

Lingua-pragmatic Politeness and Translatability

Dr. Nafez A. Shamma*

Abstract

This paper discusses the limitations of translating from Arabic into English and vice versa in one area of what has been termed General Pragmatics or Language in Use. This area, in particular, incorporates the most polite formulae in Arabic and their equivalents in English. It further suggests convenient solutions for overcoming such limitations. It focuses, in particular, on the cultural aspects impeding and/or precluding the possibility of successful translation in a narrow, but extremely important and neglected, component of General Pragmatics. This component is called *Lingua-pragmatics*, the other two being Pragma-linguistics and Socio-pragmatics (see Leech, 1983). This component is defined as the study of the *fixed forms of a language that have fixed socio-pragmatic values* in actual verbal communication. Such forms are different from all other forms of the language in their translatability, politeness, and other features. The aim of this paper is to develop the concept of this neglected area of Language in Use in terms of translatability and expressiveness of politeness between two mutually exotic languages, such as English and Arabic. The data collected reflect the problems the translator faces, but the analysis mirrors the strategies recommended for overcoming the difficulties the translator encounters in his/her work.

Keywords: lingua-pragmatics, translation equivalence, politeness, pragma-linguistics, socio-pragmatics, culture, semantics, pragmatic deviation.

* The Department of English- The Faculty of Arts & Human Sciences - The University of Damascus.

1. Introduction

This study investigates the link between *Language in Use* and the socio-pragmatic parameters affecting the translation of *lingua-pragmatic* forms¹, according to the socio-pragmatic factors governing their selection, interpretation, and translation. It thus reflects on the nature of language as used in human communication, and on the socio-cultural structure of a speech community through actual verbal interaction. Despite the scarcity of research in this area of language in use (Wilson, 1994)², an attempt is made to show that language and social parameters can be seen on a continuum rather than as discrete domains. It will be shown that language is embedded in culture as much as culture is mediated by language in use. Although taken for granted, this last fact is not so clearly manifested in the study of the area of pragma-linguistics³; that is, the mutual effect of interaction between language and social parameters is uniquely reflected in the area of *lingua-pragmatics*. Consequently, deviation from the norms governing the use of the linguistic forms studied under *Lingua-pragmatics* is not as easily recoverable as is a pragma-linguistic error (see Shamma, 1995). This deviation should of necessity lead to mistranslation and an impolite attitude of the speaker.

The importance of the study of this link between social norms and language, as embodied in the language forms studied under *lingua-pragmatics*, is that it is neither fully social nor completely linguistic. Thus, to abide by the social laws of a certain culture and communicate successfully with its members, it is not enough to know theoretically how the people of that culture think and behave in harmony with their conventions and social values, the study of this being *socio-pragmatics* (see Levinson 1983), nor is it adequate to assimilate the linguistic code and its rules related to that community language, the study of this being *pragma-linguistics* (see Leech, 1981; 1983). In this area of language in use, i.e. *lingua-pragmatics*, learning the linguistic items related to a certain social event goes hand in hand with the social norms relevant to that situation and expressed by the linguistic sign:

"one could select a corpus on the basis of occasions of use or social 'meaning' so that, for example, one could study greetings, expressions of thanks, apologies, introductions, congratulations, or any similar set of situationally identified formulas. Such an approach would be instructive" (Ferguson, 1983: 66).

These sets of situationally identified formulas are studied under *Lingua-pragmatics* in this paper. Having introduced the study of language in use under the heading of lingua-pragmatics, I first attempt to show the main

¹ The term, *Lingua-pragmatics*, was first coined, defined and used by Shamma (1995).

² In a taped interview with Professor Wilson, a co-author of *Relevance* theory, at University College London (UCL), 14 June 1994; any quotation attributed to Wilson (1994) is taken from this interview, unless otherwise stated.

³ For a comprehensive notion of General Pragmatics, i.e. Language Use, and its divisions, see Leech (1983), who divides it into *Pragma-linguistics* and *Socio-pragmatics*; Shamma (1995), on the other hand, suggested a third subdivision, i.e. *Lingua-pragmatics*, the linguistic forms, which cannot be subsumed under any of the previous two.

characteristics of the linguistic forms studied here, and differentiate them from what has traditionally been termed phatic communication or formulaic and frozen expressions (see section 1.1 below). The forms studied under *Lingua-pragmatics* are defined as **the fixed linguistic formulae that have fixed pragmatic values in the relevant context in the social reality of actual verbal communication** (see Shamma, 1995). Because these forms studied under *lingua-pragmatics* are highly culture-specific, the paper attempts to approach the question of their linguistic politeness and translatability on a pragmatic level. Finally, the factors and consequences of deviation from language use in this area, i.e. the factors involved in and the reasons for *misinterpretation and mistranslation* are discussed: this is particularly manifested in the linguistic outcome being impolite and difficult to translate. However, it is significant at this stage to show the *position* of the forms subsumed under the study of *lingua-pragmatics* in relation to the other forms studied under **pragma-linguistics** within the framework of General Pragmatics, i.e. Language in Use and in line with **Relevance Theory** (Sperber & Wilson, 1986a/1995; see also Thomas, 1983; Mey, 1985).

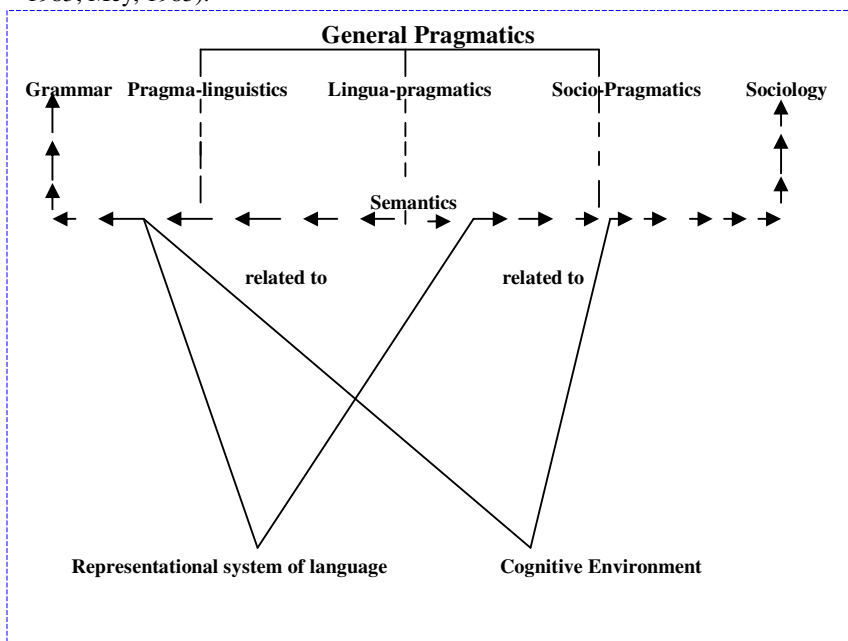


Figure 1: Components of General Pragmatics
(adapted from Leech, 1983: 11; modified by Shamma, 1995: 110)

Diagram (1) above shows the various components of pragmatics as well as the relations of these components to other fields of study, within the framework

of Relevance Theory represented in its two interactive Figure (1) The figure above represents, in particular, the interaction between the two main pillars of verbal communication, i.e. the representational *system of language* and the *cognitive environment* of communicators (see Sperber and Wilson, 1986a; 1995). The figure also reflects the indirectly related areas of *grammar* and *sociology* and the closer contact between *lingua-pragmatics* and *pragma-linguistics* on the one hand and between *lingua-pragmatics* and *socio-pragmatics* on the other - which suggests that *language use* occurs in a *continuum* rather in discrete items of verbal communication. Hence, the area of *Lingua-pragmatics* is exceptionally important here, because it marks off the necessary link between the two major components of verbal communication. This reflects that language *conventions* are part of both, the *language system* and the communicator's *cognitive environment*. This notion does not apply to the other components of General Pragmatics: *pragma-linguistics*, for instance, is certainly more related to *grammar*, simply because ill-formed utterances, due to formal transference from Arabic to English, for example, may result in *pragma-linguistic* miscommunication and consequently *mistranslation*, i.e., *misunderstanding the force* of utterances. An example may illustrate the point:

- 1) *'I wrote for him a letter.', when the speaker means:
- 2) I have written (sent) him a letter.

Socio-pragmatics, on the other hand, is more closely related to *sociology*, and consequently to *normative behaviour*, although it forms an essential background of verbal behaviour as well. *Semantics* is clearly related to and subsumed under both *pragma-linguistics* and *lingua-pragmatics*, but is more closely associated with the first than with the latter, simply because *lingua-pragmatics* is associated with *fixed linguistic forms*, whose *grammatical patterns* and *semantic structures* are easy to learn and easy to keep unbroken on the *syntactic level*. Thus, we notice here that *lingua-pragmatics* is an area of actual interaction between *context* and *language* as defined in Relevance Theory; but this interaction is already determined by a higher hierarchy, i.e., *society*: the *linguistic forms* are already designed for the appropriate situation; all the communicator needs to do is assess the situation, together with the external factors involved in the context, and *repeat*, as it were, the appropriate utterance; in other words, the communicator does not have much freedom to choose from his/her linguistic encyclopedia: s/he could choose either to behave in compatibility with the social situation or not, in terms of his/her linguistic behaviour; if not, *miscommunication* will occur. Such failure can be manifested particularly in *greetings, congratulations, compliments, condolences, God-wishes, stumbles*, and the like. Context, in this sense, is a reflection of the *cognitive environment* in a specific speech event. According to Gutt, context

“comprises a potentially huge amount of very varied information. It

includes information that can be perceived in the physical environment, information that can be retrieved from memory . . . including information derived from preceding utterances plus any cultural or other knowledge stored there - and furthermore information that can be inferred from these two sources" (Gutt, 1991: 25 – 6; author's italics).

