

**A Discursive Approach to Politeness: Negotiating Offers in  
Women's Talk by Saudi Arabic and British English Speakers**

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Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Leeds  
School of Languages, Cultures, and Societies  
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December 2018

The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his/her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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## Acknowledgements

This PhD research could not have been completed without the support of a number of people, to whom I am deeply grateful. I wish to acknowledge my debt to the External Joint Supervision Program (EJSP) at King Saud University (KSU) for granting me the opportunity to pursue my study at the University of Leeds (UoL) as a split-site student between Leeds and KSU.

My sincere gratitude goes to my supervisors Dr. Bethan Davies, from UoL, and Dr. Manal Ismail, from KSU, for their continuing guidance, assistance, encouragement, and valuable advice; without which this work would never have come to completion. Their detailed, thorough comments, suggestions, and revisions made this study more valuable. Words cannot describe the kind of guidance and support I received from them throughout the five years as a split-site student between Leeds and KSU. I could not have imagined having better supervisors for my PhD study.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to all those who have participated in providing me with invaluable data for my study. My thanks go to all my participants who gave up their time to take part in this project and agreed to be audio-recorded. Without their kind help this study would not have been possible.

I would like to admit my indebtedness to my family for their infinite prayers, kindness, and encouragement throughout my study. My most sincere gratitude goes to my parents who have been a constant source of love, support, and encouragement. Words cannot express my gratitude to my beloved children who were very young yet helped me by being patient and enduring much pressure as we travelled between Leeds and Riyadh. I definitely owe them my accomplishments. I would like to extend my profound gratitude to my brothers and sisters for believing in me. They never ceased to offer me all the support I needed. I am also grateful for the continuous support of my husband throughout the years of study and travel.

I am also deeply appreciative of the support my friends in the '*Be Optimistic to be Happy*' group who went beyond the call of duty whenever I needed them. Special thanks go to my friend Mashaal Al-Adel for her emotional and spiritual support; her words have been my stress reliever throughout my PhD journey.

## Abstract

This study explores naturally occurring offers in Saudi and British female friendship groups by drawing on discursive approaches to politeness, particularly relational work (Locher & Watts, 2005). The study differs from previous politeness research in arguing that discursive politeness investigation should not be limited to verbal communication and qualitative analysis. It explores how non-verbal politeness, a neglected area in the field, is manifested in offer negotiations and employs quantitative analysis of some concepts of discourse analysis to identify politic patterns in offer exchanges.

The data were mainly collected through recordings of natural talk among female friends in a dinner setting. Through in-depth examination of the recorded data, 143 offer exchanges were found in the SA corpus and 104 in the BE data. Follow-up interviews and scaled-response questionnaires were employed to obtain a clearer picture of individuals' perceptions of the offers.

The main results showed that the SA and BE friendship groups shared more similarities than differences in their offers. Participants did not invest much discursive work in offering, especially hospitable offers. Reoffering did not constitute a significant part in the friends' interactions. Non-verbal offers were an essential part of managing relational work. The participants viewed politeness norms as dynamic and situated. Moreover, variability in evaluations was common. Inconsistency between participants' actual reactions during the talk and evaluations during the interviews were also observed.

Finally, this study argues that although relational work can successfully tackle the participants' perceptions of politeness, it fails to provide a full picture of the discursive struggle over politeness as well as analytic tools to identify politic behaviour in the corpus. It is argued that Spencer-Oatey's (2000, 2002, 2005a) rapport management framework provides some concepts that help interpret what sort of rights affect the participants' evaluations and that descriptive quantitative analysis can help in the identification of politic patterns in offers. The study succeeded in developing a more in-depth approach to the analysis of politeness.

## Phonetic Symbols for Transliteration of Arabic Sounds

The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbols are used in this thesis for the transcription of Arabic. Below is the list of consonant symbols used including Arabic letters, IPA symbols, sound descriptions and approximate English equivalents of Arabic to aid readers' comprehension.

### Consonants

Arabic Letter	IPA Symbol	Sound Description	English Approximation
أ	ʔ	Voiceless glottal plosive	Uh-/ʔ/oh
ب	b	Voiced bilabial plosive	<b>B</b> ike
ت	t	Voiceless dental-alveolar plosive	<b>T</b> all
ث	θ	Voiceless dental fricative	<b>Th</b> in
ج	dʒ	Voiced post-alveolar affricate	<b>J</b> oy
	ʒ	Voiced post-alveolar fricative	<b>G</b> enre
ح	ħ	Voiceless pharyngeal fricative	No equivalent
خ	x	Voiceless uvular fricative	<b>Loch</b> (Scottish English)
د	d	Voiced dental-alveolar plosive	<b>D</b> og
ذ	ð	Voiced dental fricative	<b>This</b>
ر	r	Voiced alveolar trill	<b>R</b> un
ز	z	Voiced alveolar fricative	<b>Z</b> ero
س	s	Voiceless alveolar fricative	<b>S</b> un
ش	ʃ	Voiceless post-alveolar fricative	<b>Sh</b> ip
ص	sˤ	Voiceless emphatic alveolar fricative	No equivalent
ض	dˤ	Voiced emphatic dental-alveolar plosive	No equivalent
ط	tˤ	Voiceless dental-alveolar plosive	No equivalent
ظ	ðˤ	Voiced emphatic dental fricative	No equivalent
ع	ʕ	Voiced pharyngeal fricative	No equivalent
غ	ɣ	Voiced uvular fricative	French 'r' e.g. <i>rue</i>

Arabic Letter	IPA Symbol	Sound Description	English Approximation
ف	f	Voiceless labiodental fricative	Fan
ق	g	Voiced velar plosive	Gas
	q	Voiceless uvular plosive	No equivalent
ك	k	Voiceless velar plosive	Car
ل	l	Voiced alveolar lateral	Lamp
م	m	Voiced bilabial nasal	Man
ن	n	Voiced alveolar nasal	Net
هـ	h	Voiceless glottal fricative	Hat
و	w	Voiced labial-velar approximant	Water
ي	j	Voiced palatal approximant	Yes

### Vowels

The table below includes vowel symbols used in this thesis with sound description and approximate English equivalents to aid readers' understanding.

Vowel	Sound Description	English Example
i	Short close front unrounded	happy
i:	Long close front unrounded	Need
a	Short open front unrounded	Fat (but shorter)
a:	Long open front unrounded	Father
u	Short close back rounded	To
u:	Long close back rounded	Food
e:	Long mid front unrounded	play
ə	Mid-central "schwa"	About
eɪ	Diphthong	Face
au	Diphthong	Mouth
əu	Diphthong	Goat

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**List of Abbreviations**

<b>SA</b>	Saudi Arabic
<b>BE</b>	British English
<b>CCSARP</b>	Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project
<b>DA</b>	Discourse Analysis
<b>CA</b>	Conversation Analysis
<b>DCT</b>	Discourse Completion Tasks
<b>SRQ</b>	Scaled-response Questionnaire
<b>CP</b>	Cooperative Principle
<b>PP</b>	Politeness Principle
<b>FTA</b>	Face Threatening Acts
<b>COP</b>	Community of Practice

## **Chapter 1 Introduction**

The present study investigates how female friendship groups in two communities, respectively residing in Britain and Saudi Arabia, manage relational work in their offering behaviours. To highlight the significance of the study, Section 1.1 explains the theoretical, empirical and practical motivations behind the conduct of the current study. A brief background to Saudi culture is presented in Section 1.2. The research objectives, followed by the research questions, are presented in Section 1.3. Finally, an overview of the thesis organization is presented in Section 1.4.

### **1.1 Background and rationale**

The rationale behind the current study is driven by new trends in cross-cultural pragmatics, from both theoretical and empirical perspectives. In terms of theory, more evidence is required to examine the current discursive politeness models in an attempt to develop a more thorough approach to politeness. Empirically, offering as a social activity is underexplored in cross-cultural pragmatics. To offer a comprehensive picture, the two rationales for the study are described below.

#### **1.1.1 Theoretical rationale**

Politeness is an integral part of pragmatics that has received much scholarly attention. This could be because politeness behaviours have both social and cultural implications. Eelen (2001) argues that the distinction between polite and impolite is not universal but based on dominant social norms. People follow certain norms, which are mostly culture-specific, when they communicate. These norms contribute to shaping our communicative behaviour and our perceptions of behaviours in any context. Shared norms facilitate communication, and a lack of shared norms may result in communication difficulties. As such, it has been argued that people who live in different cultures may differ in their perceptions about how language should be used as a result of differences between their culture-specific norms. Differences in perceptions of politeness among various cultures may lead speakers to choose expressions according to their cultural value, which may cause misunderstanding in cross-cultural communication (Culpeper, 2008: 30). Our culturally-inflected choices may not align with the expectations within another cultural context. Arabic speakers of English, for example, may sound imposing when they make an offer to a native speaker because they insist and repeat the offer several times (Alaoui, 2011: 8; Bouchara, 2015: 73). This may be due to offering conventions in the Arab world, which are

as follows: the one who offers should insist on offering and the one who is being offered should initially self-effacingly reject the offer, but in reality fully intends to accept it when repeated (Al-Khatib, 2006: 274). This pattern of offering and refusing can be considered as a face enhancing act in Arabic cultures. It enhances the face of the offerer since it gives him/her the opportunity to show his/her sincerity and generosity by insisting, which is valued among Arabs; and it enhances the face of the offeree as it shows that s/he is not greedy by not accepting the offer immediately.<sup>1</sup> In this respect, politeness can be said to be influenced by cultural factors and social norms.

Considering that there are likely to be cultural differences in expressing politeness, it is useful to study how differences and similarities appear in the expression of politeness in the contexts of cross-cultural pragmatics. Extensive research on cross-cultural pragmatics has mainly focused on exploring the similarities and differences in the pragmatic strategies employed in different languages and cultures and the extent to which the socio-cultural norms of particular populations influence language use and perception (e.g. Al-Adaileh, 2007; Al-Kahtani, 2005; Bataineh, 2004; Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989; House, 2012; Margutti, Tainio, Drew, & Traverso, 2018; Ogiermann, 2009a; Sifianou, 1992; Tawalbeh & Al-Oqaily, 2012). These studies have reported differences in the realization of the investigated speech act cross-culturally as well as inter-culturally. This has inspired me to follow a cross-cultural approach in the present study to shed light on the similarities and differences in the negotiations and metalinguistic judgments relating to the communication of offers in female friendship contexts in both Saudi Arabic and British English. Although the present study is cross-cultural in nature, it differs significantly from previous cross-cultural research in several perspectives.

The current study is inspired by the most recent research trend in pragmatics, which focuses on the discursive construction of politeness. Most existing cross-cultural pragmatics research has built upon speech act theory or traditional politeness theories, particularly Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) politeness model and the well-known Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) framework (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). These frameworks focus on strategies at the utterance level; they ignore the role of the full discursive context in determining interaction. It can be claimed that although previous cross-cultural studies have significantly enriched our knowledge of language use in different cultures, they solely focus on the production of the speech acts – namely the selection of speech act strategies, the degree of linguistic directness, and the type and amount of upgraders/downgraders. Very few studies have considered

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<sup>1</sup> See Section 3.2.2.3 for more details.

the interplay within the complete discourse in the realization of the speech act, and most of them have focused on one language, e.g. hedging in Japanese (Nittono, 2003), apologies in Korean (Hahn, 2006), and refusals in Uruguayan Spanish (Kaiser, 2014). It is suggested that cross-cultural research needs to investigate speech acts in its entire situated context rather than through decontextualized utterances. As a result, more studies in the cross-cultural pragmatics field should explore postmodern approaches to politeness, which engage with joint construction of politeness across multiple turns and take account of a wider range of contextual aspects than more traditional models (e.g. Arundale, 1999, 2006, 2010; Haugh, 2007a, 2007b; Locher, 2004; Locher & Watts, 2005, 2008; Mills, 2003; Spencer-Oatey, 2002, 2005a, 2000; Watts, 2003).

Moreover, most cross-cultural studies have attempted to make generalizations about the cultures under investigation. Even though no one can deny the existence of cultural differences, there is a danger of oversimplifying these complex patterns for the sake of creating monolithic notions such as British culture, Saudi culture, or Japanese culture (Mills & Kádár, 2011: 42). It is incorrect to equate nations with cultures. Many researchers have argued that within each nation we have different distinct smaller communities that establish their own appropriate norms of behaviour (Baran, 2014: 40; Culpeper, 2008: 30; Dorian, 1994: 688; Kádár & Bax, 2013: 73; Kádár & Haugh, 2013: 95; Watts, 2003: 78; 2005: xxv). Therefore, recent approaches take a more dynamic view of culture instead of dealing with it as a static construct. For example, discursive approaches are concerned with how cultural norms and expectations may be oriented to, reinforced, or challenged by participants throughout an interaction (e.g. Locher & Watts, 2005: 11; Mills, 2009: 1053; Zayts & Schnurr, 2013: 198). They move away from making generalizations about cultures to analyse how interactants “negotiate and modify the values, beliefs, norms, attributes and language that they bring along into the conversation” (Cheng, 2003: 10). The discursive approach provides a useful framework for such a view as it views both politeness and culture as discursive constructs (Zayts & Schnurr, 2013: 190). Following this approach, the current study adopts the theory of relational work by Locher and Watts (2005) for its theoretical and analytical framework. Consequently, this study focuses on language within a particular micro-context and works with more naturally occurring data. It explores offers in natural women’s talk in adult friendship groups.<sup>2</sup> This is expected to go beyond the generalization view of cultures and speech acts focus in most cross-cultural research.

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<sup>2</sup> The rationale for choosing this context is explained in detail in Section 1.1.2.

Relational work is broader than the other traditional models of politeness as it fully considers interpersonal dimensions of human interaction (Locher & Langlotz, 2008: 165). "Relational work refers to all aspects of the work invested by individuals in the construction, maintenance, reproduction and transformation of interpersonal relationships among those engaged in social practice" (Locher & Watts, 2008: 96). It covers impolite, non-polite, polite and over-polite behaviours.

Simultaneously, this study adopts the rapport management framework (Spencer-Oatey, 2000, 2005a, 2008). It is worth highlighting at this point that the decision to adopt rapport management was taken during the analysis as I found that there were some aspects of the interaction that the relational work model could not account for. Locher (2008: 528) herself suggests that the framework of rapport management shows some important overlap with the discursive approach because both stress the importance of participants' evaluation. Spencer-Oatey is concerned with interactants' judgements of rapport management. Spencer-Oatey (2000) proposes the framework of rapport management to account for the use of language to promote, maintain, or threaten harmonious social relations. She argues that the basis for rapport does not only involve face sensitivities (associated with personal/relational and social values), but also includes sociality rights and obligations as social expectations, and interactional goals which might be transactional and/or interactional (Spencer-Oatey, 2008: 13-14). Rapport management acknowledges the complexity of communication by considering many other factors that influence people's use of rapport management strategies. These include rapport orientation (namely enhancement, maintenance, neglect, and challenge), contextual variables (including participants and their relations, message content, social/interactional roles, and activity type), and pragmatic principles and conventions (Spencer-Oatey, 2000, 2008). Depending on the interlocutors' considerations of these factors, interactions may be developed in different ways in which rapport management is dynamically negotiated by participants in the interaction.

It is believed that rapport management can complement relational work in the analysis of offer negotiations. The model of relational work has an evaluative character, and rapport management describes the bases of the evaluations. Building on the two models is expected to provide a fuller picture of any cultural and contextual factors inherent in making offers than studies that have followed more traditional frameworks.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The two models are reviewed and compared in more detail in Chapter 2 where I explain the reasons for choosing the theoretical framework of the study. Moreover, the guiding analytical framework of this study is provided in Chapters 4 and 9.

Even though relational work and rapport management have been widely quoted and supported in recent politeness and cross-cultural research, these frameworks have only been analysed from an empirical perspective in very few cases. Other than the contributions appearing in the original work where these theories were first published, their applications have been limited. Relational work has been quoted or adopted in some recent research that focuses on impoliteness, computer mediated discourse, humour, and compliment responses (e.g. Darics, 2010; He, 2012; Ng, 2008; Schnurr & Chan, 2009). Rapport management has only been drawn on in some studies relating to business talk, swearing and casual conversation as well as a study of doctor-patient interaction (Aoki, 2010; Campbell, White, & Durant, 2007; Campbell, White, & Johnson, 2003; Esbensen, 2009; Harrington, 2018; Hernández López, 2008). However, compared to the large amount of empirical research built on traditional politeness frameworks, the two models, to the best of my knowledge, are still under-explored. Therefore, more empirical studies, specifically on the discursive construction of speech acts, are needed to test the validity of these models. Hence, this study is motivated by the necessity to validate the ongoing shift towards discursive approaches in politeness research.

Discursive politeness researchers argue that the aim of politeness research is to provide a qualitative interpretation based on verbal and non-verbal cues in order to reveal the interpersonal stand that the interactants take towards each other and politeness norms (Locher, 2015: 6). It has been taken as evidence that quantitative interpretation does not have a place in this view. Almost all studies to date have been solely based on the qualitative investigation of discursive politeness. The only exception to this is Holmes and Schnurr (2005), who provided quantitative measures to identify polite behaviour in their investigation of humour in the work place. The present study aims to improve our understanding of politic behaviour by providing a more precise account using descriptive statistics as a means of identifying politic behaviour. It differentiates itself by using descriptive quantitative analysis of some aspects of discourse analysis in exploring discursive politeness. The quantitative analysis undertaken in this study does not aim to pinpoint particular instances of linguistic forms as instances of undeniably polite (or impolite) behaviour. Instead, it looks at the process of negotiation in order to find out situated norms of (what is evaluated as) adequate behaviour. I assume that what is most done in everyday spontaneous discourse is what is expected, and what is expected is politic. This view is driven by Watts's definition of politic behaviour as the category of behaviours that occur most frequently (Watts, 2003: 278). The quantitative analysis explores the dominant patterns of the interactional structure of offers at

a discourse level, particularly the exchange unit as proposed by Edmondson (1981).<sup>4</sup> It investigates the frequency distribution of different discourse structures for offer exchanges as a way to find out what is considered politic offering behaviour in female friends' spoken discourse. I propose to use the frequency of certain patterns in offer exchanges to identify more effectively what are the most popular behaviours in each cultural group and to show whether norms of offering behaviour by members of female friendship groups vary across the two cultures or not.<sup>5</sup> This analysis is triangulated with an investigation of participants' evaluations including their reactions in a natural context as well as responses in follow-up interviews to check its validity.

Discursive approaches have argued for the importance of politeness<sup>1</sup> rather than politeness<sup>2</sup>, thus it focuses on lay persons' evaluations rather than the intuitions of the researcher expressed in the analyses (see Section 2.1.2). Although participants' evaluations are seen as the backbone of discursive politeness analysis, the basis for their evaluations has received less attention. According to discursive researchers, concepts such as habitus, frames, and norms account for people's expectations and evaluations of appropriate behaviour (e.g. Locher, 2004; Locher & Watts, 2005; Terkourafi, 2005; Watts, 2003). However, this only tells us part of the story. What underlies these evaluations remains neglected in politeness research (Davies, 2018: 121, 149; Haugh, 2013a: 53). In this respect, Haugh (2013a: 53) states,

The actual grounds on which something is evaluated as im/polite in the first place are still left largely implicit in im/politeness research. It is simply asserted that something is polite, impolite, and so on because a participant (or the analyst) perceives or judges it to be im/polite, or because it is categorised as an instance of facework.

This study aims to fill this gap and provides evidence for the basis of politeness evaluations in order to improve our understanding of what makes certain behaviours polite in certain context rather than others. This would contribute to our knowledge of norms and frames as well as the underlying factors which determine our perceptions of politeness.

Finally, several researchers (e.g. Brown & Levinson, 1987: 91-92; Eelen, 2001: iv; Haugh, 2013a: 52) advocate that politeness is not limited to verbal language, but it can also include non-verbal behaviour. Fukushima (2004: 367, 2015: 265), for instance, proposes the term behavioural politeness to refer to politeness manifested through non-verbal behaviours. Işık-Güler (2008: 17) explains that

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<sup>4</sup> The coding framework of offers is discussed in 4.6.2.

<sup>5</sup> An outline of the quantitative approach is explained and discussed in Chapters 4 and 8.

examples of politeness such as holding the door open for someone, greeting someone with a wave or a nod, etc. are very familiar, hence “politeness may manifest itself in any form of behaviour, and even in the absence of behaviour”. However, most theoretical claims have focused on verbal communication; no research has provided insights about how non-verbal behaviour influences politeness evaluations (Bargiela-Chiappini, 2003: 1464; Fukushima, 2015: 264). There is a consensus that non-verbal politeness is still an underdeveloped area. Hence, what we know about non-verbal manifestations of politeness is undoubtedly minimal. As a researcher concerned with politeness, I see a crucial need for a systematic line of non-verbal politeness research to identify a potential theoretical account and to offer an analytical framework for the discursive struggle over politeness in non-verbal communication. Moreover, in almost all cross-cultural studies, attention is focused solely on linguistic pragmatics (i.e. communication through the use of language); no attention is paid to the communicative functions of non-verbal acts, although non-verbal acts play a significant role in the development of a conversation (Edmondson, 1981: 38; Geyer, 2008: 35). Sociolinguistic studies of offers in Ireland and England (Barron, 2005), Libya and England (Grainger, Kerkam, Mansor, & Mills, 2015), Iran (Koutlaki, 2002; Teleghani-Nikazm, 1998), and England and Morocco (Alaoui, 2011) have provided valuable insights into the way offers are realized in different cultures, but apparently no analyses have been carried out to demonstrate the discursive functions carried out by non-verbal offers in interactional data. The present study expands the focus of pragmatics investigations to cover all aspects of communication. That is, the present study is an attempt to fill this gap by comparing both linguistic and non-linguistic offering behaviour between Saudi and British females.

In conclusion, this study is motivated by the most recent paradigm in cross-cultural pragmatics, which takes a dynamic view of culture and communication. It aims to test the validity of the discursive approach to politeness. It proposes new practices to explore politeness from a different point of view, although it is driven by the claims of the discursive approach to politeness. The study is an attempt to find out how quantitative analysis can be used to aid our understanding of politeness and to explore how non-verbal politeness is manifested and perceived.

### **1.1.2 Empirical rationale**

The study explores offering behaviours among female friends in Saudi Arabia and Britain. The decision to focus on the speech act of offers is motivated by the fact that offers as commissive speech acts remain the least researched in



sociolinguistics. This was observed by Rabinowitz (1993: 64) in her study of American offers and appears to be still true. Up to now, compared with other speech acts such as requests, apologies, and refusals, which have been extensively studied, offers have not received much attention in the field yet. They have at most been discussed either in the context of studies focused on refusals, i.e. considering refusals to offers (e.g. Babai Shishavan, 2016; Jasim, 2017; Kaiser, 2014; Morkus, 2009) or those focused on invitations (e.g. Al-Khatib, 2006; Drew, 2018; Margutti et al., 2018). Most studies on offers were conducted drawing on traditional politeness theories, particularly Brown and Levinson's model or the CCSARP framework (e.g. Al-Qahtani, 2009; Alaoui, 2011; Allami, 2012; Barron, 2005; Curl, 2006; Koutlaki, 2002; Teleghani-Nikazm, 1998). Not much research has been undertaken on the speech act of offers from the perspective of the discursive approach. Only one study has built upon rapport management in the investigation of offers, i.e. by British speakers and Libyans (Grainger et al., 2015). However, we cannot assume that Saudis and Libyans share the same offering norms just because they speak (dialects of) the same language, i.e. Arabic. Al-Issa (1998: 14) states: "It would be a mistake to assume that a Saudi student from Riyadh, a Lebanese student from Beirut, a Jordanian student from Amman and a Moroccan student from Rabat would share the same characteristics in their discourse behaviours despite the fact that they are all Arabs". More notably, to my knowledge, there has not been any research on offers using the discursive approach across British and Saudi cultures. Hence, the present study has been undertaken to address this gap. The study aims to explore how two different communities do relational work in negotiating appropriate offering behaviour.

My focus on exploring offers in friendship talk is driven by several factors. Firstly, it is an attempt to avoid the pitfalls of treating cultures as homogeneous or monolithic. Practices of small groups or communities may not resemble those of the larger society. Holliday (1999: 237) proposes the idea of small cultures which is "any cohesive social grouping" in contrast to large ethnic, national culture. According to Holliday, small cultures are not subordinate to large cultures; instead they are dynamic entities. This is very important since what might govern most of our behaviour in a given situation is the norms of the small cultures. It explains why aspects of our behaviour could be seen as rude in some contexts whereas in others it is a sign of solidarity and intimacy. The small culture notion thus fits quite well with a discursive approach to politeness, which focuses on emergent negotiation of meanings rather than pre-existing meanings. Secondly, the focus on friendship talk in investigating offers is more of a practical issue. It is motivated by the claims of Rabinowitz (1993: 90) who indicates that one of the difficulties

she faced in her research with offers was they are not frequent in spontaneous ongoing conversations in formal or public settings, yet they might occur more frequently in personally intimate conversations. Moreover, Allami (2012: 117) found that most of the recorded offers in his data occurred between closely related people including family members, friends, and roommates. Hua, Wei, and Yuan (1998: 91) found that gift offers are more likely to occur in equal power relationships such as between close friends than in hierarchical power relations such as in work contexts. Thirdly, the friendship context was chosen to ensure having comparable sets of natural data in which variations in age and power do not occur. Most of the studies in offers among Arabs have not considered real contexts where such variables are not in play or where interlocutors are equal and highly intimate. The relative uniformity of the corpora and of the settings in which the interactions took place adds to the significance of the study. In all, offers were addressed to friends<sup>6</sup> during a dinner. The uniformity of the settings across all of the groups provides an opportunity to compare actions across languages in natural talk. Hence, this overcomes the argument that natural data yields sets of data that are not comparable in cross-cultural pragmatics. Last but not least, relationships between friends are significant. They are not like family relationships or those between work colleagues. A person chooses his/her friends but cannot change the membership of his/her family. In some ways, you have to take more care in the management of social interactions with your friends than your family because they can choose to stop being friends with you. On the other hand, it should be a setting in which we feel most comfortable, as presumably our friends will share similar social views as ourselves. It can be said it is the social context over which we have the most influence, in terms of its participants. The investigation of such a context is significant since it may reflect how we tend to interact if there are limited social constraints on our behaviour.

Finally, the focus on females is driven by the fact that Saudi Arabia is a gender-segregated society and thus both men and women frequently socialize in separate settings. Since cultural norms generally do not encourage the socializing of unrelated men and women in dinner settings, only female subjects were approached to participate in this study due to the fact that I, as the researcher, am also female. It is also not intended in this study to examine the effect of the gender variable and thus no comparison of male and female offering behaviour was made.

To sum up, the decision to investigate the speech acts of offers among female friends' talk is driven by both empirical and practical factors. It aims to fill an

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<sup>6</sup> In addition to the friendship relation, some of the SA participants were cousins as will be seen in Chapter 4.

important gap in the literature due to the limited research that has been done on offers. It stems from the view of small cultures and discursive approaches which assume that norms of adequate behaviours are negotiated within small groups rather than pre-existent in large groups, such as nations. The narrow focus of the context of the study meant it could overcome the difficulty of having comparable sets of natural data in cross-cultural studies. It can thus be said that this study is an attempt to provide evidence for the possibility of adopting natural data rather than relying on elicitation techniques (e.g. Discourse Completion Tasks (DCTs) and role-plays) in cross-cultural research.

## **1.2 Background information about Saudi culture**

Saudi society mainly revolves around the religion of Islam. It is a conservative Moslem Arab society where customs and traditions strongly determine all aspects of social life. The family and tribe are the basis of social structure. Social and physical segregation of the genders is the common norm. Men and women are segregated in most institutions, such as schools, work, and in other public spaces. Public places are frequently organized in a way that keeps women and men physically apart. Saudi women wear Abaya, i.e. an ankle-length cloak, and cover their heads and often faces in public places – wherever they might be seen by men to whom they are not related. Interactions between men and women are limited. Both women and men often socialize in gender-specific settings. Women's social networks mainly consist of relatives and female friends. Women in Saudi Arabia have only recently been permitted to drive motor vehicles and, as a result, were limited in mobility.<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, although men interact mostly with male friends and relatives, their social networks are more open because there are fewer constraints on their mobility (Ismail, 2012: 261).

Thus, research that examines interactions between the genders in Saudi Arabia is very difficult, since Saudi culture does not encourage mixing of the genders outside the family context. For this reason, this study explores talk in settings involving only one gender because it reflects the dominant social norm in this society.

## **1.3 Purpose of the study**

The main purpose of the study is to explore how offers are negotiated in ordinary talk among female friends by Saudi Arabic native speakers (SA) and British English native speakers (BE). The study also aims to provide insights into the discursive approach to politeness, particularly testing the validity of relational

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<sup>7</sup> The ban on women driving was lifted on 24 June 2018.

work in investigating politeness in casual talk. These two main goals encompass three key areas: cross-cultural, theoretical, and methodological. From a cross-cultural perspective, the study compares relational work strategies and the interactional structure of offer exchanges among female friends across the two cultures. From a theoretical perspective, it intends to propose new methods for the relational work framework in order to investigate more fully what is going on in an interaction. Specifically, it aims to find out if quantitative analysis can aid our investigation of politeness behaviour as part of the relational work model, to explore how non-verbal behaviour affects the discursive struggle of politeness, and to identify the elements that influence participants' evaluations of politeness. From a methodological perspective, it compares reactions and evaluations obtained through interviews and natural conversations. Specifically, the study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What are the main interactional characteristics of offers in female friendship groups in Saudi Arabia and Britain?
2. How do Saudi and British female friends manage their relational work in offer negotiations as part of ordinary talk?
3. To what extent does descriptive quantitative analysis help in identifying politeness behaviour?
4. To what extent do non-verbal offers affect relational work management among interactants?
5. What are the underlying factors that contribute to participants' evaluations of (im)politeness in the friendship groups?
6. Are the evaluative reactions gleaned from actual discourse more, or less, useful than those obtained using metalinguistic instruments?

The first question explores offer topics found in the participants' conversations, the medium of communication used to accomplish offers, the role of preceding context in initiating the offer, the degree of complexity in offer exchanges, and the supportive moves used in negotiating an offer. By looking at the interactional structure of offer negotiation, I wish to see what the dominant norms of offering among close friends are. In addition, this aims to see whether these practices are consistent with or deviant from the stereotypical view of each culture. The question also explores to what extent SA and BE female friends are similar or different in their offering behaviour during an ordinary gathering of friends over dinner.

The second question aims to shed light on the main similarities and differences between the SA and BE female friends in managing their relational work in offer negotiations. Insights into how conversations are constructed from a CA perspective and the information obtained about the participants' evaluations (i.e.

their evaluative reactions during the talk as well as their metalinguistic evaluations) are used as references to answer this question. I wish to see how appropriate relational work is performed and how the relationships between friends play a role in constructing offers as part of real spoken discourse.

The third question is intended to explore how descriptive quantitative analysis could contribute to the investigation of politeness behaviour in a particular context. The answer to this question will be provided by discussing the definition of politeness behaviour in relation to the findings of the study.

The fourth question seeks to find out how non-verbal acts influence the management of relational work among interactants, which is an understudied area in the field. The answer to this question provides insights into the applicability of the relational work framework to the analysis of non-verbal communication.

The fifth question aims to explore the underlying factors that affect the participants' behaviour, which is an underdeveloped area in discursive approaches. The study uses metalinguistic interpretations to find out the factors that influence participants' evaluations of politeness in a given context.

The last question seeks to explore any differences between the results of the two data collection methods, i.e. participants' reactions in their natural conversations and their responses in interviews and to the scaled-response questionnaire (SRQ), and highlight any implications for the design of future research into politeness.

## 1.4 Overview of the thesis structure

This thesis is divided into nine chapters. **Chapter 1** has provided a brief overview of the research background and the rationale for the study including the aims and questions of the research.

**Chapter 2** introduces the theoretical framework pertaining to this research, which informs the current investigation and positions it in the body of politeness research to date. It reviews the various approaches to the study of politeness (traditional and postmodern frameworks) and spoken discourse (discourse analysis and conversation analysis), and explains the rationale for the theoretical framework chosen in the study.

**Chapter 3** reviews relevant literature to address the gap which the study aims to fill. It first provides a brief overview of speech act theory, and then explores the speech act of offer by reviewing its pragmatic definitions, previous empirical studies, the relation of the speech act of offer to politeness as well as its role and

practices in both Arabic and English cultures. An overview of research methods in pragmatics research is also included, highlighting each method's strengths and weaknesses.

**Chapter 4** describes the methodology followed in the study. It describes the participants and how they were approached. It also presents a detailed description of the data collection instruments and procedures used in the study and the rationale behind their choice. The chapter also includes a comprehensive description of the coding scheme that I developed, building on the notion of exchange proposed by Edmondson (1981). It also describes the pilot study and procedures for data analysis.

**Chapters 5 to 8** report the main findings of the study and their discussion. **Chapter 5** presents a detailed quantitative analysis of offer exchanges, building on the taxonomy of offers developed in the study. The analysis highlights the most frequent interactional structures for offering behaviour in SA and BE female friendship groups. **Chapters 6 and 7** provide a thorough discursive analysis of representative samples of offer negotiations in the SA and BE corpora, respectively. The analysis in these two chapters mainly draws on the frameworks of relational work (Locher & Watts, 2005) and rapport management (Spencer-Oatey, 2000, 2002, 2005a). It also refers to the participants' responses in the interviews and the SRQs pertaining to their and their interlocutors' offering behaviour during natural conversations. **Chapter 8** discusses the interpretations of both the qualitative and the quantitative findings in depth.

**Chapter 9**, the final chapter, offers a summary of the study, the theoretical and empirical conclusions arrived at throughout the study as well as its limitations. It ends with suggestions and recommendations for further research.

## Chapter 2 Theoretical Background

This chapter presents the theoretical foundation on which the current study is based. It first outlines the study and the particular concepts and frameworks employed to explore how politeness is discursively negotiated among SA and BE female friends in their offering behaviour during ordinary talk. The chapter then moves on to discuss these areas, which include politeness, discourse analysis, and conversation analysis, in more detail.

Linguistic politeness has been considered one of the main concerns of pragmatics, the area of linguistics that accounts for “meaning in interaction” (Thomas, 1995: 23), and which has attracted researchers’ attention in the last forty years. It is concerned with explaining why and how people establish, maintain, or support their relations through language use (Cheng, 2005: 17). Thus, norms of politeness influence our practices when we communicate. Politeness as a social phenomenon is shown in interlocutors’ perception of appropriate behaviour in light of the cultural and social contexts involved. The meaning of politeness is context-dependent rather than being only culture-dependent. Therefore, I hypothesize that communicating offers is related to interactants’ perceptions of politeness and appropriateness, which are in turn related to their beliefs and values about their rights and obligations in a particular social context. The present study investigates empirically the ways in which Saudi and English female friends realize offers in an informal dinner setting in light of what is seen as (im)politeness based on their actual practices in a particular context, despite the assumed norms of the wider culture. As a result, this study takes a discursive approach to politeness since it allows the exploration of politeness as it is negotiated in the context involved rather than through pre-established rules.

Moreover, since the present study follows a discursive approach in investigating politeness, it investigates how offers are negotiated in spoken discourse rather than isolated utterances. Interactional phenomena are taken into account, i.e. the interactional structure of offer exchanges and if and how an offer is motivated by the preceding linguistic context. A few studies have discussed some interactional features of offer sequences in casual situations (e.g. Barron, 2003; Davidson, 1984; Hua, Wei, & Yuan, 2000; Koutlaki, 2002) and in business negotiations (e.g. Pohle, 2009). Davidson (1984) and Hua et al. (2000) studied offers from a conversational analytic approach (CA). Koutlaki (2002) analysed offers from face and politeness perspectives. Barron (2003) and Pohle (2009) drew on discourse

analysis (DA). These studies neither shed light on the relation between the interactional structure of offers and our understanding of discursive politeness, nor base their claims about the interactional features of offers on authentic data, other than Koutlaki (2002) who analysed offers in casual conversations by Persian speakers. They used such methodologies as DCTs (Barron, 2003), video recordings of simulated negotiations (Pohle, 2009), and observation sheets (Hua et al., 2000). Their claims about the interactional features of offers should thus be treated with caution. Moreover, they have only focused on either simple offers or reoffering sequences. The current study sheds light on features that make up complex offer exchanges other than reoffering sequences such as elaborated and embedded offerings.<sup>8</sup> It also breaks new ground by quantifying some aspects of the DA carried out in exploring discursive politeness. It explores the frequency of different discourse structures of offer exchanges as a way to find out what is considered politic offering behaviour in female friends' spoken discourse.

Furthermore, the discursive approach focuses on participants' perceptions of politeness. This raises the question of how an analyst interprets participants' evaluations in a given interaction. The discursive approach requires a close inspection of real discourse in order to capture interactants' evaluative reactions. Piirainen-Marsh (2005: 194-195) argues that,

conversation analysis offers the rich and nuanced methods needed to investigate how utterances are produced and interpreted in context and how social phenomena, such as politeness or impoliteness, may (or may not) become the participants' concern in the course of a particular interaction.

Haugh (2011: 257) also argues that discursive politeness researchers need to use CA to adequately analyse politeness evaluations in instances where politeness is not explicitly commented on in a given discourse. Hua et al. (2000: 86), in their analysis of gift offering in Chinese, argue that CA provides an analytic tool that traces the turn-by-turn negotiation of politeness acts in interaction. However, using CA in examining discursive politeness remains in its relative infancy, except few contributions (Arundale, 2010; Bousfield, 2008; Davies, 2018; Grainger & Mills, 2016; Haugh, 2007b, 2011, 2015; Locher & Watts, 2005; Piirainen-Marsh, 2005). Since CA allows a fine-grained analysis of what is going on in a conversation, this study refers to our knowledge of CA, such as the systematics of turn taking, preference organization, and overlap, to justify the

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<sup>8</sup> These are explained in detail in the coding framework (Section 4.6.2).



interpretations of politeness evaluations.<sup>9</sup> This also aims to fill an important gap in the literature regarding the role of CA methods in politeness research.

The approach taken in this study is eclectic, but not arbitrary, since it allows me to shed light on discursive politeness in offer negotiations among female friends in both Saudi Arabic and British English. This chapter provides the theoretical foundation and framework for the current study. The chapter aims to place the present research within the context of the literature of related fields, therefore providing insights about politeness theories, discourse analysis, and CA is a necessity.

## 2.1 Politeness theories

Politeness has attracted a huge amount of research in linguistics, particularly pragmatics, since Lakoff's (1973) pioneering discussion of it in her work, *The Logic of Politeness: Or, Minding Your P's and Q's*. However, there is still no consensus among researchers on how to investigate politeness. One can distinguish two broad directions followed by theoretical approaches to date: the traditional view which is based on Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle (CP)<sup>10</sup> and speech act theory and the discursive view which rejects these classical theories and emphasizes the importance of interactants' own perceptions of politeness.

This section will shed light on the main politeness theories, exploring their main features and the way politeness is seen in each. First, it deals with traditional models of politeness since their criticisms have formed the basis for modern politeness theories. Second, it presents a review of the discursive approach, also called postmodern politeness in contrast to traditional theories, which is the theoretical framework for this study.

### 2.1.1 Traditional models of politeness

During the last forty years, the literature has introduced many models of linguistic politeness. The most influential of these have been a maxim-based view of politeness, offered by Lakoff (1973) and Leech (1983), and a face-management view, proposed by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987). Lakoff (1973) was the first to approach politeness from a pragmatic perspective. She proposes two rules of

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<sup>9</sup> My analysis did not strictly follow the theoretical principles of CA; therefore, interactions were not transcribed in the same detail that a CA study would.

<sup>10</sup> The cooperative principle consists of four maxims: maxims of quantity, quality, relation and manner, which are observed (implicitly or explicitly) in conversation. According to these maxims, interactants are expected to try to be "informative", "truthful", "relevant", and "clear" in conversations (Grice, 1975).

pragmatic competence: “be clear” (which matches the CP) and “be polite” (Lakoff, 1973: 296). The second rule is sub-classified by Lakoff (1973: 298) into three politeness rules: “Don’t impose”, “Give options”, and “Make others feel good – be friendly”. Although Lakoff (1973) was among the first linguists who postulated a need for a model of politeness, her work first influenced and then was superseded by the work of subsequent researchers. It was rarely applied to data (Bousfield, 2008: 47; Leech, 2014: 33; Watts, 2003: 63). I will therefore not elaborate on her model here. Reviews of Leech’s (1983) and Brown and Levinson’s (1987) models are provided below as only these two models have given many examples of linguistic structures used to realize politeness strategies (Watts, 2003: 63). It is also expected that discussing these two models will facilitate our understanding of discursive politeness, the approach employed in this study.

#### **2.1.1.1 Leech’s (1983) model: The Politeness Principle (PP)**

Based on Grice’s (1975) CP, Leech (1983) built a pragmatic framework within which politeness is analysed in terms of maxims. In his model, politeness is seen as a regulative factor in interaction, i.e. they are principle-governed,<sup>11</sup> and a key explanation of why people deviate from the CP. Based on this assumption, Leech proposes the Politeness Principle (PP), which accounts for maintaining “the social equilibrium and the friendly relations which enable us to assume that our interlocutors are being cooperative in the first place” (Leech, 1983: 82). Accordingly, the model focuses only on cooperative behaviour, and cannot be used to interpret impoliteness, an issue that has attracted criticism (e.g. Bousfield, 2008: 51; Locher, 2004: 65). Leech considers the PP as an essential complement and a source of rescue for the CP, indicating that the PP allows an interpretation of conversational data that the CP alone cannot account for. For example, a speaker may not straightforwardly request an item, thus violating the quantity and manner maxims, as a result of wanting to avoid imposition. In such a case, the PP explains why a speaker is being indirect.

Moreover, Leech distinguishes between what he terms absolute politeness and relative politeness. Relative politeness is sensitive to context and norms of behaviour in a given group or situation, whereas absolute politeness – his focus – refers to acts as being inherently polite (e.g. offers) or inherently impolite (i.e. orders), regardless of their context (Leech, 2005: 10). The PP is framed to “minimize the expression of impolite beliefs” along with its less important

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<sup>11</sup> Leech (2014: 34) explains that politeness is principle-governed rather than rule-governed because principles are regulative in force but rules are constitutive. In other words, principles regulate existing forms of behaviour, whereas rules create or define new forms of behaviour.

counterpart to “maximize the expression of polite beliefs” (Leech, 1983: 81). Consequently, according to Leech (1983: 83), negative politeness lies in minimizing the impoliteness of impolite illocutions (avoidance of discord) whereas positive politeness lies in maximizing the politeness of polite illocutions (seeking concord).<sup>12</sup>

The PP is divided into six maxims, and each is divided into two sub-maxims. The first represents negative politeness and the second positive politeness (Leech, 1983: 132-136), as shown below:

1. Tact Maxim: “Minimize cost to other, maximize benefit to other.”
2. Generosity maxim: “Minimize benefit to self, maximize cost to self.”
3. Approbation maxim: “Minimize dispraise of other; maximize praise of other.”
4. Modesty maxim: “Minimize praise to self; maximize dispraise to self.”
5. Agreement Maxim: “Minimize disagreement between self and other; maximize agreement between self and other.”
6. Sympathy Maxim: “Minimize antipathy between self and other; maximize sympathy between self and other.”

The first two maxims are paired together as they deal with a bipolar scale (cost-benefit); the third and fourth are paired together as they also deal with a bipolar scale (praise and dispraise). The last two form unipolar scales. Leech (1983) also does not give all maxims the same degree of importance. For instance, he argues that the Tact Maxim is more influential on what we say than the Generosity Maxim. Similarly, the Approbation maxim is more important than the Modesty Maxim. He relates this to a general law whereby politeness places more value on the other than the self. Therefore, Leech maintains that his model is centred on the hearer rather than the speaker. Furthermore, within each maxim, the first sub-maxim is more important than the second sub-maxim, reflecting a more general law that negative politeness is given more weighty consideration than positive politeness. Moreover, Leech claims that the maxims’ value varies from one culture to another. For example, British English culture emphasizes the Tact Maxim, but Mediterranean cultures pay more attention to the Generosity Maxim, whereas the Modesty Maxim is more powerful in Eastern cultures than Western cultures (Leech, 1983: 150).

Leech (1983: 108-109) links some pragmatic scales to the maxims in order to determine the amount and kind of politeness. First, the cost-benefit scale measures the cost or the benefit to the speaker or addressee. The higher the cost

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<sup>12</sup> Leech’s use of the negative/positive dichotomy is different from Brown and Levinson’s (1987) use, which is discussed in Section 2.1.1.2.

to the hearer, the less polite the illocutionary act is, and vice versa. Second, the optionality scale assesses the degree of choice which the speaker allows the addressee on the proposed action. Third, the indirectness scale measures the amount of work incurred by the hearer in interpreting the proposed act. According to Leech, indirect illocutions tend to be more polite than direct ones because they increase the degree of optionality and minimize the impositive force of the illocution. Fourth, the authority scale assesses the degree to which the speaker has the right to impose on the hearer. Finally, the social distance scale measures the degree to which the speaker and the hearer are acquainted.<sup>13</sup>

Leech's PP has been subject to criticism. The biggest problem in Leech's theory is its limited applicability and methodology (Jucker, 1988: 376-377). The PP can only be applied to cooperative verbal interactions, i.e. polite behaviour only (Bousfield, 2008: 51; Locher, 2004: 65), although his definition of politeness accommodates both polite and impolite behaviours (Eelen, 2001: 91). Regarding its methodology, the number of maxims is infinite and arbitrary as a new maxim can be added to account for politeness phenomena in any instance of language use (Brown & Levinson, 1987: 4; Locher, 2004: 65; Thomas, 1995: 167; Turner, 1996: 6; Watts, 2005a: 46). Moreover, we cannot exactly know which maxims are to be applied at a given time (Fraser, 1990: 227). Several researchers consider the PP to be too theoretical to apply to real language (e.g. Turner, 1996: 6; Watts, Ide, & Ehlich, 2005: 7). However, Locher (2004: 66) argues that the maxims can be applied and used to explain some motivations for politeness manifestations in British and American cultures. Consequently, Leech's model has been criticized for its culturally biased approach to Western cultures (Ide, 1989: 224; Matsumoto, 1988: 424). This may be due to the fact that its examples are from English and English emphasizes the tact maxim which mainly concerns minimizing the imposition on others.

