

# The Role of the Moroccan Culture in Shaping Politeness When Performing Face Threatening Acts among EFL Advanced Learners

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## ABSTRACT

Verbal politeness has been investigated many times in different cultures and languages. One of the great works in the history of politeness theory is the work of Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson (Politeness: Some universals in language usage. 1987). This magnificent research provides the world with a spectrum of politeness styles which are claimed to be applicable in all cultures and languages. It condemns the Arab world of being less polite than the west because of their kinship bonds. This ethnocentric judgment has been approved by other scholars who claimed to conduct deep research on Arabic societies, which proves them to be direct, i.e. rude, when performing face threatening acts. Therefore, this study tests these ethnocentric judgments on Moroccan adults and put the theory of 'positive and negative societies' of Brown and Levinson into question. Additionally, this research investigates whether the Moroccan culture impacts the choice of politeness strategies when performing face threatening acts in English language among EFL advanced learners through administering two questionnaires in Moroccan language and in English language among 175 participants. The results of this research threaten the truthfulness of the claim of Brown & Levinson about kinship societies. The young Moroccans who participated in this research tend to use "Negative politeness" in casual life situations unless when they address their parents or when they intend to persuade the addressee rather than to convince them. Results also show that young Moroccans who participated in this research are not rude and that they don't consider the "Off record" style as the highest in the degree of politeness. Likewise, it is found that there is an impact of the Moroccan culture on the choice of the strategy of politeness. These results contribute to the existing literature and question the soundness of the ethnocentric judgments.

**Keywords:** Meaning and Use, Moroccan culture, Face threatening acts, Politeness, EFL advanced learners

## INTRODUCTION

Human language is a distinctive tool that enables the symbolic representation, productive and creative expression, displacement in time and space, structured grammar, metalinguistic awareness, cultural transmission, and multimodal communication, setting it apart from other forms of animal communication. Put differently, language is the principal Human method to communicate, consisting of words used in a structured systematic way and conveyed in speech, writing or gesture. Putting language into use is what is called communication or verbal human interaction. It is quite complicated and not as easy as it is thought. Humans talk everyday with each other, but unfortunately sharing words does not make of the process an effective communication. One of the ingredients needed to establish an effective communication is verbal politeness.

Politeness is a culturally embedded notion. The extensive literature on the topic supports it well. To examine the actual manifestations of politeness in various languages and cultures is just to look at social behaviors of the speakers of those languages; what these speakers do when they try to convey a verbal message to another, and what their values are. Politeness is best expressed as the practical application of good manners or etiquette. It is a culturally-defined phenomenon, and, therefore, what is considered polite in one culture can sometimes be quite rude or simply eccentric in another cultural context. Languages have specific ways to show politeness such as deference, respect, or recognition of the social status of the speaker and the hearer. The main purpose of this study is to identify politeness strategies used by young Moroccans when performing speech acts in Moroccan Arabic and in English language, according to Brown & Levinson's model of politeness. Another goal of this research

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paper is to test the ethnocentric judgments among young Moroccan participants and to put the theory of 'positive and negative societies' into question. Additionally, to check whether the Moroccan culture impacts the choice of politeness strategies when performing face threatening acts in English among EFL advanced learners.

## 2. Brown and Levinson's Model of Politeness:

Brown and Levinson provide a more sophisticated theory of politeness; they say that politeness is basically represented by the social value or the self-image that one claims for themselves when communicating with others. They call this value or public self-image "face" which is divided into positive and negative face. By the positive face, they mean the interlocutor's desire to have an appreciated and approved self-image or personality whereas the term negative face is used to indicate one's desire to be free of any action or imposition and be away from any distraction or disturbance (Brown & Levinson 1987, p.61; Leech 2104, p. 24; and Spenser-Oatey and Žegarac. 2010, p.76). Brown and Levinson focus on the importance of politeness to redress the positive and negative face in any social interaction as they view most speech acts threatening to either the speaker's face or the addressee's face. The speaker is normally keen on assessing the loss of face in the interaction and according to which they choose the appropriate strategy whether to be bold and express the intended message directly, or to be polite and put it indirectly or mitigate it (Locher, 2012).