Thus, the pragmatic force of an utterance will be dependent on several factors, the most important of which will be the relation of the pragmatic components to one another as shown in **figure 1** above, their relations to context and the freedom of linguistic choice available to the communicator. In other words, the **relativity of relevance** of one component or more to the meaning of an utterance is the decisive factor in utterance selection, interpretation, and translation: for instance, the more formal transference from one language to another is correct and appropriate, the more important the role of grammar in accounting for meaning⁴; the more we need cultural interpretation of an utterance in a foreign language, the more important the socio-cultural factor is, and so on and so forth. This seems to be compatible with the division of **General Pragmatics** into its subcomponents, especially as one component is likely to be related more closely than another to a certain factor involved in accounting for the meaning of utterances in social reality. According to this approach, **literal meaning**, as defined by Davidson (1984; 1986) or **sense**, according to Leech (1974/1981; 1980; 1983), is no longer autonomous (see Levinson, 1983): it is part of the utterance meaning in actual human communication. In the traditional approach to the study of pragmatics, the equation of **sense + context = meaning** was lacking, simply because *context* was not defined in adequate terms; according to Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson, 1986a; 1995), the equation *is* enough. But it is not simply a mixture that preserves the basic characteristics of the two essential components; it is rather very much like mixing *black* and *white*, the product being *gray*, a new colour, quite different in its characteristics from the two basic ones.

This approach of dividing General Pragmatics into subcomponents can be called the "**Rr Paradigm of Meaning**", i.e., the **Relativity of relevance** of each (sub-)component to utterance interpretation and translation equivalence (see Shamma, 1995).

2. Phatic Communion & Lingua-pragmatics

Whereas Malinowski (1923/1930) defines phatic communication as "talk for the sake of something being said" (cited in Hymes, 1972: 40), Brown and Levinson (1987: 235) differentiate between "conventionalized formulae [that]

⁴ Meaning, whenever used from now on in this research, will be synonymous with the *pragmatic force* of utterances in discourse, essentially producing it.

are very largely FTAs- [Face-Threatening Acts] oriented, and the ritual formulae . . . for apologies, thanks, farewells, condolences, sneezes (*God bless you*), stumbles (*Whoopsy-daisy*) [that] are evidence of the great utility and face-loss benefit of having ready-made ways of dealing with potential face-loss situations". Levinson (1983: 41) sees the phatic function as the "establishment and maintenance of contact". Other scholars believe that "there are formulaic expressions like "excuse me," "go on," which may be used to maintain the cooperative nature of the conversation" (Gumperz, Aulakh, and Kaltman, 1982: 55). I should like to ostensibly, and perhaps forcefully, spell out certain reservations here.

First, according to the definition of *lingua-pragmatics*, the conventionalized language forms studied are not mere 'talk for the sake of something being said'. They are an essential part of language in use, and they communicate more than what is said; secondly, both Brown and Levinson's (1987) 'conventionalized formulae' and 'the ritual formulae' are here studied under *lingua-pragmatics* and interpreted in the light of the obvious connection between the linguistic signals and pragmatic knowledge as suggested by Sperber and Wilson (1986; 1995). For instance, in terms of politeness, Relevance Theory "provides an alternative to the view that polite verbal behaviour is motivated by the desire to communicate politeness" (Jary, 1998: 18). A third reservation is related to considering such an expression as 'go on' formulaic, regardless of what precedes or follows it and how it is used. Other similar expressions that are called formulaic are not included under what I have called *lingua-pragmatics*, because they do not show any connection between the social structure of a given speech community and the communicator's intent behind using such forms in that society. For example, Hansell and Ajitotutu (1982: 92) describe expressions such as "next question", "right on", and "do you not" rather than "don't you" as formulaic. Such utterances in their context of a certain conversation are simply situational; *they do not reveal the social character of the communicator*. Bazzanella (1990: 629) mentions examples in Italian of what she calls 'phatic connectives' such as "*come sai* 'you know', *diciamo* 'let's say', *praticamente* 'practically'". She further differentiates such phatic connectives from pragmatic connectives: "[B]y 'PCs' I mean those items otherwise variously referred to as 'discourse particles', 'utterance particles', . . . 'conversational greasers', etc. which mainly perform a phatic function in the discourse, underlying the interactive structure of the conversation. I distinguish them from the 'pragmatic connectives', which also include metatextual connectives, used to mark the structuring of the discourse" (Bazzanella, 1990: 630). The forms cited above do not belong to the linguistic forms studied under *lingua-pragmatics* in this research. They are no more than what she calls them, i.e. 'conversational greasers' or 'connectives' that do not refer to any relationship between language

and the social structure of any speech community. They are merely *stylistic devices* variably used by different writers in different fields of knowledge. In other words, they do not have any linguistic characteristics or cultural traits indicative of the identity of a particular speech community.

Some scholars differentiate between formulaic words and interjections. Ameka (1992: 245), for instance, states that "formulaic words are speech acts *qua* speech acts while interjections are not fully fledged speech acts because they lack illocutionary dictum in their semantic structure". Although I generally agree with Ameka, I find that interjections are necessarily part of the language forms studied under *lingua-pragmatics*, because of their *fixed forms and their socially-determined pragmatic force* in the relevant context of use, and because of the difficulty of describing their semantic structure. Goffman (1981: 99) says "We see such 'expression' as a natural overflowing, a flooding up of previously contained feeling, a bursting of normal restraints, a case of being caught off guard. That is what would be learned by asking the man in the street [sic] if he uses these forms and, if so, what he means by them". Ameka (1992: 105) presents examples of such interjections which "can constitute an utterance by themselves and do not normally enter into construction with other word classes, for example, *Ouch!*, *Wow!*, *gee!*, *Oho!*, *Oops!*, etc. They could be used as co-utterances with other units". Thus, interjections, very much like greetings, are also, and often, used on their own as fully-fledged utterances; they usually go with non-verbal signals (e.g. a smile) that mitigate the effect of the undesirable act in a specific situation that demands the use of, say, an interjection such as *Oops!* I also agree with Cocchi (1992: 374), who criticizes Schneider (1988) for identifying phatic communion with 'small talk', "since he repeatedly uses the former as a loose synonym of the latter".

Other scholars recognize the nature of interjections as utterances that should be handled pragmatically in addition to the semantic description. Wilkins (1992: 155), for instance, believes that "[I]nterjections are hard to handle in linguistic terms, not because they are peripheral to the concerns of linguistics, but because they embody, almost simultaneously, all the concerns of linguistics. They are lexemes and utterances; they have to be described semantically and pragmatically; they require 'the examination of our relation to social situations at large, not merely our relation to conversation' (Goffman, 1981: 90)". It is this social aspect of the use of interjections that makes me consider them part of the forms studied under *lingua-pragmatics*. They are, above all, *language-specific* in **structure** and *culture-specific* in **use**. Wierzbicka (1992: 189) thinks that "[W]e can start to explore the universal and the culture-specific themes in the semantics of interjections, and the interplay between the two. We can also start to explore, and to document, different 'emotive styles' associated with different cultures and reflected in language-specific systems of interjections".

Thus, in this study, interjections are part of the linguistic signals studied under *Lingua-pragmatics*, simply because **their pragmatic force has precedence over their semantic structure**. Note, for example, that *Oops!* is said when the communicator, for instance, bumps into someone accidentally and cannot assign who is responsible for such an ‘undesired situation’; therefore, the expression ‘*Oops!*’ uttered at the same time by both parties indicates a minimal level of **apology** from each. In other words, interjections are used mainly for the satisfaction of purely social criteria and interpersonal relationships rather than expressing semantically ideational structures. They indicate an attitude already agreed upon by the members of a speech community as expressible by a certain interjection relevant to the incident and social situation.

Consequently, as I have shown, the forms studied under *lingua-pragmatics* are different in nature and function from what has been differently analyzed as formulaic, phatic, or frozen, expressions. Above all, despite the overlap, the forms that I study under *Lingua-pragmatics* are, first of all, more inclusive and varied than what is traditionally known as expressions of phatic communion or formulaic expressions. The term ‘frozen forms’ does not reflect the intended relationship between language and pragmatic knowledge as it is obviously embedded in such forms. Secondly, all expressions such as **greetings, thanks, compliments, and congratulations** (i.e. those formulas that recognize the positive aspect of social links and identity reflected in the **fixed forms** of the language), and the polite formulas such as those used in **complaints, apologies, condolences**, are all included under the study of *lingua-pragmatics*. Such forms cannot be studied under what is called ‘frozen forms’ because, in most cases, they derive from fully identifiable sentences that are not said, but understood. Consider this example (the Arabic forms are italicized):

3) A1: *assalamu alaikom!* (Peace be upon you (plural))

B1: *wa alaikom assalam!* *Kifak?* (and upon you (pl.) peace be! How are you (sing.)?)

A2: *alhamdu-li-llah!* (Thanks be to the Lord!)

B2: *tfaddal, tfaddal!* (Have the graciousness, have the graciousness!)⁵

A3: *shukran! Alla yakhleek!* (thanks! May God keep you (sing.) (safe)!)

B3: *ma' assalami! bi-aman-allah!* (with safety! in God's security!)

Note that the expression in A1 is a greeting that derives from a longer sentence: “I greet you by asking God to grant you (respectable person, because of the plural form of *you*) peace”. In B1, the interactant answers with the same greeting and adds another greeting, an enquiry about health. In A2, the communicator says in the longer version of his/her answer: “I am fine, because God has already granted me His peace.” Here, in B2, the social obligation crystallizes in the

⁵ See Leech (1983) for the translation of Arabic *min fadlek* as “out of your graciousness”.

highly polite form of “Have the graciousness” repeated twice for emphasis of the intent expressed in it (to accept my invitation to come in to my house) (see Leech, 1983, for an explanation of such polite forms in Arabic, English, and Portuguese; see also Leech, 1980: 93). Such politeness is responded to by two expressions to reflect the gratitude expressed in A3: “thanks: I thank you for your invitation! May God keep you safe for your kindness!” When the other respondent, B3, recognizes that his/her invitation is so politely ‘deferred’, s/he resorts to the same strategy of politeness explainable in the full sentence from which the expression is derived: “You may go in peace; may you be granted the safety of God in your journey!” Note, however, that the value of such expressions lies in their being incomplete sentences; otherwise, they would mean something else, as in:

4) *shukran li risalatika bitarikh 15/10/2003 (Thank you for your letter dated . . .)*.