Another major criticism of Leech's model is that it considers linguistic behaviour as inherently polite or impolite, as a result of his distinction between absolute and relative politeness (Bousfield, 2008: 53; Fraser, 1990: 227; Watts, 2003: 69). Later, Leech (2007: 174) discarded these terms in favour of the semantic politeness scale and pragmatic politeness scale, replacing his absolute and relative politeness scales, respectively. More recently, in his (2014: 88) book *The Pragmatics of politeness*, he has used the terms pragmalinguistic politeness scale (formerly absolute) and socio-pragmatic politeness scale (formerly relative). He further clarifies that they are two ways of looking at politeness, not two *types* of politeness. It seems that Leech acknowledges the context's role in evaluating

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<sup>13</sup> The cost-benefit, authority, and social distance scales resemble Brown and Levinson's imposition, power, and distance variables, respectively (Eelen, 2001: 9).

politeness, yet his model still deals with pragmalinguistic politeness only, i.e. it considers politeness at the utterance level, regardless of the context. In my view, Leech's latest work does not deviate from his early framework of politeness. I believe that the change in terms has not rescued Leech from the criticisms of his earlier work since he has just changed the terminology not the definitions. In addition, how the socio-pragmatic politeness scale should be evaluated is still neglected and unclear in his model. Similarly, Leech has also been criticized for the PP's apparent equation of indirectness with politeness (Locher, 2004: 65). Again, this is inconsistent with his socio-pragmatic/relative view of politeness, which registers the degree of politeness according to the context.

Despite the critiques, we should not completely negate the contributions that Leech's (1983) PP has made to the literature because his pioneering work has furthered our understanding of politeness. Although Leech's model focuses on absolute politeness, his inclusion of a relative way of looking at politeness can be regarded as innovative in the new paradigm of politeness models, which consider politeness at a discourse level.

#### **2.1.1.2 Brown and Levinson's model (1987): The face-management view**

Brown and Levinson's politeness theory is the most seminal one in the field. It has generated a wide range of theoretical and empirical research in different disciplines (Bousfield, 2008: 55; Leech, 2014: 81; Mills, 2003: 57; Watts, 2003: 98). The central theme of their theory is a Model Person (MP), who is described as a fluent speaker of a natural language with two properties – rationality and face (Brown & Levinson, 1987: 58). Rationality refers to the speaker's ability to reason and know what options or strategies s/he has in a given situation. Their concept of face is built on Goffman's notion of face, defined as:

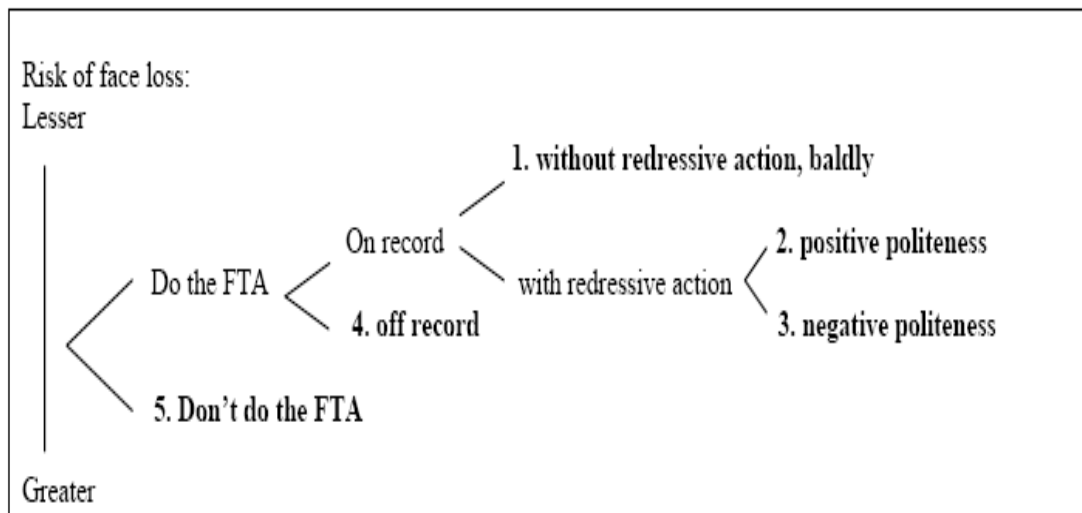
The positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact. Face is an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes – albeit an image that others may share, as when a person makes a good showing for his profession or religion by making a good showing for himself. (Goffman, 1967: 5)

Brown and Levinson (1987: 61) define face as “the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself”. Before I proceed, it is important to question the authors' claim that their notion of face is derived from Goffman's. In this respect, O'Driscoll (1996: 6) argues that Goffman's notion of face refers to self-image which individuals have to earn from society, while Brown and Levinson indicate that face consists of “wants”; hence, the image is given from the inside.

Brown and Levinson (1987: 61-62) argue that speakers enter into an interaction with two seemingly conflicting face wants: positive and negative. Positive face is

the desire of every individual for his/her wants to be appreciated, whereas negative face refers to the individual's desire to be unimpeded by others and to be free from imposition. They assert that face is emotionally invested and can be lost, enhanced, or maintained and must be attended to in any interaction. Further, Brown and Levinson (1987: 60) presuppose that certain illocutionary acts are intrinsically face-threatening acts (FTAs), which threaten either aspects of the interlocutors' face. For example, orders and requests threaten the addressees' negative face. They claim that all participants tend to minimize such threats by using politeness strategies. In doing so, people recognize the vulnerability of face and strive to maintain each other's face during a social interaction.

They propose five possible strategies for mitigating FTAs, presented in Figure 1, ranging from the most face threatening '*do the FTA and go on record baldly without redressive action*' to the safest case '*don't do FTA*'. The scale given on the left shows the degree to which these strategies are face-threatening to the addressee.



**Figure 1: Strategies for performing FTAs (Brown & Levinson, 1987: 69)**

Bald on record politeness, the first strategy, entails the FTA being performed in the most direct and unambiguous way. For example, in a situation in which a speaker forgot his/her bag and phone, s/he might say "*I need to make a phone call. Give me your mobile.*" S/he is making no effort to minimize the threat that the hearer might infer. The second and the third on-record strategies are to perform the FTA with redressive action<sup>14</sup> that attends to the addressee's positive face by treating him/her as a member of an in-group or expressing appreciation of his/her wants and personality (i.e. positive politeness), and to do the FTA with

<sup>14</sup> Redressive actions are actions that attempt to "counteract the potential face damage of the FTA" (Brown & Levinson, 1987: 69).

redressive action that satisfies the addressee's negative face by ensuring that the speaker respects his/her negative face wants and does not interfere with his/her freedom of action (i.e. negative politeness). For example, in the above situation, a speaker can use a positive strategy saying "*hey mate, do you have your mobile with you?*", or a negative strategy saying, for example, "*I feel really embarrassed to ask you this, but do you think I can borrow your mobile for a second?*". The fourth strategy is to go off record in doing the FTA, which indicates that an utterance may have more than one possible interpretation. In this way, the speaker can be assumed never to have done the FTA and the addressee can decide not to take up that particular interpretation. This strategy is illustrated in the following example: "*Oh my God. I left my bag at home. I need to ring my mum and ask her to come and pick me up. But my mobile is also at home. Where can I find a payphone?*" In this case, the request has been made implicitly. It leaves the hearer to decide whether s/he wants to offer his/her mobile or not. The last strategy – don't do the FTA – is chosen when the risk of face threat is considered too great; the speaker thus decides to say or do nothing in order to avoid face loss. In the above situation, for example, s/he might simply say nothing and instead look for a payphone.<sup>15</sup>

Brown and Levinson (1987: 74) further propose three key sociological variables involved in the assessment of the seriousness of an FTA: (a) the social distance (D) between the interlocutors, (b) the relative power (P) between S and H, and (c) the absolute ranking of impositions (R) in a given culture. They suggest the following equation to compute the weightiness of a given FTA – which is the combination of D, P, and R – in order to determine the degree of politeness required by the speaker.

$$W_x = D(S, H) + P(H, S) + R_x \quad (X \text{ is the FTA})$$

Brown and Levinson's model has been extraordinarily influential, sparking a considerable amount of research (Kasper, 1990: 193). The main contribution of the model lies in their attempt to link politeness with the concept of "face" in social interactions (Locher & Watts, 2005: 9). However, the theory has not escaped serious criticism. The criticism centres on four main aspects: the universality claim of face wants; the relationship between indirectness and politeness; the method of calculating the weightiness of the social variables; and the dominant role of FTAs. Each criticism is addressed in more detail below.

First, Brown and Levinson's politeness theory has been widely challenged for assuming the universal applicability of politeness strategies across languages (Kasper, 1990: 195; Mills, 2003: 105; Watts, 2003: 103; Watts et al., 2005: 11). It

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<sup>15</sup> The examples of the politeness strategies are adopted from Hsieh (2009: 46- 47).

is clear from many cross-cultural studies over the past decades that politeness is expressed diversely according to language and culture. Several studies have found that politeness and the notion of face are perceived differently in Eastern cultures, including Chinese (Gu, 1990; Mao, 1994), Persian (Koutlaki, 2002), Igbo (Nwoye, 1992), and Japanese (Ide, 1989; Matsumoto, 1988). The Chinese conception of face, for example, is argued to be fundamentally a more public and positive concept and firmly embedded in relations (Ho, 1994). This inapplicability is due to the Western bias of the model as it deals with interlocutors as individuals rather than as members of a society governed by its rules (Koutlaki, 2002: 1738; Leech, 2005: 2; Watts, 2003: 99). In collectivistic cultures, for example, politeness is associated with comprehending and acknowledging the structure and hierarchy of the group rather than freedom from imposition. Moreover, the interpretation of Brown and Levinson's variables may differ from culture to culture, i.e. P, D, and R are not perceived identically in all cultures. For example, Spencer-Oatey (1993: 41-42) found that Chinese and British students differ in how they see distance and power between them and their tutors; Chinese students saw their tutors as socially closer yet more superior than do British students.

A second problem is that Brown and Levinson associated indirectness with politeness (Grainger & Mills, 2016: 5-8; Locher, 2004: 68; Mills, 2003: 75; Sifianou, 1992: 118; Thomas, 1995: 167), which is considered an over-generalization by Werkhofer (2005: 162). Several studies have found that high levels of directness were perceived positively in some cultures, e.g. Israel (Blum-Kulka, 2005); Arab societies (Ahmed, 2017); and African languages (de Kadt, 1998; Kasanga, 2006). As a result, Werkhofer (2005: 164) regards Brown and Levinson's ranking of strategies as problematic. This is because indirectness is considered as a cornerstone in their ranking. Indeed, Brown and Levinson (1987: 20) admit that the distinction between the strategies has been challenged by subsequent research, which found that people rated politeness in ways that differ from what they anticipated in their model, yet they do not provide an alternative ranking.

Another focal point in the criticism has to do with Brown and Levinson's social variables P, D, and R. First, the authors have been criticized for not determining the quantitative parameters of P, D, and R to allow *W* to be accordingly calculated (Fraser, 1990: 231; Watts et al., 2005: 9). The strongest criticism was presented by Werkhofer (2005: 175) who rejects the parameters for being vague and too difficult, if not impossible, to be quantified. Yet, to be fair, Brown and Levinson explicitly clarify that they propose this formula only to simplify the complex decision-making process a speaker undergoes when choosing a politeness strategy. It is not meant to be quantified. Second, some researchers (e.g. Locher,



2004: 69; Werkhofer, 2005: 176) argue that these three variables are not sufficient to account for the complexity of social and situational contexts, and many crucial variables are neglected, such as age (Mills, 2003: 103), gender, and religion (as in Islamic cultures). Accordingly, the discursive approach has left these variables more open, indicating that the notion of frame plays an essential role in determining the appropriate norm of behaviour rather than limiting the perception of politeness to a number of variables.

Another line of criticism deals with Brown and Levinson's concept of FTA and its dominant role in politeness. For example, Kasper (1990: 194) criticizes Brown and Levinson's view on politeness for being too pessimistic, because human social interaction is not always face-threatening. Mills (2003: 60) argues that the notion of what establishes FTAs is "perverse" because of Brown and Levinson's assumption that certain acts are inherently face-threatening (Thomas, 1995: 176). Mills does not consider politeness to be simply about the avoidance of FTAs. Finally, Watts (2003: 97) argues that Brown and Levinson's work is a theory of face work rather than a theory of politeness. He raises this argument again in a 2005 article with Locher, in which they propose their model of relational work. Locher and Watts (2005: 10) consider Brown and Levinson's framework to be inadequate because they see it as "a theory of face work, dealing only with the mitigation of face-threatening acts" and argue that the framework "does not account for those situations in which face-threat mitigation is not a priority, e.g. aggressive, abusive, or rude behaviour". As a result, it cannot account for impoliteness (Bousfield, 2008: 66; Eelen, 2001: 91; Locher, 2004: 69). Instead, Locher and Watts (2005) propose a broader framework of relational work within a discursive approach, in which they see politeness as a small portion of this overall framework.

In conclusion, despite the criticism, Brown and Levinson's politeness model has been considered pioneering work in the field. It has retained its influence for the last 30 years and has been extensively discussed, debated, and acknowledged as well as criticized. If their model did not provide an explicit model of politeness, it would not have received as much attention. However, due to its limitations, the modern generation of politeness researchers has provided an alternative paradigm for considering the phenomenon of politeness, which will be discussed below.

### **2.1.2 Postmodern view of politeness: Discursive approach**

A new school of politeness referred to as "postmodern" has emerged since the publication of Eelen's (2001) book *A Critique of Politeness*. The postmodern view of politeness research has been most comprehensively represented to date in

the discursive approach to politeness (Eelen, 2001; Locher, 2004, 2006; Locher & Watts, 2005; Watts, 2003, 2005b). This approach has emerged as a result of challenging the basis of the traditional view. While postmodern researchers study politeness following different models, they are united in their rejection of conducting politeness research on the basis of the classical Gricean and speech act frameworks; instead, they carefully investigate politeness as it occurs in the unfolding of discourse (Eelen, 2001: 252-255; Mills, 2003: 38; Watts, 2003: 208, 217). They argue that politeness cannot reside in one utterance rather it is negotiated in longer stretches of discourse.

The other major contribution of discursive researchers is the distinction they make between what they term first-order politeness (politeness1) and second-order politeness (politeness2). The distinction goes back to Watts, Ide, and Ehlich's (1992) introduction to the collection *Politeness in Language*. It was again stressed in the early 2000s by Eelen (2001), and at this point it was really taken up in the field. Politeness1 refers to the understanding of lay persons, while politeness2 is a technical "term within a theory of social behaviour and language usage" (Watts et al., 2005: 3). Therefore, politeness1 considers specific cultural norms in investigating politeness. The motivation behind making this distinction was that lay persons' assessment of politeness for a given social behaviour as polite or not rarely corresponded to definitions of politeness as proposed in most of the established theories (Locher & Watts, 2005: 15). To illustrate the problems of focusing solely on politeness2 in investigating politeness, consider the following set of utterances that might occur during a dinner conversation:

(a) *Pass me the salt.*

(b) *Could you please pass me the salt?*

(c) *Would you be so kind as to pass me the salt?*

The assumption made in politeness2 models is that (b) and (c) would be perceived by native speaker informants as more polite than (a) since these models typically correlate indirectness with politeness. However, in reality, any of the above sentences might be polite or not depending on the context. If the interactants are, for instance, very close to each other and they usually talk informally, (a) might be the appropriate one whereas (c) might be considered overly polite or even insulting. On the other hand, if the interactants are on different levels of a social hierarchy and talk to each other in a very formal way, they might choose (c), and even (b) might breach the norm. That is, evaluating these utterances as polite crucially relies on the norms constructed by members of a given community of practice (COP). Therefore, researchers of discursive

politeness argue that politeness research should focus on politeness<sup>1</sup> (Eelen, 2001: 252; Mills, 2003: 14; Watts, 2003: 9).

The notion of COP is considered beneficial to the analysis of politeness (Holmes & Schnurr, 2005; Mills, 2003) since it enables the examination of linguistic behaviour within smaller groups, what Kádár (2011: 247) called the smallest analysable social unit, rather than making inadequate generalizations about the wider society (Kádár & Haugh, 2013: 46). The framework of COP was developed by Wenger (1998) in order to capture social practices that are developed within a specific group. It describes the way that groups of people who are jointly engaged to achieve a particular task develop styles of speaking, ways of doing things, and values that are specific to them (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992: 464). It is not suggested that each COP invents its politeness norms from scratch; the norms of the wider society and other COPs are also involved. Within this framework, knowledge about what is regarded as appropriate behaviour is acquired through participation (Davies, 2005: 576). Each COP composes “a shared repertoire of negotiable resources accumulated over time” (Wenger, 1998: 67). These resources are shared to a lesser or greater degree across the society, but they are evaluated and reflected in a slightly different manner within each COP (Mills, 2011a: 73). This characteristic of COP is behind the argumentative nature of politeness (Geyer, 2008: 63). For discursive researchers, this allows for a more contextualized analysis of politeness (Kádár & Haugh, 2013: 47; Mills, 2011b: 31). That is, instead of evaluating certain phrases as embodiments of politeness, the focus on COP makes it possible to see that different groups construct different norms for what is considered appropriate and/or polite. This local focus moves politeness research away from the universal view of Brown and Levinson (1987). It is thus impossible to describe politeness within the discursive approach without considering what counts as polite or politic within a particular COP.<sup>16</sup>

Another premise of the discursive approach is its incorporation of social-theoretical insights (Terkourafi, 2005: 240), particularly Bourdieu’s (1991) theory of practice, which suggests that “what is interpretable as (im)polite depends on the habitus of the individual and the linguistic capital that s/he is able to manipulate” (Watts, 2003: 160). The habitus is “the set of dispositions to act in certain ways, which generates cognitive and bodily practices in the individual. The set of dispositions is acquired through socialization” (Watts, 2003: 149).

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<sup>16</sup> Other concepts that were proposed by discursive researchers to allow examining politeness within a particular context and social group were *emergent network* and *latent network* (Watts, 2003: 153).

Habitus refers to the kinds of behaviour within societies that are considered the normal way of behaving (Mills, 2011b: 30).

Politeness is considered a social phenomenon, so politeness research should focus on “how participants in social interaction perceive politeness” (Watts, 2005b: xix). Proponents of the discursive approach assert that politeness cannot be in any way inherent in the words used (Culpeper, 2010: 3235; Locher, 2006: 251; Mills, 2011b: 26; Watts, 2003: 159), rather it depends on the interpretation of a given behaviour in the overall social interaction (Grainger & Mills, 2016: 9; Locher, 2006: 249; Watts, 2003: 8). Accordingly, Locher and Watts (2005: 10 & 16) view politeness as “a discursive concept arising out of interactants’ perceptions and judgements of their own and others’ verbal behaviour”, and these perceptions are the basis of “a discursive, data-driven, bottom-up approach to politeness”. Politeness is seen as a process of judgments about linguistic behaviours that emerge through discourse production rather than something that pre-exists (Mullany, 2011: 134). It is a constructional process (Eelen, 2001: 247) rather than a productive one; thus, politeness theory cannot ever be predictive (Mills, 2011b: 40; Watts, 2003: 25). It is apparent that the discursive approach has moved away from the generalizations of the traditional theories of politeness – Lakoff (1973), Leech (1983), and Brown and Levinson (1978/1987) – that have dealt with second-order theoretical politeness by aiming at a universal understanding of politeness phenomena.

In order to investigate politeness, the researcher must carefully examine what happens in the flow of social interaction by looking in detail at the context, the interactants, the situation, and the evoked norms, and these norms are acquired in the socialization process and cannot be predicted universally (Locher, 2004: 91; Watts, 2003: 8). The analyst’s role is to identify what the norms of appropriateness might generally be within a given community and to suggest that perhaps some utterances might be evaluated as (im)polite (Mills, 2011b: 46). It is “a matter of experience and acculturation” for the researcher to be able to identify the appropriate norm (Locher, 2006: 253). Furthermore, Mullany (2011: 136) notes that the analyst can use participants’ evaluations to aid him/her with the interpretation of the whole discourse event.

The evaluative terms related to the field of politeness, such as polite, impolite, or rude, are subject to discursive dispute as interactants might differ in their evaluations of individuals’ behaviours, and these terms are by their very nature subjective (Haugh, 2010b: 11; Locher & Langlotz, 2008: 170; Watts, 2003: 23, 2005b: xx-xxi). This issue can be illustrated using Locher and Watts’ (2008: 82) description of a situation found on a discussion board on an American internet site dealing with issues related to the topic of good eating, i.e. recipes, food, and

restaurants. They focused on an incident in which a waiter reacted to a customer taking a fork from another empty table by replacing this fork in a manner interpretable as accusing the customer for not asking first. They found that respondents' evaluations varied: some comments claimed that the waiter might have breached a norm, with some even claiming the customer was actually at fault, while others claimed the waiter was not impolite at all. Obviously, there was no overall agreement between the contributors on how this non-linguistic behaviour should be classified. Moreover, the connotations of the first-order terms have changed over time. That is, the meanings of the forms of politeness in the 18th century differ from those in the 21<sup>st</sup> century dictionary definitions (Locher, 2008: 522). Indeed, even the norms of appropriate behaviour are not static rules but are in flux, shaped and altered by the same members of society (Locher, 2004: 85, 2008: 521) and changed over time because they are constantly renegotiated (Locher & Watts, 2008: 78). For example, focusing on Saudi culture, until the 1990s it was the norm to remove one's shoes when entering someone's house. However, nowadays, taking off one's shoes is considered inappropriate unless the interactants are very closely related.

Moreover, discursive researchers do not aim to delve too deeply into interactants' intentions or what analysts can infer about their intentions or feelings (Locher & Watts, 2008: 80; Mills, 2011b: 35); rather, they focus on the interactants' perceptions in naturally occurring interactions (Eelen, 2001: 109; Grainger, 2011: 170; Kádár, 2011: 249). For example, a husband says to his wife, "*You look very beautiful in this blue dress. It is the best one.*" He intends to compliment her appearance and taste in fashion for buying the dress. However, the wife might perceive his utterance as an offence, indicating that she did not look good in her other dresses and her taste in fashion has not been good previously. Subsequently, how one perceives the message is more important than the original intention of the speaker, as there is no guarantee that the addressee will recognize the real intention of the speaker. My example supports Terkourafi's (2005: 241) claim that discursive approaches are hearer-oriented as they place the interpretation of what counts as polite on hearers' assessments rather than speakers' intentions.

To sum up, the discursive approach to politeness is norm-oriented. It emphasizes the heterogeneity of norms and practices within cultures, and that the analyst should explain the participant's perceptions of the discursive struggle over politeness rather than prescribe a universal theoretical view of politeness. The approach is "more localized, interactive, and context-focused form of analysis" (van der Bom & Mills, 2015: 187). It also asserts that not only face-saving behaviour needs to be investigated, but also indicators of face-enhancing or face-

aggravating behaviour (Mills, 2003: 121; Watts, 2003: xix). The approach is equally interested in both politeness and impoliteness (Eelen, 2001: 92; Mills, 2011b: 35) as well as other types of behaviour that are neither polite nor impolite.

This postmodern view of politeness has opened up new paths for theoretical and analytical models of politeness. Several theories of politeness have emerged in recent years, including frame-based approach (Terkourafi, 2001, 2005), the interactional approach (Arundale, 1999, 2006; Haugh, 2007a), rapport management (Spencer-Oatey, 2000, 2002, 2005), and relational work (Locher & Watts, 2005). Though these proposed models share some common features in which politeness is “situated” and “discourse oriented” (Fukushima, 2015: 262), they have their own distinctive features. Due to space limitations, the following sub-sections will only review Locher and Watts' (2005) relational work and Spencer-Oatey's (2000, 2002, 2005) rapport management as these two models serve the analytical framework of this study.

### **2.1.2.1 Relational work**

A comprehensive relational view of politeness was proposed by Locher and Watts, who took a discursive approach. Relational work is defined as “the work individuals invest in [when] negotiating their relationships with others” (Locher & Watts, 2005: 10). It is based on the idea that any communicative act always embodies some form of relational work (Culpeper, 2008: 21; Locher & Watts, 2008: 78; Watts, 2005b: xlii). It claims that politeness belongs to the interpersonal level of linguistic interaction, so politeness constitutes a much smaller part of relational work than assumed by the traditional models (Locher & Watts, 2008: 96). The key contribution of their model is that politeness and impoliteness are not seen as dichotomous, but as two positions in the spectrum of relational work. Relational work covers the entire continuum of social behaviour, ranging from polite and appropriate to impolite and inappropriate behaviour based on judgements the interlocutors make (Locher, 2004: 51; Locher & Watts, 2008: 78). Taking this approach allows analysts to avoid shoehorning utterances into the two categories, i.e. politeness or impoliteness, since there are shades of relational work that are neither polite nor impolite (Locher, 2006: 255).

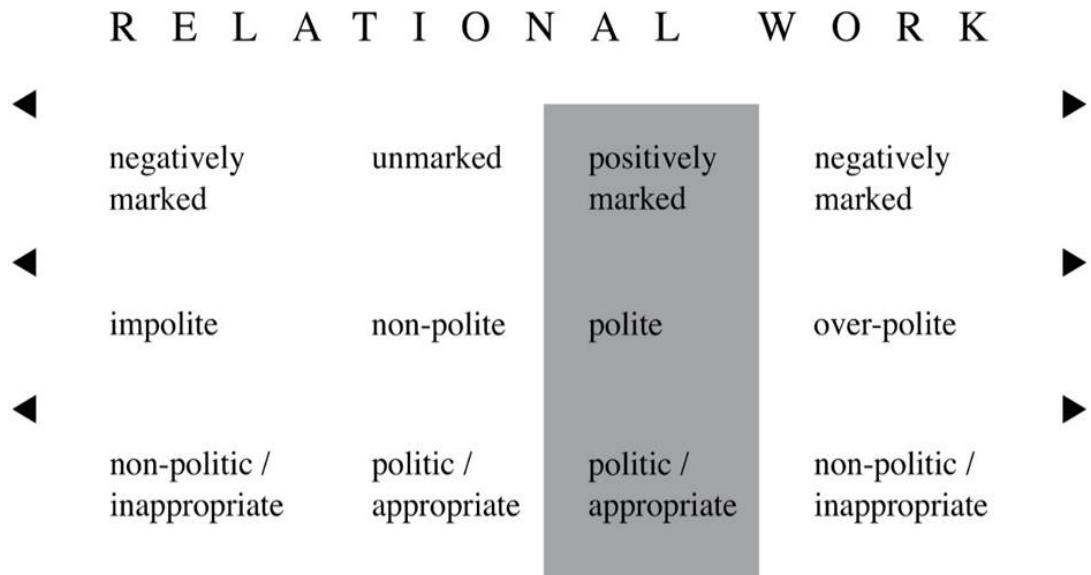
Locher and Watts invoke the notion of frame as well as Bourdieu's habitus<sup>17</sup> to explain the development of their predisposition to act in specific ways in specific situations. They consider both terms to account for the forming and existence of social norms, which guide human interaction. They claim that interactants do not pass judgments on relational work in a social vacuum, but based on their previous experiences or expectations about norms as well as rights and obligations pertaining to their person (Locher & Langlotz, 2008: 170; Locher & Watts, 2008: 78).

Moreover, the notion of face as used by Goffman (1967) is central to relational work. Locher and Watts (2005) believe that face is discursively negotiated within social interactions, rather than predefined and inherent within an individual as suggested by Brown and Levinson. Locher and Watts' view aligns with Goffman's treatment of face as "pieced together from the expressive implications of the full flow of events in an undertaking", i.e. any form of social interaction (Goffman, 1967: 31). According to them, a new face is socially constructed in every social interaction and depends mainly on the addressee's perception. They consider faces like masks, and each individual thus may be attributed an infinite number of masks, i.e. faces (Locher, 2004: 52, 2006: 251, 2008: 514; Locher & Watts, 2005: 12).

Locher and Watts propose four spectrums of relational work with respect to judgements of (im)politeness, appropriateness, and markedness. Figure 2 maps the total spectrum.

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<sup>17</sup> Frame is "an organized set of specific knowledge" (Escandell-Vidal, 1996: 629) that refers to past experiences and incorporates norms of how one should behave (Locher, 2004: 47). Habitus refers to "a set of dispositions to act in a manner which is appropriate to the social structures objectified by an individual through his/her experience of social interaction" (Watts, 2003: 274). The connection between the concepts of frame and habitus has not yet been sufficiently discussed in the literature. However, Locher, (2004: 335) claims that each individual's habitus will entail knowledge of different frames and will affect politic behaviour.



**Figure 2: Relational work (Locher, 2004: 90)**

Unmarked behaviour is what Locher and Watts call “politic behaviour”. They argue that the majority of relational work will be of an unmarked nature and unnoticed, namely, politic/appropriate (column 2). Politic behaviour is “linguistic behaviour which is perceived to be appropriate to the social constraints of the ongoing interaction, i.e. as non-salient” (Watts, 2003: 19), and it is neither polite nor impolite (Locher, 2006: 255). It could be illustrated by the addressee’s response to his friend in the following example:

*A: would you like some coffee? B: yes, please. (Watts, 2003: 186)*

On the other hand, marked behaviour can be salient in two different ways. Positively marked behaviour corresponds with being perceived as polite/politic/appropriate (column 3). Hence, polite behaviour is always politic while politic behaviour can be non-polite. This is due to the fact that “polite behaviour cannot be but appropriate since inappropriateness would turn this relational work into a case of intentional or unintentional over-politeness” (Locher, 2006: 256). In other words, both politic and polite behaviours are appropriate, but the difference is that polite behaviour is marked and meant to be understood as such (Locher, 2004: 91). However, politic/appropriate behaviour can never be impolite (Locher, 2006: 255).

Marked behaviour will be perceived negatively if it is judged to be impolite/non-politic/inappropriate (column 1) or over-polite/non-politic/inappropriate (column 4). Over-politeness is often perceived negatively as it exceeds the boundaries between appropriateness and inappropriateness (Locher, 2004: 90). The addressees’ reactions to over-polite and impolite behaviours might be roughly similar (Locher & Watts, 2005: 12; Watts, 2005b: xlv).



Finally, Locher and Watts stressed that the boundaries between these categories are not absolute and objectively definable, but rather are fuzzy edged and constantly negotiated (Locher, 2006: 258; Locher & Watts, 2005: 12; Watts, 2005b: xliii), thereby ensuring that politeness is discursively negotiated.

### **2.1.2.2 Rapport management**

Rapport management is a theory of communication, introduced by Spencer-Oatey in 2000 as an attempt to overcome the weaknesses of Brown and Levinson's politeness model. Rapport refers to the relative harmony and smoothness of relations between people, and rapport management refers to the management (or mismanagement) of relations between people (Spencer-Oatey, 2005a: 96). According to Spencer-Oatey (2000, 2002, 2005a), politeness is concerned with the way participants manage social relations, i.e. managing rapport. She claims that the motivational force for rapport management involves three main components: the management of face, the management of sociality rights, and the management of interactional goals.

Spencer-Oatey emphasizes the importance of face in social relations since face is associated with both personal/independent and social/interdependent values, and is "concerned with people's sense of worth, dignity, honour, reputation, competence and so on" (2000: 14). Accordingly, she identifies two interrelated aspects of face: quality face and social identity face (Spencer-Oatey, 2000: 14, 2002: 540). Quality face is "associated with our sense of personal self-esteem". It is related to the value we claim for ourselves based on our personal qualities such as abilities. Social identity face is related to "our sense of public worth". It is concerned with the value we claim for ourselves based on social or group roles such as being a member of family. She adds a relational component to face in her revised model of rapport management in 2008. Relational face is related to a person's sense of self in relation to others such as being a kind-hearted teacher (Spencer-Oatey, 2008: 14). As can be seen, this model has overcome the serious criticism of Brown and Levinson's individual conceptualization of face by developing the social and relational component of face. Spencer-Oatey's view of face as having individual, social, and relational values could be due to the fact that she is a Chinese specialist, which probably has given her more insight into non-Western perceptions of face.

Sociality rights refer to the "fundamental personal/social entitlements that a person effectively claims for him/herself in his/her interactions with others" (Spencer-Oatey, 2002; 540). Spencer-Oatey also identifies two different aspects of sociality rights. First, equity rights refer to our entitlement to be treated fairly and not exploited. This aspect has three components: cost-benefit

considerations, which refer to the belief that people should not be exploited or disadvantaged; fairness and reciprocity, which entail that costs-benefits should be “fair” and kept roughly in balance; and autonomy-control, which expects that people should not be unduly controlled or imposed upon. Second, association rights refer to the appropriateness of our interaction with another person according to our relationship with them. This seems to have three elements: involvement (the appropriate type and amount of people’s involvement with others), empathy (the extent to which people share appropriate concerns, feelings, and interests), and appropriate respect for others. These appropriate amounts of association depend on the nature of the relationship, sociocultural norms, and personal preferences (Spencer-Oatey, 2000: 14-15, 2002: 540-541, 2005a: 100, 2008: 16).

The third factor that may affect rapport management is the interactional goals that people hold when they interact with others (Spencer-Oatey, 2000: 36, 2008: 17). These goals can be transactional, i.e. aiming at achieving concrete tasks such as obtaining written approval; or relational, aiming at effective relationship management such as peace making (Spencer-Oatey, 2005a: 107). These two types of goals may often be interconnected since achieving a transactional goal may rely on successfully managing the relational goal. She explains that if a transactional goal is perceived to be urgent and important, then people may make allowances for any behaviour that would typically be judged inappropriate in different circumstances. It can be claimed that although the two goals are interconnected, I believe that one of them will be dominant in a given situation. For example, as in my study, the relational goal dominates most of the talk among the female friends, but there were certain instances in which a transactional goal was given prominence such as offers of information.

Spencer-Oatey (2000: 29-30) also assumes that people can hold four differing types of rapport orientations towards each other in an interaction. These are:

- 1) Rapport enhancement orientation: a desire to strengthen or enhance harmonious relations between the interlocutors;
- 2) Rapport maintenance orientation: a desire to maintain or protect harmonious relations between the interlocutors;
- 3) Rapport neglect orientation: a lack of concern or interest in the quality of relations between the interlocutors (perhaps because of a focus on self);
- 4) Rapport challenge orientation: a desire to challenge or impair harmonious relations between the interlocutors.

People’s motivations for these orientations can be different and change dynamically during the course of an interaction or series of interactions. Unlike

traditional theories, which only focus on polite behaviour, rapport management includes all aspects of behaviour whether positive, negative, or neutral.

Rapport threat and enhancement are subject to subjective evaluations. They are not simply inherited in the utterance itself, as was suggested by Brown and Levinson's model, but on interactants' interpretations and reactions to who says what under what circumstances (Spencer-Oatey, 2000: 19). As people interact with each other, they make judgements about whether their rapport has been enhanced, maintained, or damaged. These evaluations are based on behavioural conventions and norms, and these are contextually determined. This applies equally to both speakers and hearers as speakers consider which linguistic strategies to use and their possible influence, and as hearers evaluate what they have heard. Interactants need to consider not only their face and sociality rights, but also the face and rights of their interlocutors. That is, effective rapport management relies on mutual sensitivity of each interlocutor to find a proper balance between meeting his/her own needs and the needs of the other(s) (Spencer-Oatey, 2005a: 116, 2005b: 338). This approach is similar to relational work (Locher & Watts, 2005) in stressing the importance of norms, context, and participants' perceptions; however, rather than focusing on hearers' evaluations of speakers' politeness, it concentrates on both interactants' assessments of the affective quality they subjectively experience in their relations with others.

Spencer-Oatey (2000: 32-37) also identifies fundamental contextual variables influencing the choice of rapport management orientations and strategies. These include power, distance,<sup>18</sup> number of participants, message content in terms of cost-benefit considerations, and the type of communicative activity which is taking place. Spencer-Oatey (2000: 38, 2008: 39) argues that these contextual variables may have both pre-existing and dynamic roles. That is, we have pre-existing conceptions of these variables based on our relevant previous experiences, and the assessment of these variables often change dynamically as the interaction goes on (e.g. the person may be more distant than expected). Spencer-Oatey (2008: 39-40) explains that "in the course of an interaction people's initial conceptions interact with the dynamics of the interchange, both influencing and being influenced by the emerging discourse". Moreover, it is suggested that contextual, individual, and cultural differences affect people's judgments of the sensitivity of rapport management components (Spencer-

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<sup>18</sup> Power and distance are more elaborated in Spencer-Oatey's model than Brown and Levinson's model. She identifies five different sources of power, similar to French and Raven's (1959) bases of power, which are: reward, coercive, expert, legitimate, and referent power; and six components of distance: social similarity/difference, frequency of contact, length of acquaintance, familiarity, like-mindedness, and affect (Spencer-Oatey, 2000: 33-34, 2008: 34-36).

Oatey, 2002: 543, 2008: 17). Further, there may be differences in the strategies used to address certain orientations and/or their conceptions of rights and obligations; some cultures may prefer a particular strategy of mitigating potential threat to rapport, while other cultures may prefer to employ another strategy in a similar context. However, this claim needs to be supported by empirical data.

In conclusion, Spencer-Oatey provides one of the most detailed analytical frameworks that can account for linguistic data (Culpeper, 2011: 421). Rapport management is a theory where face is one of the components of rapport; the other ones are sociality rights and interactional goals. Both face and rights have individual/personal and social/interdependent perspectives. Moreover, they are not affected equally; that is, an infringement of sociality rights may cause annoyance but not a sense of face loss or threat and vice versa. For example, a request for help, which may be considered an infringement of equity rights, yet may also be considered a boost to quality face as it may show trust in our abilities. However, the same request in another context could cause the opposite interpretation.

### **2.1.2.3 A Comparison between relational work and rapport management**

Both Spencer-Oatey and Locher confess that their theories overlap to some extent. Locher (2008: 528) claims that definitions of rapport management and relational work are equivalent, whereas Spencer-Oatey (2011: 19) suggests that the approaches are compatible and complementary, but not equivalent. Both have emerged as a result of the discursive movement towards politeness in which politeness is situated in discourse, rather than inherent in isolated speech acts, and renegotiated in smaller groups, rather than generalized in larger cultures. They encompass all types of behaviour: positive, negative, and neutral. They focus on contextual and social perspectives of interaction. Politeness and face are treated as discursively constructed within situated interactions.

Although the rapport management theory shares some ideas with the theory of relational work, it seems that the rapport management is broader than the relational work framework (Locher, 2008: 528) in terms of conceptualization of participants' perceptions, face, and context. First, Spencer-Oatey posits that participants' judgements are based on three key elements: face sensitivities, sociality rights and obligations, and interactional goals, whereas Locher and Watts claim that the notions of frame and norms determine our perceptions of relational work, without providing an account of how face needs and contextual variables interplay with the shared norms in a given situation. Context is more elaborated in Spencer-Oatey's model. Haugh, Davies and Merrison (2011: 5) argue that, "Rapport Management Theory includes one of the most

comprehensive frameworks of context for politeness researchers developed to date, and indeed in its breadth anticipates much of the current discussion of politeness as situated". Second, Locher places more importance on the addressee, while Spencer-Oatey focuses on both interactants, i.e. speaker and addressee. She emphasizes the interactants' assessments of "the affective quality they subjectively and dynamically experience in their relations with others" (Spencer-Oatey, 2011: 3). Third, although both adapted Goffman's notion of face, Locher and Watts do not provide an explanation of how face needs or interactional goals interact with the negotiation of relational work. In contrast, Spencer-Oatey extends the notion of face by segmenting it into several aspects, i.e. quality face, social identity face, and relational face. Spencer-Oatey (2011: 17) argues that goals must be included in any model that deals with the underlying aspects of the management of relations.

Although it is argued that rapport management is a more elaborated model than relational work, one can argue that (im)politeness evaluations, whether marked or unmarked, are not clearly positioned in Spencer-Oatey's model. In other words, the categorization of behaviours in terms of (im)politeness and appropriateness evaluations are clearer in the relational work model. Polite or politic behaviour, i.e. expected behaviour, cannot be equated with any of the four categories of rapport orientations. Whether unmarked politic behaviour is oriented towards rapport maintenance or neglect is not clear. In this respect, Culpeper (2011: 421) claims that Spencer-Oatey's rapport management framework is not concerned with the notion of politeness and impoliteness, rather "she is simply proposing a second-order framework of interpersonal relations".

It can be argued that rapport management theory holds a more balanced view between politeness<sub>1</sub> and politeness<sub>2</sub> than relational work does since it adopts some concepts from traditional politeness theories and deals with them from a discursive view. For example, Spencer-Oatey looks more deeply at the contextual variables that affect our choice of rapport orientations as both pre-existent and discursive factors. Relational work totally rejects any theorization about politeness<sub>2</sub> and emphasizes the discursive movement towards focusing on politeness<sub>1</sub>. I think that these characteristics may make the two models complementary to each other as the result would overcome the criticism directed against politeness<sub>1</sub> and politeness<sub>2</sub> models.

#### **2.1.2.4 Critique of the discursive approach**

Like traditional theories, the discursive politeness theories are not immune from criticism. Haugh (2007b) and Terkourafi (2005) argue that they have some theoretical or methodological inconsistencies. The first question was raised with

regard to the discursive researchers' emphasis on politeness<sup>1</sup> (Terkourafi, 2005: 242-243), i.e. the lay persons' perceptions of politeness. It is well known that the term politeness does not have a one-to-one equivalence in all languages (Kádár, 2011: 253), so how can one investigate interactants' perceptions of politeness if their language does not provide a single word equivalent? Moreover, participants' judgements are based on norms, and those norms are constantly renegotiated and change over time in every type of social interaction. Accordingly, the following questions arise: What is the point of politeness research? Shall we abandon all politeness research? In this respect, Terkourafi (2005: 243) suggests that a definition of politeness<sup>2</sup> must be incorporated in our investigation of politeness. However, discursive researchers indicate that politeness<sup>2</sup> is a technical term and should not be employed in politeness analysis (Eelen, 2001: 252; Mills, 2003: 14; Watts, 2003: 9).

Haugh (2011: 257) also argues that, “[discursive] analyses [of politeness] are often not actually discursive, at least in the strict sense of the word, as the analysts draw from second-order concepts, such as ‘politic behaviour’”. Moreover, looking at their analysis, I found that they use the descriptive tools proposed by traditional theories, which they reject as politeness<sup>2</sup>, such as face mitigation, rank of imposition, and face threatening (e.g. Locher, 2006: 261-262; Locher & Langlotz, 2008: 179; Schnurr & Chan, 2009: 144). Terkourafi (2005: 245) argues that a prior rejection of a predictive theory is to reject the possibility of theorizing about politeness at any level because prediction is constitutive of any theory; and politeness<sup>1</sup> will not be an exception. She argues that interactants could not be expected to answer our metalinguistic questions about politeness if they do not have folk theories of politeness. In this respect, Grainger (2011: 168, 172; 2018: 20) argues for retaining the technical terms of politeness<sup>2</sup> while maintaining politeness<sup>1</sup> concepts in the analysis in order to achieve a better interpretation, especially for intercultural communication. She believes that both are necessary for achieving a satisfactory interpretation of politeness. The analysis in the current study aims to bring insights into this issue.

Moreover, the discursive approach strongly states that no utterance is inherently polite or impolite and that politeness is negotiated by interlocutors depending on the context (Eelen, 2001; Locher & Watts, 2005; Mills, 2003; Watts, 2003). Although context has an essential role in evaluating the discursive struggle over politeness, this extreme position fails to explain how people may have an opinion of how polite an expression is out of context, and why certain expressions such as *please*, *if you don't mind*, or *excuse me*, and certain conventionalized structures often give the impression of being polite. Regarding this point, I do not argue that politeness is predictive or inherent and context has nothing to do with

negotiating politeness nor do I believe that politeness<sup>2</sup> should be the core of politeness research. Instead, I believe that both the traditional and the discursive approaches have extreme views, and we may need to take a position that is half-way between them. That is, politeness<sup>1</sup> and politeness<sup>2</sup> complement each other as argued by Grainger (2011: 184, 2013: 35) and Haugh (2018: 155). The analysis carried out for the current study may help me to shape and test this argument empirically.

In addition, Haugh (2007b: 300) questions the validity and utility of the four categories of relational work outlined in the discursive approach, namely impolite, non-polite, polite, and over-polite:

It is not clarified in what sense these different manifestations of relational work are positively or negatively marked. In what ways is this positive marking, for example, related to face, identity, distancing/alignment, showing sincerity, or (un)intentional behaviour? This issue ... lies at core of the analytical validity and utility of this approach... Yet whether one takes this four-way categorization to be based on the perceptions of the hearer or alternatively the analyst's interpretation, it remains problematic as it is currently formulated.

He further criticizes defining over-polite behaviour as negatively marked since there are intercultural situations in which being over-polite is not negatively evaluated. For example, based on my own experience, Egyptians in my work place tend to be very polite even in informal situations, which is manifested in their heavy use of honorific terms such as */hədrɪtk/*, roughly translated as *Your Excellency*. However, this has not been evaluated negatively by other Arabs, particularly Saudis, at my workplace, although their over-politeness is identified and breaches the expected norm.

Moreover, Haugh (2013a: 53) criticizes discursive approaches for neglecting the role of speaker's intention in investigating politeness. He states, "if it is not what the speaker might be (taken to be) intending that determines whether something is polite, impolite, mock polite, over-polite and so on, then to whom can we trace such evaluations?" Indeed, Locher and Watts soften their view later by attributing impolite evaluations to perceptions of intentions; they indicate that it is the interactants' perceptions of speakers' intentions, not the intentions themselves, that determine whether a communicative act is perceived as impolite or not (Locher & Watts, 2008: 80).<sup>19</sup> Culpeper (2008: 32) also believes that people make use of their understandings of intentions in their evaluation of potentially face-

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<sup>19</sup> It is important to note that what a speaker intends to mean by a given act is not necessarily what the hearer actually understands (Davies, 1998: 122). This could be due to the fact that their intentions are not always clear (Haugh, 2007a: 95) and that speakers are not always conscious of their intentions since they are scarcely expected to make an active effort to get hearers to recognize their real intentions (Sanders, 2013: 113).

attacking behaviour, since they are held accountable for what they are taken to mean (Haugh, 2013b: 47). In conclusion, it can be argued that understandings of politeness reside in both the speaker and the addressee, as suggested by Spencer-Oatey (2005a: 116, 2005b: 338). This is due to the fact that interaction is dyadic, where both are involved in the interpersonal effects of the interaction.