## 3. Face Threatening Acts (FTAs):

According to Brown and Levinson both speakers and hearers have face wants and that the various sorts of face are open to different threatening acts targeting the two parties (speakers and hearers). For instance, threatening the hearer's negative face by requests, commands, suggestions, or threats and what may threaten the hearer's positive face can be acts like offers and promises (Brown & Levinson, 1987.p. 65). Likewise, what threaten the speaker's negative face are acts like accepting offers or apologies, and expressing thanks or excuses. Acts like apologizing and confessing a responsibility are typical instances of the acts that threaten a speaker's positive face (Brown & Levinson 1987, pp. 65-67).

Brown and Levinson (1987) say that every face-threatening act (FTA) gets filled with socially oriented factors that are referred to as weight. To

measure the weight of a face threatening act, three social variables are considered: distance, power, and ranking of imposition (also called rank). The social distance (D) represents the type of relationship between the interaction participants, the power (P) or the position that each participant has in the society or the age of each, and the ranking (R) of the seriousness that the topic (or the speech act) imposes on the addressee. All these factors play an important role in determining the potential (FTA) and the weight of politeness needed in the context. Brown & Levinson (1987) present these variables in relation with the weight of politeness in the following formula:

$$W_x = D(S,H) + P(H,S) + R_x.$$

The last mentioned factors aren't the only ones that help determine the weight of politeness needed in the context, there could be also status, authority, occupation, ethnic identity, friendship, situational factors, etc. Consequently, politeness is linguistically realized through various strategies depending on the social environment in which the speech act is performed. That is to say that verbal politeness depends upon who is the addressee, the nature of the social relationship between the speaker and the hearer and the nature of the topic that is discussed. Succinctly, the strategy of politeness depends upon the three social variables mentioned above (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

## 4. Politeness Strategies for Face Threatening Acts (FTA):

Brown and Levinson (1987) present a set of strategies which conversational partners may go back to when performing a speech act. The speaker's choice of a strategy is pragmatically-oriented, mostly to mitigate the threat that the act can cause to the addressee's face. Being complicated, the strategies require rationality to be practiced as the two theorists assume. The politeness strategies when doing FTA are mainly divided in two parts: on record and off record. The on record category is divided into doing the action baldly or doing it with redressive action, which in its turn is of two types: positive politeness and negative politeness. As for the second category is of no specific form due to the obfuscatory or confusion of the speech act as the utterance carries more than one interpretation to the addressee; thus, vague illocutionary force. The off record strategies involve indirectness in the utterance used to convey the message by the speaker. It can be a metaphor, and

irony, a hint-giving, and exaggeration, a euphemism (using words or phrases that are considered less offensive to replace another that is considered more offensive), contradiction or others (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

Brown and Levinson claim a certain ranking of politeness strategies. They believe that positive politeness is less face redressive than negative politeness which is, in turn, less face redressive than off record because of an assessment of the risks involved in choosing each of these super-strategies (Brown & Levinson, 1987. 17).

#### **A. Bald On-Record Strategies:**

When the speaker performs the speech act straight to the point, clearly, and without uttering anything that may redress the threat of the act or save the addressee's face, then they are said to enact bald on act strategy (Brown & Levinson, 1987.p.69). For example: listen to me! You can't speak loudly here. Using this strategy is common when the speaker fears no counterattack or retribution from the addressee in situations like urgency, danger, and vast superiority of the speaker over the addressee as the examples above suggest respectively (Brown & Levinson, 1987). According to Brown and Levinson (1987), On-record payoffs are as follows: clarity, perspicuousness, demonstrable and non-manipulativeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

#### **B. On-Record with Redressive Action:**

This strategy also involves direct and clear formation of the speech act, but characterized with what softens the threat of the act on the addressee's face or as Brown & Levinson put it "gives face" to the addressee, i.e. to avoid the damage that FTA may cause. This is realized by choosing one of these two forms: positive politeness and negative politeness.