The same principle applies to English expressions such as “thank you” and “take care” when extended into full sentences, as in:

5) *Take care of the garden in my absence.*

In other words, the expressions analyzed under *lingua-pragmatics* have a unique value in being used as they are in social interaction: changing them in any way different from the *norm* would imply either changing the social values expressed by them as in example (4) above or ignoring their *lingua-pragmatic* force completely as in example (5) above.

As mentioned above, some language conventions are limited in both their forms (syntactic behaviour and morphology) and functions to a set of purposes, namely, to satisfy social obligations and maintain social ties among members of a given community. Nevertheless, some of them can reveal more information than that which is embodied in the utterance when taken at face value, but in an extremely polite way. For example, an invitation - and other functions - can be expressed very politely by just using such terms as ‘*tafaddal*’ (have the graciousness) or ‘*sharrefna*’ (honour us, i.e. let us have the honour of having you with us). ‘Politeness’ here has precedence over the intended proposition of the utterance - which again shows the strong link between the language ‘signal’ and its pragmatic force as intended by the communicator. In other words, pragmatic knowledge here is more significant than the language grammar governing the *usage*⁶ of such fixed forms. Nevertheless, such forms are not originally intended to communicate *new* informative intentions, but to bring to the surface and strengthen those intentions latent in the communicators’ mental representations, i.e., in her assumptions about the world compatible with the communicator’s social structure.⁷ Their meanings and selections are governed only by *context* derived from the communicator’s *cognitive environment*, as defined by Sperber and Wilson (1986a; 1995). Thus, the importance of *lingua-pragmatics* does not lie in the amount of linguistic forms covered by it, but rather in i) the *direct relationship of such forms with socio-pragmatic knowledge*, ii) their high

⁶ See Widdowson (1978) for a distinction between *usage* (grammatical rules) and *use* (social function of language).

⁷ After Sperber and Wilson (1995) I use *she* for the speaker and *he* for the listener.

frequency of occurrence, and iii) the *polite* and *felicitous effect* of such forms on the hearer in all conditions in addition to vi) the *degree* of communicative breakdown caused by their misuse in human interaction or by ignoring them in the relevant social situations.

Asked about the division of **General Pragmatics** into *Pragma-linguistics*, *Lingua-pragmatics*, and *Socio-pragmatics* and how she viewed the role of the forms studied under *Lingua-pragmatics* in human communication, Wilson (1994) stated that: "it is an interesting question. Things like **greetings**, things like the social things encoded in language: are they handled within the language module, or are they handled in some separate domain? I don't know what the answer to that is. . . . The divisions that you are drawing *are* useful: frequency leads to greater accessibility and lesser processing effort". Wilson (ibid.) agreed to isolate the core of this area of language in use: the hearer exerts very little effort in processing the communicator's utterances studied under *lingua-pragmatics*; the social context is already designated by the background information represented by the social norms governing the selection of one of these utterances; in interpretation, the hearer needs only to equate the culturally motivated issuance of utterance(s) with his pragmatic knowledge related to the specific utterance as embedded in the social context.

I have already defined the area of *lingua-pragmatics* as that of *fixed linguistic forms* that have *fixed communicative values* in the relevant context. The striking difference between such forms and other *pragma-linguistic* forms is that the former are mainly used for maintaining *social ties*, recognizing *social distance* and keeping to the scale of *culture-specific politeness* in interpersonal interaction. Such forms also reflect the attitude of S(peaker) to H(earer) as well as to the social norms prevailing in S's speech community: their use is completely her choice and is not affected by the linguistic content of the speech activity concerned: using such forms, you could always *politely interrupt, blame, contradict* any communicators from your community; in fact, not using (one of) them may lead to miscommunication, whereas using other *pragma-linguistic* forms to interrupt communicators from your community, and under, more or less, any excuse, may lead to pragmatic failure (see Rifa'i, forthcoming).

3. The Data Collected & Respondents

The data collected included: 1) one questionnaire with three different questions addressed to native speakers of Arabic, 2) one questionnaire with three different questions addressed to native speakers of English, and 3) one text translated by the respondents from Arabic into English.

The text was a formal letter sent by a middle-class merchant to a professor at university. It focused on thanking the professor for offering condolences to the merchant and attending the funeral immediately after the death of one of the latter's next of kin. It was translated by three categories of respondents: a) 10 Arabic-speaking professors of English; b) 40 diploma students at a Department of English; and c) 100 undergraduate learners of English at Arab Departments of English in two Arab countries.

Questionnaire (1) was answered by: a) 10 Arabic-speaking professors of English; b) 40 diploma students at a Department of English; and c) 100 undergraduate learners of English at two Departments of English in two Arab countries.

Questionnaire (2) was filled in by just 6 native speakers of English, two of whom were professors of English at an Arab university, and the other 4 lived for over two years in an Arab country (see the Appendix).

4. Method

The method followed in evaluating and analyzing the data consisted of both the quantitative (statistical) and qualitative (analytical) procedures usually taken up in such research. Thus, tables were drawn to show the number of deviations each category of respondents had in translating the text and answering the questionnaires mentioned. The deviations were considered as such only when and if the respondent had an error or mistake that affected the meaning as intended in the original text of the source language, in a way as to cause misunderstanding the writer's intent. This is called a *pragmatic translation deviation*, which is different from a grammatical or even semantic error that poses itself as a reflection of the translator's incompetence in a particular linguistic area that may or may not induce miscommunication in the target language text. On another plane, answers to the third set of questions in the questionnaires were particularly analyzed on the cultural level, or more specifically, *lingua-pragmatically*, i.e. on the level of the close interface between language and culture. Nevertheless, all types of error are categorized and included in the relevant tables for the reader to consider other possible research on related areas in the data. As mentioned above, this paper is limited to examining the translation equivalence and polite use of the forms studied under *lingua-pragmatics* in two mutually exotic languages and cultures, i.e. Arabic and English.

5. Results and Discussion

As part of the data collected, the translated Text included about 230 utterances and was translated by 150 Arab respondents. Considering the number of utterances in it and the number of respondents translating it, we get 34'500 utterances translated from Arabic. All in all, the erroneous utterances that deviated from the meaning as intended in context were 26'350, i.e. 76.37% of the total number of translated utterances (see Table 1 below).

No. of Translated Utterances	No. of Deviations	Percentage (%)
34, 500	26, 350	76. 37

Table 1: The Ratio of Deviations in the Text Translation

As expected, the undergraduates had the greatest ratio of deviations in the text translation from Arabic. This great ratio of deviations was immediately

followed by that of the Diploma students; even the Arab professors of English had a non-expected rate of deviations in the translation of some utterances. This ratio of deviations is understandable and can be easily accounted for by the various degrees of exposure to the target language/culture (see Table 2 below).

Category of Respondents	Number of Deviations	Percentage %
Undergraduates	22'309	84.66
Diploma students	3918	14.86
Professors	123	0.46

Table 2: Total Text Deviations Per Category of Respondents

However, even Table 2 does not provide adequate information about the ratios of deviations for each category of respondents. To be accurate and informative, the ratios should be calculated in relation to the number of utterances translated by each category of respondents. Thus, taking the number of *translated utterances* rendered by each category of respondents and the number of *deviations* made, we get the information provided in Table 3 below:

Category of Respondents	Number of Text Utterances	Number of Deviations	Percentage%
Undergraduates	23'000	22'309	96.99
Diploma students	9'200	3'918	42.58
Professors	2'300	123	5.34

Table 3: Ratio of Deviations Per Category of Respondents

Apart from personal details, questionnaire (1) included 70 questions that were answered by 150 Arabic speakers. In other words, the total number of questions answered by all the respondents in Questionnaire (1) were 10'500. The erroneous answers were 9'605 in number, i.e. 91.47%, as shown in Table (4) below:

No. of Q (1) answers	No. of Deviations	Percentage (%)
10' 500	9' 605	91.47

Table 4: The Ratio of Deviations in Q (1) Answers

Again, it is obvious that the number of deviation in Q (1) is similar to that in the Text utterances. As table (5) below shows, the greatest ratio of deviations was in the undergraduate category, immediately followed by that of the Diploma students, although the professors' deviations could not go unnoticed.

Category of Respondents	Number of Deviations	Percentage %
Undergraduates	6895	71.78
Diploma students	2586	26.92
Professors	124	1.29

Table 5: Total Deviations in Q (1) Per Category of Respondents

However, the ratio of deviations should also be calculated in relation to the number of utterances answered by each category of respondents as stated in Table (6) below:

Category of Respondents	Number of Q (1) Answers	Number of Deviations	Percentage%
Undergraduates	7000	6895	98.50
Diploma students	2800	2586	92.35
Professors	700	124	17.71

Table 6: Q (1)-Ratio of Deviations Per Category of Respondents

Questionnaire (2) had 52 questions that were answered by just 6 native speakers of English. This means that the total number of questions answered in Questionnaire (2) was 312. All in all, The erroneous answers were 289, i.e. 92.62%. (see Table 7 below):

No. of Q (2) answers	No. of Deviations	Percentage (%)
312	289	92.62

Table 7: The Ratio of Deviations in Q (2) Answers

However, even in Questionnaire (2), one can easily observe that the category of respondents can be divided into two smaller groups, that of the professors, being only two, and that of the housewives, being four in number. As Table 8 below shows, the greatest ratio of deviations was that of the housewives.

Category of Respondents	Number of Deviations	Percentage %
Housewives	201	69.55
Professors	88	30.44

Table 8: Total Deviations in Q (2) Answers per category of respondents

This should also be further illustrated by the ratio of utterances answered by each subcategory, as Table 9 below shows:

Category of Respondents	Number of Q (2) Answers	Number of Deviations	Percentage%
Housewives	208	201	96.63
Professors	104	88	84.61

Table 9: The Ratio of Deviations in Q (2) Answers Per Subcategory

This general notion of deviations, though not insignificant, should be further clarified by analyzing the reasons lying behind such deviations. First of all, the text was translated by different categories of respondents, the majority of whom were undergraduates at Arab universities, as mentioned above. Therefore, comparison between the results of the various respondents should be made to clarify the role of exposure to the cultural factors governing the use of language in the area of *Lingua-pragmatics*.