### **2.1.3 Summary**

This section has provided a review of traditional theories of politeness and some models from the postmodern approach and evaluated their strengths and limitations. Both approaches have deepened our research insights into politeness. It can be seen that the traditional models on politeness have some common characteristics that have attracted much criticism. First, the traditional models have taken Grice's CP as their theoretical departure. Thus, these models investigate politeness from a predictive approach (Watts, 2003: 25), which ignores the constructionist nature of social interaction. Second, the traditional theories are insufficient to consider politeness at the discourse level due to their speech act focus (Bousfield, 2008: 66; Fukushima, 2004: 368; Mills, 2003: 82-83; Watts, 2003: 97). As a result, they ignore the role of context in social interaction where politeness occurs. Third, these models do not attempt to explain how the addressee might interpret or react to the produced politeness strategy (Watts, 2003: 111). Since any social interaction includes both speakers and addressees, both are indispensable elements of any view of politeness (Eelen, 2001: 96). Finally, the models classify linguistic behaviour as either polite or impolite. This view does not leave open the option for a type of behaviour that is neither polite nor impolite. These shortcomings have encouraged researchers to conduct politeness research from a different perspective. Recently, a discursive approach to politeness has emerged and become dominant.

Discursive theories investigate politeness from a social perspective. They are concerned with the contextual analysis of participants' perceptions, and what information and cues inform those decisions about whether certain behaviour has been polite or impolite. It is clear that there has been a dramatic shift from analysing politeness as a system of rational choices made by a model person, to an analysis of the discursive struggle over what counts as politeness or impoliteness in a particular context. Politeness is therefore seen as a constructional process of judgments about linguistic behaviours that emerge through discourse production, and therefore it cannot be predicted universally. It was clear that discursive theories have not escaped criticism either. Their emphasis on politeness<sup>1</sup> and exclusion of politeness<sup>2</sup> has been questioned.



The overview of politeness theories has helped me to select a theoretical framework upon which the present study could be based. Due to the relative newness of the discursive approach, there is far less empirical research that builds on these discursive politeness theories compared to the plentiful empirical research carried out to test traditional politeness theories. It appears that there is a need to provide more opportunities for exploring these newer approaches to politeness in different linguistic contexts. The discursive approach to politeness is thus employed in the current study. It aims to empirically test the applicability of the discursive approach from cross-cultural perspectives. It is essential to stress here that the employment of the discursive approach in the current study does not mean that traditional theories are not valuable. I believe that traditional theories continue to provide the dominant terminology for analysing politeness phenomenon as argued by Grainger (2018: 20).

Moreover, the choice of both relational work and rapport management is motivated by several factors. First, this study was initially based on the relational work model; however, throughout the analysis process, I found that relational work could not fully tackle offering as it occurs in ordinary spoken discourse. It is believed that relational work and rapport management can complement each other. As discussed above, relational work can tackle the participants' perceptions of appropriateness and politeness, whereas rapport management provides some concepts and predictive factors that enable an interpretation of what is going on in a given interaction. The current study aims to provide some insights into discursive politeness models through studying offers by female friendship groups in two cultures. This in turn could contribute to enriching and improving the current stance of politeness research. Second, both models have been used by studies of cross-cultural politeness more than the other postmodern models, i.e. the interactional approach and Terkourafi's (2001, 2005) frame-based approach. For example, relational work was used in impoliteness studies (e.g. Ng, 2008), computer mediated discourse (e.g. Darics, 2010), and politeness at work (e.g. Schnurr & Chan, 2009). Rapport management was also successfully employed in some business studies (Campbell et al., 2007, 2003), social talk in Thai and Japanese (Aoki, 2010), swearing in American and British English (Esbensen, 2009), debt collection call centre encounters in a UK company (Harrington, 2018), and doctor-patient interaction in Spain and Britain (Hernández López, 2008). Finally, the two models were effectively combined in two studies of requests in emails between graduate students and instructors (Zhu, 2012, 2017). My study differs from Zhu's in three perspectives. First, Zhu deals with written computer mediated communication in an education institution, whereas my study focuses on ordinary informal spoken discourse. Second, the

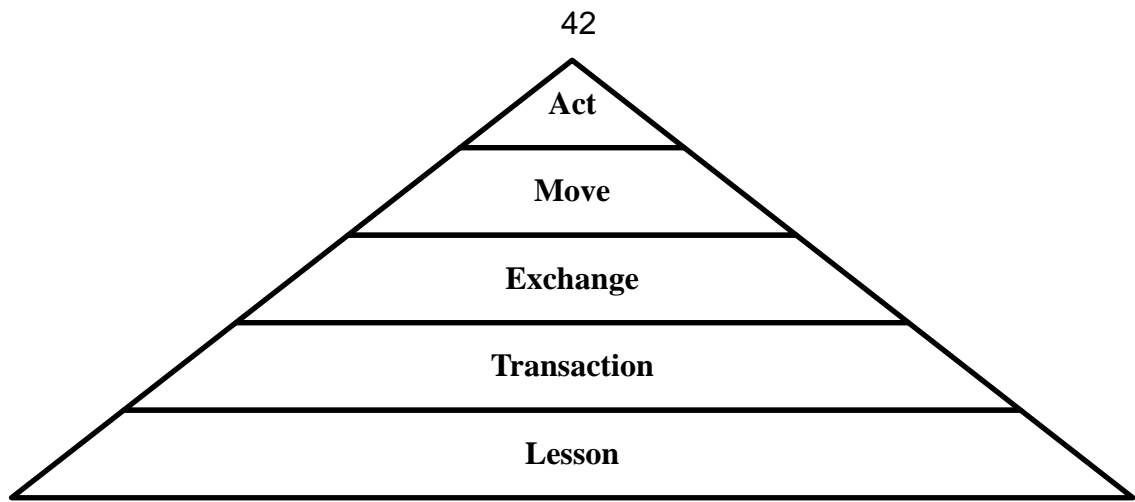
emails in Zhu's study were sent by students to their university instructors; thus, power and authority are not equal. The interaction investigated in my study is characterized by equal power and authority as it took place between close female friends. Third, Zhu focuses only on email writers and does not investigate recipients' responses to explore any negotiation of politeness and perceptions of relational work. She treats emails as monologues. My study focuses on all ratified participants in the encounter. I believe that further empirical research is needed to test the validity of these two models as part of the discursive movement in different types of communication.

## **2.2 Approaches to discourse: Discourse analysis (DA) and conversation analysis (CA)**

DA and CA are two methodological approaches to the study of talk. Although both are centrally concerned with providing an account of understanding coherence and sequential organization in discourse, they differ in many ways (Levinson, 1983: 286). DA is a deductive analytical approach that is based on the theoretical principles of structural linguistics. It attempts to extend sentence level analysis to discourse. On the other hand, CA is an inductive analytical method based on sociology, ethnomethodology, and ethnography. A brief review of both approaches is provided in the following sub-sections. The review mainly focuses on how these two approaches are employed in the current study.

### **2.2.1 Discourse analysis**

In the early 1970s, Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) pioneering research developed a model in an attempt to describe the structure of classroom discourse. Their model defines the structure of classroom talk as a hierarchical system consisting of discourse units in which any rank consists of units of a level below it. The highest unit is the lesson, which consists of transactions, exchanges, moves, and acts respectively (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975: 23). The rank scale can be illustrated as follows:



**Figure 3 Rank scale of classroom discourse after Sinclair and Coulthard (1975)**

Their main contribution is their view of the exchange as the basic unit of conversation.<sup>20</sup> A typical exchange in a classroom consists of an *initiating move* by the teacher (I), followed by a *responding move* from the pupil (R), followed by a *feedback move* (F) to the pupil's response from the teacher<sup>21</sup> (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975: 21).<sup>22</sup> The responding move could be verbal or non-verbal (Coulthard & Brazil, 1992: 64). Example 1 illustrates this structure:

### Example 1

1. T: Can you tell me what time it is? (I)
2. P: It is half past nine. (R)
3. T: Good, Mary. (F)

The model has been elaborated and adapted to other institutional discourse types such as the courtroom (e.g. Archer, 2005). However, problems have been encountered in the analysis of discourse in less structured situations, which is a drawback addressed by the authors (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975: 6), and other researchers (e.g. Burton, 1981: 61; Coulthard & Brazil, 1992: 68; McCarthy, 1991:

<sup>20</sup> This section focuses only on the exchange unit since it serves the purpose of the study in analysing offers. It is also identified by several discourse analysis researchers as the basic unit of structure (e.g. Edmondson, 1981; Francis & Hunston, 1992; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975).

<sup>21</sup> These three core moves, *Initiation*, *Response*, and *Feedback*, provided the abbreviation 'IRF model', which is widely used to refer to Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) model.

<sup>22</sup> Sinclair and Coulthard (1975: 50-53) provide other types of exchanges in which *I* is the only obligatory move, whereas *R* and *F* are either optional or impossible. For instance, when the teacher passes on information, pupils usually do not respond to the teacher initiation and there is no space for feedback. The structure of such an exchange is *I (R)*. However, the problem is that they have not differentiated between the situations in which *R* and/or *F* are obligatory and those in which they are not (Berry, 1981: 122-123).

22). Stubbs (1983: 132, 146), for example, questions the applicability of their conceptualization of exchange to other unstructured discourse types such as casual conversations in which the function of discourse is phatic and social, rather than conveying information. He also indicates that exchanges may drift along in less structured ways or are embedded in one another, giving discontinuous exchanges. Stubbs (1983: 131) defines an exchange as “a minimal interactive unit, in which an initiation *I* by A is followed obligatorily by a response *R* from B, and optionally by further utterances”. His definition has fewer constraints than Sinclair and Coulthard’s (1975). It does not restrict the function of the following moves to be feedback.<sup>23</sup> Complex exchanges can be accommodated by Stubbs’ definition. However, the model does not provide a systematic account of such complexity.

Moreover, modifications have been proposed by various authors (e.g. Coulthard & Brazil, 1992; Francis & Hunston, 1992; Willis, 1992) to overcome some limitations. For instance, Coulthard and Brazil (1992: 71-72) propose the introduction of the new optional Response/Initiation move (*R/I*), which acts both as a response to the preceding element and as an initiation to the following one. They further suggest that *F* is optional too. They argue that an exchange can consist minimally of two obligatory moves, *I* and *R*, and maximally of four moves *I (R/I) R (F)*. The other suggestion is related to the length of the exchange. Francis and Hunston (1992: 124) in their analysis of everyday conversation explain various possibilities of exchanges, for example, *I (R/I) R (F<sup>n</sup>)*, in which not only *I/R* and *F* are optional, but also *F* could occur more than once. They indicate that any absence of an obligatory element of the exchange would render the exchange incomplete. However, the authors mention some situations in which an absent response can be understood from the discourse, i.e. a response is implied but not realized (Francis & Hunston, 1992: 152-155). They also abandon Sinclair and Coulthard’s (1975) assumption that each move or act can perform only one function; they found that a single act or move could have two functions at once (Francis & Hunston, 1992: 149-150).

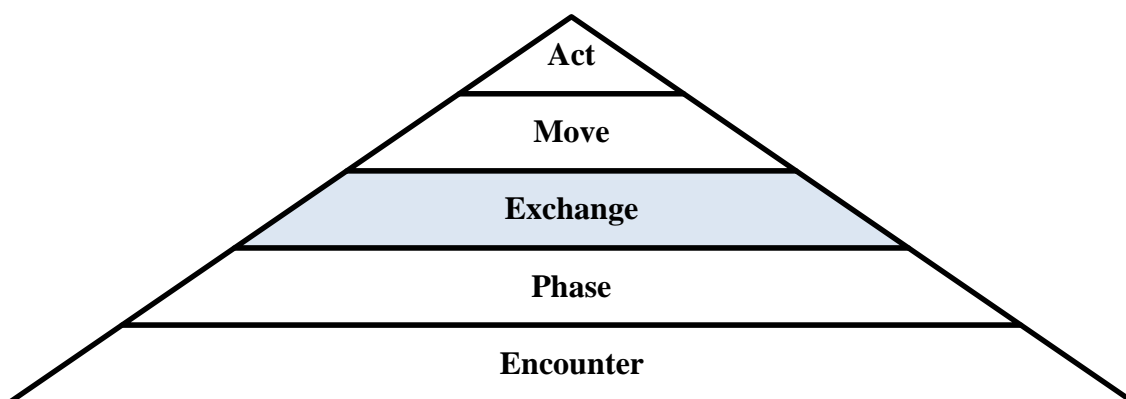
Neither Sinclair and Coulthard’s (1975) model nor the modifications subsequently proposed by researchers have been taken up in the current study since they are strongly influenced by classroom discourse and other institutional settings. The model and its modifications mainly reflect traditional teacher-centred classrooms in which teachers do most of the talking and students’ role is restricted to fit mostly

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<sup>23</sup> It is important to mention that the label *feedback* in the IRF model has been substituted with the label *follow-up* in subsequent related work to get away from its pedagogical implications.

within the response move.<sup>24</sup> What happens in friends' talk does not resemble formal classroom interaction. All interactants have the right to initiate, respond and follow-up in their exchanges (McCarthy, 1991: 20). Feedback is not an essential element of informal discourse. In this respect, Berry (1981: 130) indicates that what is problematic in the IRF model is that the evaluative function of the follow-up move is very much part of the teacher role in a typical classroom situation and is unusual outside the classroom. The IRF exchange structure is more applicable in situations where power and authority are not equal, e.g. in a traditional classroom structure where the teacher has power over students. This differs from talk amongst friends where participants have equal authority and power in the interaction. Moreover, this model cannot account for overlaps in speech, which are very common in casual conversations.

Another model was proposed by Edmondson (1981) and Edmondson and House (1981), which presents the most elaborate description of discourse (Gramley & Pátzold, 1992: 215). It is based on role-play data gathered as part of the research project, *Communicative Competence as a Learning Objective in Foreign Language Teaching*. Similar to Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) model, Edmondson (1981) uses a hierarchical rank system to account for discourse structure in conversational data. It classifies different functional units of discourse, of which *acts* are the smallest, and the *encounter* is the largest. Other units are *move*, *exchange*, and *phase*. Several units of the same level combine to form the next higher level of discourse, e.g. acts combine to form a move, moves combine to form an exchange, and so on. The following diagram illustrates this rank system:



**Figure 4 Rank scale of conversational discourse after Edmondson (1981)**

<sup>24</sup> The IRF model cannot describe classrooms that are less formal than those investigated by Sinclair and Coulthard (Berry, 1981: 135). For example, it cannot account for an interactive classroom where students engage more in the talk (e.g. discussion groups).

The move and exchange are the primary units of analysis in the model. A move is “the smallest significant element by means of which a conversation developed” (Edmondson, 1981: 6). A speaker’s turn of speech includes at least one interactional move. The model identifies four head moves: *Initiate*, *Satisfy*, *Contra* and *Counter*.<sup>25</sup> An *Initiate* is a move that begins an exchange, and a *Satisfy* is a move that leads to an outcome, whether positive or negative. A *Contra* is a speaker’s attempt to make an addressee withdraw the preceding *Initiate* (Edmondson, 1981: 88). It is an ultimate negative reaction to the *Initiate*. A *Counter*, on the other hand, is a speaker’s attempt to cause the content of the previous move to be amended, qualified, or withdrawn due to the content of the *Counter* (Edmondson, 1981: 89). A *Counter* is only a provisional negative reaction and is taken back in the course of the exchange (Gramley & Pätzold, 1992: 223). *Contra* and *Counter* are moves that make exchanges longer. All these elements may be accomplished verbally or non-verbally.

An exchange is the minimal unit of interaction (Edmondson, 1981: 86). It consists of at least two moves produced by different speakers (Edmondson, 1981: 86-100; Edmondson & House, 1981: 38-42). It is defined by Edmondson and House (1981: 38) as:

... a conversational unit in which both partners together reach a conversational outcome, i.e. they reach a point of agreement, and the conversation may then proceed to further business, or indeed to a closing ritual.

Thus, its major characteristic is that it produces an outcome of some sort. This means an exchange only comes to an end with a *Satisfy*, whether achieved verbally or not. Its basic structure is *Initiate (I) + Satisfy (S)* as in Example 2.

### Example 2

1. A: *Would you like a cup of tea.* (I)
2. B: *Love to, thanks.* (S)

However, instead of being satisfied immediately, the *Initiate* may be followed by *Contra* and then a *Satisfy*. It is important to note that a *Satisfy* functions with respect to the immediately preceding interactional move (Edmondson, 1981: 88). In Example 3, the *Contra* (i.e. the refusal) is satisfied (i.e. accepted) and the exchange reaches an outcome, with the structure *I+ Contra (C) +S*.

### Example 3

1. A: *Shall I carry this for you.* (I)

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<sup>25</sup> Edmondson (1981: 86-100) called the *Initiate* move *Proffer*. Other moves, which are called meta-moves, including *Re-Proffer*, *Prime*, *Reject*, and *Re-Run*, are not considered here.

2. B: Oh thanks, but I can manage. They are not heavy. (C)  
 3. A: OK. (S)

Spoken discourse may have an elaborate and complex structure (McCarthy, Matthiessen, & Slade, 2010: 55). An exchange may have the structure  $I+C_{(n)}+S$ . For example, an offer exchange may become more intricate and stretch over a number of moves if an initial refusal of the offer is not accepted by the offerer as in Example 4.

#### Example 4

1. A: I can go back over some of the stuff with you if you like. (I)  
 2. B: No, it's ok, I can do it myself if I just settle down and concentrate. (C1)  
 3. A: Yeah but it's easier revise with two. We can compare answers. (C2)  
 4. B: Thanks, but I find it easier to revise alone. (C3)  
 5. A: Ok... (S)

The example is an exchange by an Irish English NS group (Barron, 2003: 132).

Moreover, Edmondson, (1981: 122) identifies three types of supportive moves: grounders (used to give reasons), expanders (provide more than the minimum absolute information), and disarmers (serve to anticipate to avoid a possible offence before it is committed). Their function is identified in accordance with their semantic relationship to head moves. Edmondson indicates that they are optional and only present at the surface level, not in the underlying interactional structure. More than one supportive move may accompany a head move. Their use is strategic, i.e. it depends on how speakers view the situation, and on how appropriate they are for the speakers' conversational goals. For example, a speaker may use grounders or expanders to make the offer more attractive and hence persuade the offeree to accept.

Edmondson's (1981) model is employed in the current study for several reasons. First, the model does not only concentrate on interactional aspects of discourse like Sinclair and Coulthard (1975), rather it combines speech act theory and the study of interaction structure. Utterances are seen as having illocutionary force besides their interactional value (Edmondson & House, 1981: 36). For example, the utterance "*Can I help you?*" would be classified in Edmondson's model as an offer (illocutionary force) and as an *Initiate* (interactional move). Second, it has been successfully employed in providing insights into the interactional structure of offer sequences by Barron (2003) and Pohle (2009). Indeed, Edmondson's model provides some examples of offer/invitation exchanges itself. Third, it allows some flexibility on move types since each move functions with respect to the immediately preceding interactional move (Edmondson, 1981: 88) — i.e. a *Satisfy* has to act in relation to the preceding *Contra* or *Counter* not to the *Initiate* move — unlike the IRF model in which moves function according to their relationships

within the exchange as a whole. As a result, there is no restriction on the number of moves in a given exchange as long as the current move is related to the previous one. Edmondson's categories can therefore capture what's going on in ordinary talk more effectively. Fourth, Edmondson provides new conceptualizations of discourse units that can account for complex negotiation, which is common in offer exchanges in authentic interaction, in a way that the IRF model – which originally concentrated on traditional classroom discourse – does not. For these reasons, the taxonomy of offer exchanges used in this study draws from Edmondson's (1981) model with slight modifications made to it. Edmondson indicates that an exchange must have an outcome; however, this is not applicable all the time. There are certain exchanges in which the *Satisfy* is absent due to an interruption or a shift in the discussion. Moreover, Stubbs (1983: 132) points out that the opening and closing of an exchange is not always clear cut. Thus, a more flexible notion of exchange is employed, in which a *Satisfy* is not an essential part. The exchange may be left unfinished or embedded in another exchange. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

Such complications in identifying a discourse unit have shifted the attention of many discourse analysts to observing how people behave and cooperate in the management of discourse, rather than building elaborate models of structure (Levinson, 1983: 286).<sup>26</sup> This approach was introduced and developed by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson and colleagues in the 1970s and referred to as conversation analysis (CA). The next section is devoted to providing a brief review of CA.

## 2.2.2 Conversation analysis

CA studies the social organization of everyday talk (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974). It develops a systematic description of structural characteristics of talk-in-interaction. The analysis of CA focuses on describing what occurs in the interaction, i.e. participants' responses. It aims to discover systems of talk including organizational features of talk such as turn-taking, adjacency pairs, preference organization, pre-sequences, opening and closings, etc. (Archer, Aijmer, & Wichmann, 2012: 65). In other words, it identifies the normative expectations that underpin interaction sequences.

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<sup>26</sup> It is important to note that both the IRF and Edmondson's models of discourse are classified as structural-functional approaches to discourse analysis. They deal with the structure of language and the distribution of linguistic forms in spoken interaction (Cameron, 2001: 49). There are other approaches to analysing conversation, including sociolinguistics, social semiotics (e.g. critical discourse analysis), conversation analysis, and logico-philosophy (e.g. pragmatics) (Eggs & Slade, 1997: 24). The focus of this review is only on CA and structural-functional approaches.



The fact that people take turns to speak is central to the CA approach. Sacks et al. (1974: 702-703) propose two elements regarding turn taking. First, speakers are aware that a turn includes one or more turn-constitutional units (TCU). A TCU is defined as a grammatical unit of language, such as a sentence, clause, or phrase, the end of which represents to the interactants a point at which a speaker change can occur, in what is known as a Transition Relevance Place (TRP).<sup>27</sup> Speakers use this knowledge to project the end point of the current turn. Second, there is a mechanism for allocating turns to participants in a conversation when a TCU reaches an end point. Sacks et al. (1974) suggest a set of rules for the allocation of the next turn: 1) current speaker selects next speaker; 2) next speaker self-selects; or 3) current speaker may, but does not have to, continue holding the floor. The first alternative takes precedence over the other options. There are many ways for a current speaker to select the next speaker such as addressing questions to them, naming them, or via gaze. However, turn transitions are not always as simple as the above account suggests. There are situations where interruptions or overlaps occur (see Cameron, 2001: 92-94).

The other significant contribution of CA is its identification of adjacency pairs. Sacks et al. (1974: 716) notice that spoken interaction is often structured around pairs of adjacent utterances in which the second is related to – and functionally dependent on – the first, e.g. question/answer and offer/acceptance or refusal. Moreover, conversation analysts found that there are two types of second pair parts. Some second pair parts are routinely preferred, whereas others are dispreferred. This is called the notion of “preference” organization. This preference does not refer to personal wants of interlocutors, rather to recurrent sequential and turn-organizational features of alternative actions (Sacks, 1987: 55). A preferred response is usually short, without hesitation or elaboration, whereas a dispreferred response is usually performed hesitantly and elaborately. Focusing on offers, acceptance is considered the preferred second pair part, while refusal is the dispreferred one (Levinson, 1983: 336). Moreover, the second pair part may not immediately follow the first pair part. Adjacency pairs may include a sequence of turns that intervene between the first and second pair parts, which are referred to as insertion sequences (Schegloff, 1972: 78). These

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<sup>27</sup> The end of a turn can be marked by a range of concurrent factors including the content of what is said, the prosodic or grammatical structure of the speech, such as falling intonation or a completed sentence, and aspects of non-verbal behaviour such as gaze (Cameron, 2001: 90; Eggins & Slade, 1997: 26).

are often comprised of embedded and nested question–answer adjacency pairs related to the first pair part.<sup>28</sup>

### 2.2.3 Summary

Since both DA and CA deal with interaction, there are some overlaps between them (Wooffitt, 2005: 71). Both are concerned with features of discourse in relation to the performance of actions and practices.<sup>29</sup> They avoid assumptions about the underlying cognitive organization (e.g. intentions). Wooffitt (2005: 85) claims that even discourse analysts who have reservations about CA still offer analyses that reflect CA's methodological concerns regarding sequences or orientations of turns at talk. He argues that while discourse analytic research usually refers to CA research, CA research rarely refers to DA approaches.<sup>30</sup> DA researchers seem to be more flexible about drawing on multiple approaches than CA ones. On the other hand, Eggins and Slade (1997: 24) suggest that due to the challenges and complexity of analysing casual conversation, it would be most useful to adopt a more eclectic approach. For example, researchers could take perspectives on the micro-structuring of casual conversation, including organization of turn-taking from CA; variation in conversational style from interactional sociolinguistics; the production and interpretation of speech acts from speech act theory and pragmatics; and the grammatical, semantic, and discourse characteristics of casual talk from systemic-functional linguistics.

Following Eggins and Slade's (1997) recommendation, the current study uses some concepts from DA, particularly the functional-linguistic approach by Edmondson (1981), and CA at two separate stages of the analysis. The two approaches are not combined; each one is used separately to fulfil different purposes. DA was used at the broader level, i.e. the analysis of the organization of talk at a macro level. The concept of exchange structure was taken to identify offer extracts as they occur in longer stretches of discourse since the exchange is part of a model that enables breaking the longer discourse into units. It is argued that the concept of the exchange is more suitable than adjacency pairs,

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<sup>28</sup> Other concepts from CA, such as discourse markers, self and other repair, pauses, overlaps, laughter, and tone of voice may be explained and referred to in the analysis whenever I found that they play a role in unveiling the underlying patterns of discursive politeness in offer negotiations.

<sup>29</sup> However, there are significant differences with regard to the focus of empirical analysis such as the type of data studied, topics to be addressed, the research questions addressed, and the nature of findings (see Wooffitt, 2005).

<sup>30</sup> Most CA researchers (e.g. Levinson, 1983: 294) reject the DA approach because its methods and theoretical tools are borrowed from theoretical linguistics. They believe that these tools are inappropriate to account for conversation since conversation is not a structural product in the same manner that sentences are.

since data revealed that sometimes complex negotiation took place before the second part response of an offer. CA has neither provided a clear systematic account of how adjacency pairs may be recognized as part of a larger discourse nor has it identified the possible structures of all adjacency pairs (Eggins & Slade, 1997: 31), or indeed the different functions of the insertion sequences in relation to the other parts. In contrast, the exchange notion can capture the sequencing of turns in terms of functional slots (Eggins & Slade, 1997: 44), using the notions of a *Contra*, *Counter*, and supportive move which are absent in adjacency pairs. Using the concept of exchange therefore enabled me to more accurately identify offers as part of a longer discourse and define different patterns of complexity found in offer interactions as occurring in casual conversations. It also enabled the provision of some descriptive quantitative accounts of the possible structures of offer exchanges, which would be impossible if the notion of adjacency pairs were employed.

On the other hand, CA was used at the micro level, i.e. the detailed discursive analysis of offer negotiations. Although I do not follow a systematic CA approach to the analysis, I drew on the concepts developed in CA during the discursive analysis of politeness. CA provides a formal analysis at a greater level of detail, and offers technical terms that enable me to capture the moment-by-moment detailed organization of the interaction (Wooffitt, 2005: 80). The notions of turn taking, preference organization, repair, and overlap were observed to fully discover what is going on and hence understand interactants' assessments. Since the discursive approach to politeness focuses on the evaluations of participants' practices during an interaction, these evaluations may be affected by the organizational features studied in CA. CA provides analytical units that allow us to describe conversational regularities that are needed to interpret interactants' reactions, identify breaches of norms that are considered substantial in the talk (Pirainen-marsh, 2005: 215) and, hence, draw conclusions regarding politeness (Hua et al., 2000: 86). They allow us to describe the interactional aspects of certain behaviour such as overlaps, silence, repair, and interruption which may be relevant to understanding the discursive struggle over politeness. Therefore, many concepts of CA are inescapably relevant to the investigation of discursive politeness.<sup>31</sup>

In conclusion, DA was taken to address the macro level since the management of interaction is rarely the focus of its research (Wooffitt, 2005: 80), whereas CA was used to explain any linear process that affects our interpretation of politeness

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<sup>31</sup> Some discursive politeness research employs CA (e.g. Davies, 2018; Grainger & Mills, 2016; Haugh, 2007b, 2013a, 2015; Locher & Watts, 2005) to explore how interactants communicate.

because CA focuses on micro structural issues rather than on the larger macro structure of conversation (Eggins & Slade, 1997: 30). CA was used as a tool to aid interpreting some practices that affect the discursive struggle over politeness in offering interactions. It is my assertion that the ability to examine delicate discursive actions like offers, which have rarely been the subject of investigation in politeness research, is a sufficient justification for an eclectic approach.

## 2.3 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the theoretical foundation for the current study. It provides a comprehensive and critical discussion of the existing theoretical frameworks of politeness. Key traditional and postmodern models of politeness have been reviewed, considering their strengths and limitations. In order to explore the newer approaches in new linguistic contexts, the study takes a discursive approach to politeness, particularly relational work and rapport management models. A comparison of relational work and rapport management frameworks has therefore been presented to highlight how they can complement each other in our understanding of politeness negotiations in offer interactions among female friends.

Moreover, it has been argued that there is a need to move beyond the study of politeness from a one-dimensional perspective, e.g. using a discursive approach only, to an eclectic approach that considers the interactional construction of the macro and micro discourse in the exploration of politeness (Grainger, 2011, 2013). For example, Davies (2018) draws on different disciplines in her analysis of online comments from *Daily Mail* articles relating to the Penelope Soto court hearings. She uses concepts from pragmatics (e.g. speech act theory, intention), critical discourse analysis, CA, modality, and lexis. Two different approaches to the study of spoken discourse have impacted my exploration of politeness. They are DA and CA. I claim that quantitative analysis of some aspects of discourse can be used at the macro level of discourse to identify politic patterns of behaviour in a given context. CA is used to unveil participants' evaluations of politeness as it is discursively constructed through the construction of talk. In summary, the review of related theories has helped me form the analytical framework of this study.

After providing the theoretical background that guided the design of this study, the following chapter presents a review of speech act theory, offers, and research methods used in pragmatics research in order to complete the picture necessary for the methodology design explained in Chapter 4.

## Chapter 3 Research on Speech Acts, Offers, and Methods

One main element of pragmatics has been investigating speakers' appropriate production and comprehension of speech acts. This chapter first introduces the origin of speech act theory and related research (Section 3.1). As the focus of this research is exploring discursive negotiation of politeness in offer interactions as it occurs in natural women's talk, it does not aim to focus on theoretical developments in speech act theory itself. Instead, it explores the methodological practices employed in cross-cultural or interlanguage pragmatics studies and previous research on offers, which have been mainly based on the premises of speech act theory. The brief overview of speech act theory is provided to clarify the classifications and definitions of offers as well as the theoretical framework of most previous studies of offers. The chapter then deals with offers as speech act behaviour, starting with reviewing their pragmatic definitions, empirical studies as well as their role and practices in both Arabic and English cultures (Section 3.2). Finally, data collection methods on pragmatics research are discussed (Section 3.3). Such examination helps in selecting the methodological design for the current study.

### 3.1 Speech act: Theory and research

Speech act theory is a main component of pragmatics that was introduced by Austin (1962) in his seminal work *How to Do Things With Words* and further developed by Searle (1969, 1975a, 1975b). It deals with how words perform actions rather than just transfer meaning. The basis of speech act theory is not whether utterances are true or false; rather it is Austin's (1962: 12) statement "in saying something we are doing something". That is, if someone says "*I apologize*", s/he is not only stating a fact that can be verified as either true or false but also performing an act of apologizing.

Austin (1962: 94-108) maintains that each utterance involves the performance of multiple acts simultaneously: a locutionary act, an illocutionary act, and a perlocutionary act. A locutionary act refers to the uttering of words and the literal meaning of the utterance; an illocutionary act refers to the speaker's intention or goal in producing a particular utterance; and a perlocutionary act refers to the effect of the utterance upon its audience. For example, the locutionary act in the utterance "*It's cold in here*" is a speaker's statement about the temperature in a certain room. At the same time, its illocutionary act could be a request in which the speaker is asking someone else to close the window. It becomes a

perlocutionary act when someone closes the window as a result of the statement. It is the illocutionary act – such as offers, apologies, requests, complaints, invitations, etc. – that has been the focus of Austin’s attention in his research and in subsequent pragmatics research. He classified speech acts according to their illocutionary force into five classes: verdictives (convicting, appraising), exercitives (ordering, advising, warning), commissives (promising, guaranteeing), behabitives (apologizing, congratulating), and expositives (replying, arguing) (Austin, 1962: 150).

Drawing on Austin's (1962) work, Searle (1969: 57-71, 1975a: 354-361) has refined the classification of illocutionary acts into the following five categories:

1. Declarations, which bring about change in an official state of affairs (e.g. declaring war, announcing a marriage),
2. Assertives, which commit the speaker to the truth of an expected proposition (e.g. claiming, reporting),
3. Commissives, which commit the speaker to do some future course of action (e.g. promising, offering),
4. Directives which are a speaker’s attempts to get the addressee to do something (e.g. ordering, requesting),
5. Expressives, which express one’s psychological state (e.g. thanking, apologizing).

Searle suggests that the illocutionary act is the minimal complete unit of linguistic communication and the perlocutionary act may not comply with the intention in the illocutionary act (Searle, 1969: 136). Another major contribution of Searle is his distinction between direct and indirect speech acts, which has influenced speech act research. Searle (1975b: 177) also proposes that politeness is the main motivation for using indirect speech acts.

Thomas (1995: 93) considers speech act theory “the first systematic account of language use [which] raises important issues for pragmatic theory”. However, although its philosophical stance still contributes to the investigation of communication to date and it is still frequently cited and discussed in many studies, some of the ideas of speech act theory have been widely challenged. The main criticism is the lack of context as it is based on isolated sentences and neglects contextual factors (Hsieh, 2009: 35), a criticism that has guided the discursive shift in politeness research (see Section 2.1.2). The classifications of speech acts have been also criticized for being inconsistent (Thomas, 1995) and for relying too heavily on English verbs (Leech, 1983).

Speech act theory has been extensively used as a means to explore language use in cross-cultural and interlanguage pragmatics (e.g. Abdel-Jawad, 2000; Al-

Kahtani, 2005; Al-Momani, 2009; Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1990; Bataineh, 2004; Beebe & Cummings, 1996; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Cohen, 1996a; Ogiermann, 2009b, 2009a). These studies differ according to the investigated speech act (request, apology, refusal, etc.), methods used (questionnaires, observation, role-play, etc.), and theoretical or analytical framework followed (e.g. Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Brown & Levinson, 1987; Leech, 1983; Scollon & Scollon, 1981), and the focus of the study (e.g. intra-cultural, cross-cultural, methodological, and interlanguage).

For example, from an intra-cultural perspective, Abdel-Jawad (2000) explored swearing in Arabic using natural data. From a cross-cultural perspective, apology strategies were compared between American English and Jordanian Arabic focusing on their linguistic realizations (Bataineh, 2004) as well as between British English, Polish, and Russian following Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory (Ogiermann, 2009a). Requests in English, German, Polish, and Russian were also compared in terms of their level of directness (Ogiermann, 2009b). Discourse completion tasks (DCTs) were used to collect data in all of these three studies. The results did not only reveal differences in the realization of the speech act cross-culturally, but also intra-cultural differences were detected. Several studies have investigated the performance of speech acts by language learners (i.e. interlanguage pragmatics), including refusals by Arab and Japanese EFL learners using DCTs (Al-Kahtani, 2005), requests by Jordanian EFL learners using two types of questionnaires (i.e. DCTs and scaled-response questionnaire) (Al-Momani, 2009), and refusals by Jordanian EFL learners using DCTs and interviews (Al-Issa, 2003). Results revealed that the learners demonstrated differences in the ways they perform the speech act compared to native speakers of the target language, and that they were influenced by their L1. It is clear that the above studies have focused on strategies and semantic formulas of speech act realizations or politeness strategies. Other studies have examined and compared research methods in speech act research (Bardovi-Harlig, 1999; Beebe & Cummings, 1996; Cohen, 1996a, 1996b; Kasper, 2000). For example, Hartford and Bardovi-Harlig (1992) compared participants' performance in natural conversations and DCTs in rejections to advice by English native and non-native speakers.<sup>32</sup>

In the current study the speech act of offer has been selected for investigation from a cross-cultural perspective. However, it should be stressed that a traditional methodological approach to speech acts is not taken in the study; instead, in order to use a discursive approach to politeness I analyse offers in their entire

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<sup>32</sup> A review of research on data collection methods employed in pragmatics research is discussed in Section 3.3.

situated context rather than decontextualized utterances. I take into account the relevant factors, cues, relations, and values that seem influential in the negotiation of offers in spoken discourse.

## **3.2 Offers**

The following section will provide a review of research relating to the speech act of offers. It first sheds light on how offers are defined and classified. To deepen our understanding of the relevant empirical studies, it then discusses existing studies on the speech act of offer, addressing offer strategies, their relation to politeness, and offering in Arabic and English cultures. Finally, on the basis of the review, this section points out some limitations of previous studies on offers.

### **3.2.1 On defining offers**

There is no consensus among researchers on the classification and definition of offers. Searle (1975b: 180) and Bilbow (2002: 287) regard offers as commissive acts in which the speaker commits him/herself to a certain future course of action. Fraser (1975: 193) argues that offers categorized as acts of committing. He highlights that when making an offer, speakers propose to place themselves under an obligation to bring about the state of affairs expressed in the proposition. It is obvious that these definitions have focused on the speaker's intention and ignored that offers appear in adjacency pairs in discourse (Tsui, 1994: 11), i.e. the speaker is looking for a response on the part of the addressee. Other researchers have since modified this classification.

Hancher (1979: 7), for example, criticizes Searle's taxonomy for neglecting the hearer's involvement and classifies offers as commissive directives, indicating that an offer has a dual function: it both commits and directs. Thus, an offer makes the speaker commit him/herself to carry out the proposed act, and it also has a directive force as "it looks forward for some act by the hearer" (1979: 8). That is, in offering you coffee I am trying to get (direct) you to drink coffee and committing myself to provide you with coffee to drink. In this respect, Hickey (1986: 74-75) believes that the act of offering expresses only readiness for commitment, i.e. there is no commitment but only the mention of its possibility. He argues that this readiness is independent of the hearer's reaction since the hearer may accept or refuse the offer. According to Hickey, if someone says "*Would you like coffee?*" he only has the readiness for commitment. If the offer is accepted by the hearer, then commitment comes into effect. Thus, the commitment depends on the addressee's reaction. However, whether this readiness to commitment is regarded as helpful to the addressee is not clear from Hickey's classification.



Some researchers emphasize the beneficial aspect of offers to the addressee in their definition. For instance, Al-Bantany (2013: 26) briefly defines an offer as “saying that you are willing to do something for somebody or give something to somebody. Offer is the [speaker’s] expression to offer an act for the hearer’s or addressee’s interest”. Rabinowitz (1993: 203) defines an offer as:

A speech act, generally indirect, which voluntarily proposes, without an obligation to do so, to extend an item or a service which the speaker considers beneficial to the receiver and proposes to furnish. It arises from the interlocutors’ shared knowledge of the situational context, and is usually based upon a preference or a need on the part of the receiver which the offerer perceives and indicates a willingness to address.

She highlights two important features: suggesting doing or giving something, and the absence of obligation relating to this suggestion. This definition obviously underlines the cooperative features of offers since the offerer puts obligation upon him/herself and expects the receiver to make a decision about the offer by either accepting or refusing it. It stresses that offers in conversations appear in the adjacency pair “offer-acceptance/refusal”. The definition also considers the context in which the offer might be made.

To sum up, offers can be generally said to be a voluntary speech act for the receiver’s benefit that involves commitment on the part of the speaker and expects a decision on the part of the addressee. I believe that Rabinowitz (1993) provides the most comprehensive definition of offers; thus, her definition is adopted in the current study.

### **3.2.2 Previous research on offers**

Since the introduction of speech act theory, much research has been undertaken on different speech acts including apologies, requests, and refusals (e.g. Al-Adaileh, 2007; Babai Shishavan, 2016; Bataineh, 2004; Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Ogiermann, 2009a, 2009b; Shcherbakova, 2010; Tawalbeh & Al-Oqaily, 2012). However, the speech act of offer has not received the attention it deserves; it seems that very few studies have analysed offers in depth. Therefore, this section first explores empirical research related to offer strategies. It then concentrates on the relationship between the speech act of offer and politeness models. In addition, it reviews previous research on offers and politeness in the English and Arabic languages. Lastly, the section draws out some implications from the review of the literature for the present study.

### 3.2.2.1 Empirical studies on offer strategies

Much of the existing research on offers has been focused on linguistic realization of offers or their socio-pragmatic strategies. For instance, Rabinowitz (1993), in her descriptive study of American offers, provides a list of the most common linguistic features of offers in American English. Offer utterances could be declaratives, interrogatives, imperatives, and if-clauses. Rising intonation mostly characterizes these structures. Offers are frequently used with certain verbs, such as *want*, *like*, and *need*, as applied to the subject *you*. Offers also appear with *have*, *help*, *try*, or *let*; yet less frequently than the first group of verbs. Expressions containing the term *any*, *why don't you?*, and *feel free to* are commonly used. Furthermore, Curl (2006: 1276) found that the *conditional if* and the syntactic format *do you want me to X* are commonly used in both the United States and England in offers of assistance or remedy.

Other studies have categorized offer strategies on the basis of their level of directness. Matoba (1996), for example, groups offers by German and Japanese speakers into seven categories, based on type of commitment, level of directness, syntactic structure, and reference. However, a clear definition of each category and why he opted for this classification is missing. Moreover, Barron (2003) and Fukushima (1990) have investigated offers among other speech acts from an interlanguage pragmatics perspective using DCTs. Barron (2003) analysed offers on the basis of the level of directness and the degree of modification – similar to Kasper's (1981) study and the CCSARP (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989) – in a longitudinal study of Irish learners of German as an L2.<sup>33</sup> Fukushima (1990) analysed offers by Japanese EFL learners<sup>34</sup> in terms of sequence and syntax, following the analysis method of Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984). Barron (2003) found that there was a significant difference between the learners' data and German NS in offer-refusal exchange structures at first, but this decreased over the time spent in the target language community. From a cross-cultural perspective, Barron found that ritual reoffers are a characteristic of Irish and have no role in offer-refusal exchanges in German. Fukushima (1990) found that Japanese students tended to use direct strategies in most situations

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<sup>33</sup> The language use of Irish English native speakers, German native speakers, and Irish learners of German spending ten months in Germany were compared in terms of discourse structure, pragmatic routines, and internal modification. The instruments were distributed once to both native speaker groups and on three separate occasions to the learners' group. The first one was prior to their study abroad period; the second set of data was collected after the learners had been in the study abroad setting for around two months; finally the last set of data was gathered at the end of the students' study abroad period.

<sup>34</sup> Thirty six Japanese sophomore students majoring in English at a university in Japan and eighteen English university teachers responded to the questionnaire.

and failed to act appropriately even when they tried to be polite. Nonetheless, neither Barron nor Fukushima identify the frequency distribution of offer strategies employed by each group. Barron only focuses on the development of learners' pragmatic competence, whereas Fukushima focuses on learners' pragmatic failure to act appropriately in the Foreign Language (FL). Thus, how offers are realized by the culturally different groups in each study was not provided.

Moreover, Allami (2012) examined socio-pragmatic realization strategies of offers in Persian, following a modified version of the classification employed by Barron (2003), which originally coded offers according to their level of directness. Two hundred Persian native speakers responded to a DCT, and 30 field workers were asked to take accurate notes of approximately 10 offer productions by native speakers. The findings indicated that social distance, age, power, and gender have no significant effect on the participants' performance. Allami concludes that Persians tend to employ more indirect constructions than direct ones.

Indeed, indirect offers were also found to be preferred by westerners. In this respect, Pohle (2007) compared the speech act of offer in German and Irish business negotiations. Two German and two Irish businesspeople participated in face-to-face simulated situations of booking hotel accommodation and transport for a group of soccer fans. The participants also filled out questionnaires before and after the simulated negotiations. These elicited biographical information and also invited comments on their own as well their partner's performances. Most of the offers found were related to a service or price. The analysis revealed that the participants from both cultures preferred conventionally indirect offers (choice of indirect offers out of all offers was 78.8% for Germans, and 94.7% for Irish) over direct and non-conventionally indirect offer strategies in the context of negotiations. It seems that the participants attempted to mitigate any potential face threat. That is, offers were seen as an FTA in business negotiations since they always entail that there is something paid in return (e.g. money, service). These offers are not intended for the benefit of the addressee only. Although this research provided some insights about offers, the findings cannot be generalized due to the limited data gathered.

However, Pohle (2009) overcame this limitation in her doctoral thesis with a comprehensive investigation of offers in Irish business negotiations. Eight Irish businessmen with at least five years of work experience took part in face-to-face simulations of intracultural negotiation. The simulated interactions were audio- and videotaped, but only the verbal interaction was taken into account. Moreover, pre- and post-questionnaires were used to gather biographical and simulation-specific information. The data were analysed mainly qualitatively, addressing six

discourse levels (act, move, exchange, sequence, phase, and encounter/speech event). Pohle found that offers in negotiations were either elicited (42%) or non-elicited (58%) and fell into four topic groups: commodity or service, price (both 82%), procedural action (17%), and relationship-building (1%). Most service offers and procedural action offers, as well as all relationship-building offers, were non-elicited, while price offers tended to be elicited. Moreover, offer realization strategies were coded into eight categories. Pohle found that the participants favoured strategies placed in the middle of the directness continuum, avoiding very direct or indirect ones. They also tended to employ downgraders more than upgraders in all offer realization strategies.

To sum up, most of the studies have followed the coding schema and the method design of the CCSARP<sup>35</sup> (i.e. categorize offers according to directness level and/or using DCTs). It is also clear that all of the above studies have investigated offers in languages and cultures other than Arabic, including Persian, Irish, German, Japanese, and American as well as British English. They also have not provided any insight into the speech act of offers from a politeness perspective other than the CCSARP, such as the face-management view (Brown & Levinson, 1987), maxim-based view (Leech, 1983), and discursive approach (e.g. Locher, 2004; Locher & Watts, 2005; Mills, 2003; Spencer-Oatey, 2000; Watts, 2003). The following sections aim to shed light on this issue.