As far as positive politeness is concerned, it is adopted by a speaker who intends to attend the positive face of the hearer by expressing intimacies, support or any action that would help make the addressee feel respected and liked. In other words, the speaker appears to be friendly and helpful. Brown & Levinson (1987, p.72) define positive politeness as "to satisfy the hearer's positive face" and the speaker attempts to make their desires similar to the addressee's "i.e. approach based" (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), some of the structures to use in positive politeness are as follows:

- Optimism: to assume that the addressee wants what the speaker wants. For example: you will lend me your car for the weekend, I hope/won't you.
- Assert speaker's knowledge of and concern of hearer's wants. For example: I know you want me to bring your car back at seven o'clock, but there was traffic.
- Include both speaker and hearer in the activity. For example: let's ..., using "we" or "us" instead of "I" or "me".
- Give or ask for reasons. For example: why not...?
- Using the expression (you know) and using in-group identity markers such as brother, my friend, etc.
- Offer and promise. For example: I will drop by sometime next week.
- Using jokes (e.g., Ok if I tackle those cookies now?).
- Presuppose hearer's knowledge, (e.g., Harry took me to the movies the other day/ the hearer doesn't really know who this Harry is).
- Presuppose hearer's wants and attitudes (e.g., negative questions which presume -yes- as an answer: Wouldn't you like a drink?).
- Presuppose familiarity (e.g., mate, buddy, sister...).
- Stressing common ground like using proximal rather than distal demonstratives such as this, rather than there, that (e.g., this was a lovely party/ The speaker wants to leave).
- Personal-center switch (e.g., all my money is gone, hasn't it/ speaker is talking as if they are the hearer).
- Hedging opinions: speaker may choose to be vague about his own opinions, so as not to be seen to disagree, which leads to exaggerating using modifiers like completely, absolutely, fantastic, etc.
- White lies (e.g., Yes, I do like your new hat/ Speaker means the opposite).
- Pseudo-agreement by using (then) and (so) (e.g., so when are you coming to see us/ Speaker wants the hearer to visit them).
- Token agreement: the desire to agree or appear to agree (e.g., can you hear me? Barely).

- Use of in-group language or dialect. For example, using jargon or cursing among close friends (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

As far as negative politeness strategies are concerned, they are oriented towards the hearer's negative face and emphasize avoidance of imposition on the hearer. By attempting to avoid imposition from the speaker, the risk of face-threat to the hearer is reduced. These strategies presume that the speaker will be imposing on the listener and there is a higher potential for awkwardness or embarrassment than in bald on record strategies and positive politeness strategies (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), some of the structures to use in negative politeness are as follows:

- Pessimism (e.g., you couldn't possibly...).
- Apologizing, using expressions like perhaps, please, I wonder if..., if you allow me...; I am afraid..., etc.
- Give overwhelming reasons.
- Admit the impingement (e.g., I am terribly embarrassed to ...; I am sorry to have to say this, but...).
- Go on record as incurring a debt (e.g., I would be eternally grateful if you would...).
- Using honorifics to give difference usually when the hearer is of higher social status than the speaker.
- Using euphemism mainly to avoid rejection.
- Using passive and impersonal verbs to avoid agency (e.g., If it is possible instead of if you can; is it necessary that...?).
- Beg forgiveness (e.g., please forgive me if...).
- Minimize the imposition "R" through using expressions like (just).
- Be conventionally indirect along with reducing imposition (equal to some strategies of off record).
- Be direct but no coercing the addressee.
- Make minimal assumptions about the addressee's wants, which means assuming rather than presuming (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

They also claim that positive and negative politeness strategies payoffs are as follows:

- ❖ Speaker has the opportunity to give face in both strategies.
- ❖ To satisfy H's positive face, in some respect in the case of positive politeness.

- ❖ To satisfy H's negative face, to some degree in the case of negative politeness.