These results seem quite compatible with the **degree of exposure to the target language culture**. In other words, **the more distant the respondents from the target language culture are, the less relevant their utterances to how the various *Lingua-pragmatic* forms are used**. Even in the case of the Arab professor's deviations from the norm of using such forms studied under *lingua-pragmatics*, one can note that the results, though unexpected, are quite realistic, simply because if one studies abroad for approximately five years, one

is not expected to assimilate the whole lingua-cultural system of the target language. This is quite obvious in both the Text translation and the answers of Q1.

Secondly, the results of answering Questionnaire (2) showed that 88 deviations out of 104 utterances were committed by the English-speaking professors. This explains the *negligence of native speakers of English in attempting to know how to use Arabic* efficiently and appropriately in the relevant context: they simply use English. The ratio of the housewives' deviations (96.63%) is even more justified. This is again because *it is Arabs who use English* with the native speakers of English, whether the two parties are in the homeland or abroad. Another obvious reason for such deviations in the use of these *Lingua-pragmatic* forms is represented by the unique characteristics these forms have in terms of *culture-specific politeness* and *language-specific use*.

5. 1 Lingua-pragmatics and Politeness

Two levels of politeness should be clearly differentiated: linguistic politeness, where the *linguistic signal* is closely associated with a socially-recognized polite act or attitude, and *non-linguistic politeness*, where the normative behaviour is recognized as polite in a speech event. In this study, linguistic politeness is further divided into two domains: that of *lingua-pragmatics*, where the fixed linguistic forms represent a polite attitude in the relevant situation, and that of *pragma-linguistics*, where the grammar, particularly syntax, and the communicator's style play a significant role in constructing what is considered polite in each culture. My major assumption here is that, despite much debate about universals (see Leech, 1980; 1983; Grice, 1975; Brown and Levinson, 1978; 1987), both levels of politeness are culture-specific (see Gu, 1990; Fraser, 1990; Mao, 1994; Lee, 2001; Pizziconi, 2003; Yu, 2003; Upadhyay, 2003; Bharuthram, 2003; and Rifa'i, forthcoming). In this research, I limit my discussion of politeness to the first part of linguistic politeness.⁸

The notion of the universality of politeness, i.e. of having a certain set of rules and/or conventions that delineate what is polite, verbally or non-verbally, and which isolate it from the converse does not, unfortunately, exist:

“[T]hus, for Brown & Levinson, a strong motivation for not talking strictly according to conversational maxims is to ensure politeness. While B & L do acknowledge that politeness (never defined in the entire book) is not the only reason for ‘deviation’, they do not elaborate on other motivations such as sarcasm, humor, and irony, to name but a few” (Fraser, 1990: 228).

⁸ However, for more on the other types of politeness, see Rifa'i (forthcoming), Pizziconi (2003), Upadhyay (2003), Yu (2003), Bharuthram (2003), Taguchi (2002), Lee (2001), and Shamma (1995).

The problem of the ‘universality’ of politeness as an interactive procedure of talk or of making oneself more accessible to human society is that it lacks consensus in both its linguistic representation and the criteria of social assessment: “there is little agreement among researchers in the field about what, exactly, constitutes politeness and the domain of related research. . . . The distinction between linguistic and non-linguistic politeness is not drawn. . . . a viable theory of politeness cannot rest upon a set of rules based on social, normative behavior” (Fraser, 1990: 234). In this study, I *base the concept of politeness on the relevant social values motivating linguistic and non-linguistic behaviour in what the members of a speech community consider polite*. Thus, very much like *lingua-pragmatic* forms in language use, politeness is culture-specific in its orientation, purposes, and linguistic devices (see also Rifa’i, forthcoming). In the light of much research on the universality of politeness, Nwoye builds evidence for the fact that

“[F]ace is actually found to wear different cultural faces. If face truly is, as Brown and Levinson claim, “the kernel element in folk notions of politeness” (1987: 62), it would seem that the universal principles of politeness posited by Brown and Levinson need to be seriously re-examined in the light of the variations highlighted by these studies. As evidence from more cross-cultural research will most likely reveal even more diversity in both notions of face and the operations of politeness strategies, claims for the universality of politeness principles might be shaky indeed” (Nwoye, 1992: 328).

This is not to suggest that universals do not exist: very much as in language, universals in the concept of politeness and its procedures can be taken as a basis for comparison and raising consciousness of the differences across cultures. As Gu (1990: 256) says, “at the most abstract level, politeness indeed may be a universal phenomenon, i.e. it is found in every culture. However, what counts as polite behaviour (including values and norms attached to such behaviour) is . . . language-specific and culture-specific. . . in interaction, politeness fulfils normative as well as instrumental functions. Interactants can use politeness to further their goals (e.g. redress FTAs), but at the same time are restrained by it”. In other words, it is the social value in question that dictates the polite linguistic and/or normative behaviour of the interactant in a given speech event.

Moreover, there is an obvious difference between *lingua-pragmatic* politeness and other linguistic aspects of politeness studied under *pragmalinguistics*. On the level of the latter aspect of linguistic politeness, note, for instance, that ‘could’ in ‘Could you pass me the salt?’ is polite mainly because of its very combination with something ‘requestable’ by someone (and from someone) in a particular situation and for a definite purpose: ‘Pass me the salt’. However, this form, ‘could’, may lose its polite function when combined, for instance, with something ‘unrequestable’ in a particular situation: ‘Could you stop picking your nose?’ (see Thomas, 1983: 97). On the other hand, a *lingua-*

pragmatic form like ‘*alla ma’ak!*’ (May God be with you!), is *always polite* in the relevant speech community, even when said to somebody in a particular setting so as to mean ‘Go away!’. Furthermore, the expression itself cannot be interpreted as ‘Go away!’ on its own; nevertheless, let us suppose that this utterance can in a certain situation mean ‘Go away!’. In this case, the addressee can probably report that the communicator ‘dismissed’ him, but he cannot accuse her of using impolite language. In other words, the terms ‘*Alla ma’ak*’ consist, in that situation, of a **mitigating device** used in a polite way. Mitigation, according to Fraser (1980: 344), is specified in terms of the speaker’s intention: “mitigation entails politeness, while the converse is not true. In short, mitigation occurs only if the speaker is also being polite” (cited in Haverkate, 1992: 505).

The Arabic word *na’am* (yes) can have at least ten contextual meanings; no one of these meanings is impolite. Contrary to this, the use of ‘*na’am*’ when you are bored of listening to somebody - which could be interpreted as saying to him: ‘Go away!’ - is only a mitigating device showing a small degree of ‘uninterestedness’ as mentally represented in comparison with the linguistic output represented by the utterance. Thus, it is only very polite to use a lingua-pragmatic form such as ‘*na’am, na’am!*’, rather than a pragma-linguistic form such as *ana mashghoul* ‘I have got something to do’. The forms studied under lingua-pragmatics, in this sense, can *imply* a loss of face rather than *assert* it in an impolite way to prevent possible confrontation. I am fully aware that the pragmatic force is deducible from the discourse as a whole rather than from a particular isolated utterance; however, what I am emphasizing here is that the expressions above that are studied under *lingua-pragmatics*, as opposed to all other utterances under *pragma-linguistics*, can never be impolite, and may compose a complete discourse in themselves (see Ferguson, 1983). They must, therefore, be handled in a separate domain that links social behaviour with verbal communication - which helps us view language, as used in communication and social behaviour revealed verbally and/or non-verbally, as a continuum indicative of our mental representations and social character as revealed in verbal communication.

The importance of such forms has made several linguists call “for the systematic study of such formulas in different languages and speech communities, how they change through time and how they are acquired by children” (Ferguson, 1983: 65). Ferguson (1983: 65) also finds that the Syrian politeness formulas “have striking parallels with those used in other speech communities around the Mediterranean, as is evident, for example, in Tannen and Oztek’s study of Greek and Turkish politeness formulas (Tannen & Oztek, 1977)”. Considered in all the situations in which such forms are used, a corpus of them “deserves to be included somewhere in a systematic pragmatics of Syrian Arabic” (Ferguson, 1983: 73). What may be included in this corpus of such fixed forms standing for fixed social values and interpersonal relations are studied in this research under *lingua-pragmatics*. Such forms range between single words, such as *nashu* (after sneezing) and complex sequences of words, such as *minshan alla, ma twakhthuna* (For God’s sake, do not ‘blame’ us) depending on the requirement of the situation and the level of politeness assumed by the communicator. These forms can also be categorized into different groups

according to their social use and semantic structure. For instance, *God-wishes* (i.e. those expressions beginning with or assuming that the language form begins with the word 'God') compose only a small portion of such forms of politeness in Syrian Arabic: "[T]he Syrian Arabic speech community makes use of hundreds of politeness formulas and a full description of their structure and use would be a major undertaking requiring years of investigation" (Ferguson, 1983: 66). In this study, these forms are tackled only on the level of *use* and their inter-relationship with both language and culture. This means that such forms should be studied on other levels in other research projects, because of their variability and complexity: "[T]he politeness exchanges of Syrian Arabic are perhaps especially valuable as the object of description because they constitute a particularly rich and complex system" (Ferguson, 1983: 68). Al-Shamma (1986: 108) goes even further in emphasizing the importance of such forms in reflecting the social character of the communicator and her attitudes:

"[A] glimpse into this aspect of linguistic behaviour will show that the Syrian Arabs seldom fail to say the pleasant word, to congratulate, to welcome heartily, and to sympathize as occasions demand. Their social exchange of words is dictated in part by the factor of sociability, and it is clear that this particular phenomenon governs to a great extent their linguistic choices, exposing the speaker's social attitudes and inner feelings".

In other words, a *lingua-pragmatic* form denotes the socio-cognitive factors governing the social and linguistic behaviour of the members of the relevant speech community.

Such politeness forms are relevant to the communicative situation, the interpersonal relationship, in addition to other societal parameters such as status, gender, and age. Thus, the communicator can be extravagant in using them with an older woman, who 'deserves' them, but economical in using them with, for instance, a younger person. In other words, politeness exchanges are not taken for granted and conferred on anyone. Instead, they are contextual and purposeful: they serve and are meant to satisfy an important aspect of human communication in at least the Syrian (Fertile-Crescent) society. Therefore, it would be interesting to form a corpus of such forms in actual use, carefully describe the communicators (their age, sex, education, relationship, etc.) and the context of their use with the aim of studying these forms on the level of cognitive psychology and social psychology (i.e. how the members of a certain community act and respond in terms of social politeness and interpersonal relationships) in various situations. This might show the ways of thinking of a certain community and reflect the cognitive environment of its members.