### 3.2.2.2 Offers and politeness

Leech (1983) considers offers as inherently polite speech acts because they benefit the recipient (other) and involve a cost to the speaker (self). He holds the same view in his 2014 book *The Pragmatics of Politeness*. Leech (2014: 8) considers offers and invitations as central to politeness, which involve “the passing of some kind of transaction of value between the speaker and the other party”. However, Brown and Levinson (1987) reject this classification and consider offers as a potential FTA. One threatens one’s own positive face and the addressee’s negative face by making the offer, and if refused, the offerer’s positive face is threatened. This argument is supported by several studies, including those by Al-Qahtani (2009: 252) and Pohle (2007: 214). Barron (2005: 143), for instance, asserts that offers could threaten the hearer’s negative face

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<sup>35</sup> The CCSARP (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989) has been considered the most extensive study on cross-cultural speech acts. It investigated requests and apologies across seven different languages and cultures using a written DCT. The study classified requests according to their level of directness in three categories: direct, conventionally indirect, and non-conventionally indirect.

due to their partly directive nature since the speaker puts pressure on the hearer to react to, and in some cases to accept, the offer.

On the other hand, Koutlaki (2002: 1754) argues that offers in Persian are found to be face-enhancing acts. Nwoye (1992: 316) claims that requests, offers, thanks, and criticisms are not FTAs and carry no sense of imposition in Igbo culture. In this respect, Ruiz de Zarobe (2012) compared offers from public and private organizations' websites in Spanish and French. The author found that positive politeness strategies were used since mitigation was not necessary in such type of offers, and this directness is face flattering rather than threatening. However, this cannot be generalized as these website offers were produced on the basis that the reader needs to look for them in order to receive them. Ruiz de Zarobe (2012: 177) argues that offers, in general, when addressed directly to their potential receiver can be face threatening acts and face flattering acts at the same time. For instance, offers may threaten the negative face of the hearer since their territory is invaded, while their positive face may be flattered because offers entail that the hearer is someone worth making the offer to, and the speaker wants to satisfy the hearer's desires or needs. The positive face of the speaker is also at risk if the hearer refused the offer, and is enhanced if the offer is accepted. However, this claim is not universally applicable. For example, Teleghani-Nikazm (1998)<sup>36</sup> and Babai Shishavan (2016)<sup>37</sup> found that Iranians reject offers several times before accepting them, and this rejection is preferred and is not considered a genuine one. Indeed, it is considered as a rejection that invites another offer. Moreover, Hua et al. (2000: 94, 98)<sup>38</sup> argue that offer rejections in Chinese are regarded as the preferred second pair part whereas acceptances are considered the dis-preferred one in adjacency pairs with a gift offer. Thus, it seems that refusal of an offer does not threaten the speaker's positive face in Iran and China, as was claimed by Brown and Levinson (1987) and Ruiz De Zarobe (2012); instead, it often enhances it by encouraging another offer. The same may also apply to Arab cultures because the initial refusal is seen

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<sup>36</sup> Teleghani-Nikazm (1998) examined politeness and the preferred format of offers by Persian native speakers in their interactions. The data consisted of 25 hours of videotaped face-to-face interactions and audiotaped telephone conversations between friends, relatives, and acquaintances. The analysis demonstrated that Iranians reject offers several times before accepting them. Nikazm relates this behaviour to the appropriate norm, particularly the system of *taarof* which is a form of etiquette, in Iran.

<sup>37</sup> Babai Shishavan (2016) used observations of naturally occurring refusals and focus group interviews to differentiate between genuine and ostensible refusals in response to offers and invitations.

<sup>38</sup> Hua et al. (2000) analysed the sequential organization of 71 instances of gift offering and acceptance in Chinese, focusing on the strategies speakers employ in making, refusing, and accepting the offer. They used observation sheets as data collection method.

as an essential part of ritual offering behaviour (Al-Khatib, 2006; Alaoui, 2011; Bouchara, 2015), as will be discussed in detail in Section 3.2.2.3.

However, these classifications are not appropriate for the current study for two reasons. First, the above studies classify offers as isolated speech acts out of context. Hua et al. (2000: 101), in their study of gift offering in Chinese, found that many offers may be viewed as “face-threatening” if they are considered out of their sequential contexts, and they argue that “any linguistic choice a conversation participant makes can potentially be a politeness strategy. Exactly which act is face-giving, face-saving or face-threatening depends on when, where, and how it is performed.” Second, the study follows a discursive view of politeness, which argues that politeness is subjective and rejects classifying utterances as inherently polite or impolite. The discursive approach does not evaluate utterances out of context, so offers can be polite or rude, face-enhancing or threatening, and this depends on the interlocutors’ judgments in a particular COP.

### **3.2.2.3 Offers in Arabic and British cultures**

Bilbow (2002: 301) found that cultural predisposition seems to significantly affect how offers are used by different groups. Since Arab and British cultures differ significantly, we can infer then that their offering behaviour may also differ. It is important to point out that unfortunately only a few studies have investigated offers in both cultures. This section aims to shed light on the research so far done.

Offering as sociolinguistic behaviour represents an important part of the Arabian character due to its historical, social, and religious background. Offers in Arabic literature are associated with the common generosity of Arab people (Migdadi, 2003: 84, 132). Emery (2000: 205) posits that the importance of hospitality in the Arab world is proverbial and honoured in Arabian history in the deeds of those such as Hatim Al-Taei, whose name became an icon of generosity when he gave away the camels that he was herding for his father to a passing caravan. Arabs tend to place a high value on generosity and hospitality, which are considered key elements of manifesting politeness. As a result, offering in Arab society has its own elaborated rituals, formulas, and patterns (Emery, 2000: 205). Jordanian society, for example, has a special pattern of inviting/offering; the offeree is expected to reject an offer several times, before accepting it with a show of reluctance (Al-Khatib, 2006: 274). It is noteworthy that this ritual of offers is not restricted to Jordanian Arabic. In Morocco, an offer has to be repeated and refused several times before it is accepted as accepting it from the first time may be regarded as rude (Alaoui, 2011: 13; Bouchara, 2015: 73). Moreover, Grainger et al. (2015: 67) found that elaborate offer-refusal patterns and invoking religious

terms in hospitable offers are regarded as a social obligation by Libyans. Thus, refusing an offer in Arabic societies can be regarded as a face enhancing act in some contexts. It enhances the face of the offerer since it gives him/her the opportunity to show his/her sincerity and generosity by insisting, and it enhances the face of the offeree as it shows that s/he is not greedy. However, this cannot be generalized as it may vary depending on the discourse. Moreover, initial refusal of an offer is often expected and may be perceived as part of the politic and appropriate norm of behaviour.

In British culture, on the other hand, offer behaviour may not operate in the same way. Although there is an obligation for British people to show hospitality, offers may be seen as a burden instead of a blessing (Grainger et al., 2015: 55). That is, someone who tends to offer and insist too much may be considered as imposing rather than generous. Independence and autonomy seem to be key elements of manifesting politeness in British culture. It seems that Brown and Levinson's classification of offers as face threatening acts may be due to their bias towards Western ideologies. Accordingly, the offerer may be seen as imposing on the addressee and infringing his/her freedom of action, and this entails that the addressee is in the offerer's debt and has to find a way to pay him/her back. In this respect, Barron (2005), in her investigation of offers by Irish and English female speakers using a free DCT,<sup>39</sup> found that even though offers are realized over a number of turns by both Irish and English informants, British English informants, unlike their Irish counterparts, avoid using direct offers even in situations where the obligation to offer is high such as offering drinks to a guest. It seems that British people display their generosity and at the same time avoid imposing on others.

These claims about generosity and offering in Arab and British cultures appear to correspond to the traditional view of classifying Arabic politeness as collectivist and British politeness as individualistic (Feghali, 1997: 352; Hofstede, 1980: 157). Indeed, previous studies have provided support for these arguments. For instance, Ad-Darraji, Voon Foo, Ismail, and Shaker (2012: 4-5) claim that Western culture tends to perform offers by using indirect strategies and emphasizing the speaker's recognition of the hearer's freedom of action, whereas in Eastern culture this is not always the case. Arab learners consider that the use of imperatives to make offers is more polite than English speakers. However, we have to treat their claims with caution because their methodological framework was ambiguous, i.e. informants, data collection methods, study design, and

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<sup>39</sup> Free DCT refers to an open-ended questionnaire in which respondents are required to imagine themselves in a series of situations and asked to write both sides of an open dialogue for each situation (Barron, 2005: 148).

analysis were not provided. It is not clear whether they based their claims on assumptions or empirical research.

In addition, Al-Qahtani (2009) investigated the differences in women's use of politeness strategies across spoken Saudi Arabic and spoken British English in the speech act of offering, applying Brown and Levinson's (1987) model of politeness. The participants included 53 female native speakers of Saudi Arabic and 50 British English females residing in Saudi Arabia for the purpose of work. DCTs and interviews were used. The analysis showed significant differences between the Saudi and British female speakers in most of the situations. Bald on record and positive politeness were more frequent among the Saudis, whereas negative politeness was more frequent among the British speakers in the given situations. Al-Qahtani further indicates that the addressee's gender and the speaker's involvement in the event of offering are two significantly influential variables. Speakers from both cultures tend to use bald on record strategies when they find themselves involved in the context of offering and compelled to make the offer. However, Al-Qahtani claims that the addressee's gender is more influential in the case of Saudi female use of politeness strategies than in that of British female use. The Saudi women use more off record strategies or remain silent (i.e. they do not do the FTA) when addressing men. Although Al-Qahtani provided a comprehensive analysis of the speech act of offer in Saudi and British cultures, her findings concerning the British participants cannot be generalized as the participants might have been affected by their stay in Saudi Arabia (e.g. Clyne, Ball, & Neil, 1991; Robino, 2011). Moreover, there are two criticisms that can be made of her work due to the use of DCT. First, a DCT is often criticized for eliciting data that does not correspond to actual language use (Kasper & Rose, 2002: 95-96; Tran, 2006: 2). Second, since a DCT does not capture how speech acts are co-constructed over multiple turns (Golato, 2003: 93), Al-Qahtani has not provided insights about how offers are negotiated in both cultures. It is hence very hard to say that Saudi and British speakers would conduct the speech act of offers in real interactions in a way similar to those in the DCT data. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct a cross-cultural comparison of Arabic and English offers in authentic contexts.

Recently, Grainger et al. (2015) explored the extent to which hospitable offers are conventionalized in English and Arabic by drawing on the discursive approach, particularly Spencer-Oatey's rapport management model. They analysed four naturally occurring hospitality encounters in British English and Libyan Arabic; however, the Arabic conversations were audio recorded whereas the English ones were recalled from memory shortly after their occurrence. The analysis revealed that offerings and refusals in both cultures are conventionalized



according to expectations and norms of appropriate behaviour. It was found that the first offer may be refused and reoffered in both English and Arabic hospitality situations, but variations were found. The offer and refusal patterns were more elaborated in Arabic. Hospitality was more easily refused in the British situations than the Libyan ones due to the fact that an individual's right to autonomy takes precedence over the obligation of association in British, while obligation of association is prioritized in Arabic. In the English situations, the refusal was superficially accepted but then was redirected in the form of a slightly different and more generous offer. This can be considered as insistence but at the same time as less imposing than repeating the initial offer. When the renewed offer was also refused, this refusal was accepted and the negotiation was brought to a closure. In the Arabic contexts, on the other hand, they found that the obligation to refuse the first offer was stronger than in British English ones due to religious and ideological values related to Islam and hospitality. It was also common for the same initial offer to be repeated at least once and often more than once; second and third ritual refusals were also common. Genuine refusals by Libyans came much later in the sequence than in English encounters.

However, Grainger et al.'s (2015) study suffers from a serious problem. There was inconsistency in data collection methods in both groups of study participants. Data was collected via recordings of natural talk in Arabic, whereas in English observation and reconstruction of previous conversation from memory were used. This may have affected the reliability of the findings due to the fact that these two methods do not elicit the same type of data. This limits the possibility of a meaningful comparison. A lot of details may be missed (Kádár & Haugh, 2013: 53) when recalling previous interaction since it exceeds the capacity of the researcher's short-term memory (Kasper & Dahl, 1991: 241). Their findings regarding more elaborated negotiation of offers in Arabic was thus based on problematic empirical data. Moreover, their small corpus (two interactions representing each culture) leads to questions regarding the generalizability of the results.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the findings described above may not apply to the same extent in all English-speaking and Arabic-speaking contexts. It would be inappropriate to make any generalizations, based on the findings of the above studies, about all English-speaking or Arabic-speaking communities. I assert that not all Arabic speaking cultures are homogeneous. There are, for instance, great differences between Western and Eastern Arab nations' norms. Even within a specific Arab culture, there may be great variety between subcultures. Thus, what do we know about offers in English and Arabic is still minimal.

### 3.2.3 Summary

A look at the literature suggests that the existing research on offers is still limited. The majority of research has mainly investigated and compared “the East” (largely meaning East Asian cultures like China and Japan) and “the West” without focusing much attention on “the Middle East”. That is, research on offers is still underdeveloped when it comes to Arabic cultures except for two cross-cultural studies. The first one compared offers between British English and Saudi Arabic (Al-Qahtani, 2009) following Brown and Levinson’s model; the second study investigated how rapport management works with regards to British English and Libyan Arabic offers (Grainger et al., 2015). However, due to limitations with the data collection procedures, the claims of the published studies on offers may need to be treated with caution. Al-Qahtani (2009), which is the only existing study that analysed and compared offers in Saudi Arabia and Britain, is characterized by data collection procedures that allow for little or no interaction (i.e. DCTs). Methodologically, even though Grainger et al. (2015) use a more discursive approach, differences in the way data were collected in the two cultures mean their results are not strictly comparable. As such, none of these studies have based their findings on natural authentic data. Hence, the present study aims to distinguish itself by drawing on audio-recordings of natural conversation in the two speech communities investigated.

Significantly, previous studies on offers have predominantly taken speech act theories and traditional politeness theories for their theoretical departure. Most of the studies have followed the coding schema and the method design of the CCSARP or Brown and Levinson’s model, whether from cross-cultural or interlanguage perspectives. However, as noted above, the traditional frameworks cannot be applied to a wider variety of circumstances such as how offers are negotiated in the discourse. These studies, as mentioned above, have achieved important findings and are likely to benefit future studies. However, despite the shift towards discursive politeness in recent years, none of the above studies, except Grainger et al. (2015), have followed a discursive politeness approach in their analysis. Therefore, to fill the research gap and to explore the dynamics of the newer models proposed in politeness theories, more empirical research is needed to build upon the newer models to explore offers. The present study aims to address this gap in the field of cross-cultural pragmatics and politeness. It investigates offers by Saudi and British female friends following a discursive approach, mainly relational work (Locher & Watts, 2005) and rapport management (Spencer-Oatey, 2000, 2002, 2008), as well as drawing on discourse analysis and CA in interpreting politeness.

### **3.3 Data collection methods in pragmatics research**

Kasper and Dahl (1991) categorize data collection methods in pragmatics research into two classes: 1) production-based methods including observation of authentic discourse, DCTs, and role-plays; and 2) perception/comprehension-based methods, which include interviews, multiple-choice questionnaires, and scaled-response questionnaires. Perception-based methods will not be reviewed here because they were mostly used as complementary to other data collected by means of production instruments as followed in this study. For example, Abalalaa (2015) used interviews to interpret and explain data collected through a DCT in her investigation of the system of address terms in the Najdi dialect (i.e. the dialect of the central province in Saudi Arabia). Al-Momani (2009) used a scaled-response questionnaire with a DCT to elicit participants' socio-pragmatic assessments (i.e. perception of contextual factors) of the request situations used in the DCT in his study of requests by Jordanian EFL learners, native American English speakers, and native Jordanian Arabic speakers.

The current review of data collection methods used in pragmatics research discusses production-based methods since they are the most commonly used in pragmatics research. Naturally occurring data will be discussed in depth because it is used in this study (Section 3.3.1). The other two production-based methods, DCTs (Section 3.3.2) and role-plays (Section 3.3.3), will be briefly reviewed in order to justify their exclusion from the current research design despite their popularity in pragmatics research. Each method's strengths and weaknesses will be highlighted. The review aims to pay closer attention to the validity and adequacy of these widely used instruments.

#### **3.3.1 Naturally occurring data**

The use of naturally occurring data has its origins in anthropology. It involves collecting spontaneous data in naturally occurring settings. Wolfson (1986: 696) considers the observation of natural data to be the most reliable data source in speech act research. She argues that the observational method is the only way in which we can capture the way people actually talk. Other methods, as will be discussed in Sections 3.3.2 and 3.3.3, have been found inadequate to investigate what people actually say in naturally occurring interactions; rather they just reflect what informants think they should say in a given context. This view is shared by a number of researchers in the field (e.g. Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1993; Golato, 2003; Hartford & Bardovi-Harlig, 1992). In this respect, Tran (2006) compared data elicited by five different methods, which included DCTs, closed and open role-plays, naturalized role-plays, and natural data recordings. She used them to investigate Vietnamese English learners' interlanguage pragmatics in

compliment responses. The analysis revealed that naturalized role-play data closely resembled the natural data, whereas DCTs, and closed and open role-play differed substantially from natural data with regard to the strategies employed. In fact, DCTs and closed role-play were the least similar to natural data. It can be said that the more natural the data is, the most it reflects actual language use. The findings of the current study should be of great interest to pragmatic researchers since one of their major objectives is to examine actual language use.

On the other hand, some researchers have claimed that recordings of naturally occurring talk in interaction have some disadvantages. First, it can be difficult and time-consuming to collect a large corpus of data samples showing the phenomenon being investigated (Kasper, 2000: 320; Kasper & Dahl, 1991: 231; Kasper & Rose, 2002: 83; Tran, 2006: 4). This is because researchers can never guarantee that the phenomenon under investigation will occur. They also argue that the transcription process is time-consuming (Kasper & Dahl, 1991: 229). However, Bardovi-Harlig (1999: 244) explains,

These are really only perceived difficulties and for those who undertake it, collection and transcription are no worse – and no better – than the steps that have to be carried out for proper construction of scenarios for DCTs or role plays... [T]he responsible construction of scenarios for a DCT requires extensive observation and collection of natural conversational data.

Indeed, many researchers use observation of natural data to create other elicitation methods such as DCT or role-plays with scenarios that are similar to real-life situations.<sup>40</sup> Al-Issa (1998), for example, used observations of naturally occurring data in order to design a DCT to investigate the speech act of refusal in American English and Jordanian Arabic. Thus it can be said that designing a reliable elicitation method that reflects real-life situations would be time-consuming, too.

Second, using naturally occurring data can make it impossible to control extraneous variables such as power, status, gender, and age (Yuan, 2001: 275), and hence collecting comparable sets of data using naturally occurring talk in cross-cultural or interlanguage contexts may be impossible. However, Bardovi-

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<sup>40</sup> Wolfson (1986: 689) explains that the methods used in speech act research fall into two broad categories: observation and elicitation. Observation techniques refer to gathering natural data through observation, recording, or taking field-notes, whereas elicitation techniques involve the manipulation of situational or linguistic variables by the researcher to collect data such as using DCTs and role-plays.

Harlig and Hartford (1990) successfully compared congruence<sup>41</sup> in native and advanced non-native speakers' interactions during advising sessions. In addition, in a later study, the authors compared suggestions and rejections between native and non-native speakers of English in a longitudinal study of pragmatic competence acquisition (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1993). They used recordings of advising sessions as the source of data in both studies. These two studies showed that two or more sets of naturally occurring data can be compared if the context is kept constant. The researchers used advising sessions as the context of study; thus, social variables were controlled to some extent (i.e. the status of the speakers, the task, and the relations). I believe that we can have comparable sets of natural data if we narrow the contexts in which we want to examine a given phenomenon. In my study, I used dinner gatherings in a hostess/guests setting among female friends as the context of the recording which allowed for making hospitality offers in a natural way. I also narrowed the age range of the participants (23-39 years) and gender (only females). I believed that those procedures allowed some control over social variables and hence allowed me to collect comparable sets of data.

Other researchers argue that the presence of the recording equipment may affect participants' performance (e.g. Kasper, 2000: 319), that is, researchers in this case face what William Labov (1972) called "the observer's paradox".<sup>42</sup> Cameron (2001: 24) points out that although the absence of the researcher may reduce the effect of the observer's paradox, the presence of the recording device still reminds participants that they are being observed. Nevertheless, extended experience with using recordings of natural data in ethnographic studies has shown that the presence of the researcher and his/her recorder become less of an obstacle over time once subjects have become accustomed to it (Duranti, 1997: 118; Johnstone, 2000: 106).

Despite these limitations, it is still posited that the ideal data would consist of a large amount of carefully recorded natural conversations by representative subjects (Hinkel, 1997: 2; Kasper & Rose, 2002: 80). It seems that the advantage of using natural data outweighs its disadvantages. This method has been used in several pragmatics studies. Nittono (2003), for example, used audio-recordings of spontaneous conversations to study the use of hedging in Japanese among

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<sup>41</sup> Congruence is defined as "the match of a speaker's status and the appropriateness of speech acts given that status. Congruent speech acts reflect the expected or established role of the participants." (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1990: 473)

<sup>42</sup> The observer's paradox refers to a situation in which the phenomenon being investigated is affected by the presence of the observer (Labov, 1972: 209). In other words, speakers may adjust their linguistic behaviour as soon as they are aware of the fact they are being observed.

friends. Hahn (2006) used naturally occurring data to examine realizations of apologies by Korean native speakers. Wang (2008) used naturally occurring conversations between female speakers in Taiwan to explore characteristics of (im)politeness that serve as the basis for the understanding and evaluation of their interpersonal relationships.

### **3.3.2 Discourse completion tasks (DCTs)**

DCTs were first introduced by Blum-Kulka and Levenston (1978) in their study of lexical simplification and was then adapted by Blum-Kulka (1982) to explore speech act realizations of learners of Hebrew as a second language. They have been widely used by researchers in the field of pragmatics after its broad use in the CCSARP, which compared speech acts by native and non-native speakers of different languages. DCTs are questionnaires which consist of a number of brief situational descriptions followed by a prompt for some dialogue. The situations are carefully planned so that they are likely to elicit a contribution relating to the speech act under study. Participants are asked to write what they think they would say if they found themselves in those scenarios in real life (Bataller, 2013: 112; Kasper & Dahl, 1991: 221).

This method has been considered an effective means to collect large amounts of comparable data in a relatively short period of time (Bardovi-Harlig, 1999: 240; Bataller, 2013: 112; Beebe & Cummings, 1996: 80; Blum-Kulka, 1982: 54; Houck & Gass, 1996: 46). It also allows the researcher to control different contextual or social variables related to a given situation (e.g. age, gender, distance, or power), thus permitting him/her to investigate the impact of each variable on the production of the speech act under investigation (Beebe & Cummings, 1996: 80; Cohen, 1996b: 390; Houck & Gass, 1996: 46; Kasper, 2000: 329). According to Ogiermann (2009a: 67), DCTs are the only data collection instrument that yields sufficient quantities of comparable and systematically varied data. They enable researchers to create an initial classification of semantic formulas and strategies that likely occur in natural speech and discover the stereotypical requirements for socially appropriate responses (Beebe & Cummings, 1996: 80).

On the other hand, DCTs suffer from some disadvantages. The main drawback of DCTs is that they may not necessarily present actual speech acts as they occur in real-life situations (Cohen, 1996b: 394; Hinkel, 1997: 19; Kasper, 2000: 329; Kasper & Rose, 2002: 92). In this respect, Golato (2003) compared compliment responses in German collected via two methods: DCT and recordings of naturally occurring talk. All in all, speakers in the natural data produced 50 compliment sequences, and DCTs provided a total of 217 compliment responses. The DCT situations were designed to mirror the situations that occurred in the natural data,

which were normal activities with friends and family such as dinners, barbeques, and get-togethers over drinks. The DCT included a description of the setting and the compliment given for seven frequent situations that occurred in the natural data. The participants in both methods were similar in their socioeconomic (middle and upper class), educational (held or pursuing a university degree), and geographic (northern, eastern, southern, and central Germany) backgrounds. The age range of participants was between 23-70 years. The findings indicated that DCTs and recordings of naturally occurring data yielded different results. For example, no DCT respondent ignored a compliment while participants in actual conversation did. The DCT data yielded more strategy combinations than the natural data, in which only two strategy responses were combined. Appreciation tokens (e.g. *thank you*) in compliment responses were never found in natural data, yet they occurred around 27 times in the DCT data. It is apparent that DCT respondents tended to use more politeness phenomena than is evident in natural face-to-face interaction. Golato (2003) asserted that recordings of natural talk-in-interaction allowed the researcher to find out how language was organized and realized in natural settings, whereas DCTs just reflected the sum of prior experience with language and were inappropriate for studying actual language use.

Moreover, research has shown that DCTs may not elicit appropriate data representing face-to-face interactions from speakers of non-Western languages (Rose, 1994: 10) nor do they display discourse or non-verbal features found in real interactions (Cohen, 1996b: 395; Hartford & Bardovi-Harlig, 1992: 47; Kasper, 2000: 326; Tran, 2006: 2). DCTs may produce shorter and more formal responses than natural conversation (Beebe & Cummings, 1996: 80; Cohen, 1996b: 394; Kasper & Rose, 2002: 92). For example, Yuan (2001: 289)<sup>43</sup> found that both oral and written DCTs failed to evoke the kind of elaborated negotiation and indirect compliment exchanges that occurred in ordinary conversations. Morrison and Holmes (2003: 59)<sup>44</sup> also found that refusals elicited using DCTs resembled those in natural data the least. The refusals in the DCTs differed in length, complexity, and directness from those that occurred in role-plays and natural data. Moreover, DCTs do not often provide the opportunity for respondents to opt out (Bardovi-Harlig, 1999: 238) as a default option in a way

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<sup>43</sup> Yuan (2001) compared the data-gathering methods of written DCTs, oral DCTs, field notes, and recorded conversations, focusing on gathering large-scale data sets of two speech acts of compliments and compliment responses in China.

<sup>44</sup> Morrison and Holmes (2003) compared refusals by the same participants in three different methods of data collection: observation of face-to-face interaction in a naturalistic setting, open-ended role-play, and written DCT. A one week interval was allowed between each data collection method for each participant.

that natural conversations do. The responses in the DCTs are not spontaneous as participants have time to think about them (Barron, 2003: 85). Wolfson (1986: 690) argues that what is being collected is speakers' intuitions about the language rather than speech as it actually occurs in everyday use. It is concluded that DCTs provide data that can be used for purposes other than exploring how language is used in real situations.

### 3.3.3 Role-plays

Role-plays can be defined as simulations of social interactions in which participants take on and act out described roles within predefined situations (Tran, 2006: 3). They have been used as an attempt to study the subjects' natural way of speaking without observing naturally occurring speech. Two kinds of role-plays have been identified in the literature: open and closed role-plays based on participants' degree of involvement (Kasper & Dahl, 1991: 226-229). In a closed role-play, the respondent is asked to give a one-turn verbal response to a prompt.<sup>45</sup> In open role-plays, on the other hand, the researcher specifies the situation, interlocutor roles, and the communicative goals of the interaction but the interlocutors are free to produce as many turns and discourse sequences as they need in order to maintain their interaction (Kasper, 2000: 323; Kasper & Rose, 2002: 87).

The main advantage of using role-plays is that they elicit oral data which is believed to be the closest to naturally occurring speech events (Houck & Gass, 1996: 47). Morrison and Holmes, (2003: 59) in their study of refusals in three different methods of data collection (see fn. 44, Section 3.3.2) found that the refusals elicited using observation of natural data and role-plays were relatively similar in many ways and differed from those obtained by the written DCT. Role-plays are interactive and allow the researcher to examine the speech act in its full discourse (Bardovi-Harlig, 1999: 245; Kasper & Dahl, 1991: 228), and are found to include spoken features of discourse such as repetition, pauses, intonation, laughter etc. (Tran, 2006: 3). Al-Khawaldeh (2014) compared the results obtained in role-plays and DCTs in her examination of gratitude by Jordanian and English native speakers. She (2014: 244) concludes that the role-plays were found to be better than DCTs in giving insights about the communication of emotions through the informants' facial expressions and tone of voice. Similarly to questionnaires, role-plays allow control of the social variables that might affect the realization of a given speech act (Kasper, 2000: 323-324; Kasper & Rose, 2002: 87; Turnbull,

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<sup>45</sup> This review focuses only on open role-plays because closed role-plays are considered similar to spoken DCTs, which means that there is no interaction or negotiation involved in the realization of the speech act.



2001: 40) and hence yield comparable data. Role-plays are considered to occupy a midway position between DCTs and naturally occurring talk (Kasper & Dahl, 1991: 217). As a result, they have been a widely used method in pragmatics research (e.g. Al-Khawaldeh, 2014; Al-Momani, 2009; Jasim, 2017).

However, role-plays are not problem free. Concerns about role-plays include whether the respondents follow the instructions carefully, whether their acting ability may affect their performance, whether they are willing to perform as they would do in real life, and whether they would give honest perceptions of others' behaviours (Cohen, 2012: 284). Moreover, there is no guarantee that behaviour in role-plays resembles that in real-life situations. For example, Turnbull (2001: 47) compared role-plays to naturalistic data as well as DCTs in the production of refusals. He found that although role-plays were similar to natural data in many ways, role-play refusals tended to be longer and more repetitive than refusals in the natural data. Golato (2003: 94) stresses that the unnatural aspect of role-plays stems from the fact that the participants act out how they imagine someone in these situations might behave so that they provide their beliefs about imaginary roles that they might have never played in real life. Golato further argues that participants are aware of the fact that their performance in a role-play is not going to lead to any consequences, such as impacts on the interlocutors' relationship; therefore, what is said during role-plays may not reflect learners' natural speech. It is also argued that giving instructions in how to respond in role-plays distorts the naturalistic context of the interaction (Cohen, 2012: 284). Moreover, similarly to naturally occurring data, data elicited through role-play requires transcribing, which is time-consuming (Houck & Gass, 1996: 48; Kasper & Dahl, 1991: 229). In conclusion, despite the fact that role-plays overcome some of the drawbacks of DCTs, they cannot be considered equivalent to natural interaction.

### **3.3.4 Summary**

It is clear that data collection methods have been a hotly debated issue in pragmatics research (Cohen, 1996a: 257). According to Turnbull (2001: 31), the best technique to collect data in pragmatics research is one that generates data "in situations in which researchers can manipulate variables in the testing of hypotheses and speakers can talk freely and spontaneously without awareness that their talk is the object of study". However, none of the data collection methods discussed in this chapter meets all of these requirements. That is, no single method can be claimed to be the best. Bardovi-Harlig (1999: 238) notes that, "To look for a super method – a one-size-fits-all variety – is to look for a phantom". Each method has its advantages and disadvantages. Natural data, for example, is difficult to control and compare. On the other hand, some elicitation methods,

while providing sufficiently large samples of controlled and comparable sets of data, may yield data that does not reflect natural speech. What determines the selection of a data collection method is measuring the potential strengths and weaknesses of the available methods and deciding which one best fits the aims of the study (Bardovi-Harlig, 1999: 237). For instance, if the negotiation of a speech act and social variables of age, distance, and power as well as the degree of imposition are central in a given study, one research design option is the role-play since it allows interlocutors to take turns and researchers to control variables.

Since the current study adopts a discursive approach, it neither aims to establish universal patterns in the realization of offers nor attempts to provide generalizations about BE and SA cultures. It aims to discover norms of offering between close female friends in actual language use rather than study participants' intuitions about what is considered the appropriate norm. As a result, neither DCTs nor role-plays can help in unveiling the localized norms of offering practices or shed light on the discursive negotiation of politeness as it occurs in spontaneous natural interaction among friends. This study thus used recordings of conversations between female friends in Britain and Saudi Arabia to explore the negotiations of the speech act of offers. The rationale for this decision is explained in Chapter 4. Moreover, to overcome the drawbacks associated with using each method individually, several researchers have suggested the adoption of a multi-method approach in cross-cultural studies (e.g. Beebe & Cummings, 1996: 81; Cohen, 2012: 272; Kasper & Rose, 2002: 115; Morrison & Holmes, 2003: 59) in order to increase the credibility of a study. The study therefore takes a multi-method approach as will be explained in the next chapter.

## Chapter 4 Methodology

Taking into account the research purposes and questions detailed in Chapter 1 and the review of related literature provided in Chapters 2 and 3, this chapter describes and justifies data collection procedures and analysis. The chapter falls into nine sections. Section 4.1 describes the participants and their recruitment. Section 4.2 discusses data collection methods with reference to the justification of adopting these methods in conducting the current study. Section 4.3 presents a summary of the pilot study and its resulting modifications to the current study. Section 4.4 outlines the main procedures followed in collecting the data. Following the procedures, Section 4.5 discusses shortcomings of the data. Section 4.6 details the procedures employed to prepare the data for the analysis; these include the transcribing process, the coding framework and the process of its development, and the difficulties that I encountered during coding of the data. Section 4.7 explains the procedures for data analysis. Section 4.8 introduces the ethical issues related to the study. Finally, Section 4.9 sums up the key points made in the chapter.

### 4.1 Participants

Six groups of female friends participated in this study, involving 20 participants in total. Half of them were native speakers of Saudi Arabic (SA), and the other half were native speakers of British English (BE).<sup>46</sup> For the purpose of collecting naturally occurring data between female friendship groups, the research recruited people who identified each other as friends in real life. This ensures that the interactions would reflect natural friends' talk. Demographic information about the participants and the process of recruitment are detailed below.

#### 4.1.1 SA participants

My recruitment of SA participants began with my friends and family members who meet frequently. This is because it would be difficult to convince people in a conservative society to be recorded if they do not know and trust the researcher.

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<sup>46</sup> While recognizing that the concept of a 'native speaker' is not straightforward, this study takes the position that as all the participants were citizens of KSA or UK, respectively, and had acquired their native language in their early childhood, they should be considered native speakers.

I posted a call for participants in one of my WhatsApp<sup>47</sup> groups that includes 21 female members. Detailed information about the research design was sent to the people who showed interest in the project. Both the call for participants and the research information were sent in Arabic because I did not want a potential language barrier to affect people's decisions. Two of those who showed interest in participation were excluded from the sample because they have recently lived abroad for 12 or more months; cross-cultural communication research (e.g. Clyne, Ball, & Neil, 1991; Robino, 2011) has shown that while under the influence of the target language and culture, non-native speakers living abroad may no longer abide by their home cultural norms when using their native language. Ten participants were then recruited in total. The SA participants of this research were members of my friendship network. They were residing in the capital city, Riyadh, where I myself live. Although they originally came from various regions in Saudi Arabia (northern, eastern, central, western, or southern provinces), they spoke the Urban Najdi dialect which is widely used in Riyadh.

A WhatsApp group was then created in order to divide the participants into three groups and set out dates and venues for the gatherings in order for the recordings to take place. The WhatsApp application was used because it is widely used in Saudi Arabia to communicate, especially among groups. It was also the participants' preferred method for arranging venues and dates for their gatherings.<sup>48</sup>

The data were collected in April 2016. The gatherings took place in one of the participants' homes. The ten women were divided into three groups according to which venue and time suited them since all ten were members of the same friendship circle and were used to meeting frequently. Moreover, besides their friendship, it is important to note that Faten, Arwa, and Sally are cousins, as are Suha and Abeer. The real purpose of the study was not revealed to any of them until the recordings were completed by all three groups. This was to ensure that none of the participants could reveal the real objective of the research to any other informants before the other gatherings took place.

Each gathering took from two to three hours; all in all there were approximately eight hours of recorded conversations. It is important to note that I participated in the interactions of all groups. This was done to make the interactions more natural

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<sup>47</sup> WhatsApp is a free application and service for smartphones. It uses the Internet to make calls; send text messages, images, videos, user location, audio files, and voice notes using standard mobile numbers. Users can communicate with other users individually or in groups of individual users.

<sup>48</sup> The group from which those participants were recruited always use the WhatsApp application to communicate and plan their activities and gatherings.

since as a friend of the individual group members I am also a group member.<sup>49</sup> Table 1 provides information about each recording: place of recording, number of informants, and age, education, and occupation of each informant.

**Table 1 Recording sessions with SA participants**

Group #	No. of informants	Place of recording	Name of participant	Age	Education	Occupation
1	Three	Faten's parents' house	Faten	27	BA	Accountant
			Wa'ad	33	BA	Educational administrator
			Sally	32	MA	Housewife
2	Four	Ahad's house	Ahad	27	MA	Kindergarten school supervisor and owner
			Abeer	33	PG Diploma	Accountant assistant
			Nada	33	MA	Educational administrator
			Suha	28	MA	Teaching assistant
3	Three	Yusra's house	Yusra	32	BA	Nurse
			Lama	31	BA	Executive Assistant
			Arwa	33	BA	Public relations

The groups were almost homogeneous in terms of age, level of education, and occupation. Their ages ranged from 27 to 33 years. All participants have a university degree (equivalent of a BA or MA), and have held white-collar positions in their country (e.g. teachers, accountants, administrative workers, bank employees, etc.). Their area of specialization covered a wide range of subjects such as translation, accounting, business administration, nutrition, and nursing.

#### 4.1.2 BE participants

The process of recruiting the BE participants was a difficult one. Several calls for participants were emailed and sent via the school secretary over a period of six weeks (with a two-week interval between mail-outs) in the summers of 2016 and

<sup>49</sup> See Section 4.5 for more details regarding my participation.

2017. The emails included a detailed information sheet about the study and a consent form. However, the responses to the emails were very low. In 2016, there were no responses to the first and second emails. Only three participants contacted me to take part in the study after the third call for participants had been sent; they were asked to invite two to three female friends to a dinner. However, one of these withdrew before the scheduled dinner due to family illness. Moreover, a poster was created for the study in the Call for Participants website (<https://www.callforparticipants.com/>) which allows access to a large pool of participants. However, there was not any response. The same attempts to recruit BE female participants were repeated in the summer of 2017 because I needed one more group. There were no responses to the emails, but two participants contacted me to take part in the study via the Call for Participants website. Both were asked to invite two to three friends to a dinner, and dinner was arranged with both. However, the first group was eliminated because it was found that one of the participants had lived in Riyadh for three years which might have affected her behaviour.<sup>50</sup> This left three groups of British female friends with ten participants in total.

With all groups, I arranged in advance with the hostess participant the kinds of food and drinks that they preferred. A meeting at a convenient place for the hostess in the first group was scheduled to discuss arrangements for the dinner, whereas everything was arranged via emails and phone calls with the hostess in the other groups. Everything related to the dinner was discussed with the hostess only. I did not contact the other participants before the dinner; they were invited and told about the study by their friend, the hostess. This approach was intended to make the guests feel that the social situation was as natural as possible.

The data was collected between August 2016 and August 2017. Two of the hostesses invited two of their friends to their houses, and one hostess invited three of her friends to my house in Leeds. However, I was an observer and Susan (i.e. one of the participants) was the hostess. This aimed to increase the possibility of producing offers by the participants since it ensured that making hospitable offers was not part of my duties. Being hospitable was the duty of the hostess, Susan. Susan arrived fifteen minutes before the other women and arranged everything before their arrival. In all groups, the guests and the hostess were close friends who often met for dinner or other activities.

Each gathering took from two to three and half hours; all in all there were approximately eight hours of recorded conversations. Table 2 provides

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<sup>50</sup> Marti (2006: 1862) found that Turkish-German bilinguals returning to their homeland have experienced some influence from German in their requests in Turkish.

information about the place and number of informants in each recording, as well as the age, education, and occupation of each informant.

**Table 2 Recording sessions with BE participants**

Group #	No. of informants	Place of recording	Name of participant	Age	Education	Occupation
1	Three	Elsa's house	Elsa	39	MA equivalent	Educational administrator
			Janet	28	BA	Educational administrator
			Helen	29	PhD	Software developer
2	Four	Researcher's house	Susan	22	BA	Teaching assistant at a primary school
			Flora	24	BA Honours	Project coordinator
			Rachel	24	BA	Production buyer film & TV
			Hilary	24	A-Level	Team leader in a cinema
3	Three	Alice's house	Alice	25	BA	Personal assistant
			Clara	24	BA	Digital Marketer
			Gail	25	BSc	Marketing Executive

The groups were relatively homogeneous in terms of age. Their ages ranged from 22 to 39 years. However, there were differences in terms of level of education. All except one of the participants had attained a university degree (BA or above), except Hilary (educated to A-Level). They were employed in various jobs such as administrative workers, software programmer, film producers, and assistants. Their area of specialization covered a wide range of subjects like business administration, film and media studies, marketing, computer programming, and education. The BE participants currently live in Leeds or London. However, they may have originated from other regions in the UK.

## **4.2 Methods of data collection**

The use of a multi-method approach in cross-cultural pragmatics studies has been advocated by several researchers in the field (e.g. Beebe & Cummings, 1996; Cohen, 1996a, 1996b, 2012; Kasper, 2000; Kasper & Dahl, 1991). Kasper and Rose (2002: 115) suggest that multi-method approaches are a crucial means to improve both the validity (trustworthiness) and reliability (dependability) of a study. Kasper and Dahl (1991: 232) recommend: "One method can be employed to collect the primary source of data, with data collected by means of another method having the subsidiary function of developing the instrument for the primary data collection or helping with the interpretation of the primary data." For example, some researchers use observation of authentic data to aid them in designing DCTs, which may be the primary source of data. In addition, they may employ follow-up interviews in order to help them interpret the data collected via DCTs. Moreover, Wolfson (1986: 697) argues that if we want to study speech in any language we must use "an iterative procedure" which combines investigation of the speech in actual use and elicitation methods that provide intuitions about the speech under study.

Following these recommendations, a combination of research instruments was employed in order to capture the complexity of politeness as realized by two culturally and linguistically different groups of subjects in their offer behaviour. These research techniques included authentic data (audio-recorded spontaneous naturally occurring conversations), scaled-response questionnaires (SRQ), and interviews. The recordings of natural data were employed as the primary source of data; interviews and SRQ were used to help with the interpretation of the primary data. In line with the discursive approach, the natural conversations allowed me to focus on and analyse offers embedded in discourse and real contexts; the interviews and SRQ functioned as metalinguistic data which aided me to elicit participants' evaluation and judgements of strategies employed. The description and rationale for using each data collection instrument are provided below.

### **4.2.1 Recordings of natural data**

Several studies show that to capture people's actual behaviour, audio/video-recording of natural conversations is the most suitable instrument of data collection (e.g. Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1993; Ellis, 1992; Golato, 2003; Yuan, 2001). Natural conversations reflect what speakers actually say rather than what they think they say in a given speech event. Golato (2003: 110) argues that recordings of natural data should be the preferred method of data collection if a researcher wants to investigate the underlying interactional rules and patterns of



actual language use (which is the aim of the current study). It has been discussed in Chapter 3 how other methodological approaches, such as DCTs and role-plays, which have been widely used in pragmatic studies, have been found inadequate to investigate what informants actually say in naturally occurring interactions, and they just tap into what speakers think they should say in reality (e.g. Archer, Aijmer, & Wichmann, 2012: 15; Tran, 2006: 2; Yuan, 2001: 284).<sup>51</sup> Therefore, I believe that using natural conversations would allow me to investigate actual language performance as it occurs in real situations. The findings would be more reliable because they are based on spontaneous, naturally occurring speech instead of data collected in more artificial environments.

Moreover, the current study is framed within a discursive approach to politeness. Politeness researchers taking this approach have emphasized the role of discourse and participants' perspectives in evaluating politeness. They are united in their determination to emphasize the necessity to pay more attention to how politeness is perceived by participants in social interaction (Haugh, 2013a: 56; Watts, 2005b: xix). Further, Mills (2011b: 47) notes that discursive researchers analyse longer stretches of spoken discourse to see how (im)politeness is interpreted over time, due to their belief that politeness does not reside in individual utterances but is negotiated over a discourse level.

As a result, data elicited with the aid of DCTs have been evaluated as being less valid and reliable; accordingly, more attention has been given to naturally occurring data (Kádár & Haugh, 2013: 52) because it provides insights about both actual discourse and participants' perceptions. Eelen (2001: 255), for example, indicates that due to the argumentative aspect of (im)politeness its evaluations must derive from spontaneous natural data. It can be said that recordings of natural data in the current study would enable me to investigate the underlying interactional patterns of actual language use as well as the discursive struggle over politeness indicated by the linguistic choices of two different groups.

The recordings for this study were carried out during a meal setting, with three to four persons. The purpose of having this number of participants in each setting is to create "focused encounters" in which all the participants are ratified; i.e. they are expected to jointly sustain and attend to the talk at hand (Goffman, 1981: 130). According to Kádár and Haugh (2013: 88), a conversation between two to three friends in a private setting is a perfect example of a focused encounter, while interactions that involve larger gatherings will include both ratified and

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<sup>51</sup> See Section 3.3 for a detailed review of the research methods used in pragmatics research.

unratified participants. Ratified participants are those who have responsibility to attend or participate in a particular interaction, whereas unrated participants are not expected to directly participate in or attend to such talk (Goffman, 1981: 132-133; Kádár & Haugh, 2013: 87). For example, when two or three friends are having a conversation in a restaurant or a café, the waiters and the people at the adjacent tables may be able to hear what the friends are talking about, but they are not considered ratified participants in that interaction.

Moreover, drawing on Johnstone's (2000: 104) assumption "you cannot interact with a tape unless you are part of the interaction being taped", I attended the recording setting. This enabled me to take notes of non-verbal behaviour and some contextual factors such as gestures, eye contact, etc., which provided salient input for the analysis and would not have been available via the audio recording alone.