### C. Off Record

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), off-record utterances are essentially indirect uses of language. To construct an off-record utterance, one says something that is either more general. In others words, utterances which contain less information in the sense that it rules out fewer possible states of affairs or actually different from what one means and intends to be understood. In either case, the addressee must make some inference to recover what was in fact intended. Some of the strategies to be used to be off record according to Brown & Levinson (1987):

- Giving hints, giving association clues (e.g., I have a headache/ i.e. to ask for medicament).
- Presupposition, understate and overstate by violating quantity maxim (e.g., it's fine/i.e. I don't particularly like it. I have thousands of problems/i.e. stop complaining to me or I am busy).
- Using tautologies (e.g., war is war).
- Using contradictions (e.g., yes and no).
- Be ironic.
- Using metaphors.
- Using rhetorical questions.
- Be ambiguous and vague.
- Over-generalize (e.g. use of idioms).
- Be incomplete. (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

### 5. The Notion of 'Face' in Moroccan Culture

Arabic is a language in which the term face is frequently used when matters of politeness are concerned (Shammas, 2005). Rizk (1997) analyzed the apology strategies used by Moroccan, Egyptians, Saudi, Jordanian, Palestinian, Lebanese, Syrian, Tunisian, Yemeni and Libyan learners of English. His results show similarities between the apology strategies used by native and non-native speakers of English in all situations but one. Unlike native speakers of English, Arabs do not apologize to children through sentences; instead, they chose to offer food. This practice, which may seem rude to native speakers of English, is culturally correct since food in some cultures is an acceptable offer in that has the power to wipe off a lot of hurt (Cited in Boubendir, 2012.p.82).

According to Farhat (2009) in the Arab culture, (/lwæʒeh/ meaning -face-), is used to describe the front part of the head from the forehead to the lower

jaw. However, it is also used metaphorically to stand for expressions such as 'respect', 'shame', 'honor' and 'dignity'. Face in the Arab culture functions as a deterrent, making people abide by the institutionalized and sanctioned code of politeness. At the same time, the significance of face in Arab societies, such as the Moroccan society, prevents people from violating social rules and engaging in actions that might be considered as antithetical to the interests of the group (Cited in Boubendir, 2012).

Expressions denoting face translated semantically from Arabic are very common and mostly used by parents and elderly people such as " /hifz ma? al-wa3h/ which means (preserving the water of face) and it indicates face-saving (Meyer, 2002). This is common in Moroccan society as well; for instance, using the expression /hemer li:na l-w3ah / which means (he made us proud) or " /mærməd lina l-w3ah f-trab/ " which means (he humiliated us) or the expression " /maʕənduf l-w3ah ʕlaf yħjəm/ " to refer to impolite people. Likewise, Moroccans use expressions like " /wə3hək qa:səħ/ " to describe someone as rude or even too direct when doing FTA. Thus, the concept of 'face' exists in the Moroccan culture and it is very important to save.

According to Boubendir (2012), offering is one of the famous concepts in the Moroccan etiquette. When accepting a compliment, English speakers tend to use the token 'thank you' to respond to any compliment, as if they were acknowledging a friendly gift, while Arabs tend to return the compliment. The concept of offering holds significant importance, representing a deeply rooted tradition and a fundamental aspect of social interaction. The act of offering, whether it is a gift, hospitality, or a gesture of kindness, plays a crucial role in fostering and maintaining relationships within Arabic societies. Offering reflects the values of generosity, reciprocity, and respect for others, and it serves as a means of expressing appreciation, goodwill, and solidarity. Moroccan hospitality, for instance, is often shown through the offering of traditional mint tea and pastries to guests, symbolizing warmth, welcome, and a desire to create a hospitable environment. Moreover, the Islamic values of charity and benevolence further underscore the importance of offering in Moroccan culture.

## 6. Methods & Instruments

Concerning the study in hand, it follows a descriptive quantitative approach in order to gather numerical

data which are needed to answer the research questions. More specifically, this paper aims at highlighting politeness strategies which are mostly used among young Moroccan participants, depending on the frequency of use of each politeness style of Brown & Levinson's model. This makes of the current study quantitative in nature.