For instance, Ferguson (1983) selects only 31 God-wishes and treats them as reflective of politeness criteria in the Syrian society: "God-wishes constitute a major form type among Syrian Arabic politeness formulas" (Ferguson, 1983: 67). Such forms are used in different contexts according to the social parameters and the communicator's assessment of that socio-cognitive environment and its requirement in the relevant context. The social context is already chosen by the immediate context of the situation and the social setting that involves, in a definable way, the interactants who are present in that setting, what their relationships are, and what the social requirements dictate on those

communicators involved in that gathering. This emphasizes the role of the *principle of relevance* in assessing what is to be said and how it is said. The social setting itself makes the utterances exchanged more readily accessible in the relevant situation and, consequently, the first relevant interpretation of each utterance in that situation is the one intended by the communicator. To make this clearer, let us take an example: if someone next door is just heard saying “*aslamitkon! khatimat-l ahzan!*” (For your safety! Conclusion of sorrows!), the hearer can easily tell that somebody in that family has just died, and the communicator is observing the code of social obligations. Another example is that if someone is heard saying ‘*amer!*’ (approx. ‘full!’), the hearer can also tell that the communicator is a guest invited to a meal or a drink, but politely rejects the offer, or has just finished her meal. Thus, the context here is already determined by the social norms and the utterances are interpreted in that light. In other words, it is a ready-made part of the communicator’s cognitive environment and the contextual effects are, therefore, *always* much larger than the processing effort of interpreting such utterances. All the communicator needs in such a social situation is to match, rather than select, the social context with her understanding of the social code required in her community in such situations.

This correspondence between the socio-cultural context and the communicator’s verbal behaviour is the *interpretation* of the social obligation itself. There is no possibility for the addressee to misinterpret one of the linguistic forms studied under *lingua-pragmatics*. The communicator has limited choices, which depend on the principle of *selectivity* that is also restricted to two levels only: the first level is that the communicator can choose between *saying* something or keeping *silent*, the latter ‘act’ being interpreted as *negative*, the interpretation of which can range between her ignorance of the social code or lack of social tact, to impoliteness or even hostility, depending on other social criteria governing the interpersonal relationship between the communicator and the addressee. The second level of selection is that of an appropriate linguistic form relevant to the situation in question. Thus, the communicator can be cool, warm, or enthusiastic and, thus, satisfy the social requirement partly or fully, sincerely or out of social etiquette.

All of the social situations that one can think of can be expressed by one or more of the forms studied under lingua-pragmatics. *Weddings, engagements, giving birth, birthdays, funerals, sickness, recovering from illness, having a haircut, having a bath, having a shave, going abroad, returning from travel, buying something new, changing the hair style, getting a new job, getting an academic degree, sneezing, coughing, belching, having a drink, a meal, etc.* are all social occasions in the Syrian society that demand some level of response from relatives, friends, neighbours, and acquaintances. This response can be expressed both verbally and/or non-verbally, depending on the interpersonal relationship, the geographical distance as well as the relative significance of the incident itself. Lack of response, however, is interpreted as lack of social etiquette, and may lead to miscommunication. This is why such forms are unique in their structure, understandability, and significance: *they represent the spirit of*

social life and its obligations; therefore, they cannot be appropriately interpreted except under this area of the study of language in use, i.e. *lingua-pragmatics*.

5. 2 Lingua-pragmatics and Negotiation

Another distinctive feature of such forms studied under *linguapragmatics* is that a characteristic of discourse that usually helps communicators avoid miscommunication leads to inevitable misinterpretation in the area of *linguapragmatics*: this feature is *negotiation*. Negotiation of the informative intention is *counterproductive* with these forms: imagine somebody asking you what you mean by '*khatimat~l ahzan!*' (Conclusion of sorrows!) in a relevant situation, and after 30 seconds of explanation, for instance, he asks you about what s/he is supposed to say in reply to your utterance. When you let him/her know that, s/he says 'I see; then, '*ma tshufu huzn!*' (I hope you won't see sorrows!}'. This negotiative role of another interactant would certainly sound aberrant; in other words, it would in the relevant situation be better not to use such expressions or even not to appear, say, on the scene of a funeral, rather than negotiate your role as somebody offering condolences. According to my assessment, there are over 500 linguistic forms that can definitely be studied under *lingua-pragmatics* in Arabic. These forms are, as I see them, the product of a long process of socio-historical negotiation that established them across the ages in compatibility with the users' assumptions about the world.⁹ Such expressions are certainly more distinctive and significant in a highly conventionalized society than in less conventionalized societies. In Syria, for instance, *greetings, expressions of dispreffereds (see Levinson, 1983), compliments, condolences, apologies, congratulations, thanks and expressions of gratitude* are repeatedly heard among individuals and families, quite often composing a complete discourse each, denoting, only to the insider, a whole range of 'messages' related to the positive and negative nets of social ties (see Al-Shamma, 1986). They have fixed patterns and values that are repeated in the relevant social situations, so that one can easily memorize and use them in accordance with the social conventions, regardless of the difficulty of language, just as one practices other non-verbal rituals (military or religious, for instance). Many of these expressions, as we shall see below, make no sense outside of the cultural context; consequently, negotiating their 'meanings/uses' would be a negotiating of social ties and obligations in a manner that sounds unpleasant to the other interlocutor and leads to a certain level of pragmatic failure.

5. 3 Being Culture-Specific

As the results of the data show, these expressions and many similar ones, studied under *lingua-pragmatics*, are certainly **culture-specific** and can hardly, whether in context or in isolation, be understood by members of a remote culture, unless similar utterances are found in the community language of that culture (e.g. the Mediterranean Region) or represented in a kind of overlap between such forms in two different cultures/languages. Each utterance is to be

⁹ It is notable that the English expression 'Power to your elbow!' was common in Victorian England; such an expression is similar to Arabic 'May God give you activity!' usually said to somebody at work.

linguistically taken as a whole for the required, and in fact, *specified*, pragmatic effect: each utterance is generally composed of one or two words in Arabic and the appropriate response(s). Even in discourse, it is almost the same sequential pattern that repeatedly occurs in the relevant context, among members of the same community. These expressions have a great deal in common with the object of study of both socio-pragmatics and pragma-linguistics, but they are distinctive in being a set of **fixed linguistic forms with fixed communicative values**. In other words, discussing such forms of language, we are not discussing social distance, status, or even interpersonal relationships, all of which fall under the study of *Socio-pragmatics*, nor are we discussing the effects or constraints of grammar (or language), in whatever sense it is taken, on the pragmatic force of utterances - which is the area of pragma-linguistics. Instead, we are studying the ready-made link between language and social norms. In other words, this area of language use is a manifestation of the social structure and its networks through an objective body of linguistic information, out of which the communicator only *chooses* what suits her assessment of the social situation in question. This means that the communicator does not *construct* language, as is the case in the area of pragma-linguistics.

Such utterances *must*, in varying amounts and social functions, be available in every language, at least as viewed by other language community members. In Chinese, for example, *'Have you eaten your rice?'* (literal translation) is a culture-specific greeting, and so is the answer to it: 'Yes; I'm full. Thank you!', meaning in English, but only *contextually*, 'Are you alright? Fine; thank you!' One may not imagine that the English traditional comment on the weather such as 'Nice day! Isn't it?' is taken as a truth-conditional semantic proposition by outsiders¹⁰ (for more on the differences in weather terminology between Arabic and English, see Barkho, 1990). In the majority of such communicative aspects as condolences, compliments, etc., the English language forms or utterances also have different equivalent realizations in Arabic. I will now suggest some of these lingua-pragmatic forms in Arabic and a possible translation into English, in addition to studying a variety of such English forms and their possible translation equivalents in Arabic.

5.4 Translatability

Although translation can be useful in language learning, perhaps mainly for overcoming pragmatic failure (see Thomas, 1989), one feature of the language forms studied under lingua-pragmatics is the difficulty of translating them into other languages: "each text the translator deals with speaks out of a different tradition, with different names for different things that make up the world, things which connect differently in thought, which point to different constellations of character, motivation, intention, to whom the meanings are necessarily different, too" (Morris, 1992: 201). In other words, as suggested above, these forms are both language-specific in their use and culture-specific in their communicative

¹⁰ The first time I was exposed to it by an elderly lady at a bus-stop, my answer was 'No, madam; it is very cold to me'; the lady, certainly, was shocked. When I discovered months later that it was only a traditional comment for perhaps initiating talk, I was shocked, too.

value (see Ferguson, 1983). Therefore, the translation equivalence in most cases is only a rough approximation; it does not yield either the *effect* intended by the communicator or the *social obligation* denoted by using them, unless the social structure in the other language community is identical or at least similar to that of the mother tongue, in which they are embedded. Consequently, the difficulty of using them lies in some cases in the communicator losing face or in appearing alien to the social context. Hence, I suggest that a near equivalent, as the case is in translating such forms into a different language with different social parameters, can be counterproductive and may itself lead to pragmatic failure. Instead, an *explanation* of the social act that dictates the selectivity of one of these forms to accompany the form selected for that occasion along with its potentially pragmatic 'equivalent' in the other language is recommended. This is so because

“[I]ndividuals are normally experts at interaction only within the context of their own culture, because the conventions which guide and constrain their behaviour are not 'natural' and absolute, but . . . culturally relative” (Laver and Hutcheson, 1972: Intro. 14).