## **4.2.2 Metalinguistic evaluation instruments**

In recent politeness research, metalinguistic evaluations, i.e. understandings of lay observers about features of language use, play an essential role as they offer useful insights for the analyst to draw on in the interpretation of evaluative moments of politeness (Chang & Haugh, 2011: 434; Kádár & Haugh, 2013: 99-101; Locher, 2011: 204). Lay observers are people who do not have specialized knowledge of the field under investigation, i.e. the field of politeness research in this case (Kádár & Haugh, 2013: 98). Research has also shown that metalinguistic evaluations provide valuable insights about how particular politeness phenomena function in a given society (e.g. Chang & Haugh, 2011; Davies, 2011). This is because the analyst generates systematic evidence for those interpretations by formalizing those evaluations and teasing out possible relationships, order, and structure in that data. I thus systematically examined the responses of lay observers, using both follow-up-interviews and SRQ. These instruments aimed to improve the validity of the analyst's inferences about the evaluations of politeness.

### **4.2.2.1 Follow-up interviews**

Interviews are a popular method in qualitative research to investigate "participants' identities, experiences, beliefs, life histories, and more" (Talmy & Richards, 2011: 1). Furthermore, asking the participants to comment on what was happening and why is one way to help the analyst in evaluating his/her interpretation of the primary data (Johnstone, 2000: 65). Since politeness in the discursive approach is determined by the participants' perceptions, interviews are indispensable for obtaining in-depth information about participants' evaluations

and perceptions of politeness employed in a given interaction (Haugh, 2010a: 155-157). Moreover, many researchers in the field conducted post-recording interviews with the participants of an interaction after the occurrence of the given interaction in order to investigate their perspectives regarding the interaction (e.g. He, 2012; Schnurr & Chan, 2009; Spencer-Oatey & Xing, 2003; Wang, 2008). Kádár and Haugh (2013: 55) argue that this type of interview is in some sense naturalistic due to the fact that participants can freely discuss how they experienced the interaction.

Follow-up interviews were conducted with the same participants who took part in the recordings of conversations to see how they perceive their own and interlocutors' offer behaviour in the interaction (see Appendix A).<sup>52</sup> The interviews were conducted using the participants' native language to avoid any miscommunications that could be caused by limitations in their command of English.

The time and the venue of the follow-up instruments were set according to what was convenient for each participant. Interviews were conducted face-to-face or via telephone with the SA participants. The participants themselves were not required to travel; I did the travelling. Since I was not a full-time resident in the UK, interviews with BE participants were carried out via telephone or email<sup>53</sup> depending on the participants' preferences. The oral follow-up-interviews were recorded. The interviews served as an extra resource to help me with the analysis of the recorded conversations.

#### **4.2.2.2 Scaled-response questionnaire**

A SRQ typically consists of items with fixed choices; these choices represent certain scaled category responses from which respondents have to choose the response they think is the most appropriate. Such a questionnaire is a common tool for obtaining valuable information regarding subjects' perception of relative politeness, pragmatic meaning, or meta-pragmatic knowledge (Kasper & Dahl, 1991: 216; Kasper & Rose, 2002: 100). The use of SRQs thus aimed at

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<sup>52</sup> According to Hua et al. (2000: 87), we cannot guarantee that an outsider would understand the norms of the group under investigation due to a lack of understanding of the relational aspect among participants even if they were provided a complete account of the context. Therefore, outsiders' perspectives were not considered in this study.

<sup>53</sup> Several researchers found that email interviewing is a useful method to explore participants' understandings in qualitative studies, especially when recruitment attempts through traditional methods – i.e. face-to-face or phone interviews – fail (e.g. Burns, 2010; Hershberger & Kavanaugh, 2017; James, 2007, 2016; James & Busher, 2006; Lynch & Mah, 2018).

measuring the participants' perceptions regarding appropriateness and politeness of offers.

The Arabic and English data were evaluated by the participants of the actual interaction in this study (see fn. 52, Section 4.2.2.1). The participants were given transcriptions of the elicited data as well as a description of their context. They were first asked whether they identified the given act as an offer. Based on the discursive approach to politeness, I claim that the participants' judgments provide an essential basis for determining whether certain behaviours are offers or not. They were subsequently asked to rate the level of politeness and appropriateness according to their perceptions in making an offer (see Appendix A). The two scales were used since appropriate politic behaviour in relational work may be judged as polite (positively marked) or non-polite (unmarked). In other words, if certain behaviour is perceived as appropriate it does not guarantee that it would be positively perceived as polite, whereas polite behaviour cannot be perceived as inappropriate. I also have noticed that it is very common for people, as lay persons, to judge certain behaviours as appropriate but neither polite nor impolite. The two scales were therefore intended to provide deeper understanding of politic offer behaviour as well as of the relationship between appropriateness and politeness. Politeness was rated on a five point Likert-type scale, ranging from "very impolite", "impolite", "neither polite nor impolite", "polite", through to "very polite". Appropriateness ranged from "appropriate", "neither appropriate nor inappropriate", to "inappropriate". They were also given some space to provide any comments. This approach differs from previous studies that have asked participants to rate politeness, which have only encompassed perceptions of single utterances – divorced from their real contexts – through written questionnaires (e.g. Gupta, Walker, & Romano, 2007; Koyama, 2001; Shcherbakova, 2010). The instrument used in the current study, however, allows for evaluations of offers to be situated within a broader discourse context rather than focusing on single utterances.

### **4.3 Pilot study**

A pilot study was conducted after the data collection methods had been developed. The main purpose of the pilot study was to test the feasibility of the methodological and theoretical framework planned to be employed in the study. Two natural talk encounters among female friends were recorded. The first one involved three Saudi native speakers during a home gathering, whereas the second one involved four British native speakers in a dinner setting at a restaurant. The data were transcribed and analysed following the relational work framework. In addition, interviews were conducted and SRQ administered.

Based on the findings, some modifications were made to the methodology. First, it was initially planned that recordings would either take place in a restaurant or at a participant's home, depending on the preference of the group. However, it became clear that the restaurant setting was not as productive in generating opportunities for offer exchanges as a domestic setting.<sup>54</sup> It has been found that a home context provides more opportunities for the production and negotiation of offers due to hospitality obligations. Second, non-verbal communication was not originally considered to be a focal part of this study; however, findings from the pilot study showed that offers might be accomplished non-verbally. Thus, non-verbal offers were considered in this study to determine their contribution to the overall offering behaviour and the management of relational work by both groups of participants.

#### **4.4 Data collection procedures**

Once the participants expressed their willingness to participate in this study, they were sent a detailed information sheet (see Appendix B) and consent form (see Appendix C) so that they would have enough time to read them prior to actual data collection. This aimed to inform them about the research and their role and rights in this study. The information sheet describes briefly the purpose of the study yet without the obvious revelation that I am doing research on politeness and offers, since this would have the potential to invalidate the results. The subjects were told the following: 1) their talk over the gathering would be recorded. 2) The dinner is expected to take approximately two hours but this depends on how things go and can be adjusted to their schedules, so some flexibility is allowed for. 3) There are no fixed topics to be discussed because this study is interested in ordinary and informal talk between friends. This was to ensure that my data fits the characteristics of natural conversation as being spontaneous, unplanned and composed in real time in response to immediate situation (Stubbs, 1983: 32).

The recordings took place over a dinner meal in a hostess/guests settings. I provided the drinks and food upon the participants' request so as not to overwhelm the participants with tasks not related to the study's objectives. Two recording devices were used, one was a digital recorder, and the other was an iPad. Using two devices provided a back-up in case of technical failure and also provided an alternative recording to help with deciphering any unclear speech. The recording devices were turned on and placed on two sides of the seating

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<sup>54</sup> Only seven offer exchanges occurred during more than two hours of natural interaction among BE friends in a restaurant compared to 17 offers in the SA data in a domestic setting.

area prior to the guests' arrival.<sup>55</sup> The intention of setting this up in advance was to avoid reminding the group of the recording process. It was hoped that this would reduce the effect of the observer's paradox (Labov, 1972: 209) and enhance the likelihood of natural behaviour. Moreover, I observed and took notes when needed. The dinners took approximately two to three and half hours.

After the recordings were completed, the participants were asked to sign two copies of the consent form, which they had received in advance via email, in order to obtain their formal agreement to participate in this study. This intended to avoid reminding the participants that data collection had started which might have affected their behaviour.<sup>56</sup> After completing the consent forms, some demographic information, including names, age, education, occupation, contact information, and the nature of their relationship, was gathered to aid analysis (see Appendix D). Each participant was then asked to say her name while the recorder was turned on. This was to aid me in recognizing the participants' voices when transcribing the data.

After the transcriptions were completed and all of the offers had been identified in the data, the participants were contacted to schedule the SRQ and interviews. When this was arranged, the transcriptions with offers highlighted as well as the SRQ and interview questions were sent to the participants so that they could have a look at them in advance. Due to the nature of this study, the interview and SRQ questions concerning each offer were addressed together to make it easier to track participants' ideas. That is, during the interview I first asked them the SRQ questions about each offer and then the interview questions concerning that particular offer. An answer sheet was sent to those who asked to complete the SRQ and interview via email (see Appendix E). The follow-up metalinguistic instruments were conducted in June and July 2016 with the SA participants, and in October and November 2016 and 2017 with the BE participants. Although all of the SA participants were originally willing to take part in the interviews and SRQ, only nine did so as one could not participate due to her having a new-born baby. Three participants completed the interviews and SRQ face-to-face, and the other six completed them via phone. Concerning the BE participants, only six responded and completed the interview and SRQ (i.e. two from Elsa's group, three from Susan's group, and only one from Alice's group) even though all of the participants initially showed their willingness to take part in the interviews and

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<sup>55</sup> I had arranged with the hostess to arrive at least ten minutes before the others.

<sup>56</sup> Nanbakhsh (2011: 88) indicates that the participants in her study of Persian address terms asked her to distribute the consent form after the recording to minimize the chance of unnatural behaviour.

SRQ. Five completed them via email, whereas only one asked to do so via phone. Finally, oral interviews were recorded and transcribed.

#### 4.5 Limitations of the data

All in all, the recordings produced rich data. However, there are certain issues that need to be noted. I participated in the SA group interactions, which could have affected the participants' behaviour since I of course know the purpose of the recordings. However, my participation did have some advantages. First, being a friend to all members of the groups it would be weird and unnatural being there solely as an observer rather than also being involved in the interactions. Thus, my participation made the interactions more natural. I not participating in the interaction would have been likely to affect the participants' behaviour as they would have been suspicious about the recording and might have been reluctant to act naturally.<sup>57</sup> Thus, participation helped build a climate of trust. Second, my presence in the meal setting as a participant acting naturally would have helped make the other participants less nervous about the recording equipment thus enhancing the likelihood of getting spontaneous natural conversation. Wolfson (1986: 690, 1989: 78) argues that being a member of the group under investigation allows one to observe natural data without causing self-consciousness on the part of those being observed. Tria Airheart-Marttin (n.d.), whose fieldwork in the customer stories project was considered very effective by Johnstone (2000: 110), suggests that her laughing and talking naturally during data collection made the other participants less nervous and act more naturally. Finally, Punch (2005: 152) states that when the observer becomes part of the natural setting, it gives him/her more opportunities to understand the group being investigated and to become familiar with the "shared cultural meanings" that are of help in comprehending the social behaviour of that group. Thus, my participation was likely to help me in understanding the underlying structure of the investigated phenomenon. It is important to note that any offers produced by me were excluded to ensure the validity of the results.

Another issue with the data was that non-verbal offers could not be validated due to the absence of video recordings. This is due to the fact that it would be impossible to use video recording in the Saudi group because of the conservative nature of Saudi society. I instead relied on taking notes during my observation/participation. However, there were some sound signals in the recordings that were able to validate the occurrence of a non-verbal offer such

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<sup>57</sup> Some researchers were participants in the social interactions analysed in their papers (e.g. Coates, 1996; Haugh, 2013b; Locher & Watts, 2005).

as the sound of a cup clicking as it was placed on the table, someone's movement, or an appreciation token by the offeree.<sup>58</sup>

Moreover, it has been indicated in the previous section that only one of the interactants in Alice's group responded and completed the interviews and SRQ. This resulted in having limited access to the participants' metalinguistic evaluations and judgments, which puts a limit on my understanding of this group's data. I thus avoided extracts from this group in my discursive analysis unless there was an offer behaviour with characteristics that was not found in the other groups. Indeed, only one offer exchange from this group was included in the discursive analysis (Extract 21).

Finally, offers from the pilot study were eliminated from the quantitative pool as non-verbal offers were not carefully observed during its data collection. Including offers from the pilot study in the quantitative analysis could have invalidated the results. However, from a qualitative perspective, I believe that some offers from the pilot study would provide evidence to clarify some of the dynamics of offering behaviour among female friends in both cultures, and so some were considered in the discursive analysis and conclusions.

## **4.6 Data preparation**

This section describes the procedures employed to prepare the collected data for analysis. These fall into two main steps: transcribing the recorded conversation and establishing a coding framework for the corpus. The coding process and the solutions undertaken to overcome the difficulties which arose during data coding are discussed.

### **4.6.1 Transcribing process**

I carefully selected representative extracts from the naturally occurring conversations that demonstrate how offers were negotiated in the interaction. Two different types of software tools were used for data editing and transcribing:

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<sup>58</sup> The issue that non-verbal offers may constitute an essential part of the total offering behaviour was discovered during the pilot study (Section 4.3). However, the conservative nature of KSA meant that it was not possible to adapt the methodology of the study in the most ideal way, i.e. using video recordings.



1. Express Scribe, a free audio player software, assisted the transcription of audio recordings.
2. WavePad was used to segment the audio files into representative extracts to ease revising and proofreading.

The selected extracts were transcribed according to Du Bois, Cumming, Schuetze-Coburn, and Paolino's (1992) transcription conventions with some minor modifications to increase the ease of reading, such as the symbol to indicate code switching between L1 and L2<sup>59</sup> (see Appendix F). Since the emphasis of the present study is on the pragmatic and politeness aspects of language, a broad orthographic transcription was used and only relevant prosodic qualities of speech were included. The transcripts were checked by one of the supervisors to ensure inter-transcriber reliability; the Arabic supervisor checked the Arabic data, and the British supervisor checked the English data. Still, some passages remain unintelligible due to background noise or participants' unclear speech.

Participants' names in the original text have been replaced by pseudonyms in the thesis to preserve their anonymity. Where applicable, any sensitive personal information was deleted. For the sake of confidentiality, proper names have been substituted in the transcripts by fictional names whenever they are mentioned.

The Arabic data were first transliterated using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) and then translated into English in order to enable English readers to comprehend the Arabic data. First, the English literal meaning of the transcriptions is provided, based on The Leipzig Glossing Rules (<https://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/pdf/Glossing-Rules.pdf>), and this is followed by an English translation of the speech.

To ensure the accuracy of the translation, I translated the Arabic extracts by myself. The translations were then revised and validated by two translation experts who hold an MA in English/Arabic translation as well as the Arabic supervisor. Their comments were taken into consideration. Moreover, the British supervisor looked at the English translations to check that the resulting text was idiomatic.

#### **4.6.2 Coding framework of the study and coding process**

A first step towards building a taxonomy of offer exchanges was to decide on a working definition of offers to identify instances of offering in the spoken

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<sup>59</sup> The symbol which marks that the speaker has shifted to another language was changed from angle brackets labelled with L2, i.e. <L2 word L2>, into just angle brackets, i.e. <word>.

discourse. Offers were identified following Rabinowitz's (1993: 203) definition of an offer as:

A speech act, generally indirect, which voluntarily proposes, without an obligation to do so, to extend an item or a service which the speaker considers beneficial to the receiver and proposes to furnish. It arises from the interlocutors' shared knowledge of the situational context, and is usually based upon a preference or a need on the part of the receiver which the offerer perceives and indicates a willingness to address.

Secondly, for the purpose of building a coding framework, observations made during the early stages of data analysis influenced my choice of methodological/theoretical approaches. The process is characterized by a combination of close examination of the data and consultation of the relevant literature, resulting in building a taxonomy that can delineate the main characteristics of the interactional structure of offer negotiations in ordinary spoken discourse. It is worthwhile noticing that most coding schemas for offers build upon the CCSARP (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989) framework; hence they have mainly focused on speaker's actions and have provided little account of the offeree's role in jointly constructing the discourse. They have largely been concerned about offer strategies in the head acts in terms of directness level (e.g. Allami, 2012; Barron, 2003, 2005). Some have provided insights about the interactional aspect of offer exchanges from a discourse analysis perspective (Barron, 2003; Pohle, 2009). As this study is mainly concerned with the discursive struggle over politeness in offers, we can see that it needs to establish a coding scheme that could provide a comprehensive picture of how offers are negotiated in spoken discourse. Hence, on the basis of the data, a coding scheme was constructed. Some codes and definitions were adapted from Barron (2003, 2005), Edmondson (1981), Pohle (2009), and Schneider (2003).

The codes were data-driven. It is important to note that neither the generation of codes nor the process of coding followed a strict methodology as, for example, in grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Nonetheless, some techniques were employed, such as the writing of memos and diagrams throughout the analysis process (Strauss & Corbin, 1998: 217-241). I constantly recorded general ideas, coding definitions, and problems with references to relevant text extracts. The coding process was dynamic, i.e. categories were considered as preliminary entities in the early stages of the analysis. Throughout the coding process, some new categories were added, and some were merged with other categories, divided into sub-categories, or deleted. Some of the categories were taken from the literature (e.g. supportive moves), yet they were modified and defined based on the present data. Category definitions were

constantly re-examined and modified accordingly. As the coding scheme grew in clarity, complexity, and accuracy over time, it was used as input for the final analysis, results, and discussion sections.

Offer interactions were coded using NVivo 10. This enabled me to manage the complexity of different coding categories in relation to the transcripts. The use of this qualitative data analysis software allowed taking some limited descriptive statistical aspects into account too. The quantitative analysis was limited to descriptive statistics of absolute and relative frequencies. This analysis was considered sufficient to reach the research objective of detecting the discursive struggle over politeness in offer negotiations among two different groups.

Upon completion of the coding process, the categories were reviewed one last time to ensure high internal consistency. Moreover, a random sample of codes for each body of data were examined by two other raters (mainly the thesis supervisors) to determine interrater reliability.

The coding framework of the present study aims to capture the main characteristics of the interactional structure of offer negotiations in ordinary spoken discourse. Offer exchanges were classified according to: whether offers were initiated verbally or non-verbally, offer topics, complexity of offer exchanges, and stimulus type of initiative offer. Supportive moves that accompanied an offer were explored. The components of each category are identified below and illustrated with examples adopted from the corpus of the study. At the end of this section, Figure 5 presents a summary of the coding framework of the study.

### **1. Verbal vs. non-verbal offers**

Offers were first categorized in terms of whether they were achieved verbally or non-verbally. This was intended to find out whether non-verbal offers constitute an essential part of politic offering behaviour across the two groups. Moreover, it provided the opportunity to explore any traceable relations between the communication type and the other categories, e.g. the degree of complexity in offer exchanges. This classification is based only on indicating whether the first offer turn in every offer exchange was accomplished verbally or non-verbally.<sup>60</sup>

### **2. Offer topics**

Three offer types have been previously identified in the literature: offer of hospitality, gift offering, and offer of assistance (Barron, 2005: 144; Fukushima, 1990: 318). The present corpus, however, included instances in which speakers

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<sup>60</sup> My aim was to accurately identify whether the participants chose to initiate their offers verbally or non-verbally. Therefore, the communication type in reoffers or supportive moves were not considered.

offered some information to the addressees. Based on the discursive approach to politeness, I claim that the participants' judgments provide an essential basis for determining whether certain behaviours are offers or not. Since this behaviour was perceived as offers by the participants, a category for offers of information was created. Moreover, a few offer exchanges, including offering a speaking turn and offering comfort, did not fall into any of the above categories, thus a category called *other* was created. Since only one instance of gift offering occurred in the data, this topic was excluded and demoted under the category *other*. To sum up, based on the corpus, offer exchanges were classified into four key offer topics: hospitable offers, offer of assistance, offer of information, and *other*.

### 3. The complexity of offer exchanges

Offers were then coded according to their interactional features. Following the framework of discourse analysis presented by Edmondson (1981) and Edmondson and House (1981), the analysis presented in this thesis employed their exchange unit to distinguish between simple and complex offer exchanges.

A simple offer exchange is one in which the offer is not repeated; thus no complex negotiation is involved, and the outcomes are either positive or negative. In other words, from a discourse perspective, they may consist of *Initiate* + *Satisfy* as in Example 5 or *Initiate* + *Contra* + *Satisfy* as in Example 6.<sup>61</sup>

#### Example 5

1. A: Coffee?            **(Initiate)**
2. B: Yes, please.      **(Satisfy)**

#### Example 6

1. A: Cake?                               **(Initiate)**
2. B: No, thanks, I am full.   **(Contra)**
3. A: Ok.                                   **(Satisfy)**

On the other hand, complex offer exchanges employ more intricate negotiations that are interactionally achieved over a number of turns. In this thesis, an offer is considered complex if it includes one or more of the following strategies: offer-reoffering sequences, embedded offers, elaborated offers, and/or collaborative offers.

Offer-reoffering sequence refers to offer exchanges that consist of an initiative offer and reoffer(s) as a result of an addressee's refusal. In other words, from a discourse analysis view, they occur when a number of *Contras* follow an *Initiate*.

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<sup>61</sup> An account of Edmondson's (1981) discourse model including the definitions of the terms *Initiate*, *Contra* and *Satisfy* is provided in Section 2.2.1.

These *Contras* occur when a refusal is not accepted (Barron, 2003: 132). This analysis adopts Barron's (2003, 2005) and Schneider's (2003) distinction between initiative offers and reoffers (Schneider's offer renewals) within offer sequences. Schneider (2000: 295) defines initiative offers as "... the first move in each offer sequence". Reoffers, on the other hand, refer to further attempts on the part of the speaker to restate a particular initiative offer within one offer sequence (Barron, 2003: 127). The following example clarifies this type.

### Example 7

1. Susan: Do you want another drink? (**Initiate/Initiative offer**)
2. Hilary: I'm all right. (**Contra 1/ Refusal 1**)
3. Susan: You sure? You want some-- (**Contra 2/ Reoffer**)
4. Hilary: Yeah, I'm all right. Thank you. (**Contra 3/ Refusal 2**)
5. .. ((Susan serves the other guests)) (**Satisfy**)

Embedded offers refer to complex offer exchanges in which an offer exchange acts as a response to another offer exchange. It could be a refusal to the first move or an elaborated move from the addressee. Example 8 from the Arabic data illustrates this type of offer:

### Example 8

1. Ahad: *we:n finʒa:l-ik?*  
where cup-your?  
Ahad: Where's your cup? ((Addresses Suha.)) (**Initiative offer**)
2. Suha: Ahad, *ʔigʕid-i ʔiħna: --*  
Ahad, sit-F we--  
Suha: Ahad, sit down. We -- ((She takes the thermos and puts it on the table next to her)). (**Embedded offer**)
3. Ahad: *tʕejjib tʕejjib. bas ba-ʔa-ru:ħ ʔa-ʒi:b--*  
OK OK. But will-I-go I-bring--  
Ahad: OK, OK. But I'll go and bring--

Ahad asked Suha about the location of her cup so that she could pour coffee for her (line 1). However, Suha offered Ahad (hostess) the choice to return to her seat and allow the guests to serve themselves coffee by taking the thermos (line 2). This offer was accepted by Ahad (line 3). Suha's offer seems to be a refusal to Ahad's offer. Thus, it is embedded in Ahad's offer exchange.

Elaborated offers refer to the situations in which the same initiative offer is continued over a number of turns by the same speaker. These do not include elaborations that function as offer renewal due to an addressee's refusal. They may be elaborated over a number of turns to add information, answers, or reasoning, that is, no refusals occur. Collaborative offers, on the other hand, refer

to exchanges in which an offer is jointly constructed by two or more speakers over a number of turns to persuade the offeree to accept the offer.<sup>62</sup> In this type, a refusal in response to the initiative offer may take place. If the same speaker restates the initiative offer after the addressee's refusal took place, this behaviour is considered reoffering, not elaboration. Alternatively, if the offer is reproduced by other speaker, it is considered a collaboration. The offers made by the other speaker(s) are considered elicited by the initial offer. Consider Example 10 and Example 11 in the following section as they illustrate elaborated and collaborative offers.

#### 4. Supportive moves

Speakers tend to use supportive moves (also called *external modifications*) in most offer exchanges. They are used to soften or intensify the head move (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989: 277; House & Kasper, 1981: 168-169), and they occur in pre- or post-head position. Edmondson (1981: 122-129) classifies supportive moves into three main groups: grounders, expanders, and disarmers. Building on CCSARP (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989), Bilbow (2002: 299-300) found that supportive moves elaborate on the nature or circumstances of a given commissive speech act, including offers. Among them are explanations and elaborations which correspond to Edmondson's (1981) grounders and expanders, respectively. He added three other supportive moves: condition, expression of reservations, and request for feedback. Aijmer (1996: 191) lists two main types of external modification found in offers: conditionals, such as *if you can/if you wish/if you want*, and grounders. Barron (2005) found that these two types were dominant in Irish English and British English hospitable offers and offers of assistance.

The notion of supportive moves adopted in the present study goes beyond the one found in the literature. It is broader than Edmondson's (1981) notion of an anticipatory strategy in which a speaker may not only predict a certain move by an addressee in response to his/her head move, but may respond to an actual move by an addressee. Moreover, it is wider than the CCSARP's (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989) external modifications which are turn-internal supportive moves, i.e. within its immediate turn. My notion of supportive moves not only refers to those which appear in the same turn of the head act, but also covers those that occur in a separate turn from the actual head act turn. They may also comprise longer stretches of talk extending over many turns as found by Pohle (2009: 299) in her investigation of offers in simulated business negotiations. This broader notion of

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<sup>62</sup> This is parallel to Geyer's (2008: 73) collaborative disagreement, in which two or more interactants make a dissenting team, and Haugh's (2013a: 64) collective teasing, in which side participants other than the primary initiator of the teasing elaborate on the teases.

supportive moves was due to the fact that this study was built upon natural spoken discourse, whereas most previous studies – particularly those built on CCSARP – based their notion on data elicited by artificial methods such as DCTs. Therefore, they have focused on the utterance level and failed to grasp the patterns of real interactions. In addition, my approach acknowledges that some supportive moves have more than one function. Some of them functioned as reoffers as well as supporting the initiative offer head move as in Example 9.

### Example 9

1. *Ahad: Susu ʔa- sçb lik ja:hi ? willa tistan-i:n ʔal-fatçajir?*  
           Susu I-pour for-you tea? Or wait-youF the-pies?  
*Ahad: Susu. Do you want tea or you'll wait for the pies? (Initiative offer)*
2. *Suha: la: xali ʔal-fatçajir tiçi.*  
           no leave-F the-pies come.  
*Suha: No, I'll wait for the pies. (Refusal 1)*
3. *Ahad: wallah ? bi-ʔatç-çari:g liʔan-aha:.*  
           by God ? in-the-way because-it.  
*Ahad: By God? Because they're on the way. (Supportive move/ Reoffer)*
4. ((*Suha nods her approval.*)) **(Satisfy)**

It can be seen that the expression ‘By God’ on line 3 acts as both a reoffer to have more tea and a supportive move that confirms Suha’s refusal. The utterance ‘Because they’re on the way’, which is also part of the reoffer, is another supportive move that justifies why Ahad offered Suha the option to wait for the pies.

Five types of supportive moves were identified in the current study. The first four were adopted from previous literature (e.g. Aijmer, 1996; Bilbow, 2002; Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Edmondson, 1981). The fifth strategy was identified from the data. This strategy was added because it seemed to act as a supportive move that confirmed H’s response. The types of supportive moves are defined and provided with examples from the data below.

- A. **Grounder:** A speaker gives reasons for making a certain move, thus justifying his/her behaviour (Aijmer, 1996: 191). Speakers use this move to convince the recipients to accept the offer. The following offer exchange from the Arabic data illustrates the use of a grounder in a collaborative offer.

### Example 10 Collaborative offer (using a grounder as supportive move)

1. *Sally: ʔismiç-i ja: ra:çjat ʔil-be:t .. wif raji-k*  
           listen-F hey owner the-house.. what opinion-you

*tʒi:b-i:n*      *ʔal-qahwah*      [*hina:=*].  
bring-youF      The-coffee      [here=]

Sally: *Listen lady of the house...How about you put the coffee [=here] ((pointing to the table which is right in front of them)) (Initiative offer)*

2. Wa'ad: [*ʔajwah s'aħ*].  
[yes correct].

Wa'ad: [Yes correct.] (**Collaborative offer**)

3. Sally: *ʕafa:n*      *biʕi:dah*      *marrah*,      *wa*      *ʔʒlis-i*      *ʔant-i*      *hina:*,  
because      far      very,      and      sit-you      youF      here,  
*wa*      *xala:sʕ*      *n-sʕabsʕib*.  
and      finish      we-pour.

Sally: *Because it's so far away. And you sit here, so we keep pouring.*

(**Grounder**)

4. Wa'ad: *ʔant-i*      *tau-k*      *ʒa:ja-h*      *min*      *ʔad-dawa:m*,      *wa*      *taʕba:nah*,  
you-F      just      come      from      the-work,      and      tired  
*jaʕni*      *raħmi:n-ik*      *ʔiħna:*,      *ħa:si:n*      *bi-ʔħsa:s-ik*.  
mean      touch up-you      we      feel      for- feeling-you

Wa'ad: *You've just got back from work, and feeling tired. Poor you. We understand how you feel.*

(**Grounder**)<sup>63</sup>

Sara and Wa'ad collaboratively offered to serve themselves coffee from the thermos so that Faten would relax (lines 1 & 2). Although this collaborative offer was not refused, it was then supported by grounders by both speakers (lines 3 & 4). They both provided reasons and justifications for the offer. It is worth noting here that not all the speakers in a collaborative offering exchange always provide supportive move(s). There were instances in which no supportive moves occurred or only one speaker provided supportive move(s).

B. **Expander:** A speaker provides further information which relates to the content of the head move. Pohle (2009: 157) found that expanders and grounders help to explain multiple offer turns in business offers, i.e. complex offers. The initiative offer is somewhat general and is then followed by more specific supporting "sub"-offers. The following interaction illustrates the use of expander as a supportive move in an elaborated offer.

#### Example 11 Elaborated offer (using expanders as supportive moves.)

1. *Elsa: Do you want something to drink, Janet?* (**Initiative offer**)
2. *((Elsa stands to serve the next course))*
3. *Janet: Could I have another cup of tea?* (**Acceptance**)
4. *Elsa: Yeah. Do you want the same again?* (**Expander**)

<sup>63</sup> This example is part of an embedded offer exchange that is analysed in detail in Chapter 6 (see Extract 9).



## 5. Janet: Yeah, thanks.

In Example 11, Elsa offered her guest, Janet, a drink on line 1 by asking her if she wanted something to drink since Janet had finished her first cup of tea. Even though it was clear that Janet accepted the offer by asking for another cup of tea, Elsa added an expander move (line 4). This expander was to check whether Janet wanted her tea served in the same way. This exchange is classified as elaborated offering.

- C. **Imposition minimizer**: The speaker considers the imposition on the hearer or speaker that is involved in compliance with the offer. In Example 12, Yusra tried to minimize the imposition on Inas when she refused (line 2) her offer to have more tea (line 1) by reoffering her tea, using an imposition minimizer by asking her to have just one more cup (line 3).

**Example 12**

1. Yusra: Inas finʒa:l-ik.  
Inas Cup-your.  
Yusra: Inas, your cup.

**(Initiative offer)**

2. Inas: la: ħabi:bti . tism-i:n wallah.  
no darling. Bless-youF by God.  
Inas: No, darling. By God. Bless you. **(Refusal)**

3. Yusra: wa:ħid? 0  
one? 0

Yusra: Just One more? 0

**(Reoffer/ Imposition minimizer)**

4. Inas: la: wallah xala:sʕ .  
no by God enough.

Inas: No, I swear ,I've had enough. ((She puts her hand on the cup to cover it.))

- D. **Explicit conditional**: This refers to phrases (such as *if you like/want/need*) in which the speaker makes clear that the addressees can opt out and are free to reject, by asking them directly if they are interested in having the action carried out as in Example 13. According to Aijmer (1996: 191), it accompanies an offer when it is clear that the action is of benefit to the hearer.

**Example 13**

1. Susan: I can just--, I can split them, if you want, **(Explicit Conditional)**

2. But-- 0

3. Flora: I'm sure it's OK.

- E. **Confirmation of H's response:** The speaker checks the hearer's prior response to an offer. This may aim to give the addressee the chance to confirm or change his/her opinion. As in Example 14, Susan tried to confirm Hilary's choice of drink on line 3.

#### Example 14

1. Susan: *Tea, coffee.* =0 ((She opens the fridge to show them the juices.))
2. Hilary: *I'll have a cup of tea, please.*
3. Susan: *Do you want a cup of tea?* (**Confirmation of H's response**)
4. Hilary: *Yes, please.*

#### 5. The stimulus type of initiative offers

It is within the interest of the present study whether the initiating offer in a given offer exchange is triggered by the preceding linguistic or non-linguistic context. Some researchers (e.g. Bilbow, 2002: 296; Drew, 2018: 66; Haugh, 2015: 117) indicated that some commissive speech acts are not expressed as a result of apparent initiation. Accordingly, the data is classified into two major categories according to the stimulus: solicited and spontaneous offers. Solicited offers are produced as a result of hinting or requesting<sup>64</sup> on the part of prospective receiver or caused by a preceding offer or hint by another interactant,<sup>65</sup> whereas spontaneous offers are not preceded by a prompt from the receiver or any other participant. Both types are exemplified in the following offer interactions, taken from the BE data:

#### Example 15 Solicited offer

1. Hilary: *I'll get a piece of bread.* ((Extends her hand to take one.))
2. Flora: *That's the one.* ((She passes a piece of bread to Hilary since it is closer to her.))

Flora's offer in the above example is solicited by both a hint from Hilary that she wanted to get a piece of bread and Hilary's non-verbal action as she tried to reach over to get bread.

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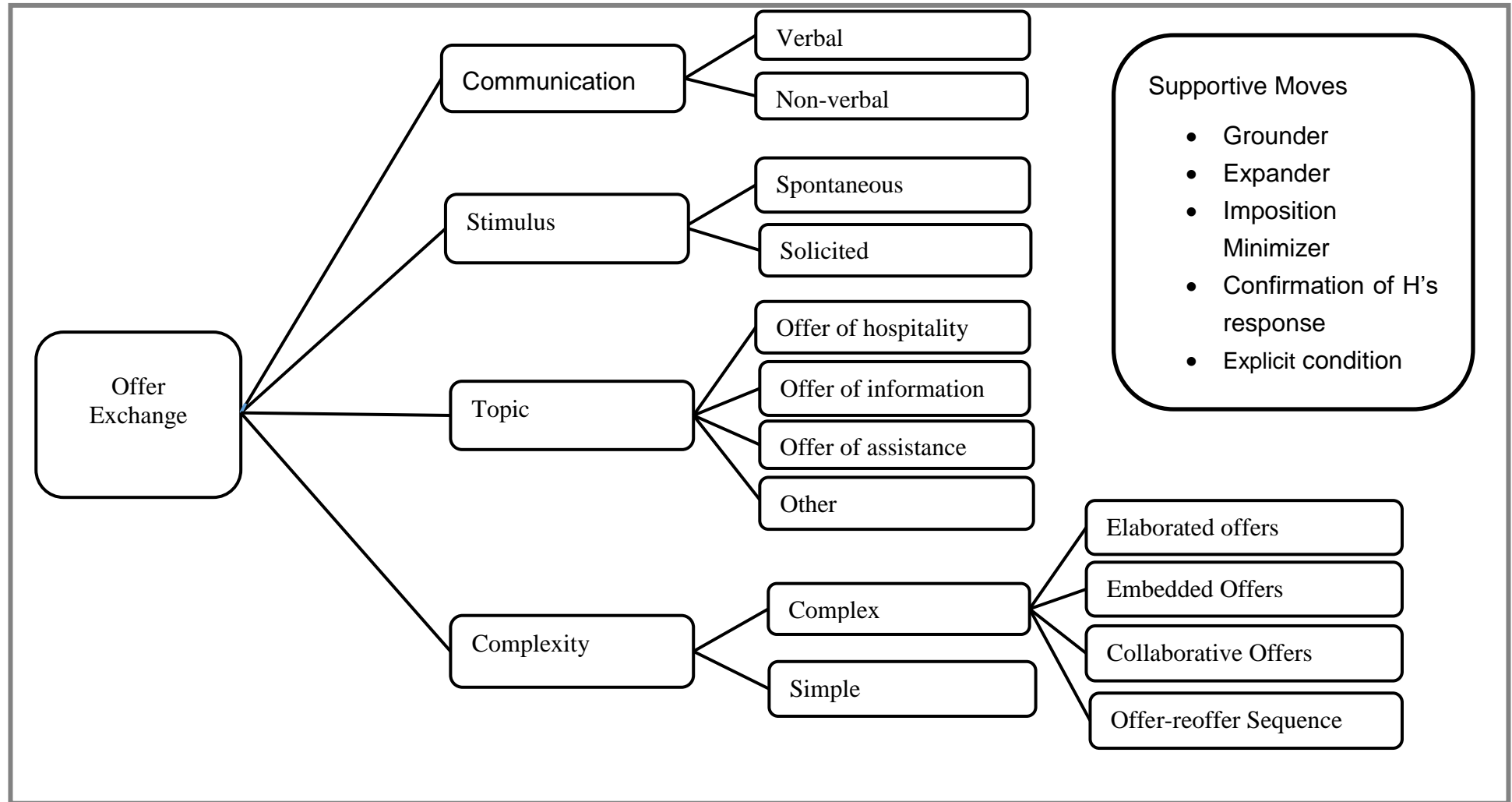
<sup>64</sup> Responses to requests are considered as solicited offers only if the request was addressed to a group of interactants and one of them voluntarily decided to fulfil it. On the other hand, if someone taking up a request addressed directly to him/her, it is not identified as a solicited offer, but categorized as the second pair part of a request adjacency pair.

<sup>65</sup> It is worth noting that a solicited offer does not have to follow the request or hint in the next turn. It can occur several turns later.

**Example 16 Spontaneous offer**

1. ...
2. *((Elsa serves Helen her main course.))*
3. *Helen: Thank you.*

It is clear here that Elsa's hospitable non-verbal offer (line 2) was a spontaneous one. It was not prompted by a request or need from Helen. It aimed to show hospitality and generosity.



**Figure 5 Coding framework of offer exchanges**

### 4.6.3 Coding difficulties

Some difficulties arose in the coding process. First, exchanges do not always have straightforward boundaries (Stubbs, 1983: 132), and sometimes they are incomplete due to the lack of a *Satisfy* move (whether verbal or non-verbal) at the end. An offer exchange may be left incomplete either on purpose or because the initiative offer was not heard. In such a situation, the person who has performed the offer could silently accept their offer not being taken up by the addressee and go on talking about something different. In this case, the exchange is regarded as a simple one and consisted of only one move. Another possible option is that the offerer produces a second, possibly renewed attempt, at an initial offer, which gives the offeree a second chance to clearly accept or reject the offer. This was regarded as a complex exchange, and most likely an offering-reoffering sequence.

Another coding difficulty can occur in identifying complex offer exchanges. The structure of an offer exchange is sometimes ambiguous. It may not be clear whether an offer is followed by elaboration/explanation and/or reoffering attempts within a sequence of turns interrupted by the interactant's backchannels or discussion. Some of these situations may be neither accepted nor refused as the focus of the interaction shifts to discuss the information provided in the offer. This occurred more often when an offer of information took place. However, if the initial offer is refused (whether implicitly or explicitly), the other turns by the offerer in the sequence are considered reoffers. These reoffers may also function as supportive moves to the initiative offer in order to convince the addressee to accept the offer or confirm her prior response (as in Example 9). On the other hand, if the initial offers were not refused, we have two possible analytic outcomes. First, if the discussion shifts to another topic, and the speaker tried to redirect the attention to her offer, it is considered reoffering. Second, if the discussion is relevant to the offer itself, the other turns are regarded as supportive moves to the initiative offer and the exchange is identified as elaborated offering.

Another difficulty was finding a robust way to distinguish verbal and non-verbal offers. I acknowledge that non-verbal offers cannot be completely separated from verbal ones since some of the offers involve both verbal and non-verbal aspects.<sup>66</sup> My position is that an offer should be classified as initiated non-verbally if its initiative non-verbal move was not accompanied by any verbal move aiming to achieve its illocutionary force. Only offers that were initiated totally non-verbally

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<sup>66</sup> Fukushima (2015: 265) indicates that some behaviours can involve both verbal and non-verbal aspects. Thus, it would sometimes be difficult to separate them when considering politeness.

without any supportive verbal account were considered as non-verbal offers. Those offers that were initiated using both verbal and non-verbal communicative acts were classified as verbal offers. This aimed to minimize any possible inconsistency during the coding process.

#### 4.7 Analysis of data

The primary source of data in this study is the recordings of natural talk. Representative extracts from the recordings which include offers were first carefully identified following Rabinowitz's (1993: 203) definition of offers (see Section 4.6.2). All types of offer were investigated, except those produced by me. After that, driven by the discursive approach to politeness, I maintain that the most appropriate basis for categorizing a given act as an offer is the interactants' judgment. Thus, the identified offers were then subject to verification as offers by the participants. If there was consensus among the respondents to not consider a given exchange as an offer, it was eliminated from the analysis. As a result, one item was discarded from the SA data and 12 from the BE data. The one removed from the SA data was about offering a piece of information which was no longer beneficial to the addressee.<sup>67</sup> A similar item was also discarded from the BE data for the same reason.<sup>68</sup> The other eleven items excluded from the BE data included the following:

1. Two items involved using the expressions *'that's yours'* and *'here you go'* when putting the drinks on the table. The participants believed that the hostess was pointing out and presenting the guest's drink rather than offering her a drink (the offers had been made a few minutes ago when she asked them what they wanted to drink).
2. One item involved naming the item when placing it on the table; i.e. Alice said that she would get the sauces and named them when she put them on the table. The participant believed that she was fulfilling an offer that

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<sup>67</sup> Nada had braces applied to her teeth two days before the friends' gathering. Ahad said that she wished Nada had asked her before having this done because she could recommend an excellent dentist. Ahad provided the dentist's name although she knew that Nada did not need it. Her behaviour was not considered an offer by all the interactants, including Ahad, because they believed that the information did not benefit Nada in any way.

<sup>68</sup> Helen was telling the women about the trouble she had had in buying train tickets to Brighton. Janet immediately provided her a solution. This was not seen as an offer since the solution given had been discovered and undertaken by Helen before the conversation took place.

took place a few minutes ago when she asked them if they wanted any sauces with the food rather than performing a new offer.

3. Three items related to the hostess's action of clearing the table after they had finished eating. The participants believed that this action was not an offer unless a question was proposed as to whether she should clear the table or not.
4. Two items were about a guest's attempt to take over a service that was intended to benefit her rather than allowing the hostess to complete it. For example, Elsa (hostess) was arranging the cutlery on the table, and Janet (guest) took the cutlery from Elsa and arranged it herself. This was not seen as an offer because the interactants believed that Janet was taking care of herself rather than helping Elsa.
5. One situation involved a guest indicating a certain seat to another guest in order to sit in it while there was another seat available.
6. One item involved asking the guests to '*come in*' when they arrived. The participants considered it as a way to greet them, not as offering them a new opportunity as the invitation had been already made and agreed in advance.
7. One item referred to a situation where Elsa changed the cutlery for her guests after they had finished their starter in preparation to serve the main dish. This action was not seen as an offer because the respondents thought that Elsa should have given these out when she provided cutlery at the beginning.

It is obvious that the offers which were discarded from the BE data were greater in number than in the SA data. This could be due to several reasons. First, this could be attributed to differences between the two cultures in considering offers. For example, situations 1, 4, 5 and 7 were seen as offering in the SA data but not in the BE data. It appeared that I was classifying them as offers from a Saudi cultural perspective, i.e. my culture. Second, since I was involved in the Saudi friends' interactions, I might have had a better understanding of what happened and what might be seen as an offer. Finally, since I am not part of British culture, I considered any exchange that had the minimum potential to fit the adopted definition of offers even though it would not be regarded as an offer in Saudi Arabia. For example, although situations 3 and 6 are similarly interpreted as not being offers in Saudi Arabia, I included them in the interviews with the BE participants. This approach was intended to avoid excluding offers due to cultural differences.

The data were then analysed using different methods. The main methods used were the interactional negotiation of offers, which is based on discourse analysis,

and relational work, complemented by such theoretical frameworks as conversation analysis and rapport management. Each of these frameworks was discussed in more detail in the theoretical framework guiding this study (Chapter 2). The analysis of the data was undertaken in two phases: quantitative and qualitative. The combination of qualitative and quantitative methods is increasingly encouraged by linguists and social scientists (e.g. Holmes & Meyerhoff, 2003: 13; Holmes & Schnurr, 2005: 124). Generally, the quantitative approach was used to explore the interactional structure of offer negotiations, and the qualitative approach was used to investigate the discursive struggle over politeness.

#### **4.7.1 Quantitative analysis**

Holmes and Meyerhoff (2003: 13) argue that there is “a place for quantitatively oriented studies, at least as a background for understanding the social significance of particular linguistic choices at specific points in an interaction”. In this respect, Holmes and Schnurr (2005: 124), in their investigation of humour in the workplace, point to the value of complementary quantitative and qualitative approaches to the issue of how politeness is performed in specific interactions. They argue that the quantitative approach enabled them to determine the amount and type of humour in which members in a given workplace engage. They moreover claim that quantitative analysis provided them with a valuable backdrop describing the features that distinguish different distinctive COPs.

The current study differentiates itself by using descriptive statistics of absolute and relative frequencies of some aspects of discourse analysis in exploring discursive politeness. The adoption of this type of analysis is motivated by the definition of politic behaviour as the one that occurs frequently (Watts, 2003: 278). It aims to identify the dominant norms and patterns of the interactional structure of offers at a discourse level. The results of the quantitative analysis illuminate whether norms of offering behaviour in female friendship groups vary across the two cultures.

The coding framework of the study (see Section 4.6.2), which takes the exchange level as defined by Edmondson (1981) as its basic unit, provides the main units of quantitative analysis in this study. It organizes the large number of offers into manageable categories that would enable a comparison between the distributions of interactional characteristics of offers between female friends in two different cultures. The frequencies and percentages of each category were quantified. Major findings were compared between the two groups concerning: 1) whether offers were initiated verbally or non-verbally; 2) degree of complexity in offer exchanges; 3) supportive moves employed; 4) offer topics; and 5) stimulus



type of initiative offers. Any traceable relations between these categories and their sub-categories were examined.