The main instrument used to collect data is 'discourse completion tasks, i.e. DCTs. They are used in linguistics and social sciences to elicit language data from participants. DCTs typically involve providing participants with a written or spoken prompt, such as a question or statement, and asking them to complete the dialogue by providing an appropriate response. The responses can then be analyzed to gain insights into how people use language in different social situations. DCTs are often used in cross-cultural and interlanguage studies to examine differences in language use and communication styles across cultures or languages.

The questionnaire consists of two major sections. The first is to collect demographic data (gender, age, origin, level of education, specialty, university from which they graduated) and the second section contains several suggested situations from real life to which four answers are assigned and respondents have to choose only one and provide a brief justification for their choice. The four answers are proposed by the researcher who followed Brown & Levinson's model of politeness to construct them. One politeness strategy is used in each answer; thus, participants are in front of four possible ways to express FTA (on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, off record) and they have to pick only one which represents their cultural background as well as their personality. The researcher relied on the several examples of these politeness strategies provided by Brown & Levinson (1987), which they claim to be universal, to construct answers to the problematic situations presented in the questionnaire.

It is crucial to mention that cultural specificities are taken into consideration when generating the utterances of the four politeness styles in the questionnaire. This procedure allowed the researcher to collect accurate data about the type of politeness strategies used by young Moroccans when performing FTA in Moroccan language and in English as a foreign language. The responses selected by participants can be analyzed quantitatively to

determine the frequency of politeness styles used in all situations and the justifications contribute to the interpretation and understanding of the quantitative findings. Additionally, the data can be used to compare the responses of the two sample categories based on the frequency of use of the politeness styles to shed light on the role of the Moroccan culture in shaping politeness when performing FTAs in English as a foreign language. Quantitative descriptive research aims to describe and document a phenomenon or behavior in a systematic and objective manner through the collection and analysis of numerical data. In a descriptive design, justifications in a close-ended discourse completion task serve to provide additional information and context for the responses obtained. A justification section is added

underneath each situation for participants to provide a reason for their choice of the strategy. This research paper used ‘Google Forms’ to create online questionnaires and to analyze the collected data; as for the justifications of the participants, they are analyzed thematically.

**7. Example of the scenarios used to collect data:**

In English: You are a senior in your MA program and you have noticed some inappropriate behavior of a freshman that would negatively affect their learning process. What would you tell the freshman?

In Moroccan Arabic: /Nta ta:lib sana tanija master w laħdṭi ħi taṣarufat maħi ħija hadik mən waħd ta:lib sana ʔula f nafs l-master dijalk li yaḍi tʔaṭer ʕlih b-ʕkəl ʔayəb f qrajtu. ʔafnu ʔatqul l-had ta:lib ʔədid/?

**Table1. The strategies used in the previous situation**

Strategy used in each choice Politeness Style	English DCT	Moroccan Arabic “i.e. Darija” DCT
<b>OR (1<sup>st</sup> choice)</b>	Direct criticism	Direct criticism
<b>+P (2<sup>nd</sup> choice)</b>	Include both speaker and hearer “our image” and the use of in group identity markers “brother/sister”	Include both speaker and hearer /dijalna/ and the use of in group identity markers / ʔaxuya / ʔaxti /
<b>-P (3<sup>rd</sup> choice)</b>	Use of “I’m sorry to say this” and indefinite “a master student”	Use of /smahlija/ and indefinite / waħd ta:lib f l-master /”
<b>OFR (4<sup>th</sup> choice)</b>	Indirect criticism “warning”	Indirect criticism “warning”

This research paper used ‘Google Forms’ to create online questionnaires and to analyze the collected data; as for the justifications of the participants, they are analyzed thematically.