The difficulty of translating such forms into another language reflects “how the experiential and ideological ordering of society directly and profoundly shapes the use of language” (Morris, 1992: 206). Nevertheless, I intend to present some of these forms in Arabic with a literal translation first and secondly an alternative based on the contextual effects each form may yield in a similar context in the English culture, and present English examples to compare with Arabic ones in similar situations of interaction. This is not to suggest that the pragmatic equivalent is always available in the other language, nor does this attempt deny certain universal aspects in the use of such forms in verbal communication. My intent behind this attempt is to show that the only pragmatic principle that can reflect somewhat adequate similarities between the uses of these lingua-pragmatic forms cross-culturally is that of *relevance*.¹¹ As speech acts are realized differently in different languages and there is no definite number of linguistic representations of each speech act, and there is no one speech act for each linguistic representation in any one language (see Shamma, 1995), relevance is taken as a criterion of measuring the comparative contextual effects of such utterances in the two languages, Arabic and English. Thus, if the relevance of a pragmatic translation equivalence is not adequate for the utterance to be used in a similar context in the other culture, mistranslation is more likely to occur.

<u>A) Greetings (L1)</u>	<u>Semantic Translation (L2)</u>	<u>Pragmatic Equivalence</u>
1) marhaba!	Hello!	Hello!
2) ahlan!	Parents! ¹²	Welcome!
3) assalamu alaikom!	Peace be upon you!	Good morning!

¹¹ However, see Hatim and Mason (1990: 93 – 100) for a counterargument against the reliability of Sperber and Wilson's (1986a; 1995) principle of relevance in the field of translation.

¹³ Notice that the literal translation of this utterance in Arabic is 'Parents', but what is pragmatically intended is a 'welcome to your parents' home!'

4) Alla ya'teek~l 'afi!	May God give you activity!	Keep it up!
5) saidi!	Happy (evening/night)	Good evening!
6) qawakon Alla!	May God strengthen you!	Put your back into it!
7) alawafi!	Activities!	Put your shoulder into it!
8) saidi!	Happy (night)!	Good night!

Condolences

1) khatemat~l ahzan!	Conclusion of sorrows!	Sorry to hear about . . . !
2) 'aslametkon!	For your safety!	Can I offer my condolences!
3) 'aslamet awladkon!	For you children's safety!	Can I offer my sympathies!
4) taqabbala~lahu ajrakom!	May God accept your reward!	" " " " "
5) shakara~lahu saikom!	May God thank (for) your efforts!	" " " " "
6) al~baqyieh bi~hayatkom!	The rest (to be added) in (to) your life!	" " " "

Loss/Disappointment

1) baseeta!	Simple (f.)!	Not the end of the world!
2) btifrej	(it) will clear away!	Try again!
3) la tihtamm	Don't worry!	Never mind!
4) bit'awida!	You'll make up for it!	Not the end of the world!
5) irfa' rasak!	Raise your head!	Keep your head up!
6) ma muhimm!	Not important!	Don't worry about . . . !

Congratulations

1) mabrook	Blessed (the new thing)!	Very nice!
2) ta'at'u bil'afi!	May you wear it out with activity!	Great suit/jacket!
3) tahaneena!	Our congratulations!	Congratulations!
4) na'iman!	Heavenly! (said after a shave/haircut/bath)	Nice hair!
5) qassa helwi!	Beautiful (hair-) cut!	Have you had a haircut?
6) alf mabrook!	A thousand (times) blessed!	Congratulations!
7) rawaa!	Wonderful!	(Your hair looks) wonderful!

Travel

1) alla ma'ak!	May God be with you!	Have a safe journey!
2) khatrak	By your leave	Good-bye
3) ma assalami	with peace	All the best!
4) tirja' bissalami	May you return safely!	See you later!
5) deer balak!	Pay attention!	Take care!
6) intibeh lahalak	Attention to yourself!	Look after yourself!

God-Wishes

1) Sahtein	two healths ¹³	you're welcome!
2) ala albak!	On your heart!	Thank you!
3) mamnoun	Grateful!	I owe you one!
4) daymi	for ever (always)!	Delicious!
5) alla ya'tik~l afi	God give you the strength!	Put your back into it!
6) alla ykhlilak yahom	God spare-for-you them!	Nice children!
7) alla ytawwel omrak	God lengthen your life!	I'm grateful!

(for more of these expressions, see Al-Shamma, 1986; Ferguson, 1983)

14 In this area of the forms studied under lingua-pragmatics (i.e. God-wishes), I adopt Ferguson's (1983) semantic translation into English, for which he provides no pragmatic equivalence.

Apologies

1) Asef!	Sorry!	Sorry!
2) Afwan!	Excuse (me)!	Sorry!
3) I'tizarati	My apologies!	Apologies!
4) A'tazer!	I apologize!	I apologize!
5) Ma twakhzuni/a	Don't 'blame' me/us!	Sorry!
6) wa law!	Even if	Not at all!

Foods & Drink

1) taffadal	Have the graciousness	Dinner is ready.
2) kaman!	Also/more!	Have some more!
3) kasak!	Your glass!	Cheers!
4) bisahtak!	With your health!	Your health!
5) daymi!	Always!	Thank you!
6) sahtein!	Two healths!	You're welcome!
7) min'adi!	Repeated!	Do come again!
8) mumtazz!	Excellent!	Delicious!
9) yislamu ideiki	(May God) keep safe your (f.) hands!	That was a wonderful meal!

However, the equivalents above are subject to cultural and situational variations. In other words, although I have tried to suggest the nearest possible pragmatic equivalent in English for each Arabic utterance, this attempt can be successful only as far as the speech situation and the socio-cultural parameters represented mainly by the degree and kind of interpersonal relationship, permit this equivalence to be used in English. In other words, this equivalence is not appropriate in absolute terms; it is rather relatively relevant to the social norms governing verbal behaviour in a similar situation in the target language. Above all, if we take the English utterance as a basis for comparison, other translation problems will appear. In compliments in English, for instance, it would be counterproductive and even funny to translate certain utterances into Arabic with the attempt of preserving the same pragmatic force. Thus, the English 'You smell good'¹⁴ can be taken as a severe criticism of the addressee in Arabic, whereas 'What a good/lovely smell!' is acceptable only with reference to the kind of perfume used by the addressee. But if no perfume is ostensibly used by the addressee, this utterance will also be interpreted as sarcastic. However, 'It really looks good' in English is replaced by *al-qaleb ghaleb* (The pattern is dominant!) with reference to a suit or a jacket in Arabic, the reference of 'pattern' here being made to the body of the wearer. Whereas 'Nice one!' in English has more or less the same equivalent with the same effect in Arabic, the semantic equivalence - *kwayyes* - is different, and its use covers different situations. Other similar expressions of compliment that can be used in both languages with the same pragmatic force include 'Are you going anywhere in particular?' or 'Oh! What are you up to?' said in English to someone exceptionally dressed up in such a way as to reflect a kind of sarcastic compliment; the same applies to similar situations in Arabic. The problem,

15 All the English examples are taken from native speakers of English. They are taped in interpretive interviews.

however, lies in the linguistic representation: even when the expression in one of the two languages under study has an equivalent for the same situation with the same pragmatic effect, the structure of what is said in English is not easy for the Arab learner of English to grasp/use, simply because it will be affected by the mother language transfer, and is grammatically more complex than the Arabic equivalence. Thus, for instance, the linguistic representation of the English utterance 'Oh! What are you up to?' is equivalent to *wein, habeeb?* (Where, love?) in Arabic.

The same problem of linguistic representation in addition to a possible mismatch in the social event itself is encountered in this field between Arabic and English. Thus, 'Give me five!' said to a child in (American) English is equivalent to Arabic '*Five it!' i.e. 'put your five fingers on mine' (and strongly) - for the effect of showing that the child is a hero/athletic. Arabic *sahha!* 'health!' said after a drink or a meal to a guest is equivalent to 'welcome' in English after a meal. However, 'Best wishes!' or 'Best regards!', normally used in letters, are '*ma' afdali-tamanyyat*' (with the best wishes!) in Arabic. This semantic difference, such as the one represented by the last two utterances in English and Arabic respectively, justifies the linguistic side of the error usually committed by the foreign learner/user of English. But the pragmatic effect may be lost completely with the increase of linguistic deviation in one language from another in such expressions. Imagine someone using (Your glass!) '*kasak!*' instead of 'Cheers!' or 'to your health!' in English when drinking! The whole pragmatic effect intended by the communicator would be misunderstood, and even counterproductive. The expression 'God bless you!' is used in both cultures, but for different effects: in English, it is usually said to somebody sneezing; in Arabic, it is an expression of gratitude said by a senior to a junior in return to a service or kind act. In the case of presents and gifts, in English, the receiver tries to play down the generous act in such an expression as 'You shouldn't have bothered!' whereas, in Arabic, the expression is more often a statement such as *kallaft nafsak* (you've bothered/cost yourself [time, effort, and money]). Before such a kind act is done or a gift is given, the expressions in the two languages are also different. For example, if someone proposes to give a lift to somebody, and this lift entails a change in the route, more effort, time and petrol, in Arabic, the receiver of the service/gift usually says 'I don't want to bother you!', whereas in English, the expression 'Are you sure?' is more common. However, an interesting similarity in both the semantic representation and the pragmatic effect is in the area of *apologies* in both languages (see 5.4 above).

In condolences, whereas in Arabic there are many expressions that designate the degree of loss (death/failure, etc.), the formality of the situation, and the interpersonal level of relation, such expressions in English are few and lack the level of formality expressed in Arabic utterances. Thus, all the *condolence* expressions used in English are formally equivalent to only one or two Arabic expressions: 'Sorry to hear about x' or the originally Irish expression 'Sorry for your trouble' usually said to a widow. Nevertheless, in minor issues of loss such as a student's failure in a subject/year, a girl leaving her boyfriend, etc., similar expressions are used in both cultures. Examples of these are: 'Oh, never

mind; try again!', 'There is always tomorrow!', 'She is not worthy of you!'. But, of course, the linguistic representations of such functions in the two languages need to be learned as part of the lexicon in Arabic and the grammar and the lexicon in English, because of the more complicated grammar of such utterances in the target language.