#### **4.7.2 Qualitative analysis**

The discursive approach was the main paradigm used to understand how politeness phenomena within relational work was enacted in offer interactions, which is qualitative in nature. The elicited data were analysed following the norms of relational work as proposed by Locher and Watts (2005). According to relational work, interactants might not show evaluative reactions/comments towards unmarked/politic/appropriate behaviour since this behaviour is the norm, while positively marked/politic/appropriate behaviour would trigger the judgment of behaviour as polite. Behaviours which violate social norms and are negatively marked would be referred to as impolite or over-polite. The analysis was complemented by borrowing the concept of “sociality rights” from the rapport management framework (Spencer-Oatey, 2000, 2002, 2005a). This made it possible to explain factors determining the appropriate relational work. Moreover, some features of conversational analysis, such as turn-taking, hesitations, pauses, backchannels, repair, and laughter were used to aid interpreting the underlying patterns of interactants’ negotiation of relational work. CA enabled an understanding of the way in which moment-by-moment reactions were made.

Representative samples were carefully chosen to be included in the discursive analysis since it is impossible to discuss every offer exchange in detail. The selection seeks to provide insights about each sub-category of the coding scheme as well as both marked and unmarked offering behaviour. The samples were selected in order to present the following categories: the most common offering behaviour; situations of offering that challenge the relational work framework; or offers with characteristics that had not been discussed previously, such as those with partial acceptance responses.

Moreover, the data from the interviews and SRQ were used to complement the discursive analysis of naturally recorded data. The participants’ responses to the interview were transcribed and a qualitative analysis was undertaken to investigate their perceptions and evaluations of politeness and appropriateness. The participants’ responses to the SRQ were used to help in identifying lay persons’ perceptions of politeness and appropriateness. Their responses were used to enable the capturing of some of the norms and patterns of offers against which the behaviours of individuals could be more usefully interpreted.

## 4.8 Ethical considerations

Sociolinguistic research inevitably raises ethical concerns since it involves studying people's language behaviour (Cameron, 2001: 22-27; Duranti, 1997: 346; Feagin, 2004: 32; Johnstone, 2000: 39). Issues of participants' confidentiality and anonymity are the focus of ethical considerations. Anonymity and pseudonymity are usually used in social research to safeguard participants' confidentiality. They are intended to protect the participants' real identities from exposure.

Since the data collection instruments employed in this research seek to provide an analysis of people's talk, I obtained ethics approval from the Ethics Committee of the University of Leeds before participants were approached (Ethics reference number: PVAR 14-048, date of approval: 31/01/2015). The study has strictly abided by the policy set out by the Ethics Committee. The following security measures were taken to protect the participants' autonomy and anonymity:

1. **Information Sheet:** A detailed Information sheet was provided to all potential participants before taking part in the research in their native language (i.e. Arabic or English) to ensure their complete understanding. Potential participants were given information about the required procedures followed in the research design in advance. The information sheet fully informed participants about all aspects of the research project: the purpose of the study; what participation in the research would require; the potential risks and inconveniences that may arise; the potential benefits that may result; and procedures followed for data protection and confidentiality (see Appendix B). In order to feel more secure, participants were given the researcher's contact information so that any questions they had could be answered.
2. **Informed Consent:** The participants were invited to complete and sign a consent form (see Appendix C). They were assured that the recordings and the transcriptions would be dealt with confidentially and that their identities would be anonymized. The form reminded the participants of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without the need to give a reason. Any recorded data held about them at that time would not be used and would be destroyed.
3. **Confidentiality:** Participants were assured that the analysis would involve anonymizing their identities, and only anonymized transcripts of the interaction would appear in data analysis sections of the research. They were also reminded of their right to delete any part of the conversation on request. Any identifying information was removed (e.g. name, date of birth, or address). All participants were given pseudonyms to protect their

identity. Care was taken to ensure that none of the participants could be identified by any quotation either from the recorded interaction or the interviews.

4. **Data Protection:** A digital audio recorder was used. The audio files were stored in password protected computer files, and the recordings were then deleted immediately from the digital recorder.

## 4.9 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the methodological framework for the study. A cross-cultural research design, in which I draw upon a discursive approach to politeness, was followed to investigate how BE and SA female speakers negotiate offers. I have discussed the research methods employed in the study and shown how they were administered. I argued that authentic data would be the best method since it would allow me to investigate the underlying interactional patterns of offers in actual language use as well as the discursive struggle over politeness. I also argued that metalinguistic elicitation methods – interviews and SRQs – would provide me with valuable insights, and hence improve the validity of the analysis. For the data analysis, I devised a coding scheme to account for offer negotiation from a discourse perspective. The study also differentiates itself from most discursive methodologies by investigating politeness from both qualitative and quantitative perspectives. The analysis suggests that frequency counts can shed light on what is seen as politic among the members of a given group. Moreover, due to the discursive nature of politeness, a qualitative approach was used to explain how relational work is manifested in offer interactions. Finally, shortcomings of the data and ethical issues taken to protect the participants' identity were discussed.

Following the methodological design explained in this chapter, the next chapter presents a quantitative analysis of the interactional structure of offer exchanges.

## Chapter 5 Quantitative Analysis

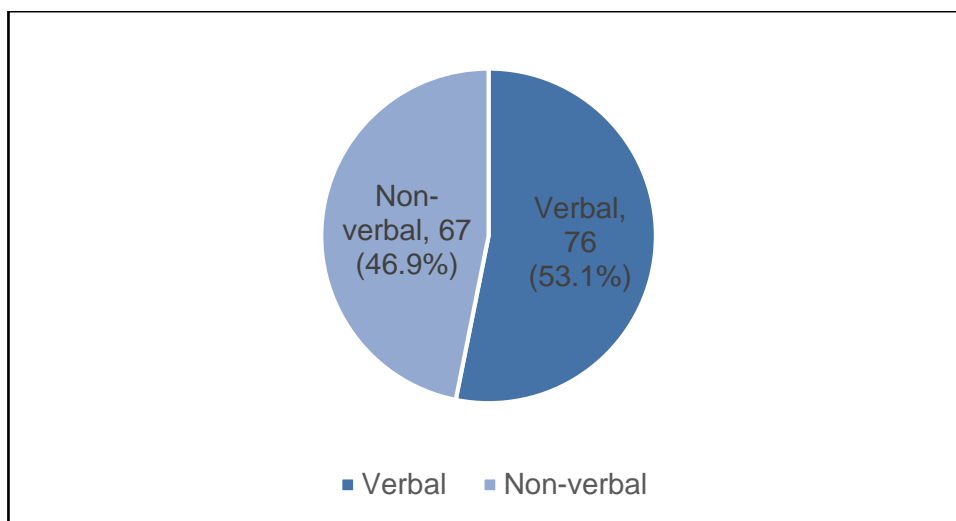
Since one of the goals of this study is to provide a comprehensive picture that detects general patterns in the phenomena of offering in friendship talk, this chapter aims to address the first research question, which is concerned with identifying and comparing the main interactional characteristics of offers in both SA and BE groups. In particular, the chapter compares the frequency distribution of some aspects of the interactional negotiation of offers in natural talk among members of Saudi and British female friendship groups. At the same time, it will provide insights about how descriptive quantitative analysis can help in identifying politic offering behaviour. It also explores the extent of non-verbal behaviour in offering in female friendship groups. Given these issues, the chapter is divided into three main sections. Section 5.1 presents a detailed descriptive analysis of the interactional patterns of SA offers. Section 5.2 deals with the distribution of those patterns in BE offers. The analysis in both sections is similarly organized and issues in analogous sub-sections are addressed consecutively. Finally, the main results of both sections are compared in Section 5.3.

### 5.1 SA offers

This section deals with the interactional patterns of offers among SA female friends as they occur in natural spoken discourse. The analysis is presented by following the categorization of the taxonomy presented in Chapter 4. First, it classifies offer exchanges according to whether their initiative offer was achieved verbally or non-verbally (Section 5.1.1). Second, insights about offer topics are provided in Section 5.1.2. Third, it sheds light on the stimulus type of the offers (Section 5.1.3). It then deals with the complexity of offer exchanges (Section 5.1.4). Any traceable relations between stimulus, language type, and complexity of offer exchange are also addressed within each section. Finally, the supportive moves accompanying those offer exchanges are explored (Section 5.1.5). A summary of the main findings are presented in Section 5.1.6.

### 5.1.1 Verbal vs. non-verbal offers

In total, 143 offer exchanges were identified in the present corpus, of which 67 (46.9%) were achieved non-verbally, whereas 76 (53.1%) were accomplished verbally as shown in Figure 6.<sup>69</sup>



**Figure 6 Distribution of verbal and non-verbal offers in SA corpus**

It can be seen that nearly half of the offers were non-verbal. This provides evidence that non-verbal behaviour constitutes an essential part of relational work in the SA groups. The analysis further showed that 77.6% of the non-verbal offers were accepted, 7.5% were refused, 11.9% had no response at all, and 3% had an unclear response<sup>70</sup> (see Table 3). We cannot dismiss non-verbal offers as a homogeneous category. They have variable response types in the same way that verbal offers have. Thus, the scope of the relational work model must be expanded to consider both types of interactions. Moreover, around half of the verbal offers were accepted, and about a quarter were refused. It appears that verbal offers are more likely to be refused than non-verbal ones. This could be attributed to the interpretation that the addressee's choice is not taken into consideration as much in non-verbal offers. They are accomplished before waiting for an addressee's response. As a result, refusals could be harder and hence are avoided. It could also be attributed to which offers interactants choose to perform non-verbally, i.e. interactants may choose to perform an offer non-verbally if they think it is unlikely to be refused. This was apparent in Yusra's response in the interview to justify her verbal offer of having more dessert to Arwa saying, *"I know that Arwa was on diet, so she might refuse to have more dessert. By saying 'here you are', I gave her the chance to refuse or accept [the offer]. It*

<sup>69</sup> All percentages are rounded to the nearest 0.1%.

<sup>70</sup> These refer to situations in which an addressee's response did not include explicit or implicit acceptance or refusal, i.e. she responded, but she did not express a standpoint.

is not like if I offered it [the dessert] nonverbally to her.” More observations about these two types of offering, e.g. their relation with the complexity of offering exchange and stimulus type, are provided in the following sections.

**Table 3 Response types to verbal and non-verbal offers in SA corpus<sup>71</sup>**

Response Type	Non-verbal		Verbal	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Accepted	52	77.6%	40	52.6%
Refused	5	7.5%	20	26.3%
No response	8	11.9%	7	9.2%
Unclear	2	3%	9	11.8%

### 5.1.2 Offer topics

Three offer topics were detected in my corpus: hospitable offers, offers of assistance, and offers of information. However, five offer exchanges did not fall into any of these categories and were classified as “*other*”. These included offering comfort, offering a speaking turn, and hospitality in future situation.<sup>72</sup> Table 4 shows the distribution of each topic.

**Table 4 Distribution of offer topics in SA corpus**

	Hospitality offers	Offer of assistance	Offer of information	Other
Frequency	113	13	12	5
Percentage	79%	9.1%	8.4%	3.5%

It can be seen that the majority were hospitable offers. The high frequency of hospitable offers could be attributed to the setting, which was a hostess/guests

<sup>71</sup> It is important to note that the quantitative analysis in this study does not aim to explore responses to offers. Only general insights are provided to better explain the dominant interactional norms of offers whenever they are relevant.

<sup>72</sup> Invitations are considered a subclass of offers that take place in a hospitality frame (Leech, 2014: 180; Margutti, Tainio, Drew, & Traverso, 2018: 55; Schegloff, 2007: 35). The speaker, in the role of the host, offers something good for the addressee, in the role of the guest. However, these offers were not included in the hospitable offers category since they refer to a future setting rather than displaying hospitality in the ongoing interaction.

situation in which an obligation to show hospitality arose. This also indicated that other topics of offers were not very typical in natural interactions. As a result, most of the offers referred to the immediate future, i.e. present. Only one referred to actions to be done in the distant future. Moreover, I found that most of the hospitable offers were simple offer exchanges (82 out of 113) as seen in Table 5. There was not much discursive work undertaken in negotiation or appreciation in the majority of them. Thus, the majority of hospitable offers seemed to be part of unmarked politeness behaviour. On the other hand, most of the offers of information involved complex negotiation. A possible explanation for the present finding is that such a speech act needed some elaboration and explanation so the speaker could clarify what they wanted to offer. In addition, it was found that around 12.4% of the hospitable offers were performed by one of the guests rather than the hostess.<sup>73</sup>

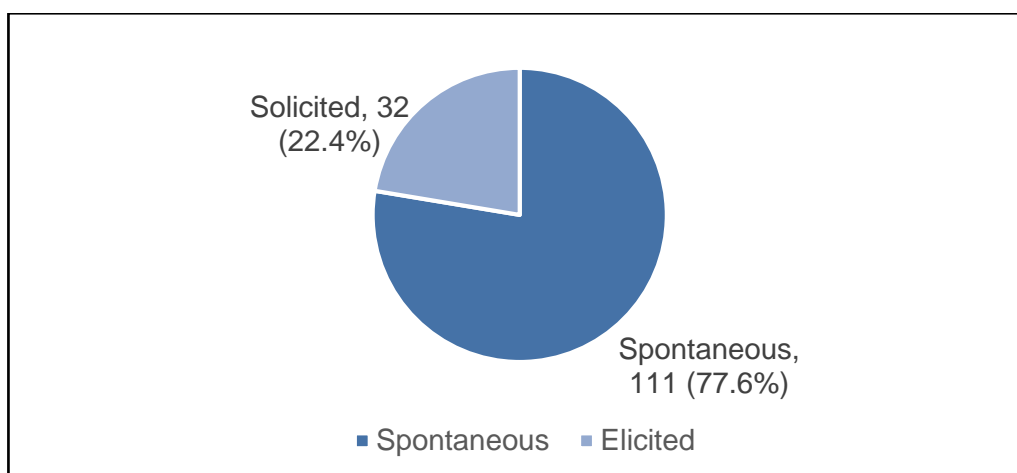
**Table 5 Frequency of offer topics in simple and complex offers in SA corpus**

		Hospitality offers	Offer of assistance	Offer of information	Other
Complex offer Exchange	Freq.	31	4	7	3
	%	27.4%	30.8%	58.3%	60%
Simple Offer Exchange	Freq.	82	9	5	2
	%	72.6%	69.2%	41.7%	40%

### 5.1.3 Stimulus for initiating offers

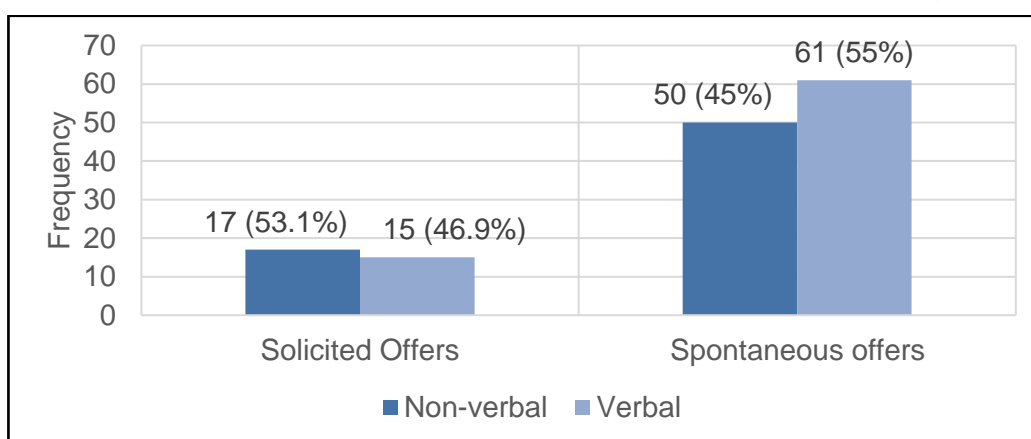
As shown in Figure 7, just over three quarters of the offers were spontaneous (77.6%), whereas only 22.4% were solicited. This could be explained by the expectation that hospitable offers must occur in such a setting. It is an indicator of the hostess's skill in anticipating her guests' needs in order for her to appear more generous. A guest needing to elicit an offer may cause negative inferences in certain situations. Thus, a solicited offer is limited to occasions in which such behaviour could be acceptable.

<sup>73</sup> This percentage does not include the instances of hospitable embedded offers in which a guest offered to take over a hospitable offer as an act of refusing the initial offer by the hostess, i.e. refusal to be served by the hostess. The coding of this behaviour was based on the initiative offer in each offer exchange to increase accuracy and consistency.



**Figure 7 Distribution of stimulus type of initiative offers in SA corpus**

Moreover, the analysis also showed that whether or not an offer was spontaneous or solicited by preceding context had no relationship with it being accomplished verbally or non-verbally. Both categories of stimulus type were divided about equally with respect to the medium of communication as shown in Figure 8.



**Figure 8 Distribution of initiative offers by stimulus and communication type in SA corpus**

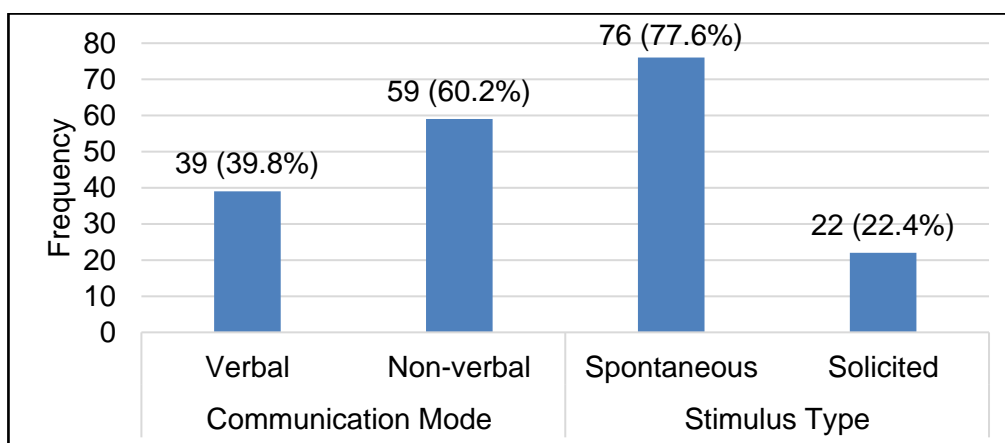
However, Figure 8 shows that there was a reverse pattern of communication medium (verbal vs. non-verbal) across the two categories of stimulus type, i.e. solicited offers (53.1% non-verbal and 46.9% verbal) in contrast to spontaneous offers (45% non-verbal and 55% verbal). Although the difference is about the same, a Chi-Square test was performed to find out if this reverse pattern was statistically significant. There was no statistically significant association between stimulus type and medium of communication in SA offers,  $X^2(2, N=143) = 0.651$ ,  $p = .419$ . Hence, the small reversal of pattern was not significant.



### 5.1.4 Complexity of offer exchanges

Of the total offering exchanges, 45 (31.5%) were complex and 98 (68.5%) were simple offer exchanges, so, generally, simple offer exchanges occurred about twice as frequently as complex ones. This result stands in striking contrast to the findings of previous studies that offerings in Arab society are characterized by a high degree of elaboration (Emery, 2000: 205).

As Figure 9 shows, most simple offers were accomplished non-verbally (60.2%), whereas only 39.8% were achieved verbally. Moreover, nearly three quarters of the simple offers (72.4%) were accepted immediately. Some of the simple exchanges (about 15) were accomplished in one turn and no response occurred, whether verbal or non-verbal. The absence of the response was considered an implicit acceptance to the offers.<sup>74</sup> This was also stated by Yusra in the interview to explain her non-verbal offers in Extract 3 and Extract 4 (Chapter 6), *“I would continue to pour coffee for my guests without asking them verbally. If they did not want, they would refuse.”* Only 10.2% of the simple offers were refused. It appears that the producer of these offers accepted their addressees’ refusals and no further attempts were made to renew the offer. Moreover, 77.6% were spontaneous, and 22.4% were solicited. These highlighted a major finding. It seems likely that spontaneous and non-verbal offers are part of unmarked politic relational work, so they did not receive much attention and hence largely resulted in simple offer exchanges.

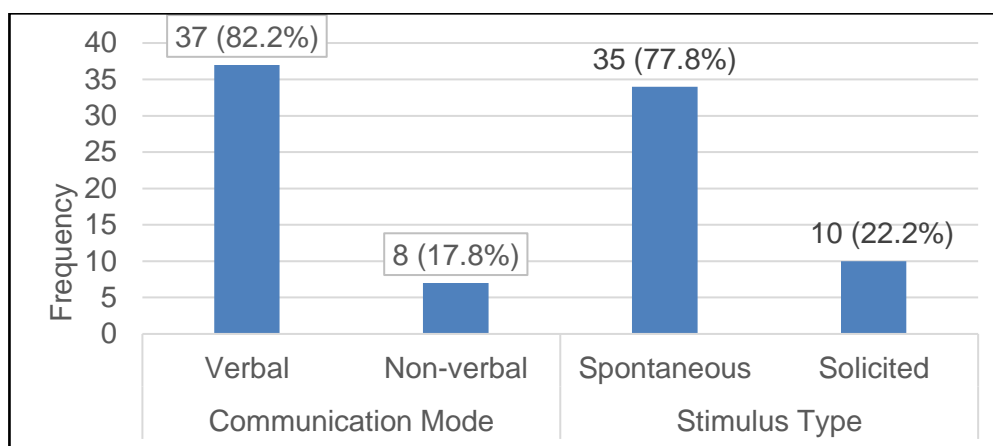


**Figure 9 Distribution of simple offer exchanges in SA corpus**

Similar to simple offers, around 77.8% of the complex offer exchanges were spontaneous, and 22.2% were solicited as shown in Figure 10. This shows that there is no noteworthy relation between the stimulus type and the complexity of

<sup>74</sup> It was argued that if we do not say anything, this can be taken to mean something, i.e. by not saying anything, we are doing something (Drew, 2013: 140; Haugh, 2013b: 43, 51). For instance, a refusal to a request can be implied through silence (Haugh, 2015: 99; Pomerantz, 1984: 70).

offer exchange, yet it provides further evidence that spontaneous offers are part of the unmarked politic relational work framework.

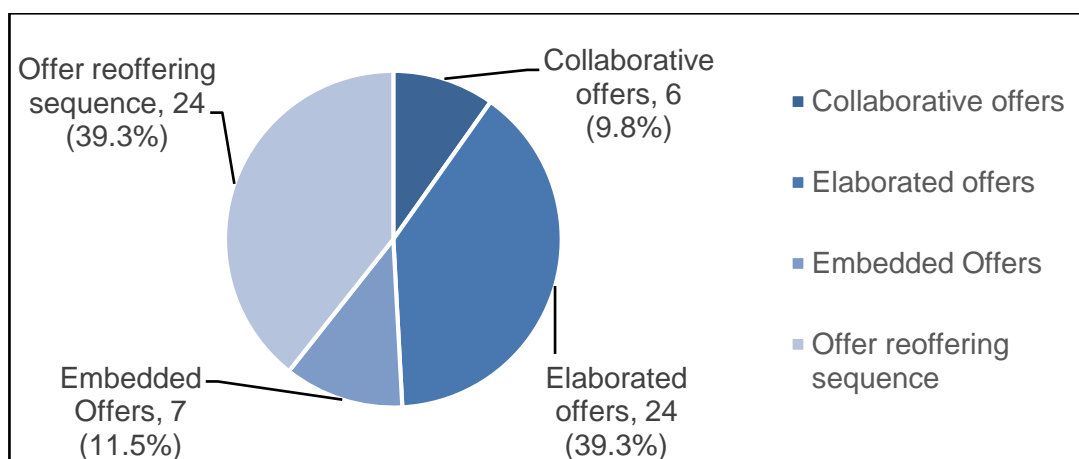


**Figure 10 Distribution of complex offer exchanges in SA corpus**

Unlike simple offers, most initiating offers in complex offer exchanges were accomplished verbally (82.2%), whereas only 17.8% were achieved non-verbally. This indicates that an initiative verbal offer may enable more complex negotiation than the non-verbal ones. It was obvious that the potential for a non-verbal move to pass unnoticed or enable simple offer exchange was greater than for verbal ones. Comparing Figure 9 and Figure 10, it can be seen that verbal initiative offers were used about equally to establish complex or simple exchanges. This provides more evidence that most non-verbal offers may pass unnoticed and are regarded as the expected appropriate norm.

Moreover, the strategies that comprised complex offers were explored from two perspectives. First, the percentages were considered in relation to all strategies identified, not how many complex offer exchanges employed them, since one complex exchange might include more than one strategy.<sup>75</sup> This approach aimed to explore the distribution of these strategies and their relations. As shown in Figure 11, the most recurrent strategies found in complex offer exchanges were offer-reoffering sequence and elaborated offering, each contributing 39.3% of the total. These two accounted for 78.6% of all identified features. Collaborative offering constituted only 9.8%, and embedded offers made up only 11.5%.

<sup>75</sup> Sixty-one strategies were found in a total of forty-five complex offering exchanges.



**Figure 11 Distribution of complex offering strategies in SA corpus**

Second, in order to provide a deeper understanding, the proportion of complex offers in relation to each strategy was also calculated as seen in Table 6. It is important to remember that more than one strategy may be found in one complex offer. This aimed to shed light on the relation between complexity and each strategy as well as to allow for a more accurate comparison with the offers in the BE corpus. Focusing on the offering/reoffering sequence, I found that around 24 out of 45 complex offers were reoffered, i.e. around 53.3%. Table 7 shows that 16 of the complex offers (35.6%) were reoffered once, 5 (11.1%) were reoffered twice, 2 (4.4%) were reoffered three times, and 6 attempts of reoffering were made in one of the complex offers. In general, speakers tended to avoid having more than two attempts when they make an offer. Moreover, 53.3% of complex offers were elaborated (24 out of 45), 15.6% involved embedded offering, and 13.3% included collaboration.

**Table 6 Percentages of strategies according to the number of complex offers in SA corpus**

Strategy	Total	Percentage of Complex offers
Elaborated offers	24	53.3%
Offer-reoffering sequence	24	53.3%
Collaborative offers	6	13.3%
Embedded offers	7	15.6%

**Table 7 Frequency of offering attempts in offering/reoffering sequence in SA corpus**

2nd Attempt	3rd Attempt	4th Attempt	7th attempt
16	5	2	1

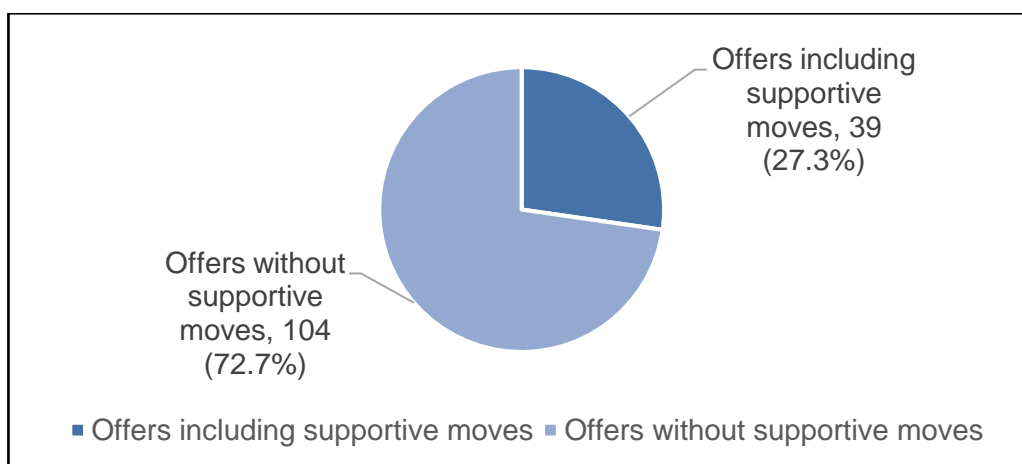
It was also common for more than one feature to occur in a given complex offering. Table 8 shows that the most common features that co-occurred were offer-reoffering sequences and elaborated offers. The embedded offering strategy was present with one elaboration feature and one collaborative offering. Two of the collaborative offers were also elaborated, and another two were reoffered. Reoffering sequences also co-occurred with two embedded features.

**Table 8 Frequency of co-occurrence of complex offering strategies in SA corpus**

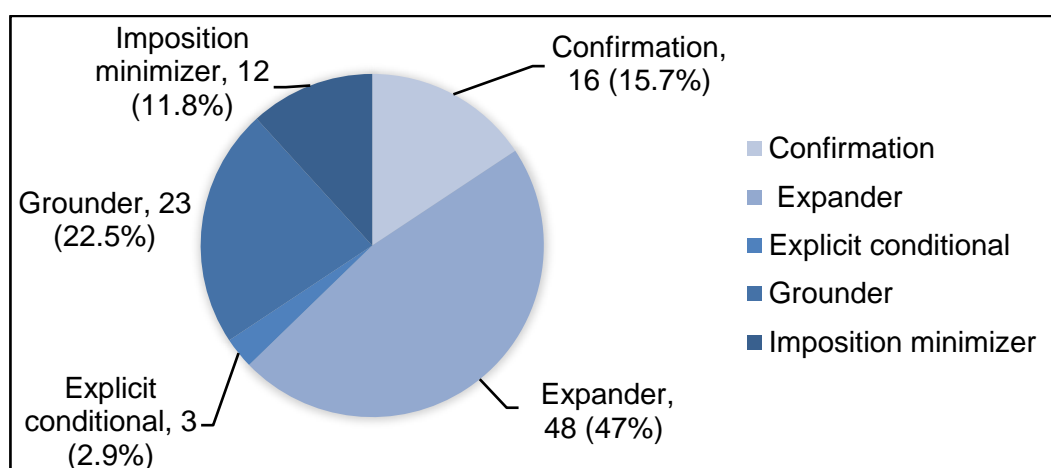
	Collaborative offers	Elaborated offers	Embedded Offers
Elaborated offers	2		
Embedded Offers	1	1	
Offer-reoffering sequence	2	9	2

### 5.1.5 Supportive moves

This sub-section aims to track and account for the supportive moves accompanying the offer head move. Five categories of supportive moves and their frequencies of occurrence were identified. Across the three groups, 102 supportive moves were identified. The existence of 102 supportive moves that accompanied offers does not mean that 102 of the total number of offering exchanges were modified just once, nor that 41 were not modified at all. Some offer exchanges were supplemented by more than one supportive move so that the overall number of unsupported offers was larger than 41 as can be seen in Figure 12. A combination of different supportive moves could accompany one offer exchange.



**Figure 12 Distribution of supported vs. unsupported offer exchanges in SA corpus**



**Figure 13 Distribution of supportive moves by SA females**

Of the total 102 supportive moves, expanders were the most frequent, accounting for 47%. Following a long way behind, grounders came second with 22.5%. Imposition minimizers made up 11.8% of the supportive moves used, and confirmation of H's response accounted for 15.7% of the total supportive moves employed. The least common supportive move was explicit conditional (only 2.9%). This showed that most offers were not made on condition of being accepted by addressees. It seemed that supportive moves were used as strategic persuasion tools.

Finally, it should be pointed out that most supportive moves (89.2%) occurred in separate turns from the head moves as shown in Table 9. Moreover, most supportive moves (92.2%) occurred in complex offer exchanges, whereas only eight (7.8%) accompanied simple offer exchanges (three were explicit conditionals, two expanders, two grounders, and one imposition minimizer). Six of them were within the head turn, whereas the other two were in separate turns. Although they were in separate turns, the offer exchanges were considered

simple because the turns of speech were only separated by non-verbal gestures. Only two supportive moves were found in pre-head position in Arabic offer exchanges. One occurred in a simple offer exchange, whereas the second one was found in a complex offer (in a separate turn).

**Table 9 Distribution of supportive moves position in SA corpus**

	Within the Same turn	In a Separate Turn
Frequency	11	91
Percentage	10.8%	89.2%

### 5.1.6 Summary

Offer of hospitality was the most frequent topic of offering behaviour, making up four fifths of all offering exchanges. It can be said that the conclusions of this study mainly refer to offers of hospitality in female friendship groups. Moreover, not all of the hospitable offers were performed by the hostess. The guests made some of these offers. The gatherings of these friends can be characterized by cooperative conjoint hospitality, which is also shown in the occurrence of embedded offering.

Non-verbal offers and simple offer exchanges were more typical offering behaviour among the Saudi female friends. Most of them were accepted on the first attempt. This suggests that most offers were expected as part of proper hospitality behaviour in such a setting, thus participants did not invest much effort in negotiating them, which was clear in the absence of response in some of these offers. However, if they did not occur, their absence would affect the interaction negatively. This result provides evidence that non-verbal offers are an essential part of unmarked politic offering in the relational work framework.

Focusing on complex offer exchanges, it was found that elaborated offers and offering-reoffering sequences were the most common features to make up a complex offer exchange. The analysis revealed two other special patterns of offering that have not been addressed in previous research: collaborative offering and embedded offering. However, they were not very frequent.

In the present study, the main function of making supportive moves was to add sub-details to the original offer or to enhance the attractiveness of the offer to the addressee. Speakers provided details to better accommodate their addressees or reasons why the offer was a good one and should be accepted. Obviously,

expanders and grounders were particularly useful for these purposes. Thus, they were the most common supportive moves accompanying the offers. The corpus also showed that supportive moves were often not realized in close proximity to the head moves that they were supporting.

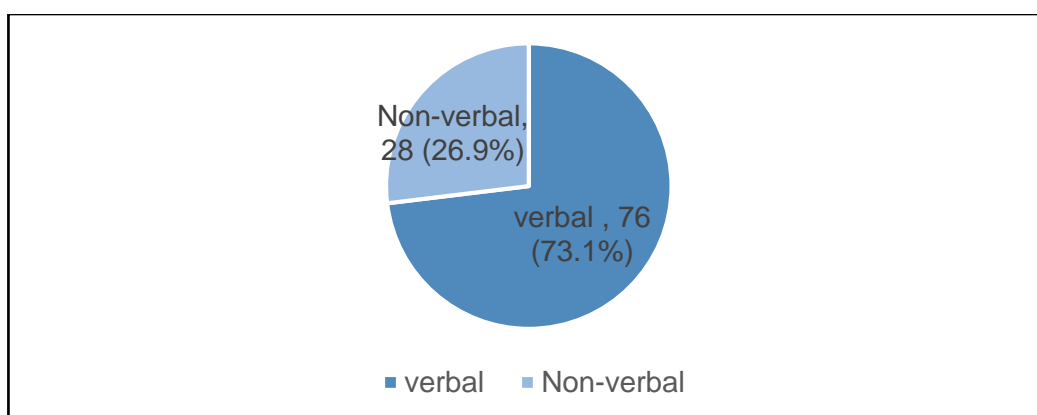
Moreover, most offers (more than three quarters) were spontaneous and not solicited by the preceding context. In addition, there was no obvious relation between the stimulus type and whether the offer was achieved verbally or non-verbally or whether the offer exchange was simple or complex. Finally, it can be concluded that descriptive quantitative analysis may help in identifying the dominant norms and patterns in offering among Saudi female friendship groups.

## 5.2 BE offers

This section deals with the frequency distribution of some aspects of the interactional negotiation of offers in natural talk among British female friendship groups. Following the taxonomy presented in Chapter 4, it first groups offer exchanges regarding whether their initiative offer was achieved verbally or non-verbally (Section 5.2.1). Second, the distribution of offer topics is explored in Section 5.2.2. Third, it deals with the stimulus type of the offers (Section 5.2.3). It then explores the complexity of offer exchanges (Section 5.2.4). Any observable relations between stimulus, language type, and complexity of offer exchange are also investigated within each section. Section 5.2.4 focuses on the supportive moves accompanying those offer exchanges. Finally, Section 5.2.6 wraps up the main findings of this section.

### 5.2.1 Verbal vs. non-verbal offers

All in all, 104 offer exchanges were verified by the participants as offers in the BE corpus. Twenty-eight (26.9%) of the offer exchanges were accomplished non-verbally, whereas 76 (73.1 %) were achieved verbally as shown in Figure 14.



**Figure 14** Distribution of verbal and non-verbal offers in BE corpus

It can be seen that approximately one quarter of the offers were non-verbal. Further investigation shows that half of the non-verbal offers were accepted, none were refused, only 7.1% triggered an unclear response, and 42.9% had no response at all (see fn. 70, Section 5.1.1) as shown in Table 10. It is obvious that BE females were careful about performing an offer non-verbally since they employed them in situations where refusing was not seen as a likely option. Its use might be limited to certain occasions where considering imposition on the addressee is not essential or the absence of such behaviour would render the interaction inappropriate. For example, serving the food to guests who were invited for dinner is part of politic relational work. Their acceptance of the dinner is implied in their acceptance of the invitation at the first place. Providing cutlery to the guests in order to be able to eat is mandatory and hence does not need negotiation, i.e. no responses were made. Moreover, non-verbal offers might take place when an immediate need for assistance arose. Helping someone when needed took precedence over freedom of imposition in these female friendship interactions. This would suggest that the speaker chose to achieve her offer non-verbally to manage friendly rapport. This provided evidence that non-verbal behaviour is part of the relational work in the BE groups for two reasons. First, BE speakers were careful in employing them which suggested that they may affect the ongoing interaction.<sup>76</sup> Second, they caused some reactions from the interactants such as appreciation tokens.

In addition, Table 10 shows that more than half of the verbal offers (67.1%) were accepted, 14.5% were refused, 11.8% had no response at all, and 9.2% generated unclear responses. This suggests that verbal offers might have less chance of going unnoticed in the negotiation of behaviour (i.e. not prompting a response) than non-verbal ones, whereas they are likely to have more chance of being refused in the interaction. This shows that addressee's desire is considered when offers are made verbally. From a CA perspective, verbal behaviour highlights a need for a second pair part (i.e. a response) more than non-verbal one. More observations about both verbal and non-verbal offering, e.g. their relationship with the complexity degree of the offering exchange and stimulus type, are presented in the following sections.

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<sup>76</sup> This is exemplified in detail in the discursive analysis of BE offer exchanges in Chapter 7.



**Table 10 Response type to verbal and non-verbal offers in BE corpus**

Response Type	Non-verbal		Verbal*	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Accepted	14	50%	51	67.1%
Refused	0	0	11	14.5%
No Response	12	42.9%	8	10.5%
Unclear	2	7.1%	7	9.2%

\* The number of responses exceeds the total counts of verbal offers.<sup>77</sup>

### 5.2.2 Offer topics

Similar to the SA corpus, three key offer topics were detected in the BE data. They were hospitable offers, offer of assistance, and offer of information. Nevertheless, eight offer exchanges did not fit in any of these topics and were categorized as “*other*”. Four of them included offering an addressee a speaking turn, one was a gift offer, one was an etiquette offer, and the other two were hospitality in a future situation (see fn. 72, Section 5.1.2). Table 11 shows the distribution of each topic.

**Table 11 Distribution of offer topics in BE corpus**

	Hospitality offers	Offer of assistance	Offer of information	Other
Frequency	72	10	14	8
Percentage	69.2%	9.6%	13.5%	7.7%

It can be seen that the majority were hospitable offers. Like in the SA corpus, this could be due to the hostess/guests setting in which responsibility to show hospitality arose. Other topics of offers were not frequent in this setting. As a result, most of the offers referred to the immediate future, i.e. in the present. They rarely referred to actions to be done in the far future. It was also found that eight hospitable offers (11%) were performed by one of the guests, not the hostess.

<sup>77</sup> One of the verbal offers triggered both an acceptance and a refusal. The hostess offered another round of drinks to her guests. This offer was accepted by one and refused by the other two guests. Therefore, the response was coded twice as acceptance and refusal which caused the unequal total between offers and responses.

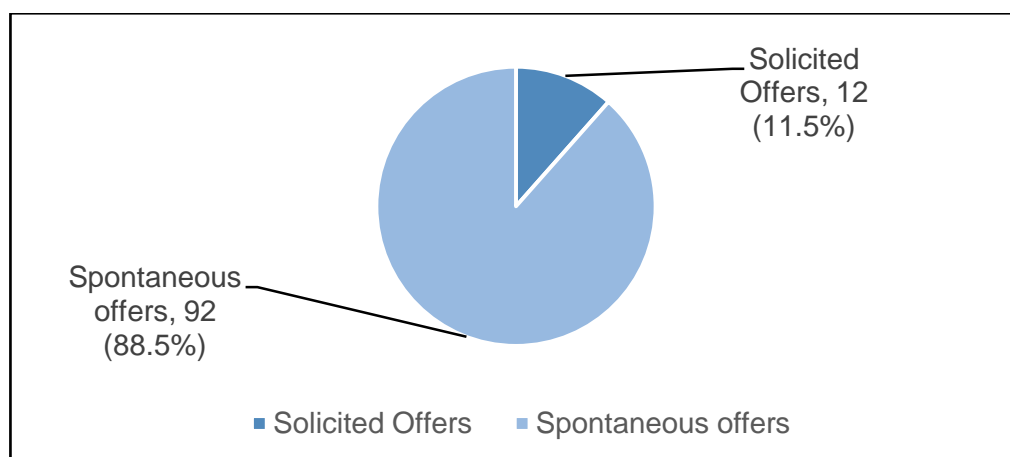
However, it is important to note that all of them occurred in one group (Alice's group); none were found in the other two groups. It seems that this is not seen as an appropriate behaviour in the other two groups. This shows that norms concerning what is counted as appropriate behaviour may change across the three friendship groups and also that individuals do vary in their behaviour although they came from the same culture or group. Moreover, Table 12 shows that most of the hospitable offers were simple offer exchanges (58 out of 72). There was not much effort in negotiating the majority of them. Thus, it can be said that hospitable offers were part of unmarked politic behaviour. Moreover, most offers of information were also simple. This type of offering was mainly about providing a word or phrase that the current speaker struggled to remember. It seems that offers in these English groups are not elaborated even if the speaker provides information.

**Table 12 Frequency of offer topics in simple and complex offers in BE corpus**

		Hospitality offers	Offer of assistance	Offer of information	Other
Complex offer Exchange	Freq.	14	3	3	3
	%	19.4%	30%	21.4%	37.5%
Simple Offer Exchange	Freq.	58	7	11	5
	%	80.6%	70%	78.6%	62.5%

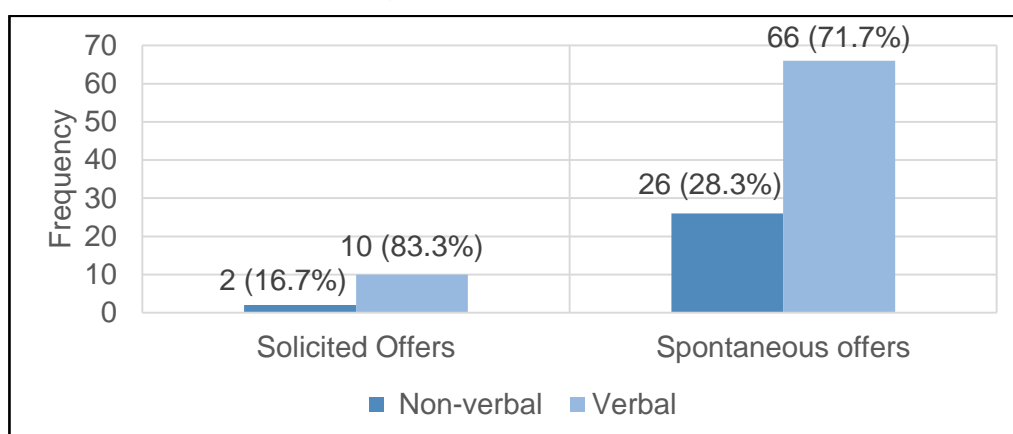
### 5.2.3 Stimulus for initiating offers

Most of the offers were spontaneous (88.5%), whereas only 11.5% were solicited as shown in Figure 15. This could be explained by the fact that hospitable offers are expected in such setting. It is an indicator of the hostess's ability in anticipating her guests' needs as part of showing generosity. If a guest needs to elicit an offer, this may lead to negative inferences in certain situations. Thus, it is limited to occasions in which such behaviour could be acceptable.



**Figure 15 Distribution of the stimulus type of initiative offers in BE corpus**

Moreover, the analysis showed that there was no obvious relationship between an offer being spontaneous or solicited and between it being accomplished verbally or non-verbally as shown in Figure 16. Both categories were divided roughly in a similar manner regarding the medium of communication. This division corresponds to the main finding that the majority of offers were verbal.



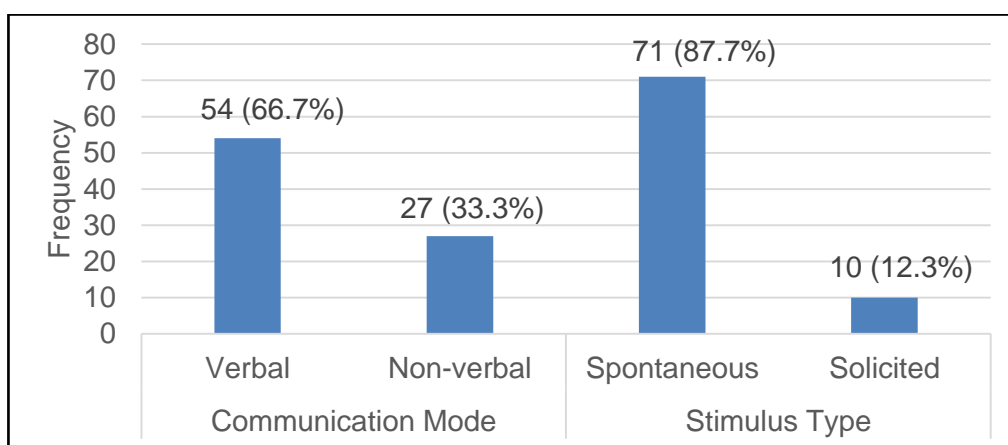
**Figure 16 Distribution of initiative offers by stimulus and communication type in BE corpus**

#### 5.2.4 Complexity of offer exchanges

Of all offering exchanges, 81 (77.9%) were simple and 23 (22.1%) were complex offer exchanges, hence, generally, simple offer exchanges occurred more than three times as often as complex ones. This result corresponds to Grainger et al's. (2015: 67) claim that offers are not elaborated in British English.