The English DCT was answered by 93 advanced EFL learners, primarily females (58%) and males (42%), who hold Bachelor's degrees in English studies from various universities in Morocco. Nearly half of them have Master's degrees in programs such as Language, Communication and Society, Applied Linguistics, Translation, Cultural Studies, Gender Studies, Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Media Studies and Education, and Literary Studies. Also, some participants are pursuing PHD degrees, and most of the participants are English language teacher trainees. Few participants are already high school English teachers, either with Bachelor's or Master's degree. The majority of the participants are aged between twenty and twenty-five (72%), while the remaining few are aged between twenty-five and

thirty-six (28%). They come from various regions in Morocco, including the north (such as Tetouan), south (such as Souss and Arfoud), middle (such as Meknes and Fes), east (such as Oujda), and west (such as Kenitra). Furthermore, The Moroccan Arabic DCT was answered by 82 young Moroccans, also comprising females (58%) and males (42%), who are majoring in different fields, excluding English studies (e.g., Mathematics, Geography, Sociology, Arabic Language, French Language, Islamic Studies, Journalism, Philosophy, Chemistry, Psychology, Biology, Economy and Management, Civil Engineering, Electricity, Vehicles, Computer Science, etc.). They are from various universities and origins. Similar to the first sample, they fall within the age range of 20 to 36, with 70% aged between 20 and 25, and 30% aged between 25 and 36. They share the same cultural and intellectual background; they are born and raised in Morocco and either currently enrolled as university students or graduates.

- **Findings and discussion of the previous situation:**

Abbreviations: Number of participants “N° of Ps”; on record “OR”; positive politeness “+P”; negative

politeness “-P”; off record “OFR”; most used strategy “MUS”; less used strategy “LUS”

**Table 2. Quantitative results of the previous situation**

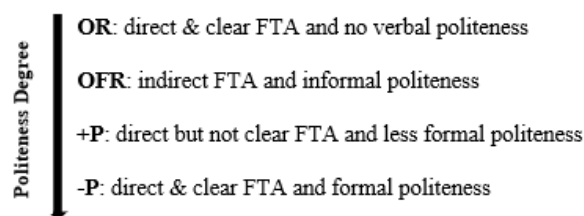
Politeness Strategies	N° of Ps	OR	+P	-P	OFR	MUS	LUS
Darija (Moroccan Arabic, i.e. MA)	82	14.6%	4.9%	42.7%	37.8%	-P	+P
English	93	8.6%	10.8%	48.4%	32.3%	-P	OR

The current situation provides a setting between peers, in which the S has to criticize an inappropriate behavior of the H. The most used strategy in both MA and English is -P (42.7%: 48.4%). The less used strategy in MA is +P (4.9%) and the less used strategy in English is OR (8.6%).

These results show that the Moroccan participants care about the negative face of the H even if they have equal power relation. Participants who picked -P strategies said that they want to be assertive and respectful. They said that they picked the third choice (i.e. -P) because they don't want to threaten the H's face or sound aggressive. They also believe that doing the FTA using the third option maximizes the chance of being listened to by the H. In both languages, OFR comes the second in percentage after -P. Those who picked this choice said that they don't want to seem like they are criticizing the H (i.e. they don't want to be direct). They opted for the OFR in this case because the utterance doesn't declare clearly that the H did inappropriate behavior; instead, it sounds like an advice to keep them away from trouble.

However, in MA, the OR ranks the third but with low percentage (14.6%). Some of those who picked it said that they don't care about the S, while the rest of them said that the H deserves to hear a direct criticism because it is not acceptable that a master student behave inappropriately in any way. The OR strategy has the lowest use percentage in English (8.6%). Similarly to DDCT results, this category of participants doesn't care about the H' feelings and they think that direct criticism is deserved in this case. The last strategy in rate in MA is +P (4.9%). The four participants who picked it believed that using “our/brother/sister” (i.e. in group identity markers) is good in this case to show some sense of belongingness and that they are doing the FTA because they care about the H. The +P strategy ranks the third among

EFL advanced learners (10.8%). This category of participants provided the same justification of the four participants who picked +P in MA, and that is to make the H feels cared for and not criticized. The current results and the previous ones show that the spectrum of politeness shaped by the Moroccan participants is as follows:



## 8. Summary of the findings of the 11 situations:

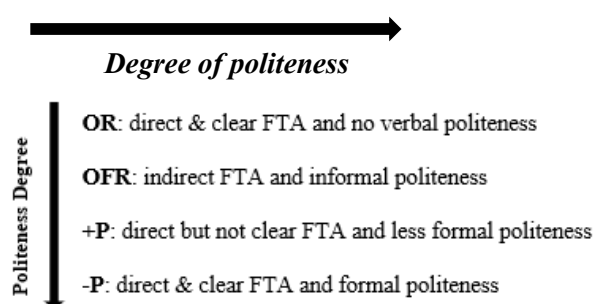
The study results reveal that the ethnocentric judgments which are said about kinship societies generally and Morocco specifically do not apply to this research participants. Young Moroccans who participated in the study in hand do not excessively use positive politeness nor do they frequently use the on record style. In this study, the negative politeness ranked as the most used strategy among young Moroccan participants in six situations out of eleven, and the positive politeness ranked as the most used strategy in five situations out of eleven. Therefore, it is illogical to overgeneralize and say that Morocco is completely a positive or a negative society. This study participants use the four politeness styles of Brown & Levinson based on some specific features. Likewise, it is proven that the face saving goal behind the verbal politeness styles is agreed upon by the Moroccan participants. However, they provide more reasons behind the choice of a politeness strategy rather than the face saving, such as using the +P style when the intention is to appeal for emotions or using the -P style when the intention is to be reasonable.

Moreover, it is found that the Moroccan participants do not agree upon the order of the spectrum of

politeness provided by Brown & Levinson. They actually perceive the off record style as one of the least in the weight of politeness, unlike the model founders who believe it to be the most polite. Furthermore, the impact of the cultural background of participants on their choice of the strategies in English is highlighted when the same strategies ranked as MUS or LUS in English and in Moroccan Arabic at the same time. Also the huge resemblance between participants' justifications for the choice of the same strategy in both languages is an explicit proof for the impact of the Moroccan culture on the choice of a politeness strategy. Put differently, if a certain strategy ranks as the most used or less used strategy in English and in MA simultaneously and with the same justification, this means that the common cultural background of participants has an impact on their choice. Yet, unfortunately, the extent of this impact couldn't be determined by this research.

- ✓ The order of the spectrum of politeness according to the Moroccan participants from the less polite to the most polite and their induced features are as follows:

$$\text{OR} \leq \text{OFR} \leq +\text{P} \leq -\text{P}$$



Intention behind the use of positive and negative politeness:

- If the S wants to resort to affective reasons for doing the FTA (i.e. Pathos), they use +P.
- If the S wants to resort to logical reasons for doing the FTA (i.e. Logos), they use -P.

## CONCLUSION

The paper in hand aims at putting the ethnocentric judgments concerning politeness in kinship societies such as Morocco into question, using Brown & Levinson's model of politeness, and to check the impact of the Moroccan culture on the choice of the verbal politeness when performing face threatening acts in English language among young Moroccan participants. To achieve the aforementioned purpose,

the study is conducted on 175 young Moroccans (93 participants are EFL advanced learners and 82 participants are majoring in other fields, and all participants age between 20 and 36). The first category received a DCT in English language and the second category received a translated version in Moroccan Arabic. Results revealed that young Moroccan participants tend to use negative politeness more than the rest of the strategies. Thus, it is completely absurd to overgeneralize and say that Morocco is considered a positive society. It is proven also that Moroccan participants rarely use the direct style when performing FTAs, which again threatens the sanity of the fact that Moroccans, as part of the eastern world, are being direct or rude when performing FTAs. Additionally, this study reveals that the cultural background of participants has an impact on their choice of the politeness strategy. Moreover, this research shed light on the dysfunctionality of some politeness styles concerning their order and weight of politeness in the cultural background of the participants. It is found that all Moroccan participants don't agree upon the placement of the OFR style in the order of politeness nor do they agree with Brown & Levinson about its weight of politeness.

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