In short, in attempting a translation equivalence of such expressions, we not only change the cultural implications, but also the very structures themselves, formally and semantically. It is this area of linguistic 'signs' that have no literal meaning in translation equivalence and the pragmatic translation equivalence is only a rough approximation in many cases, which can lead to a certain level of pragmatic failure; it is what I have called *Lingua-pragmatics*, where utterances that are *culture-specific* and *language-specific*. On the verge of these utterances can be added any expressions/utterances that are culture-specific. Utterances like 'Jane is my girlfriend' (where both the speaker and Jane are females) and 'Having a child and getting married.' are on the outskirts of lingua-pragmatic utterances that are culture-specific, alien to Arab culture, for instance. The more verbal communication becomes conventionalized, the wider the scope of *lingua-pragmatics* will be; and the wider the social distance between cultures on the level of verbal communication, the wider the scope of lingua-pragmatics and the more difficult the translation of such linguistic forms, from a cross-cultural perspective. However, the reverse *is* true. In English, pragmatic constraints on linguistic forms have also been studied (e.g. Levinson, 1983). Leech (1983) calls them 'pragmatic restrictions'. Blakemore (1992) prefers to speak of 'pragmatic principles' affecting the very propositional content of the utterance. The term 'well', to Levinson (1983: 334), "prefaces and marks dispreferreds"; (for an elaboration on *well*, see Greasley, 1994). The term 'please', to Leech (1983: 29), "is just treated as a particle of politeness". These expressions and similar ones, according to Leech (1983: 29), are "not translatable into semantically equivalent forms in other languages". These utterances, according to Relevance Theory, are subjected to **culture-specific interpretation**, in order that they may yield **non-trivial implications**: "the notion of an interpretation - i.e. of a representation in virtue of resemblance in content - is the most fundamental one in pragmatics" (Wilson and Sperber, 1990: 152).

In summary, such language forms as those studied under lingua-pragmatics are mostly language-specific in structure, culture-specific in communication, and very difficult to translate appropriately. Above all, negotiating their meanings leads to pragmatic failure. Therefore, the only way to avoid pragmatic failure in using them in a foreign language is by acquiring/learning the cultural code that matches the use of a possible equivalent in the target language or keeping silent if the situation in that language does not require their use. Explanation of the intended pragmatic force of such linguistic forms is another successful strategy for both the foreign learner and the foreign language teacher; otherwise, miscommunication or mistranslation will occur.

6. Conclusion

As the discussion of the data in this paper implied, Lingua-pragmatic failure is, or can be, in fact a combination of both pragma-linguistic and socio-

pragmatic deviations. However, such deviations in the use of the forms studied under lingua-pragmatics are expected to be few, simply because the forms themselves are relatively few and composed of short utterances that are learnable. The most intricate area of *lingua-pragmatic failure* is where S completely *ignores the social context* requiring the use of such forms, or uses them reservedly in specific and limited situations assessed through her mother language cultural norms, or excessively in a way that is unmatchable with H's world. In other words, the failure here is a mismatch between S's and H's cognitive environments. Another source of possible miscommunication here is the unsuccessful attempt to translate such forms from one language into another when correspondence between the sets of such language forms do not match each other in the two languages (mother tongue transfer). The fear of using them because of their being language-specific and culture-specific may also lead to loss of face. Approaching the *lingua-pragmatic forms* in a foreign language, the user either avoids using them altogether, or uses them inappropriately. The first case results in pragmatic failure; the second yields a different pragmatic effect of the linguistic form as is the case with some Arab speakers' use of the English utterances 'very kind of you' and 'of course' instead of 'thank you' and 'yes'/'agreed' respectively. Therefore, it is important to learn some of these forms in the target language for both social and communicative purposes. Being culture-specific, these forms are uniquely significant, first of all in the way they are used, and secondly in conveying a(n) (un)co-operative attitude on the part of the speaker (see Austin, 1962; Grice, 1975). Their implications on language learning must be important, for their being a link between purely social norms and linguistic forms whose 'literal sense' in isolation does not yield the same contextual effects in a different culture. Finally, more research in this area of **Language in Use** in different languages and cultures can certainly be fruitful and is recommended.

Acknowledgements

I would like in particular to thank all the respondents, foreign and local, professors and students, for spending some of their precious time on answering my questionnaire with all its three different parts and translating the text into English – a task that no less than the number of respondents refused to do. Special thanks are due to the American professor of English, Philip Middleton, who did his best to have more English-speaking respondents fill in the relevant questionnaire.

Appendices

Questionnaire 1

This is a questionnaire meant to serve part of my research on 'Lingua-pragmatic Politeness and translation' in the field of English learning as a foreign language. Your cooperation in answering the questions below would be appreciated. Please interpret the questions as freely as you wish or ignore any question(s) you feel unable to answer. All information provided will remain confidential.

Question I

- a. Name: (omit if wish) ----- b. occupation: -----
- c. Sex ----- d. Age -----
- e. Highest qualification attained -----
- f. Have you ever been to an English-speaking country? -----
- g. Do you know English at all? -----
- h. Are you familiar with the English culture? -----
To what extent? -----
- i. From what sources have you got knowledge of the English culture? -----
Press? ----- Mass media? -----History lessons? -----
Friends? ----- --Tourism? ----- --Employment? -----
Other? Please specify: -----

Question II

The following are expressions taken from English. Please read them carefully first; then answer the questions below, but please do not discuss these questions with any native speaker(s) of English:

1) What is the *Arabic translation equivalent* of each of these expressions? You could suggest *more than one equivalent* to each of these expressions in harmony with the situation/context in your mind at the time of using such expressions:

- 1) Hi: ----- 2) hello: -----
- 3) good morning, sir! -----
- 4) God bless you: -----
- 5) Oops! -----
- 6) Wow! -----
- 7) Ouch! -----
- 8) Take care: -----
- 9) Pass the salt: -----
- 10) Sorry to hear about your father! -----
- 11) Delicious: -----
- 12) I am full; thank you: -----
- 13) No more; thanks! -----
- 14) Keep it up: -----
- 15) Put your back into it:-----
- 16) Put your shoulder into it: -----
- 17) Can I offer my condolences? -----
- 18) Can I offer my sympathies? -----
- 19) Not the end of the world: -----
- 20) Try again: -----

- 21) Never mind: -----
- 22) Keep your head up: -----
- 23) Very nice: -----
- 24) Great jacket: -----
- 25) Nice hair: -----
- 26) I like your shirt: -----
- 27) Have you had a haircut? -----
- 28) I owe you one: -----
- 29) Have some more: -----
- 30) Dinner is ready: -----
- 31) Come again: -----
- 32) Cheers: -----
- 33) You're welcome: -----
- 34) Give me five: -----
- 35) What are you up to? -----

Question III

Describe the situation in which each of these expressions is uttered? *Who* says what to *whom*? On what *occasion*?

- 1) Hi: -----; 2) hello: -----
- 3) Good morning, sir! -----
- 4) God bless you: -----
- 5) Oops! -----
- 6) Wow! -----
- 7) Ouch! -----
- 8) Take care: -----
- 9) Pass the salt: -----
- 10) Sorry to hear about your father! -----
- 11) Delicious: -----
- 12) I am full; thank you: -----
- 13) No more; thanks! -----
- 14) Keep it up: -----
- 15) Put your back into it:-----
- 16) Put your shoulder into it: -----
- 17) Can I offer my condolences? -----
- 18) Can I offer my sympathies? -----
- 19) Not the end of the world: -----
- 20) Try again: -----
- 21) Never mind: -----
- 22) Keep your head up: -----
- 23) Very nice: -----
- 24) Great jacket: -----
- 25) Nice hair: -----
- 26) I like your shirt: -----
- 27) Have you had a haircut? -----
- 28) I owe you one: -----
- 29) Have some more: -----
- 30) The dinner is ready: -----

- 31) Come again: -----
- 32) Cheers: -----
- 33) You're welcome: -----
- 34) What are you up to? -----
- 35) Give me five: -----

NB: please feel free to add any comments that you deem appropriate and relevant in the space below.

Thank you very much for help & cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Questionnaire 2

This is a questionnaire meant to serve part of my research on 'Lingua-pragmatic Politeness and Translation' in the field of English learning as a foreign language. Your cooperation in answering the questions below would be appreciated. Please interpret the questions as freely as you wish or ignore any question(s) you feel unable to answer. All information provided will remain confidential.

Question I

- a. Name: (Omit if you wish): -----
- b. Occupation: -----
- c. Sex: -----d. Age: -----
- e. Highest academic qualification attained: -----
- f. Have you ever been to an Arab country? -----
- g. Do you know Arabic at all? -----
If yes, roughly what level of ability? -----
- h. Are you familiar with the Arab culture? -----
To what extent? -----
- i. From what sources have you gained knowledge of the Arab culture:
Press? ----- Mass media? -----
History lessons? ----- Friends -----
Related to employment? ----- Tourism? -----
Other? Please specify: -----

Question II

The following are expressions semantically (i.e. literally) translated from Arabic. Please read them carefully first and then answer the questions below, but please do not discuss these expressions with any native speaker of Arabic. What is the communicative function of each; just insert the number representing one of these function against the relevant expression below:

- a) initiating talk? b) greeting? c) condoling? d) complimenting? e) saying 'good bye'! f) other? g) I don't know.
- 1. Yes, my brother, father of John: -----
- 2. Peace be upon you: -----
- 3. Peace be with you: -----
- 4. *May* God give you activity: -----
- 5. A happy opportunity: -----
- 6. Thank God for safety: -----
- 7. Out of your graciousness: -----
- 8. If you permitted: -----

- 9. If you want: -----
- 10. If God wanted: -----
- 11. Have the graciousness: -----
- 12. May God increase your graciousness: -----
- 13. We were honored: -----
- 14. We have won honor: -----
- 15. When did you honor us: -----
- 16. By God, we were honored yesterday: -----
- 17. A million hello's my eyes: -----
- 18. How are you, my soul: -----

A. How reasonable is the function suggested for each of the expressions above on a scale of five points to a native speaker of English, do you think:

- 1) 0%? 2) 10%? 3) 25%? 4) 50%? 5) 100%

Please add one percentage of reasonability against each expression above.

B. What would you suggest the English equivalent expression to be to each of the above in actual communication? Enter 'nil' if you can find no equivalent. Please use punctuation marks (e.g. comas) where you think this may make your expression more explicit or natural.