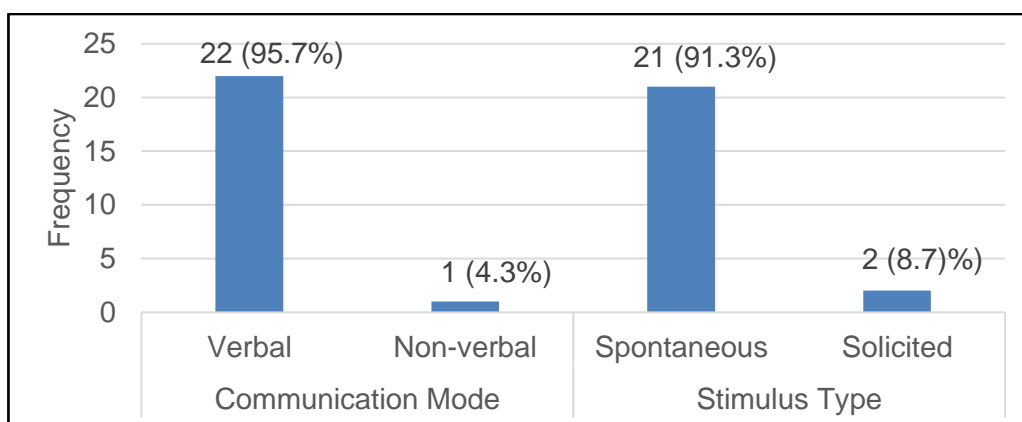
Figure 17 shows that about two thirds of simple offers were achieved verbally (66.7%), whereas only one third (33.3%) were accomplished non-verbally. Moreover, 87.7% were spontaneous, and only 12.3% were solicited. These findings correspond with the major finding that solicited and non-verbal offers

were less common in the BE corpus; however, this does not mean that they do not affect the management of relational work. It is essential to note that about 20 of the simple exchanges were accomplished in one turn and no adjacent acceptance/refusal response occurred, whether verbal or non-verbal. The absence of the *Response* or *Satisfy* move was seen as an implicit acceptance since there was no adjustment to or withdrawal of the offer. More than half of the simple offers were accepted (60.5%), and only 8.6% were refused. It seems that these refusals achieved their illocutionary force; thus, no complex reoffering occurred. It was also found that only nine instances of simple offers were accompanied by supportive moves within the same turn of the head act. More insights about this issue are provided in Section 5.2.5.



**Figure 17 Distribution of simple offer exchanges in BE corpus**

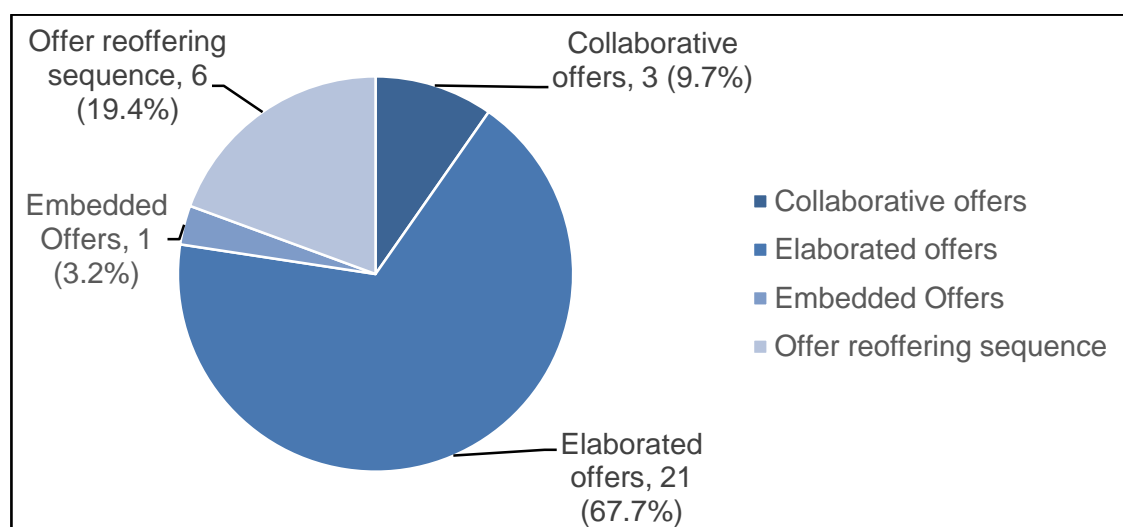
Similar to simple offers, almost all complex offers were spontaneous (91.3%). Only two complex offers were solicited by previous context as shown in Figure 18. This shows that there is no noteworthy relationship between the stimulus type and the complexity of offer exchanges. This provides further evidence that spontaneous offers are part of the unmarked politic relational work framework.



**Figure 18 Distribution of complex offer exchanges in BE corpus**

Almost all initiating offers in complex offer exchanges were verbal (95.7%), whereas only one was achieved non-verbally. This indicates that non-verbal offers seldom lead to complex negotiation. It is obvious that the possibility for verbal moves to enable intricate negotiation was much greater than for non-verbal ones. Indeed, the distribution of both simple and complex offers over communication and stimulus type is in line with the main finding that most initiative offers were verbal and spontaneous.

Moreover, the strategies that made up complex offers were investigated from two perspectives. First, the percentages were calculated according to the total number of strategies found, not how many complex offer exchanges employed them, since one complex exchange might employ more than one strategy.<sup>78</sup> This was intended to provide a visual representation of the distribution of these strategies and their inter-relations. As seen in Figure 19, the most commonly recurring strategies found in complex offer exchanges were elaborated offerings (67.7%), followed by offer-reoffering sequences (19.4%). These two categories made up 87.1% of all identified strategies. Collaborative offering contribute only 9.7% of the total strategies, and embedded offers accounted for 3.2%.



**Figure 19 Distribution of complex offering strategies in BE corpus**

Second, the proportion of how many complex offers employed these strategies was also calculated to find out the relationship between complex offers and each strategy as seen in Table 13. This was also intended to allow for a more accurate comparison between SA and BE offers, which is the aim of this study. Focusing on the offering/reoffering sequence, I found that only 6 out of 23 complex offers were reoffered, i.e. around 26.1% of complex offers were reoffered. Five of these were reoffered only once, and only one was reoffered more than once, i.e.

<sup>78</sup> Thirty-one strategies were identified in a total of 23 complex offers.

reoffered twice. Speakers tended to avoid making more than two attempts when they offer. It can be said that reoffering is not very common among British female friends in this study. It may be seen more as a burden to the addressee rather than generosity on the part of the offerer. Moreover, almost all complex offers were elaborated (21 out of 23). The elaboration aimed at minimizing the imposition of the offers, adding options, and/or making the offer worth accepting in the eyes of the addressee. It is clear that only three complex offers involved collaboration, and embedded offering occurred only once.

**Table 13 Percentages of strategies according to the number of complex offers in BE corpus**

Strategy	Total	Percentage of Complex offers
Elaborated offers	21	91.3%
Offer-reoffering sequence	6	26.1%
Collaborative offers	3	13%
Embedded offers	1	4.3%

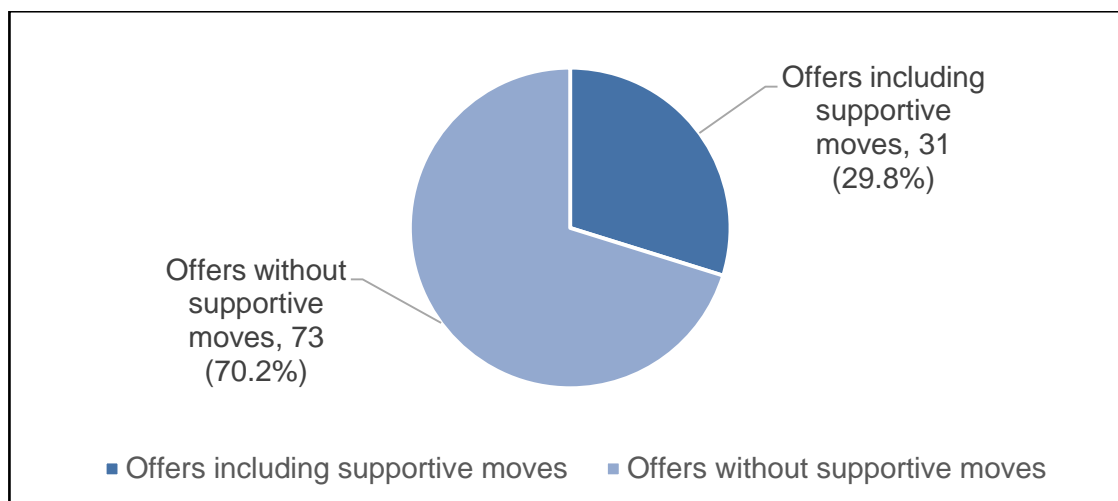
It was also common that more than one strategy occurs in a given complex offering. Table 14 shows that the most common strategies that co-occurred were elaborated offers and offer-reoffering sequences. Five of the reoffering sequences were elaborated. In these cases, the speaker used elaboration as a way to explain why the reoffer was made and should be accepted. An embedded offering strategy was present with one elaboration strategy and one offer-reoffering sequence. Two of the collaborative offers were also elaborated, and another one was reoffered. Instances that combined embedded and collaborative offers were not found.

**Table 14 Frequency of co-occurrence of complex offering strategies in BE corpus**

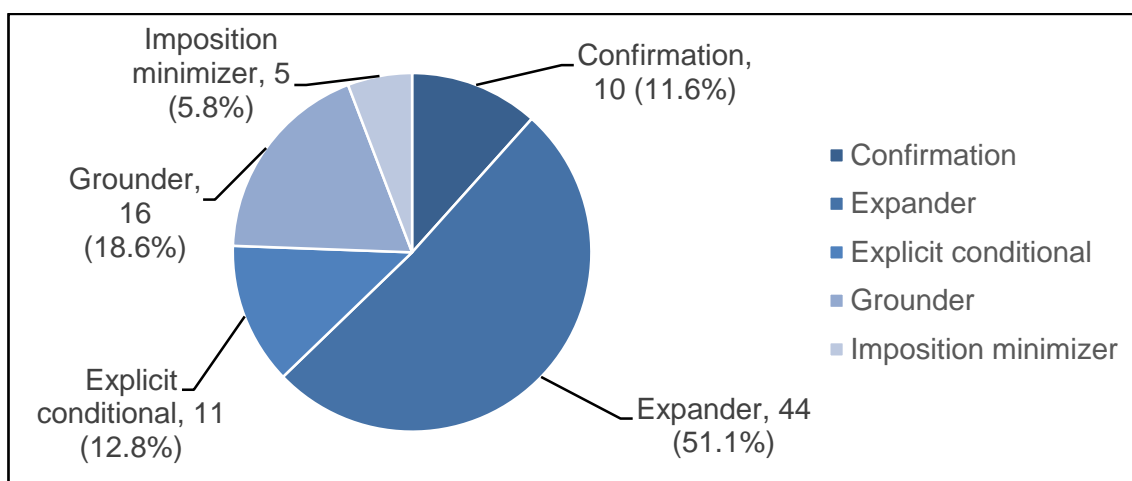
	Collaborative offers	Elaborated offers	Embedded Offers
Elaborated offers	2		
Embedded Offers	0	1	
Offer-reoffering sequence	1	5	1

### 5.2.5 Supportive moves

This sub-section explores the supportive moves accompanying the offer head move. Five categories of supportive moves and their frequencies of occurrence were detected. All in all, 86 supportive moves were found across the three friendship groups. The total number of supportive moves does not imply that 86 of the offer exchanges were supported just once, nor that 18 were not modified at all as shown in Figure 20 . Some offer exchanges were supplemented by more than one supportive move and some were not supported at all.



**Figure 20 Distribution of supported vs. unsupported offer exchanges in BE corpus**



**Figure 21 Distribution of supportive moves by BE females**

Expanders constituted about half of the supportive moves and were the most frequent at 51.1%. Distant second were grounders (18.6%). This resembles Saudi Arabic offers in which expanders and grounders were the most frequent supportive moves. Explicit conditional and confirmation of H's response came third, and each, respectively, made up 12.8% and 11.6% of the total supportive

moves employed. The least common supportive move was imposition minimizer, which took up only 5.8%. This distribution indicates that supportive moves were used as strategic persuasion tools rather than as a means of reducing imposition. Moreover, similar to the SA data, most supportive moves occurred (76.7%) in separate turns from the head move as shown in Table 15. Only 21 of the total supportive moves occurred in pre-head position; 12 of them were in separate turns whereas only nine were within the same turn as the head move. Finally, it is worth mentioning that most supportive moves occurred in complex offer exchanges (89.5%). Only nine (10.5%) occurred in simple offer exchanges within the same turn as the head move (four explicit conditionals, two expanders, two grounder, and one imposition minimizer), and four of these were in pre-head position. It is noteworthy that the distribution of supportive moves in relation to the relative complexity of offer exchanges in both BE and SA offers is strikingly similar.

**Table 15 Distribution of position of supportive moves in BE Corpus**

	Within the Same turn	In a Separate Turn
Frequency	20	66
Percentage	23.3%	76.7%

### 5.2.6 Summary

This section has explored the main interactional characteristics of offers in BE female friendship talk. As in SA talk, an offer of hospitality was the most recurrent topic of offering behaviour, making up three quarters of all offering exchanges. It can be said that the conclusions of this study mainly refer to offers of hospitality among female friends. It appears that hospitable offers are an essential constituent of politic relational work in hostess/guests settings even among very close friends. The absence of these hospitality offers would likely be evaluated negatively. In addition, it is worth mentioning that a few hospitable offers were performed by a guest in one of the groups, i.e. Gail in Alice's group; however, this behaviour was not found in the other groups. This provides evidence that norms of appropriate behaviour may vary within the same culture.

Moreover, the majority of offers were simple (77.9%). This may be due to the fact that most offers were expected as part of proper hospitality behaviour in such a setting. Thus, complex negotiation was not needed. This was apparent in the fact that the guests did not seem to invest much effort in demonstrating appreciation for the offers. Indeed, the satisfy move was absent in some of them.



It was found that elaboration was the most common strategy that made up a complex offer exchange. Only six instances of offers were reoffered, and the reoffer was not further repeated. Reoffering does not seem to be part of politic behaviour in this context. Offers as well as acceptance and refusals achieved their illocutionary force and fulfilled their sincerity condition from the initial attempt. It seemed that repetition of the act was not needed to reinforce the sincerity of the speaker and did not seem to affect how the genuineness of the offer was perceived by the addressee. Other strategies that led to complex offering were not very common. Only three instances of collaborative offers and one instance of embedded offering occurred in the data.

It was found that three quarters of offer exchanges were initiated verbally. Non-verbal offers were not very frequent, but no one can deny that they were part of the relational work. Moreover, the majority of offers (87.5%) were spontaneous and not solicited by the preceding context. In addition, the analysis showed that there was no obvious relation between whether the offer was spontaneous or solicited and whether it was accomplished verbally or non-verbally. Non-verbal and solicited offers were limited to instances where freedom of imposition is minimized due to urgent factors such as an immediate need for help.

The main function of making supportive moves in the BE corpus was to add sub-details to the original offer. Speakers provided details to better accommodate their addressees. Obviously, expanders were useful for this purpose. Thus, they were the most common supportive move accompanying the offers. Grounders, explicit conditionals, and confirmations of H's response came far after expanders, respectively. Surprisingly, the least employed supportive move was imposition minimizer. Similar to the SA corpus, the BE corpus also showed that supportive moves were often not found in close proximity to the head moves that they were modifying. Finally, the quantitative analysis captured the dominant norms and patterns of offering behaviour among female British speakers.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

The present chapter has explored offers quantitatively at a discourse level, looking at their interactional structure in Saudi Arabic and British English. The findings of the analysis shed light on the dominant interactional norms of offer negotiations by female friends. The results showed that in spite of the differences between the two cultures, both Saudi and British participants tended to resort to the same main categories in offering. Only minor differences were detected. Some categories were more frequent in one set of data or the ranking of sub-categories according to their occurrence may vary.

The most frequent topic of offering behaviour by the friends in both cultures was offer of hospitality. As a result, the conclusions of this study mainly address hospitality among female friends. Although other offering topics were not typical in ordinary talk, it was found that offering assistance was equally distributed, and offering information was more common among the British females. The majority of the offers were spontaneous in both SA and BE interactions. Soliciting an offer seemed to be a dispreferred choice, perhaps because it may have negative implications.

Both SA and BE female speakers chose to be more involved in simple offer exchanges rather than complex ones. This result suggested that offer exchanges did not include much discursive work. Indeed, it was found that most of the offers were accepted without any negotiation, and this was the case in all groups. Although intricate negotiation of offers was not common for any participants, it can be said that this behaviour can be regarded as a characteristic of SA offers more than BE ones. The analysis showed that the BE interactants tended to avoid complicated negotiation of offers to a greater extent than the SA speakers do. Moreover, it was found that elaborated offers and offering-reoffering sequences were the most common strategies constituting a complex offer exchange in both sets of data. Instances of other strategies that could contribute to complex offer exchanges were limited in the data. The occurrence of collaborative offers is similar in both the SA and BE corpus. However, there were some differences concerning the distribution of the other strategies. Reoffering was more common among SA speakers; it was about twice as frequent as among the BE groups. On the other hand, elaboration is much more preferred over other strategies by the BE participants. Around 91.3% of BE complex offers included elaboration compared to 53.3% in SA. It was found that embedded offers were more customary in Arabic (15.6%); in contrast, it was very rare in British English (only one instance).

The distribution of supportive moves was also very similar. It was more common for supportive moves to occur in a separate turn from the head move. The analysis also showed a preference for strengthening offers through means of expanders. Grounders as supportive moves came a distant second. The explicit conditional was more frequent in the BE corpus, whereas imposition minimizer and confirmation of H's response were more common in the SA data.

Although non-verbal offering was part of the overall offering behaviour in all sets of data, they were much more an emblematic part of the SA corpus as they comprised approximately half of the offers. The proportion of non-verbal SA offers was about twice as high as in the BE corpus. This showed that non-verbal offering in BE was not as favoured. Moreover, some of the non-verbal offers led to

complex negotiation in the SA context. This provided evidence that non-verbal behaviour is an essential part of relational work.

Finally, the quantitative account in this chapter gives a holistic picture of offer behaviour among SA and BE female friends. It seems that the interactional structure of offers by both SA and BE female speakers shared more similarities than differences. The following two chapters (6 and 7) will provide a discursive account of representative samples of both SA and BE offer interactions, respectively, aiming to explore evaluative behaviour that emerges through talk. The findings of the three analysis chapters will be discussed in detail in Chapter 8.

## Chapter 6 Discursive Analysis of SA Offer Exchanges

After I had established the quantitative overview of the interactional patterns of offer exchanges (Chapter 5), the discursive approach was taken as the main paradigm to understand how politeness phenomena within relational work was enacted in offer interactions (Chapter 6 & 7). I investigated politeness by analysing both the participants' reactions in the recorded conversations as well as their metalinguistic evaluations from the interviews and SRQ since participants' perceptions are at the heart of the discursive approach to politeness.

This chapter explores how Saudi female speakers manage relational work in their offering behaviour in friendship groups. The analysis is divided first according to the communication type in order to easily trace any characteristics that can be attributed to non-verbal politeness, an area that has been neglected in the literature (Bargiela-Chiappini, 2003: 1464; Fukushima, 2015: 264). Section 6.1 examines offer exchanges that were initiated non-verbally, and Section 6.2 explores offer exchanges that were accomplished verbally. The analysis in both sections is similarly divided; each section includes two sub-headings addressing the two levels of complexity in offer exchanges, i.e. simple and complex. Altogether, these sections analyse a total of 20 representative extracts of offer exchanges that were selected according to the following criteria: 1) The selection addresses all the possible interactional features of offer exchanges discussed in the quantitative analysis (Chapter 5). 2) It presents the most typical offering behaviour. 3) The selection attempts to account for interactions that challenge the relational work framework or offer exchanges with properties that had not been discussed previously, such as those with partial acceptance responses or no responses at all. 4) The selection reflects as wide a variety of features within each category as possible. Finally, the chapter ends with a summary of its findings.

### 6.1 Non-verbal offers

This section aims to find out any properties of non-verbal politeness. The analysis first focuses on exploring selected simple offer exchanges that were accomplished non-verbally (Section 6.1.1). It then provides a discursive account of politeness behaviour in complex negotiations of non-verbal offers (Section 6.1.2).

### 6.1.1 Simple offers

The following sub-section will provide a discursive analysis of some non-verbal simple offer exchanges that were identified in the SA corpus. Different examples will be provided in order to address the different patterns that occurred in the real interaction, for example simple offer exchanges with no second-part pair and with verbal or non-verbal adjacent pair (acceptance and refusal), spontaneous, and solicited offer exchanges.

#### 6.1.1.1 Simple offers without a response

About eight non-verbal offers were not followed by an immediate response, in which the response was either delayed or absent. Three of them were solicited by preceding context, whereas the others were spontaneous hospitable offers that occurred while the participants were talking about other topics. Samples of both categories are analysed.

The following extract was taken from an interaction between three friends: the hostess (Yusra) and her guests (Lama and Arwa). Yusra placed crisps and dips on the middle tea table before her guests' arrival. While Lama was telling them about her in-laws (lines 1, 3, 5 & 7), Yusra served them a dip (lines 2 & 4) and crisps (line 11) by placing these on the tea table close to the women. The extract exemplifies four simple offer exchanges that were initiated non-verbally and spontaneously with no immediate response.

#### Extract 1 (Spontaneous, hospitable offers with no immediate response)

1. Lama: "fla:n wif sawa:?" hij tugu:l-ah, wa hu: jiz̩i:  
guy what did? She tell-him, and he come  
jigu:l marrah θa:njah.  
say time another.

Lama: "That guy, what did he do?", she asks. Then, he says it another time.

#### 2. ((Yusra serves the dip by placing it on the service table in front of Arwa.))

3. Lama: wa ʔana: ʔa-na:ð̣ir, ʔinnah xala:ṣ tara ḍʕaħak-na:  
and I I-look, that enough by the way laughed-we  
ʕalei-ha:  
at-it

Lama: And I look in a way showing that it's enough. We've already laughed at it.

#### 4. ((Yusra serves the dip by placing it on the service table in front of Lama.))

5. Lama: bas hum kil marrah jḍʕħak-u:n. @@  
but they every time laugh-they. @@

Lama: *But they laugh every time.* @@

6. Arwa: <@ dʿaħakt-u:-na: marrah xala:sʿ @>  
<@ made laugh-youPI-us once enough @>

Arwa: <@You made us laugh once. That's enough. @> ((Yusra puts crisps in a plate.))

7. Lama: jdʿi:f-u:n ʕaleɪ-ha: ʔidʿ a:fah ʒadi:dah kil marrah. jaʕni:  
add-they at-it addition new every time. Mean  
X wa haða jstahbil. wa haða --  
X and this make fun. And this --

Lama: *They add new details every time. I mean X one of them makes fun, and the other--*

8. ((Yusra is still putting crisps in a plate.))

9. ((deleted part))<sup>79</sup>

10. Yusra: [ʔilli: raħam Maha, maθalan ʔinnah zəuʒ-ha:  
who have mercy Maha, for instance that husband-her  
mu: kiða, jbya: be:t-ah.]  
not like this, want home-his

Yusra: *[who have mercy on Maha, for instance, that her husband is not like this. He wants his home.]*

11. **[[Yusra places the plate of crisps in front of Lama and Arwa.]]**

12. Arwa: ʔajwah.  
Yeah.

Arwa: Yeah.

13. ((Yusra continues Maha's story.))

It was obvious that Yusra did not want to interrupt Lama's narrative to ask the women whether they would like to have some dips and crisps. It seems that listening to someone's talk takes precedence over expressing an offer verbally. Therefore, Yusra's offers display respect to the current speaker (i.e. Lama). In addition, Yusra shows Lama that she was a good listener by commenting on what she had said. It seems that she considered this more important than shifting the attention to her offer by asking the women if they wanted some crisps. She commented on Lama's story by introducing a similar story about her friend – Maha – while she was offering them the plate of crisps (lines 10 & 13). Moreover, this attitude was shared by the other interactants since they did not react immediately to the offer. The offer was taken up non-verbally around two minutes later by one of the guests (Arwa) as she started eating crisps and dips; it took longer for Lama since she was engaged in speaking. The absence of an

<sup>79</sup> The part was deleted because it includes interaction between the females about their friend Maha, which was irrelevant to the offer negotiations.

immediate response was a sign of implicit agreement since the addressees ate crisps and dips a few minutes later. This would contradict CA claims that the absence of a second pair part generally implies that the addressee is ignoring or resisting the initial action (Drew, 2013: 140; Maynard & Perakyla, 2006: 247; Pomerantz, 1984: 70). This shows that offers could be taken up non-verbally, and the response may not follow the offer immediately. It also provides evidence that the offer was most probably considered part of unmarked politeness behaviour, thus it passed unnoticed.

These offers were evaluated as polite and appropriate by the speaker and Lama, and as very polite and appropriate by Arwa. Lama stated, "*She did not want to interrupt us while we were talking.*" Arwa, on the other hand, indicated that, "*Because we could serve ourselves, I mean it was generous of her. The crisps were on the table in front of us.*" Both guests stated that they would do exactly the same if they were the hostess. It seems that an interruption here would be seen as an unfavourable action meant to deny the legitimate right of the current speaker to maintain the floor (Cameron, 2001: 92), thus it is avoided even if this leads to the minimization of the importance of other essential actions.

It seems that offering the guests snacks is part of unmarked politeness behaviour as no effort at all was made to negotiate it. It was evident from Lama's and Arwa's comments that listening to friends' talk was more important than negotiating these simple hospitable offers. We cannot say that hospitality is not important, yet people would not notice it unless it is absent. It can be concluded that displaying hospitality is played down in favour of the rights and obligations related to association rights.

Extract 2 includes a solicited simple offer with no response. Inas was telling the women a story she had read on Instagram.<sup>80</sup> Wa'ad hinted in a very low voice that she felt cold, using an elliptical structure (line 1). This showed that she was hesitant to address her feeling of being cold. She appeared afraid that she would threaten her own face if her hint was ignored or her interrupting the talk was seen as an unfavourable action. By hinting, Wa'ad decreased the degree to which she could be held accountable for making a request to turn off the AC (Haugh, 2015: 147). However, this hint solicited an immediate action from the hostess (Faten) as she immediately headed to the AC controller to turn it off (line 2). Her action enhanced both Wa'ad's and her own face needs. It fulfilled Wa'ad's desire to feel warmer and also showed that Faten was a good hostess and attentive to her guests' needs. Although Faten's action was simultaneous with Sally's request to

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<sup>80</sup> Instagram is an online mobile application for photo-sharing, video-sharing, and is a social networking service. It enables its users to take pictures and videos, and share them either publicly or privately on the app as well as comment on them.

turn off the AC (line 3), it was clear that this had no influence on Faten's action. Since Faten moved immediately towards the AC as soon as Wa'ad commented that it was cold, i.e. Faten's action latched onto Wa'ad's comment. Faten's quick response most probably implied that she was responding to a need indicated by Wa'ad not to Sally's direct request.

**Extract 2 (Solicited, comfort offer with no response)**

1. *Wa'ad: barrd. 0*  
cold. 0

*Wa'ad: It's cold. ((In a low voice)) 0*

2. **[[*(Faten heads directly to the A/C.)*]]**

3. *Sally: [ʔi:h barrd xala:sʕ tʕafi:-h. ʔa-ħis ʔinn-i: sʕaddaʕt.]*  
yes cold finish turn off-it. I-feel that-I have headache

*Sally: [Yes. It's cold. Turn it off. I feel I've got a headache]*

4. *((Faten turns off the A/C, and Inas continues her story))*

Faten's behaviour was seen as an offer by the interactants. It was evaluated as very polite and appropriate by all of them. Both Sally and Wa'ad indicated that they evaluated it that way because she took action immediately to make the place more comfortable upon hearing Wa'ad's remark. Faten did not try to comment on the remark or state how she felt. It seems that imposition did not have a role in this offer. Ensuring your guest feels comfortable is a key factor in managing relational work. Faten's action can possibly be explained by borrowing from Spencer-Oatey (2000: 14) the term association rights, particularly the elements of involvement and empathy (Section 2.1.2.2). These appropriate amounts of association depend on the nature of the relationship between interlocutors, sociocultural norms and personal preferences (Spencer-Oatey, 2000: 14-15; 2002: 540-541; 2005a: 100). It seems that these two elements governed the action and its positive evaluation. This is shown by a high degree of involvement between Faten and her guests as concerns about imposition in performing the offer do not have a role. Moreover, empathy is manifested in Faten's immediate attempt to fulfil Wa'ad's hint. This shows how much she takes care of her guests' feelings and concerns.

The agreement between the interactants on the evaluation gives strength to the conclusion that this behaviour may fall in the category of positively marked polite behaviour. The solicited offer is arguably seen as a polite stance in which Faten



demonstrated attentiveness<sup>81</sup> towards the explicit needs of Wa'ad (Fukushima, 2013: 91, 2015: 271) and showed concern for "the well-being of the beneficiary" (Haugh, 2015: 260). On the other hand, the absence of positive evaluative reaction such as appreciation during the actual conversation could lead to the assumption that it is unmarked politic behaviour. If we imagine that Faten had not performed the offer immediately or accomplished it in another manner, the ensuing interaction would not have been problematic. It seems that the speed and efficiency of Faten's action makes the offer more polite despite the absence of the interactants' positive evaluation. However, if no offer at all had occurred, the interaction would be impolite or rude. Thus, we cannot say that this offer passed unnoticed. It can be argued that the absence of an evaluative reaction does not always imply that it is unmarked. It seems that the categories of relational work are complex, as suggested by Locher and Watts (2005). They indicated that, "there can be no objectively definable boundaries between these categories" (Locher & Watts, 2005: 12). Therefore, we claim that the two categories of politic behaviour, i.e. marked and unmarked, may sometimes overlap in order to be able to account for the above situation and the definition of politic behaviour must be revisited.<sup>82</sup>

In the previous extracts, we notice that there was no immediate second pair part, whether verbal or non-verbal. Davidson (1984: 115-116) found that if a response does not occur, the offerer may interpret this absence as a possible rejection-implicative. However, it was interpreted as acceptance in the previous extracts. It seems that for this group of friends the absence of an offeree's response would be interpreted as acceptance rather than rejection. This was verified during interviews since most participants indicated that if the offeree did not want what was offered, she would refuse the offer.

#### **6.1.1.2 Simple offers with response**

This section presents three simple non-verbal offers with three different types of responses: non-verbal acceptance (Extract 3), verbal refusal (Extract 4), and verbal acceptance by complimenting the offered item (Extract 5). It is worth noting that only two non-verbal offers were refused in simple exchanges by the Saudi Arabic speaking participants.

The first two extracts exemplify how most offers of drinks were made among members of the SA groups. When a hostess notices that her guests' cups are

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<sup>81</sup> Attentiveness is defined as "a demonstrator's preemptive response to a beneficiary's verbal/non-verbal cues or to situations surrounding a beneficiary and a demonstrator, which takes the form of offering" (Fukushima, 2013: 19).

<sup>82</sup> This will be discussed in detail in Chapter 9.

empty, she serves them even though they have not requested or hinted at a refill. The responses to most of these offers are non-verbal, especially when the group are busy chatting with each other.

In Extract 3, Lama asked Yusra to give her the thermos (line 2). Instead, Yusra served her a cup of coffee (line 4). This was a solicited offer; Yusra did not fulfil the request by giving Lama the thermos, yet she offered Lama coffee. She also served coffee to the other guests when she noticed that their cups were empty, without them asking for more (lines 7 & 11). She did not ask Arwa or Inas whether they wanted another cup or not. Hence, Yusra showed that she was attentive to the needs of her guests. Fukushima (2015: 274) proposes that the lack of such alertness is “the opposite of being attentive”, and being attentive is important for one’s personality and successful communication. Thus, Yusra’s behaviour would enhance her face. Her offers overlapped with Inas telling them about her friend. Yusra’s offers were accepted non-verbally by both Arwa and Inas; the addressees took their cups back without any verbalized attempt to directly state their acceptance or appreciation (lines 9 & 13).

### Extract 3 (Solicited and spontaneous, hospitable offers)

1. Yusra: [ʔal-muʃkilah            tara            fi:-h            hu:.]  
           [the-problem        by the way        in-him        he]  
 Yusra: [He is the problem by the way.]

2. Lama: [ʔaʕtʕ-i:-ni:        ʔat-turmis.]  
           [give-F-me        the-thermos.]  
 Lama: [Give me the thermos.] ((In a very low voice))

3. Inas: ju:f-i:    waħdah    min    ʔal-bana:t    tugu:l    “ʔana:    tarabe:t    fi:  
           see-F    one    of    the-girls    say    “I    raised up    in  
           be:t    ʔizʕa:ʒ.    ʔiħna:    sabiʕ    bana:t”    madri    sit    bana:t.  
           house    noise    we    seven    girls”    don’t know    six    girls.  
 Inas: See, one of the girls says: “I was raised in a noisy home. We’re seven girls,” or six. I don’t know.

### 4. ((Yusra takes the thermos and Lama’s cup. She pours coffee and serves it to her.))

5. Inas: gilt    li-k        ʕalei-ha ,    ʔilli    tugu:l    ʔa:h-    tʕabʕan    ra:ħat  
           told to-you    about-her, who    say    ah-    of course    went  
           biʕθah        wa        zəuʒ-ha:        ʕaja:        jirsil    ʕija:l-ha:  
           scholarship and    husband-her    refused    send    kids-her  
           maʕ-ha: X  
           with-her. X

Inas: I’ve told you about her. The girl that says um- that she went for a scholarship, and her husband refused to let her take the children with her. X

6. Arwa: [ ʔi:h    haði    tidʕəħnik ]  
           [yeah    this    funny.]

Arwa: [Yeah, that's a funny one.]

**7. [((Yusra stands up and heads towards Arwa to serve her coffee.))]**

8. Inas: *fa-la: ʔila:ha ʔilla ʔalla:h, tugu:l ʔamma: hina:k gaʕadt*  
 so-no God except God, say when there stay  
*bilʔa:li: tugu:l marrah ʔinhabat. taxjal-i: gaʕadat ʔisbu:ʕ*  
 alone say very I-got crazy. Imagine-F stayed a week  
*min ye:r ma: ʔa-tkallam. sʕirt ʔa-gu:l ʔa:h ʔu:h.*  
 without no I-talk. become I-say aah ooh.

Inas: So, no God other than God ((a phrase usually used to remind the speaker about what she was saying)). She says: "when I was there, I've stayed alone. I was going crazy. Imagine, I stayed a whole week not speaking a word. I've started to say aah ooh."

9. ((Arwa takes her cup and places it on the table after being served.))

10. Inas: [ʔwa ʔamma: ʔa-na:m ʔa-fayil ʔat-tilfizjəun. tugu:l  
 and when I-sleep I-turn on the-television. Say  
*ʔinhabat. ʔamma: ʔa-na:m ʔa-fayil ʔat-tilfizjəun.* 0  
 go crazy. when I-sleep I-turn on the-television. ] 0

Inas: [ʔAnd when I sleep, I'd turn the TV on". She says she was going crazy turning the TV on when she went to sleep.] 0

**11. [((Yusra serves coffee to Inas.))]**

12. Arwa: X ʔana: ma: ʔa-na:m. 0  
 X I no I-sleep. 0

Arwa: X I wouldn't sleep. 0

13. ((Inas takes her cup and places it on the table after being served.))

14. Inas: ʔa-bya sʕəut na:s.  
 I-want voices people.

Inas: "I want to hear people's voices."

On the other hand, the following example shows how the same non-verbal offer was refused. While Yusra was talking, she noticed that Arwa's cup was empty. She picked up the cup to pour more tea (line 2) while she was still talking. This is further evidence that hospitable offers are part of the unmarked politic behaviour. It was clear that it would be inappropriate to stop her talk in order to display hospitality. In addition, ignoring her hosting duties until she finished her talk might be seen as inappropriate. Non-verbal offering may be considered the best solution in such cases. It helps in managing the friendly and talkative atmosphere among friends (e.g. Extract 1 & Extract 5). However, Arwa refused the offer by first stating the reason for her refusal, saying she had enough tea, then showed appreciation for the offer by thanking Yusra (line 3). It was very common in the

SA data that offerees showed appreciation for offers that are refused<sup>83</sup> more than when they are accepted. This provides evidence that refusals are dispreferred. Thus, speakers need to minimize face threat and mitigate<sup>84</sup> the illocutionary force of the refusal by appreciating the offer (Jasim, 2017: 301). This also corresponds to Babai Shishavan's (2016: 56) findings that speakers tend to give reasons and explanations to minimize the negative effect of the refusal.

#### Extract 4 (Spontaneous, hospitable offer)

1. Yusra: *tara                   ʔant-i   la:zim--*  
           by the way   you-F   must--  
*Yusra: By the way, you must --*

#### 2. ((Yusra take's Arwa's cup to pour some tea.))

3. Arwa: *xala:s<sup>ç</sup> , ʔana:   ʃukran.*  
           enough,   I       thanks.  
*Arwa: Enough for me, thank you.*

#### 4. ((Yusra puts Arwa's cup on the tray.))

5. Yusra: *min ʒid,   min ʒid   Lama. mu:   ʃan,       ʔa-ʃaif-ik*  
           seriously,   seriously   Lama. not   about,   I-cause trouble-you  
           ʃala:   zoʒ-ik.  
           on   husband-your.  
*Yusra: Seriously Lama. Seriously. It's not that I'm trying to cause trouble between you and your husband.*

Arwa's refusal was taken as a sincere refusal rather than a ritual one. This was evidenced in Yusra's reaction as she did not try to reoffer. The offer interaction was brought to an end. She cleared the table by putting the cup on the tray and continued speaking. This translates to a belief that Yusra took care of her obligation as a hostess as well as her obligation to respect the independence of Arwa by not imposing too much. It seemed that autonomy rights were given greater prominence than displaying hospitality in this extract; this was evidenced in considering Arwa's refusal as genuine and avoiding reoffering. It seems that what the participants perceived to be appropriate or politic behaviour in the interaction from which this extract was taken is that the speaker must not insist on offering a drink that was initially refused in informal and intimate situations. In fact, if they do the opposite, their behaviour could be regarded as inappropriate and evaluated negatively as being over-polite. Reoffering in such a situation could

<sup>83</sup> Jasim (2017: 209) found that showing gratitude/appreciation was one of the most frequent strategies in refusals to offers among Iraqis.

<sup>84</sup> Mitigation smooths the managing of interpersonal relations during a given verbal interaction since it makes an utterance more acceptable to the interactants without changing the speaker's standpoint (Schneider, 2010: 255).

be seen as an infringement of equity rights, particularly autonomy-control, since it involves imposing upon the guest. Indeed, reoffers were evaluated negatively elsewhere in similar situations. For example, a participant from a pilot study said about her reoffering behaviour,<sup>85</sup> *“I should not have repeated the offer in our group; I was very over-polite.”* Moreover, Faten’s continuous attempts to reoffer coffee to Sally and Wa’ad were seen as annoying and unnecessary (see Extract 16).

Although the same offers from Extract 3 and Extract 4 generated different responses, they were judged similarly as polite and appropriate in the interviews by Yusra and Lama and very polite and appropriate by Arwa. Yusra justified her behaviour by saying, *“I don’t have to wait for an acceptance or a request to serve my guest. If she did not want, she could refuse. It is polite to keep on serving coffee or tea until my guest asks me to stop.”* Her explanation highlights a very common norm in SA: you continue offering Arabic coffee or tea to your guests until they state their refusal. In this case, we have two options. Either the hostess accepts the refusal and the exchange is brought to an end, or she repeats the offer and generates a complex offer exchange. This behaviour may be perceived as part of the register used and might be a way to strengthen in-group solidarity.

In the following example, we can see that the non-verbal offer was treated differently as some appreciation was expressed in response to it. Extract 5 shows how a non-verbal offer was accepted using a compliment. The women were talking about abdominal exercises when Ahad served dessert to Nada (line 2). Ahad did not use any verbal expression when she served it. It seems that the interlocutors were listening to what Abeer was telling them, and Ahad did not want to interrupt the talk in order to perform her hosting duties.

#### **Extract 5 (Spontaneous, hospitable offer)**

1. Abeer: *tʕu:l      ʔams      ʔa-gu:l      lil-bana:t      batʕn-i:= ,      maʕleɪf*  
           as long    yesterday    I-say      to the-girls    tummy-my,      OK  
           *maʕleɪf    ja:    Abeer.*  
           OK      oh      Abeer

*Abeer: Yesterday I kept saying to the girls ‘My tummy’=, they said oh it’s OK. It’s OK Abeer.*

#### **2. ((Ahad serves a plate of dessert to Nada.))**

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<sup>85</sup> The offer took place between Dana (hostess), Rana, and Inas (guests). It was from the beginning stages of the gathering. Before they gathered, Dana placed hot drinks, nuts, dates, and a dessert on the tea tables so everyone could reach them easily whenever they wanted. After the greetings, Rana offered to serve Arabic coffee to the others, and Dana offered to bring an extra thermos of Arabic coffee. The offer was refused by Rana and Inas. However, Dana reoffered to bring more coffee to them.

3. *Nada*: <Wow.> ?

<wow>

*Nada*: <Wow.>? ((Taking the dessert plate from *Ahad*..))

4. *Suha*: *ʔi:h ʕunsʕur ʔal-bida:jah marrah sʕaʕb.*  
yes element the-beginning very difficult.

*Suha*: Yes, the starting point is very difficult.

5. *Abeer*: *baʕde:n ga:l-u: li ʔal-bana:t la: tsaw-i:n-ha:.*  
then said-they to me the-girls no do-youF-it.

*ʔal-bana:t ga:l-u: “Abeer la: tsaw-i:n-ha:.”*  
the-girls said-they “Abeer no do-youF-it”

*Abeer*: Then the girls told me not to do it. They said, “Abeer, don’t do it.”

6. *Ahad*: *la: saw-i:-ha: xamsah, baʕde:n bukrah sittah,*  
no do-F-it five, then tomorrow six,  
*baʕde:n ʕafrah.*  
then ten.

*Ahad*: No, do it five times, then tomorrow six, and then ten.

This offer of dessert was accepted by *Nada* without any negotiation, and she showed her strong appreciation by saying ‘wow’ in high pitch (line 3). This implies that she did not only accept the offer but also liked it. Her response seemed to enhance *Ahad*’s face. However, there was not much effort involved in negotiating the offer or the appreciation. Again, this is further evidence that listening to someone’s talk is more important than negotiating hospitable offers. In other words, sociality<sup>86</sup> seems more important than negotiating hospitality. However, if *Ahad* had not offered dessert to *Nada* with Arabic coffee, the absence of the offer would render the interaction as impolite and rude especially since *Ahad* had offered dessert to the other guests. The dessert was on the main tea table. It was coffee time, and it is traditional in Saudi Arabia to serve dessert or at least dates with Arabic coffee. It is obvious that this falls within unmarked politic behaviour in relational work, yet *Nada*’s response appeared to be positively marked and evaluated as very polite by the interactants. Her compliment was an extra element to her acceptance of the offer. Through the expression ‘wow’, *Nada* implied that the dessert was too good to describe in words. By complimenting the host’s offer, the guest gave the highest praise possible, which gives rise to politeness (Haugh, 2007a: 88). This may lead us to conclude that when people behave in a way that enhances and acknowledges others’ effort, this may be seen as politeness. This would support defining politeness as “more than merely appropriate behaviour” (Watts, 2005a: 51).

<sup>86</sup> Whenever I use the word sociality in this thesis without being followed by the term rights, it refers to “the tendency to associate within social groups”, i.e. the word is used in its common sense. It does not refer to Spencer-Oatey’s concept of “sociality rights”.

The offer was evaluated as neither polite nor impolite by Ahad and Abeer, but as polite and appropriate by Suha. What is noteworthy here is that although participants vary in their evaluation, they provided the same justification. It seems that there is no one to one relation between justifications and evaluations. The participants indicated that it is illogical to use an offering expression every time you offer your guests something. Suha and Abeer also added that they would do the same (offering the dessert non-verbally) to avoid interrupting talk and in this way it would show respect to the current speaker. Suha also added, "*It would be unreasonable to wait for them to finish talking as they may elaborate their discussion and coffee time would pass without her having dessert.*" It seems that the offer falls within the expected behaviour in this context. It is governed by previous experiences and expected norms. Ahad justified her evaluation and behaviour saying,

Since she was drinking coffee, I had to offer her dessert. The norm is that we have dessert with coffee. I had neither offered her dessert before coffee nor was it my second offer. The setting and situation govern whether we use offering expressions or not. For example, I used an expression when I offered coffee for the first round,<sup>87</sup> but later you can see that I was serving while we were talking so I did not want to interrupt the talk. In this case, when I offered Nada the dessert, I was talking about abdominal exercises. Thus, there was no time for using offering expressions.

Ahad's comment highlights important issues in offering behaviour. It seems that there are certain expectations that people seek to meet in conducting their hospitable offers. However, these vary from situation to situation, which is an issue people are aware of. This provides evidence that people base their evaluations on a set of principles they have acquired in previous situations. The judgments are made on the basis of socialization, i.e. they are social, not individual judgments. This confirms van der Bom and Mills' (2015: 198) argument that:

Each individual has their own take on the politeness resources available to them and each will engage in negotiations with others about what is acceptable and appropriate behaviour in each context, drawing on their past experience to evaluate the function and meaning of each utterance.

### **6.1.2 Complex offers**

This section explores how some offers were initiated non-verbally and developed into complex exchanges. This was not very common; only eight non-verbal offers generated intricate negotiation, as was seen in Chapter 5. Intricate negotiation

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<sup>87</sup> Extract 12 illustrates the initial offering of drinks.

led to a strategic refusal to most of them. Since complex offers may be built using one or more of the strategies discussed in Chapter 4, the analysis in this section classifies representative samples of complex offers in two sub-sections: offers employing only one strategy (Section 6.1.2.1) and offers including two or more strategies (Section 6.1.2.2).