- 1. -----
- 2. -----
- 3. -----
- 4. -----
- 5. -----
- 6. -----
- 7. -----
- 8. -----
- 9. -----
- 10. -----
- 11. -----
- 12. -----
- 13. -----
- 14. -----
- 15. -----
- 16. -----
- 17. -----
- 18. -----

C. What clues, other than linguistic, have you depended on in interpreting and replacing the expressions above:

- 1. Previous knowledge? -----
- 2. Guessing? -----
- 3. Others? -----

D. How would you react if *you* were addressed by a foreigner with one or more of the expressions above in an actual situation:

- 1. Enquire about the intended meaning? -----
- 2. Ignore the utterance altogether? -----
- 3. Ignore the speaker? -----
- 4. Other response? Please specify:-----

Question III

Who are the addressees in these expressions? Relate each expression to a point on each of the two scales below by using the numbers, e.g. 1(i) and 2(iv):

Scale I: (i) a friend (ii) a colleague (iii) an acquaintance (iv) a stranger

Scale 2: (i) superior (ii) equal (iii) inferior (iv) not applicable

a. Good morning, sir! -----

b. You're welcome, Professor Adel! -----

c. Shall I come tomorrow, Chris? -----

d. This is Dr Ziad! -----

e. Professor Ahmad, may I borrow this book? -----

f. (On the telephone) This is Mr. Brown, Mary. -----

g. (On the telephone) This is George, Dr. Ziad. -----

h. Your Excellency may choose any book you like. -----

i. This is Brigadier Najm; this is Professor Adel. -----

NB: please feel free to add any comments that you deem appropriate and relevant in the space below.

Thank you very much for help & cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Bibliographical References

- Al-Shamma, G. (1986), "A Sociolinguistic Study of Some Basic Characteristics of Expression of the Syrian Arab Personality" in Anthropological Linguistics, Vol. 28, Part 1: 106 – 114.
- Ameika, F. (1992), "Interjections: the Universal Yet Neglected Part of Speech", in Pragmatics, Vol. 18: 101 – 118.
- Ameika, F. (1992), "The Meaning of Phatic and Conative Interjections" in Pragmatics, Vol. 18: 245 – 271.
- Austin, J. L. (1962), How to Do Things With Words, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Bargiela-Chiappini, F. (2003), "Face and Politeness: New (Insights) For Old (Concepts)", Journal of Pragmatics, Vol. 35 (2003): 1453 – 1467.
- Barkho, L. Y. (1990), "Implications of Weather-Related Language: Contrasts Between Arabic and English" in Pragmatics, Vol. 14: 471 – 476.
- Bazzanella, C. (1990), "Phatic Connectives As Interactional Cues in Contemporary Spoken Italian" in Pragmatics, Vol. 14: 629 – 647.
- Bharuthram, S. (2003), "Politeness Phenomena In The Hindu Sector Of South African Indian English Speaking Community", Journal of Pragmatics, Vol. 35 (2003): 1523 – 1544.
- Blakemore, D. (1992), Understanding Utterances, Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Brown, P. and S. Levinson (1987), Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cocchi, P. (1992), "Review of K. P. Schneider, Small Talk: Analysing Phatic Discourse" in Pragmatics, Vol. 18: 373 – 393.
- Davidson, D. (1984), Inquiries Into Truth and Interpretation, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Davidson, D. (1986), The Meeting of Minds: Linguistics and Philosophy of Language, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Farghal, M. (1992), "Colloquial Jordanian Arabic Tautologies" in Pragmatics, Vol. 17: 223 – 240.
- Ferguson, C. A. (1983), "God-Wishes in Syrian Arabic" in Mediterranean Language Review, Vol. 1: 65 – 83.
- Fraser, B. (1990), "Perspectives On Politeness" in Pragmatics, Vol. 14: 219 – 236.
- Goffman, E. (1981), Forms of Talk, Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Greasley, P. (1994), "An Investigation Into the Use of the Particle *well*: Commentaries on a Game of Snooker" in Pragmatics, Vol. 22: 477 – 494.
- Grice, H. P. (1975), "Logic and Conversation" in Cole and Morgan, op. cit.: 41– 58.
- Groefsema, M. (1992), "Can You Pass Me the Salt?": A Short-Circuited Implicature" in Lingua 87, 1992: 103 – 135.
- Gu, Y. (1990), "Politeness Phenomena in Modern Chinese" in Pragmatics, Vol. 14: 237– 257.
- Gumperz, J. J. , Aulakh, G. and K. Hannah (1982), "Thematic Structure and Progression in Discourse" in Gumperz, J. J. (ed.), Language and Social Identity; New York: Cambridge University Press: 1 – 21.
- Gutt, E. (1991), Translation and Relevance: Cognition and Context, Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

- Gutt, E. (1998), "Pragmatic Aspects of Translation: Some Relevance-Theory Observations" in Hickey, L. (ed.), The Pragmatics of Translation, London: Cromwell Press Ltd.: 41 – 53.
- Haddad, S. (2003), The Science of Translation: Toward A Theory of Translating Genre, Damascus: Damascus University Press.
- Hansell, M. and C. S. Ajitutu (1982), "Negotiating Interpretations in Interethnic Settings" in Gumperz, J. J. (ed.), Language and Social Identity, New York: Cambridge University Press: 85 – 94.
- Harasawa, I. (1994), "A Pragmatic View of the Japanese Complex *Forms V-te-i-ru* and *V-te-ar-u*" in Pragmatics, Vol. 22: 169 – 197.
- Hatim, B. and I. Mason (1990), Discourse and the Translator, New York: Longman.
- Havekate, H. (1992), "Deictic Categories in Mitigating Devices" in Pragmatics, Vol. 2: No. 4: 505 – 522.
- House, J. (1998), "Politeness in Translation" in Hickey, L. (ed.), The Pragmatics of Translation, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters: 54 – 71.
- Hymes, D. (1972), "Models of the Interaction of Language and Social Life" in Gumperz, J.J. and D. Hymes (eds.), Directions in Sociolinguistics: The Ethnography of Communication, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston: 35 – 71.
- Jary, M. (1998), "Relevance Theory and the Communication of Politeness" in ELSEVIER Journal of Pragmatics, Vol. 30: 1- 19.
- Laver, J. and S. Hutchesson (eds.) (1972), Communication in Face-to-Face Interaction, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Lee, B. P. H (2001), "Mutual Knowledge, Background Knowledge and Shared Beliefs: Their Role in Establishing Common Ground" in ELSEVIER Journal of Pragmatics, Vol. 33: 21 – 44.
- Leech, G. (1980), Explorations in Semantics and Pragmatics, Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Leech, G. (1983), Principles of Pragmatics, London: Longman.
- Levinson, S. C. (1983), Pragmatics, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Malinowski, B. (1930), "The Problem of Meaning in Primitive Languages" in C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richards (1923) The Meaning of Meaning, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul: 296 - 336.
- Mao, L. R. (1994), "Beyond Politeness Theory: 'Face' Revisited and Renewed" in Pragmatics, Vol. 21: 451 – 486.
- Mey, J. L. (1985), Whose Language? A Study in Linguistic Pragmatics, Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Morris, M. (1992), "What Problem? On Learning To Translate" in Wolf, G. (ed.), New Departures in Linguistics, New York: Garland: 199 – 211.
- Nwoye, O.G. (1992), "Linguistic Politeness and Socio-cultural Variations of the Notion of Face" in Pragmatics, Vol. 18: 309 – 328.
- Pizziconi, B. (2003), "Re-examining Politeness, Face and the Japanese Language", Journal of Pragmatics, Vol. 35: 1471 – 1506.
- Rifa'i, K. (forthcoming), Linguistic Politeness in Arabic and English, an MA Dissertation, Damascus University, Syria.

- Shammas, N.A. (1995), Pragmatic Failure: Misunderstanding in Verbal Communication Between Speakers of Arabic and English, Unpublished PhD Thesis, Loughborough University, England.
- Sperber, D. and D. Wilson (1986a), Relevance: Communication and Cognition, Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Sperber, D. and D. Wilson (1987), "Authors' Response: Presumptions of Relevance" in Behavioral and Brain Sciences, Vol. 10, Part 4: 736 – 751.
- Sperber, D. and D. Wilson (1987), "Precis of *Relevance: Communication and Cognition*" in Behavioral and Brain Sciences, Vol. 10, Part 4: 697 – 710.
- Sperber, D. and D. Wilson (1990), "Commentary on Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson (1987) *Precis of Relevance: Communication and Cognition*. BBS 10: 697 – 754" in Behavioral and Brain Sciences (1990) 13 (1): 177 – 184.
- Sperber, D. and D. Wilson (1995), Relevance: Communication and Cognition, 2nd edn., Oxford: Blackwell.
- Taguchi, N. (2002), "An Application of Relevance Theory to the Analysis of L2 Interpretation Processes: The Comprehension of Indirect Replies" in IRAL 40 (2000): 151 – 176.
- Thomas, J. (1983), "Cross-Cultural Pragmatic Failure" in Applied Linguistics, Vol. 4, No. 2: 91 – 112.
- Thomas, J. (1989), "Discourse Control in Confrontational Interaction" in Hickey, L. (ed.), the Pragmatic Style, London: Routledge: 133 – 156.
- Thomas, S. (1989), "Using Translation to Overcome Cross-Cultural Pragmatic Failure" in New Comparison, Vol. 8: 75 – 84.
- Upadhyay, S. R. (2003), "Nepali Requestive Acts: Linguistic Indirectness and Politeness Reconsidered, Journal of Pragmatics 35 (2003): 1651 – 1677.
- Widdowson, H. (1978), Teaching Language As Communication, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Wierzbicka, A. (1992), "The Semantics of Interjections" in Pragmatics, Vol. 18: 159 – 162.
- Wilkins, D. P. (1992), "Interjections As Deictics" in Pragmatics, Vol. 18: 119 – 158.
- Wilson, D. (1994), Taped Personal Communication with Wilson, Deirdre, University College London: 14 June 1994.
- Wilson, D. and D. Sperber (1990), "Linguistic Form and Relevance" University College London Working Papers in Linguistics, 2: 95 – 112.
- Wilson, D. and D. Sperber (1992), "On Verbal Irony" in Lingua 87, 1992: 53 – 76.
- Yu, M. (2003), "On The Universality Of Face: Evidence From Chinese compliment Response behavior", Journal of Pragmatics, Vol. 35: 1679 – 1710.

Received 26/4/2004