### 6.1.2.1 Using one strategy

Seven of the complex non-verbal offers used only one strategy. Elaborated offers, reoffering sequences, and embedded offers were the strategies employed by the female SA speakers to manage the complex negotiation of offers that were initiated non-verbally. A sample representing each strategy is explored below.

The following extract shows how a non-verbal offer was refused by undertaking the action of another non-verbal offer. Arwa, a guest, served dessert to the group (lines 3 & 10) while Lama was expressing her anger about men.

#### Extract 6 (Spontaneous, embedded, hospitable offers by a guest)

1. Lama: *ʔal-muhim      ʔafeina:      fi:      ʔar-rʒa:l      tara,      wa*  
           the-important      gossiped      in      the-men      by the way,      and  
           *laʕan-na:-hum .*  
           curse-we-them.

*Lama: The important thing is that we gossiped about men, and by the way cursed them.*

2. Arwa: *leih? X 0*  
           why? X 0  
 Arwa: *Why? X 0*

#### 3. ((Arwa serves dessert to Lama.))

4. Yusra: *mitʔa:gg-ah      maʕ ((name)) .      miski:n-ah.*  
           fought-she      with ((name)).      poor-she.  
 Yusra: *She's had a fight with ((a name)). Poor girl.*

5. Arwa: *hij ,      baʕad?*  
           she      too?  
 Arwa: *She did, too?*

6. Lama: *X. ʔalla:h      <@ jilʕan      ʔar-rʒa:l @>.*  
           X. God      <@ curse      the-men @>.

*Lama: X. May <@ men go to Hell@> ((She takes a piece of dessert off the box.))*

7. All: *@@@.*

8. Arwa: *la:      Lama,      ju:f-i: ,      ju:f-i:      ʔawal      marrah      tara*  
           no Lama, see-F,      see-F      first      time      by the way  
           *tiñif-ah. @@*



bad mouth-him. @@

Arwa: No, listen, listen. It's the first time Lama talks negatively about him. @@

9. Lama: ?i:h      tara      da:jim    ?a-mdaḥ-ah,    bas    ?ams    marrah--  
                   yeah by the way always I-praise-him, but yesterday very--

Lama: Yeah. I always praise him, but last night was so --

**10. ((Arwa serves dessert to Yusra.))**

11. Arwa: ?a:h.

          yeah.

Arwa: Yeah.

**12. ((Yusra takes the box from Arwa and serves dessert to Inas.))**

13. Yusra: miski:n-ah.

          poor-she.

Yusra: Poor girl.

**14. ((Inas holds up the piece of dessert that she still has to show to Yusra.))**

**15. ((Lama is talking on the phone.))**

The example illustrates how offers related to hospitality were not only offered by the hostess herself, but also by the guests. It seems that Arwa wanted to help Yusra in her hosting duties. This signals that she considers Yusra a very close friend. In her offer to Lama, the offer was simple and the response was a non-verbal acceptance, in which Lama picked up a piece of dessert from the box (line 6). There was not much effort invested in dealing with this offer. However, when Arwa offered Yusra the dessert, a non-verbal complex offer developed. First, Yusra responded to Arwa's offer with another non-verbal offer. She took the box and served the other guest, Inas (line 12). Her behaviour implied two things. First, it acts as a refusal to the offer of dessert. Second, it functions as an offer to help Arwa since Inas was sitting beside her. If Yusra did not take the box, Arwa would need to stand in order to be able to serve Inas. Her behaviour did not signal that she refused Arwa's offer of help in hosting duties. If this were the case, she would have done so when Arwa served Lama initially. Yusra's offer to Inas was refused non-verbally by showing that she had a piece of dessert (line 14). It is obvious that there was no great effort invested in dealing with the offers. They were not the focus, as the main attention was directed towards Lama's emotions.

When interviewed, Arwa's behaviour was evaluated as polite and appropriate by Yusra and seen as a sign of sharing and involvement. She indicated that she would do the same if she were at Arwa's home. Yusra's response provides support for Spencer-Oatey's (2000, 2002, 2005a) association rights, i.e. the appropriateness of our interaction with another person according to our relationship with them. Accordingly, face may be associated with social and

dependent values rather than individualism. However, Arwa's behaviour was considered very polite by Lama and Arwa since it was not Arwa's duty to get involved; she was helping her friend. Although there was no verbal interaction, this offer was classified as a complex one. This is because it fits the description of embedded offers, in which an offer acts as a response to the initial offer. This provides evidence that non-verbal communication has a significant role in our interaction. Non-verbal moves can form a complete complex exchange without any supportive verbal ones. Although this was the only example of a complex offer that consisted only of non-verbal moves in the corpus, this does not indicate that it is not worthy of analysis since it raises the possibility of its existence. It also provides evidence that non-verbal behaviour, particularly offering, must be considered in politeness research as its role is not limited to initiating or closing exchanges in the discourse. They can form complex exchanges that constitute more than two moves by themselves. However, I believe that there might be limitations on the degree of complexity they can achieve.

Another example of an offer that was initiated non-verbally and which developed into a complex negotiation, is illustrated by the reoffering sequences shown in Extract 7. The extract was taken from the end of the gathering; Wa'ad was approaching the front door to leave. Faten appeared to accompany her to the outside gate (line 1).

### **Extract 7 (Spontaneous, hospitable offer with a reoffering strategy)**

**1. ((Faten walks Wa'ad to the inside door.))**

2. Wa'ad: *ja: na:s tara ʔa-dil xala:sʕ.*  
oh people by the way I-know enough.

Wa'ad: *Oh, people, by the way, I know the way. It is OK. ((The sound of a phone ringing))*

3. Faten: *la: ʕa:di:.*  
no normal

Faten: *No, it's OK.*

4. Wa'ad: *ja: ʔub-i: li-k.*  
oh love-my to-you.

Wa'ad: *Oh you're a sweetheart.*

**5. ((Faten goes out with Wa'ad.))**

6. Wa'ad: *la: titʕlaʕ-i: maʕ-i:, ʔa-ʕrif ʔatʕ-tʕari:g.*  
no go out-F with-me, I-know the-way.

Wa'ad: *Don't walk me out, I know the way.*

7. Faten: *la: la: ʕa:di: ʔa-tʕlaʕ maʕ-ik.*  
no no OK I-go out with-you.

Faten: *No, No, it's OK. I'll walk you out.*

8. *Wa'ad: gu:l-i:    ?a-bya:    ?atmaja:.*  
                   say-F        I-want        taking a walk  
*Wa'ad: Just say you want to take a walk.*

9. *Inas: maʕ ?is-sala:mah.*  
                   good bye.  
*Inas: Good bye!*

10. *Wa'ad: jallah    maʕ ?is-sala:mah.*  
                   let's            good bye.  
*Wa'ad: OK good bye! ((She leaves them))*

11. *((Faten walks her to the outside gate.))*

It seemed that Faten wanted to accompany Wa'ad to show her that she was taking good care of her hosting duties. Wa'ad in return refused by first using a backchannel token 'oh'. Davidson (1984: 112) regards these tokens as weak agreements, in which the offerer may take it as a potential pre-rejection; hence, it provides a revised version of his/her offer. This was obvious since Wa'ad added a reason for refusing the offer. She expressed her ability in terms of knowing the way and indicating that it is all right if Faten did not accompany her to the outside gate (line 2). Her reaction showed that the offer would benefit Faten rather than her. In other words, the cost and benefit are both directed to the offerer as it enhances the offerer's face in respect of her being a good hostess. Faten assured Wa'ad that her offer to accompany her to the door was normal (line 3). This is in line with Davidson's (1984: 112) claim, since Faten revised her initial version of the offer by minimizing the potential imposition that might take place in relation to her. This revised version generated a compliment from Wa'ad as she expressed how lovely Faten was, using a softener 'sweetheart' (line 4). It seemed that this was interpreted as acceptance by Faten as she continued walking Wa'ad to the gate. This action led Wa'ad to state her refusal directly by using an imperative 'Don't go out with me' and then indicated she knew the way (line 6). She clarified that she did not need the offered action. It seemed that she noticed that Faten misunderstood her compliment as acceptance, whereas it seemed that her intention was to compliment her for being nice so there was no need to show her that by performing the offer. The compliment was used to hedge the refusal. It confirms that Wa'ad was aware that the offer was more likely directed to enhance Faten's face as a hostess. This refusal was not accepted by Faten. She marked and emphasized her refusal of Wa'ad's denial by repeating the word 'no' twice within the same turn. Faten then assured Wa'ad that walking her out would not bother her; she also confirmed the offer by using an affirmative declarative statement, saying 'I'll walk you out' (line 7). It seems that Wa'ad felt that her refusal would not be accepted or even considered. The negotiation was brought

to an end by Wa'ad's proposal that she was not imposing on Faten and the offer would benefit Faten by saying to her '*Just say you want to take a walk*' (line 8). This remark did not offend Faten. Her main concern appeared to be displaying her abilities as a hostess. This also ensures Faten's sincerity in performing it. After they finalized their negotiation, Inas stepped in and said goodbye to Wa'ad who replied saying goodbye, too. Faten then walked outside with Wa'ad.

Participants evaluated the offer as very polite and appropriate. In fact, although Wa'ad refused the offer she indicated that she would do exactly the same for her guests even if they refused. They all considered this behaviour as part of being polite and courteous. Moreover, Faten added that, "*Only rude people would not walk their guests to the front door.*" It seems that the participants unconsciously follow certain norms in their behaviours and evaluations. Her comment indicated that each single behaviour takes part in building a discursive image of a person. Single interactions are not completely autonomous, but rather are connected to earlier and future similar ones. Thus, when interactants have relational histories, the discursive construction of face extends over time as a cumulative effect of several interactions with the same individuals (Sifianou, 2011: 45). Lay persons are also aware of the variability of norms according to the context. In this respect, Sally maintained that, "*Walking a guest to the door is part of our customs as a sign of good hospitality. However, if you have a huge party with many guests, it would be impossible to walk everyone to the door.*" Their responses explain why Wa'ad was showing Faten that it would be all right if she did not walk her out because accompanying your guest to the door is hospitable and can be considered unmarked behaviour in SA culture. Wa'ad also pointed out that the offer would benefit Faten since she did not need the service. This extract contradicts Brown and Levinson's (1987) claim that offers are costly to the speaker and beneficial to the hearer. It seems that this offer enhanced the speaker's face as a good hostess and might threaten the addressee's face as being unable to find the way out on her own.

The following extract shows a special case in which partial acceptance of a non-verbal offer occurred. Faten was dishing up some salad on Wa'ad's plate as part of serving the starter (line 1). Wa'ad indicated that the amount was enough. She first used a backchannel token '*Oh*' which is considered by Davidson (1984: 112) as weak agreement, then Wa'ad forcefully refused to have more salad by repeating the word '*enough*' three times (line 2). Her repetition showed the

strength of her refusal.<sup>88</sup> It is important to note that she did not refuse to have the salad; she only refused to have more.

### Extract 8 (Spontaneous, elaborated, hospitable offer)

**1. ((Faten scoops some salad for Wa'ad.))**

2. *Wa'ad: ʔa:h xala:s<sup>ʕ</sup> xala:s<sup>ʕ</sup> xala:s<sup>ʕ</sup>.*  
oh enough enough enough.

*Wa'ad: Oh that's enough, enough, enough.*

**3. Faten: ʔi:h ʔi:h xala:s<sup>ʕ</sup> bas ʔa-ħit<sup>ʕ</sup> lik ruma:n.**  
yeah yeah enough but I-put for-you pomegranate.

**Faten: OK yeah enough but I put some pomegranate for you.**

**4. ((Faten gives the plate to Wa'ad.))**

5. *Wa'ad: ʔalla:h jaʕt<sup>ʕ</sup>i:-k ʔal-ʕa:fjah.*  
God give-you the-wellness.

*Wa'ad: God gives you wellness. ((Equivalent to thank you.))*

Faten also accepted Wa'ad's refusal to have more by saying 'yeah', then confirming that the portion of salad was enough; however, she did add an elaboration (supportive move) to her offer stating that she wanted to add some pomegranate. She then handed the plate of salad to Wa'ad, who in return accepted it with appreciation by using the expression 'May God give you wellness'. The invoking of God ensures the sincerity of Wa'ad's appreciation. It seems that whenever a speaker invokes God, the sincerity condition is not in question (Abdel-Jawad, 2000: 239; Almutlaq, 2013: 225; Jasim, 2017: 303). During the interviews, Faten's offer was evaluated as polite and appropriate by Wa'ad and Faten, but as very polite and appropriate by Sally. It seems that the offer falls within marked politic behaviour, which is apparent in Wa'ad's appreciation. Faten explained that Wa'ad appreciated the offer because other hostesses may not serve up food for their guests and rather require them to serve themselves at the dinner table.

#### 6.1.2.2 Using more than one strategy

Only one offer exchange that was initiated non-verbally generated some complex negotiation using more than one strategy in the SA corpus; thus, it may be considered more complex than those considered in the previous section. Extract 9 illustrates how the non-verbal offer by Faten to serve more coffee to her guests was developed into collaborative and embedded offering sequences as well as

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<sup>88</sup> Speakers tend to repeat their speech acts to reinforce their real intentions (Abdel-Jawad, 2000: 229).

elaborated over a number of turns to add reasoning (lines 2 to 7). While she was talking, Faten took the thermos from the table next to Sally and Wa'ad to pour some coffee for them (line 2) even though she agreed earlier to her guests' suggestion to give them the opportunity to serve themselves. Sally asked her immediately to sit down, and said that they would serve themselves.

**Extract 9 (Spontaneous, collaborative, embedded, elaborated, hospitable offer)**

1. *Faten: taxajal-i: wa ka:nat tau-ha: msagt<sup>ʕ</sup>-ah wa tnat<sup>ʕ</sup>it<sup>ʕ</sup>. 0*  
     imagine-F and was-F just-she miscarriage-F and jumping. 0  
*Faten: Can you imagine she had just had a miscarriage and kept jumping. 0*
2. **((Faten takes the thermos to serve coffee)) 0**
3. *Sally: ʔismiʕ-i: ja: ra:ʕjat ʔil-be:t .. wif ra:ji-k*  
     listen-F oh owner the-house.. what opinion-you  
     *tʒi:b-i:n ʔal-qahwah [hina:=].*  
     bring-youF the-coffee [here=]  
*Sally: Listen lady of the house .. How about you put the coffee*  
     *[here=?] ((Pointing to the table which is*  
     *right in front of them))*
4. *Wa'ad: [ʔajwah s<sup>ʕ</sup>ah].*  
     [yes correct]  
*Wa'ad: [Yes. Right.]*
5. *Sally: ʕafa:n bʕi:dah marrah, wa ʔiʒlis-i: ʔant-i hina:, wa*  
     because far very, and sit-F youF here, and  
     *xala:s<sup>ʕ</sup> n-s<sup>ʕ</sup>abs<sup>ʕ</sup>ib.*  
     finish we-pour.  
*Sally: Because it's so far away. And sit here, so we keep on pouring.*
6. *Wa'ad: ʔant-i tau-k ʒa:ja-h min ʔad-dawa:m, wa*  
     you-F just-you come-she from the-work, and  
     *taʕba:n-ah, jaʕni: raħm-i:n-ik ʔiħna:, ħa:s-i:n*  
     tired-she mean touch up-we-you we feel-we  
     *bi-ʔħsa:s-ik.*  
     about- feeling-you  
*Wa'ad: You've just got back from work, and feeling tired. Poor you. We*  
     *understand how you are feeling.*
7. *Sally: [ʔismiʕ-i: ja: ra:ʕjat ʔil-be:t] @@*  
     [listen-F oh owner the-house] @@  
*Sally: [listen lady of the house] @@*
8. *Faten: [ʔalla:h jaħaji:k-um]*  
     [God welcome-youPI]  
*Faten: [May God welcome you all] (meaning make yourself at home) ((She*  
     *places the thermos next to them))*

## 9. Everybody @@@@

10. Wa'ad: ʔajwah wa ʔeɪf kama:n.  
 yes and what else

Wa'ad: Yes, what's else?

11. Faten: hij lau ʔnna-ha mib basa:tʃah ka:n ma: ʃazamt-ukum  
 it if that-it not simple was no invited-youPI  
 wasatʃ ʔal-ʔsbu:ʃ.  
 mid the-week

Faten: *If it wasn't a humble effort on my part, I wouldn't have invited you on a weekday.*

## 12. Everybody: @@@

Sally's offer latched onto Faten's offering behaviour. She made an implicit offer in the form of a suggestion. This acted as a refusal to Faten's offer; however, the refusal was partial. She refused being served as a formal guest, yet she did not refuse to have more coffee and so asked Faten to place the coffee thermos next to them (line 3) so they could serve themselves as much as they wanted. Sally's offer aimed to assist Faten in her hosting duties. Sally acknowledged Faten's role as a hostess, by saying '*the lady of the house*'. She then minimized the imposition of her offer by directly asking Faten about her opinion, saying '*what is your opinion about...?*' (see the literal translation in line 3). The question confirmed Faten as the main decision-maker (Haugh, 2007a: 89). This offer was collaboratively approved by Wa'ad in line 4 as she directly agreed with Sally saying 'yes' and added that this was the right thing to do. Wa'ad's offer overlapped with Sally's last word, which shows her sincerity in collaborating to undertake the offer. Although Faten has not yet responded to their offers, both offerers added grounders as supportive moves to strengthen the illocutionary force of their offer. They gave reasons why she had to accept their offer. Sally's reason derived from considering the benefit of the offer to the guests as they could keep on pouring coffee whenever they needed (line 5), whereas Wa'ad used a grounder in which she projected herself as a considerate person. She based her grounder on concerns about her imposing on Faten and causing too much trouble for her (line 6). Sally repeated her acknowledgment of Faten's role as the hostess (line 7) to guarantee that her acceptance would not conflict with her being a good hostess. This was then followed by laughter, which could perform a positive function. It confirmed the informal and intimate nature of the context. The collaborative offer got Faten's acceptance as she did what they asked her to do (placing the thermos next to them in line 8), and she welcomed

them by invoking God, saying ‘*May God welcome you*’.<sup>89</sup> It seems that she invoked God to show her pleasure at having them in her home and to confirm that her acceptance of their offer to serve themselves did not entail her unwillingness to host them. Her behaviour brought the discussion to a close, which was also apparent in their laughter. It is clear that being served by the hostess was seen as a sign of formality by the guests and could attribute negative evaluation as over-politeness between Saudi close friends. Thus, the guests may not want to be treated formally and as distant friends. Their reactions demonstrated the high degree of intimacy between them.

In the interview, Wa’ad and Sally evaluated their behaviour as very polite and appropriate, whereas Faten considered it polite and appropriate. However, all of them gave the same justifications for the evaluation. Sally said that she justified her offer to show her sincerity. In addition, Faten indicated that she considered their behaviour as polite because it did not matter whether she served them or they served themselves. She also added, “*If they were formal/distant guests, I would consider it inappropriate and would insist on serving them myself. Thus, due to the nature of our relationship, I consider their offer appropriate.*” They all indicated that this was part of the intimate and friendly relationship they had with each other. Faten also pointed out that it bothers her when she visits a close friend and she is busy showing her hospitality rather than sitting and talking with her. This behaviour may be perceived as part of strong in-group solidarity and intimacy. In fact, similar instances were found in all of the three SA female friendship groups. The participants’ comments also showed that they are unconsciously aware that the relevant norms are continuously changing depending on the context. Thus, this is in line with the relational work argument that the judgment of an utterance may differ from one instance to the next (Locher, 2011: 192).

The above extracts have shown that some offers were accomplished non-verbally without waiting for acceptance from the addressee. They appeared to be perceived as being beneficial to the addressee. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), this offering behaviour threatens the addressees’ negative face. However, these non-verbal offers might be perceived as politic/polite behaviour in particular contexts based on the interactants’ judgments. This finding argues against the applicability of Brown and Levinson’s model for certain types of

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<sup>89</sup> Religious expressions that invoke God are widely used among Arabs in their speech. Such expressions amplify politeness among Arabs (Samarah, 2015: 2015) and confirm the truth value of the speaker’s proposition and his/her sincerity (Abdel-Jawad, 2000: 239; Al-Issa, 2003: 594; Almutlaq, 2013: 225).



hospitable offers in Saudi culture and supports Watts's (2003: 159) claim that no utterance is inherently polite or impolite.

## 6.2 Verbal offers

This section aims to explore relational work management in verbal offer exchanges by the members of the Saudi female friendship groups. The analysis first explores carefully selected simple offer exchanges that were accomplished verbally (Section 6.2.1). It then explores representative samples of verbal complex offer exchanges (Section 6.2.2).

### 6.2.1 Simple offers

This section will provide a discursive analysis of some simple offer exchanges that were initiated verbally. Selected examples will be investigated as it would be impossible to analyse all of the offers discursively. Nonetheless, the examples have been selected carefully to provide a comprehensive picture of the SA data.

#### 6.2.1.1 Simple offers without a response

The following extracts show that, like non-verbal offers, verbal offers might sometimes have no second pair part. This was found in about seven instances of verbal offers. Five of the offers were addressed to the group and the other two to a specific interactant. A representative sample of each case is explored below.

In Extract 10, Yusra served tea to her guests non-verbally in lines 2, 10 and 12 while they were talking about something they had discussed in their WhatsApp group. This was followed by a simple verbal offer of sugar to the group in line 15.

#### Extract 10 (Spontaneous, hospitable offer with no response)

1. Yusra: tara:           ʔana:   ʔilli:   gilt-ah,   tara    haða   jai  
           by the way    I       that   said-it, by the way   this   thing  
           tʻabi:ʕi       tara,       jaʕni:  
           normal     by the way,   mean.

*Yusra: By the way, what I've said is that this is a normal thing.*

2. ((Yusra serves tea to Arwa.))

3. Lama: ʔana:   ma:   gare:t, ʔana:   ma:-- 0  
           I       not   read,   I       not --0

*Lama: I haven't read. I didn't -- 0*

4. Arwa: wufu ?  
           what?

*Arwa: What?*

5. Lama: wif       gilt-i?

what said-youF?

Lama: *What did you say?*

6. Yusra: *lamma: ʕala: ʔatʕ-tʕabi:x wa ma: ʔatʕ-tʕabi:x, wa*  
 when about the-cooking and that the-cooking, and  
*Abeer ʔatʕ-tʕabx mu: wa:ʒib gilt la-ha:, jaʕni:,*  
 Abeer the-cooking not mandatory said to-her, mean,  
*“tizawaʒ-i, ʔawal baʕde:n gu:l-i ʔatʕ-tʕabx mu: wa:ʒib.”*  
 marry-youF, first then say-F the-cooking not obligatory.  
 Yusra: *When they talked about cooking and so, and Abeer said that cooking is not obligatory. I said to her, “First get married, then say that cooking is not mandatory.”*

7. Lama: @@.

8. Yusra: *ʔatʕ-tʕabx mu: wa:ʒib ʕa-ʔal-marʔah, [ʕa-ʔaz-zoʒah.]*  
 the-cooking not mandatory on-the-woman, [on-the-wife.]  
 Yusra: *Cooking is not mandatory for a woman, [on the wife.]*

9. Arwa: [la:=]  
 [No=]  
 Arwa: [no=]

10. ((Yusra serves tea to Inas.))

11. Arwa: *hum ʔilli: jugul-u:n, liʔan ʔi:k ʔal-jəum jəum*  
 they that say-they, because that the-day day  
*tugu:l-u:n, ʔana: ʔa-rgisʕ madri wufu.*  
 say-youPI I I-dance don't know what.  
 Arwa: *They're the ones who say, because the other day when you we're saying, I was dancing or something like that.*

12. ((Yusra serves tea to Lama.))

13. Arwa: *Faten ʕakl-aha: dʕʕajf-ah tau-ha: mxalsʕ-ah tʕabx.*  
 Faten seems-she poor-she just-her finish-she cooking.  
 <@ wa:dʕiħ, ga:lat, ga:lat wufu X, gahart-u:-ha: @>  
 <@ Clear, said, said, what X, upset-youPI-her @>  
 Arwa: *It's seems that poor Faten had just finished cooking, <@Clearly. She said: “What!!” You upset her @>*

14. ((deleted part))

15. ((Yusra sits back in her place after she's taken her cup.))

16. Yusra: *ʔaʒal ʔana: ʔa-baʕr-ik, “ʔana: ʕind-i: muʕkilah*  
 so I I-preach-you, I have-I problem  
*nafsijah. la:zim ʔa-ru:ħ ʔa-tʕa:laʒ”. ʕu:ʕu: ʔas-sukar*  
 psychological. must I-go I- treat . see-PI the-sugar  
*ʔiða: tibyu: 0*  
 if want-youPI.0

Yusra: *so I tell you, “I have a psychological problem. I need to get therapy”. Here's the sugar if you want. 0*

17. *Arwa: fi:h jai θa:ni tiħib-ah baʕad. <F ʔi:h sʕaħ F>. tiħib*  
 there thing another like-it else. <F yeah right F>. like  
*tyassil mala:bis. tiħib tyassil mawa:ʕi:n.*  
 wash cloths . like wash dishes.

*Arwa: There's something else she likes. <F Yeah. Right F>. She likes to do the laundry and the dishes*

18. *Lama: fiʕlan?*  
 really?

*Lama: Really?*

19. *Yusra: ʔi:h naʕam.*  
 yes indeed.

*Yusra: Yes indeed.*

After serving tea, Yusra offered her friends sugar, using a declarative. Yusra told the women there was sugar if they wanted it (line 16), after she had finished commenting on what Arwa had said. She employed a conditional if clause. The use of an explicit conditional if indicates explicitly that the addressees can opt out, i.e. they are free to reject the offer. The use of an if-clause also shows that the addressee is the main decision-maker. This could explain why none of the three addressees responded to this offer. It seems that they knew that it was their decision whether to have sugar or not. If they wanted some sugar, it had already been offered to them and they could get it themselves. It can be concluded that equity rights, particularly the autonomy-control element which expects that people should not be unduly controlled or imposed upon (Spencer-Oatey, 2000, 2005a), were prioritized in this offer exchange.

Yusra's behaviour was seen as an act of offering sugar by the participants. It has been evaluated as polite and appropriate. Both addressees indicated that they would serve it while pouring tea and whoever wanted sugar would take some. It seems that it was expected to offer sugar while serving tea rather than after it. As a result, the offering of sugar was expected but the sequential position of the offer is what makes it salient to the participants. Moreover, since there was no effort invested in discussing Yusra's offer of sugar, it seems part of unmarked politic behaviour. However, if the offer had not occurred, it might not have affected the interaction negatively since Yusra had already added sugar to the tea. It was an extra thing. The offer was for those who might want more sugar. This does not affect our evaluation of the offer as unmarked since Yusra had not told her guests that there was sugar in the tea when she offered it.

The following extract includes a simple offer exchange of information that took place while Yusra was serving coffee non-verbally. Arwa was telling them that she was not dressed well because she had overslept. She was thankful that on that day it was just these three women from her friendship group, who do not

usually dress formally, not Lamees and Maha,<sup>90</sup> who dress formally all the time. Yusra joked with Arwa that she should have worn eyelashes (line 1). This reminded Arwa of what happened the day before when her eyelashes detached once she had arrived at a friend's wedding (line 3). Yusra had done Arwa's make-up and hairstyle for that occasion.<sup>91</sup>

### Extract 11 (Spontaneous offer of information)

1. Yusra: *ʔa-gu:l-ik ka:n ʔatʕe:t-i: rumu:f.*  
I-tell-you was put-youF eyelashes.  
*Yusra: Listen, you should've worn eyelashes.*

2. .. ((Arwa takes the coffee cup from Yusra.))

3. Arwa: *ʔi:h , ʔatʕe:t rumu:f .. rumu:f-i: ʔinfakat .*  
yeah, put eyelashes .. Eyelashes-my detached.  
*[nis<sup>ʕ</sup>a-ha: tara ʔams].*  
[half-it by the way yesterday.]

*Arwa: Yeah, I would have worn eyelashes. By the way, my eyelashes got detached [half of them last night].*

4. Lama: *[ʔana:-- . ʔal-muʔkilah--].*  
[ I -- . the-problem--].

*Lama: [I'm--. The problem is --]*

5. Yusra: *[[la: ja: ʃeɪx-ah ʔ]]*  
[[no oh sheik-F?]]

*Yusra: [[No, really?]] ((Yusra serves coffee to Inas.))*

6. Lama: *[[X]]*

7. Arwa: *jəum was<sup>ʕ</sup>alt . tauwni wa:s<sup>ʕ</sup>l-ah, wa ʔana: bi-ʔal-ʔama:m*  
when arrived. Just arrived-F, and I in-the-toilet  
*ʔilla ʔa:h. wa ʔa-gʕid ʔa-ʔa:wil ʔa-lazig fi:ha:, bas*  
then oh and I-kept I-trying I-stick in-it, but  
*ʔal-muʔkilah ma: maʕ-i s<sup>ʕ</sup>amɣ. @@*  
the-problem not with-me glue. @@

*Arwa: When I arrived. I'd just arrived and I was in the toilet and oh. I kept trying to stick them back, but the problem was I didn't have any glue with me. @@*

8. Yusra: *ʔuf ʔi:h=.*  
oh yeah=.

*Yusra: Oh, yeah=*

9. Lama: *ʔaj rumu:f ta:xð-i:n?*  
which eyelashes got-youF?

*Lama: Which eyelashes did you get?*

<sup>90</sup> These are pseudonyms for the friends who she referred to during the talk.

<sup>91</sup> Yusra sometimes works as a make-up artist on her days off besides her main job as a nurse.

10. Arwa: *ʔa:h=* [*.. Red Cherry*]. *Red Cherry*  
           *um=* [*.. Red Cherry*]. *Red Cherry*  
 Arwa: *Um=* [*.. Red Cherry*]. *Red Cherry*

11. Yusra: [*ʔisma-ha: Red Cherry*],  
           [*name-it Red Cherry*],  
 Yusra: [*It's called Red Cherry*],

12. Yusra: *ʔari:bah tara, ʕumri ma:, ʔal- <glue> ʕumr-ah ma: fak.*  
           weird this, never not, the-*<glue>* never-it not detached.  
 Yusra: *That's strange. It's never, the <glue> has never got detached.*

13. ((*Yusra serves coffee to Lama.*))

14. Arwa: *madri ... ʔakl-ah ʔant-i ma: lazagt-i:-ha: ze:n. jimkin.*  
           don't know... Seem-it you-F not glue-youF-it well. May be.  
 Arwa: *I don't know... Maybe you didn't glue them well. Maybe.*

15. Yusra: *la:s<sup>ʕ</sup>gah mad<sup>ʕ</sup>bu:t<sup>ʕ</sup>, ʔifta-ha:.*  
           glued well, saw-it.  
 Yusra: *They were glued well. I saw them.*

16. ((*A sound of phone ringing*))

Here Yusra showed her shock about what happened to the eyelashes (line 5). Then Arwa told her that she could not fix them as she did not have glue. Lama contributed to the discussion by asking about the brand of eyelashes that Arwa had used (line 9). It seemed that Lama's aim was to find out why this had happened and to save Yusra's face from any threat of not being considered a good make-up artist. Arwa wanted to answer but instead she started her utterance with a lengthening backchannel and a short pause (line 10). This signalled her inability to remember the name. Arwa's struggle to remember the name was picked up by Yusra, who tried to help by providing the brand's name (line 11). Her attempt overlapped with Arwa's pronunciation of the name. Arwa's reaction to this help could be perceived as somewhat negative. She repeated the name showing that she knew it. Arwa's behaviour indicates that she was trying to save her own face by displaying knowledge of the brand's name. It seemed that Arwa did not like being corrected by Yusra. In fact, studies have shown a preference for self-repair over other-repair (e.g. Schegloff et al., 1977: 367-379). This became even more obvious during the interview, when Arwa said, "OK, I mean whether she said it or not, it wouldn't affect. She just made it quicker to answer the question." Moreover, Yusra indicated, "There are situations in which I do not have to remind the person in front of me or tell her. Not everyone would accept this help. I might interfered in that situation although it was not my business." Both Arwa and Yusra evaluated this as neither polite nor impolite yet appropriate. Thus, if the offer to provide help in saying the name had not

occurred, the interaction would have been smoother. Its absence would not have affected the interaction negatively. Therefore, it did not fall within politic behaviour, rather it may be considered impoliteness based on Arwa's immediate reaction, i.e. repeating the brand's name, and the interviewees' comments. However, the interaction continued smoothly straightaway as the women continued discussing what had happened. This shows that evaluative moments could be very brief and their affect may be temporary. The appropriateness level was decided based on the degree of relevance of the offer to the current situation, not according to the level of politeness invested. Thus, we can conclude that appropriateness does not always entail politeness, yet the opposite would be inevitable. Evaluating a given behaviour as polite and inappropriate does not occur at all in this study. In other words, if a behaviour is inappropriate, it cannot be polite. However, if it is appropriate, different levels of politeness could be perceived. Appropriateness is broader than politeness.

### 6.2.1.2 Simple offers with response

This sub-section will explore four extracts representing different situations of simple verbal offers with different types of responses (acceptance and refusal). These include: hospitable offers by a hostess or by one of the guests, offer of assistance in which the age variable plays a role, and a solicited offer to a group in which it was satisfied by the refusal of some of the addressees.

The following dialogue includes two verbal simple offers that occurred at the beginning of the gathering. It shows how Arabic coffee was offered for the first time to the guests. It took place between Ahad (hostess), Inas, Abeer, and Suha (guests). Before they gathered, Ahad placed hot drinks, nuts, dates, and a dessert<sup>92</sup> on the tea tables so everyone could reach them easily whenever they wanted. After the greetings, Ahad offered Arabic coffee to the guests.

#### Extract 12 (Spontaneous hospitable offer and spontaneous offer of assistance)

1. Ahad: *tiʕzibn-i: ʔal-misʕda:gijah ʔaggat ʔas-suʕu:diji:n.*  
           like-I           the-credibility           owned           the-Saudis.  
*Ahad: I like the credibility of Saudis.*

2. All: @@@.

3. **Ahad:           sami:**  
           **by the name of God.**

---

<sup>92</sup> It is the norm in Saudi Arabia to serve Arabic coffee with dates and/or dessert.

**Ahad: *In the name of God. ((Equivalent to here you are)). ((She serves coffee to Inas))***

4. *Inas: tislīm-i:n.*  
bless-youF

*Inas: Bless you. ((Equivalent to thanks.))*

5. *Ahad: [xali:-na: nsʕi:r <perfect>.]*  
[let-us become <perfect>.]

*Ahad: [Let's be <perfect>.]*

6. *[[ (Ahad serves coffee to Abeer, and Abeer takes it.) ]]*

7. *((Ahad serves coffee to Suha.))*

8. *[[ (Suha takes her cup.) ]]*

9. ***Suha: [[ ʔirta:h-i: ʔirta:h-i:. ʔigʕid-i: wa ʔiħna:-- ]]***  
***[[relax-F relax-F. Sit-F and we--]]***

***Suha: [[Relax. Relax. Take your seat and we--]]***

10. *Abeer: la: la: ʕind-uhum X. 0*  
no no owned-they X.0

*Abeer: No no, they have X. 0*

11. *((Ahad pours coffee for herself then puts the thermos near the guests to serve themselves.))*

12. *Suha: tʕejjib xala:sʕ =.*  
Ok enough=.

*Suha: OK. This is enough=.*

After laughter, Ahad offered coffee to Inas, saying the elliptic version of 'In the name of God<sup>93</sup>' (line 3). The utterance has two functions. First, it verbalizes the offer of coffee to Inas. Second, it can function to remind Inas and the others to say the Islamic prayer before they start to drink coffee. The expression is widely used when handing drinks or any comestibles to someone in SA. It implies respect and good manners. This offer was accepted by Inas as she took the cup of coffee and appreciated the offer using the formulaic utterance, 'bless you', which is an elliptical form of 'God bless you'. The use of these expressions can be attributed to religious values. Both the speaker and addressee asserted their sincerity of offering and appreciation by invoking God. The offer was evaluated as very polite and appropriate by Ahad and Abeer, and as polite and appropriate by Suha. However, despite the difference in evaluation, all of them provided the same reasoning. They said that the expression used is part of Saudi customs and norms. Moreover, it is obvious that subsequent offers of coffee to the other guests

<sup>93</sup> The expression 'In the name of God/Allah' is the prayer Muslims always say before they eat or drink.

were accomplished non-verbally (lines 6 & 7). The offers seemed to be expected and part of unmarked politic behaviour. It is the norm in SA to serve coffee to all of your guests without exception. If we imagined that Ahad did not offer coffee to them after starting with Inas, this would cause negative reactions. As was explained in the previous section, the offers were accomplished non-verbally because participants place more importance on a friendly and interactive atmosphere among friends than uttering offers. These offers were evaluated differently by the participants. Ahad evaluated them as neither polite nor impolite and appropriate, Abeer as polite and appropriate, and Suha as impolite and neither appropriate nor inappropriate. Suha said that Ahad should have used an expression like *'here you are'* to focus the addressee's attention on the offer, whereas Abeer implied that Ahad did not want to interrupt their talk. Abeer added that she would do the same, and if her guests were silent she would use a spoken expression to make an offer. This variability in evaluation is in line with the discursive approach to politeness; variability seems to be the norm rather than the exception (Grainger & Mills, 2016: 11; Haugh, 2013a: 56; van der Bom & Mills, 2015: 202).

Moreover, the extract shows a widely honoured tradition among close friends and family members, where guests offer to help in hosting duties. Such offers were coded as offer of assistance in this study. Although it is apparent from line 8 that Suha accepted the offer non-verbally from Ahad, she nonetheless asked Ahad to rest so that they could serve themselves (line 9). These two actions were done simultaneously. Suha's offer is considered a simple and spontaneous one since the first one has been finalized with a non-verbal acceptance. The offer was accepted non-verbally by Ahad as she left the coffee thermos near the women to be able to serve themselves (line 11). There was no effort made to negotiate or appreciate the offers. Based on Ahad's reaction, it is obvious that it was expected and fell within the unmarked politic behaviour of relational work. Both Ahad's and Suha's reaction highlighted that acceptance can be expressed non-verbally.

Suha's offer was evaluated as very polite and appropriate by Abeer and Ahad, yet only as polite and appropriate by Suha. It seems that Suha underestimated the politeness value of her offer and considered it part of proper courtesy to make hostess duties easier. She aimed to reduce the imposition of inviting them on Ahad. Both Ahad and Abeer indicated that Suha intended to help, and they would do exactly the same so that they could enjoy an easy-going and friendly gathering. Abeer also added that she did not offer to help Ahad with her hosting duties because she did not feel well that day. Since Abeer provided an excuse for the absence of her offer, this provided evidence that the offer falls within unmarked politic behaviour, which was apparent in Ahad's reaction too, i.e. she



accepted the offer without any negotiation. Moreover, the participants' responses indicated that their evaluation was based on their interpretation of Suha's intentions. Addressees' interpretations of speakers' intentions may be influenced by norms, experiences with similar contexts, and relations among interlocutors. Fukushima (2015: 275) claims that politeness resides in both a demonstrator and recipient of attentiveness; nevertheless, I have argued that it mainly resides in the recipient's uptake of intended attentiveness, which may be different from the real intention. This is discussed in detail in Chapter 8.

The following extract is taken from the data gathered in the pilot study. It is provided because it exemplifies how age plays a role in understanding politeness. Extract 13 takes place between Dana (hostess) and her younger sister (Amal), in the presence of three guests (Dana's friends). The friends were sitting and chatting before the main dinner. Dana's sister, Amal, entered the room as dinner time was approaching. Dana asked her to serve dinner using a softener and a declarative sentence in line 1 and a request to ask their other sister to bring the plates (line 3).

### Extract 13 (Spontaneous offer of assistance)

1. Dana: Amal *ħabi:bti:* *tʒi:b-i:n* *ʔsʕ-sʕi:nija:t* *ʔilli:* *ʒa:bat-ha*  
 Amal honey bring-youF the-trays that brought-them  
*Rana*  
 Rana

*Dana: Amal honey, you bring the food trays which Rana brought.*

2. Amal: *ʔi:h* *tʕejjib*  
 yes OK

*Amal: Yes, OK*

3. Dana: *wa* *xal-i:* *Lamo* *tʒi:b* *ʔsʕ-sʕuħu:n.*  
 and let-F. Lamo bring the-plates

*Dana: and let Lamo bring the plates.*

4. Amal: *ʔsʕ-sʕuħu:n ?*  
 the-plates?

*Amal: The plates?*

5. Dana: *ʔi:h* *ʔsʕ-sʕuħu:n* *ħag* *ʔal-ʔakil*  
 yes the-plates for the-food

*Dana: Yes the plates for food*

6. Amal: *tʕejjib.*  
 OK

*Amal: OK*

7. ((Amal was clearing the table and collecting the dirty cups and plates.))

8. Dana: *xal-i:-ha:* *xal-i:-hum* *ʔana:* *ʔa-ʒmaʕ-hum* *hina:*

leave-F-it    leave-F-them    I    I-collect-them    here  
*xal-i:-hum*  
 leave-F-them

**Dana: Leave them, leave them, I will collect them here, Leave them.**

9. Amal: *tʕejjib ʔawadi:-hum, ..<X to the kitchenX>*  
 OK        take-them, .. <X to the kitchen>  
 Amal: *OK I will take them, .. < X To the kitchen X>*

Amal accepted the request and started clearing the table in order to have an area for the food. Dana asked her to leave the mess, and she offered to do it herself (line 8). Dana's offer was refused by Amal as she immediately cleaned the area and said, 'OK I will take them ... to the kitchen'. Her definitive tone indicated that she was demonstrating proper behaviour. Amal's refusal to leave the plates reflects the Saudi cultural norms of deference. It is a crucial part of the Saudi culture to show deference to older people, particularly family members in the presence of others. When interviewed, Dana indicated that she offered to clean the mess just because she did not want her sister to waste time cleaning; *"I did not mean to offer. Amal was supposed to immediately do what I asked her to do which is bringing the plates and dinner immediately, so I didn't want her to waste time fixing the place."* Dana's insincere intent in her offer was clear as she did not try to step in and perform it. As Dana was older than her sister, Amal's refusal was perceived as appropriate/politic unmarked behaviour, whereas Dana's offer was considered as inappropriate over-politeness. This is evidenced by the reactions of both women: Amal's refusal and Dana's insincerity.

In Extract 14, the women started to eat dinner while Ahad was not in the room. She was bringing her food from the kitchen. Suha offered to pour some tea for Inas and Abeer, who were sitting beside her (lines 5 & 11), using a declarative sentence with high intonation. These offers were accepted directly by Inas and Abeer, but not accompanied by any appreciation tokens.

#### **Extract 14 (Spontaneous, hospitable offer by a guest)**

1. Nada: *kaʔan ʔal-jəum barrd.*  
           seems        today        cold.  
   Nada: *It seems cold today.*
2. Suha: *barrd!*  
           cold!  
   Suha: *Cold!*
3. Nada: *hawa: hawa:.*  
           wind        wind.  
   Nada: *Windy windy.*
4. ((Suha takes the tea thermos.))

5. **Suha: ?a-sʕib li-k?**  
 I-pour for-you?

**Suha: I pour for you?**

6. *Inas: ?a:h.*  
 yeah.

*Inas: Yeah. ((Nodding her approval while she is talking on the phone.))*

7. *Nada: <F Ahad F> ((Leaving the room to catch up Ahad to tell her something.))*

8. ...

9. *Suha: haða ñag-- Abeer haða ñag mi:n?*  
 this for-- Abeer this for whom?

*Suha: This is for-- Abeer, who's this for?*

10. *Abeer: ((Pointing to herself.))*

11. **Suha: ?a:h Abeer ?a-sʕib li-k?**  
 aha Abeer I-pour for-you?

**Suha: Aha Abeer, I pour for you?**

12. *((Abeer nods her approval)).*

13. *((Suha pours tea for Abeer.))*

14. ...

15. *((Suha pours tea for herself))*

I posit here that offers must not always be seen as costly to the speaker and beneficial to the recipient (Brown & Levinson's 1987 view). Offers, in fact, also have benefits for the speaker/offerrer. First, in this case, the offer shows Suha's understanding and consideration of Inas's and Abeer's need for tea because their cups were empty. It also demonstrates Suha's sensitivity to the social conventions of this group. Suha has adapted her relational work to what is considered appropriate. Thus, by offering she confirms her proper membership of the group. During the interview, Ahad pointed out that this is what they are accustomed to doing in their group. They agreed on evaluating it as neither polite nor impolite and appropriate. Second, offers give face to the speaker, that is, Suha gains credit from Ahad (hostess) and addressees, who will pay back the debt in the future.

It can be said that the politic/appropriate behaviour in these groups is for the members of the group to offer tea or coffee to the others, if they serve themselves. I postulate that the participants were following the line expected from them. In other words, they were producing the appropriate/politic behaviour expected in gatherings among close friends.



appropriate in the SRQ, Ahad as very polite and appropriate, and Suha as polite and appropriate. Both Suha and Ahad considered the offer as an extra service since no one knew that the waiter gave Ahad the option to order wedges as a starter. On the other hand, Abeer stated that, "*It is the normal thing to do.*" Indeed, all of them agreed that reoffering would not occur in such a situation due to the context (the waiter was on hold) and the expected sincerity of the refusal as a result of their close relationship.

Moreover, the metalinguistic evaluations make identifying the type of relational work invested in this exchange more difficult since participants' immediate reaction and their responses are contradictory, an issue the relational work framework does not attempt to address. This questions the reliability of asking lay persons about politeness. It seems that they are not necessarily aware of why they behave in a certain way. There is some degree of inconsistency between what they think and what they do. This signals a problem which is that lay persons may not be consciously aware of the levels of politeness they intended or interpreted. For instance, Mills, (2003: 45) posits that even consulting the interactants, as she did in her own research, does not provide any guarantee of getting "what really went on". It could be claimed that more weight should be given to considering the immediate reaction in this extract in order to understand politeness since power is equal in this friendship group and there were not any constraints on expressing one's reaction. However, it is worth noting that this argument is not applicable all the time. We have to notice if there is any conflict between metalinguistic evaluations and immediate reactions in the context. We cannot not be sure that people would express how they really felt during the interaction<sup>94</sup> or that metalinguistic evaluations can absolutely reflect what has been going on. In other words, we cannot solely rely on metalinguistic evaluations and ignore the reactions in the immediate context or vice versa. Both may provide useful evidence to understand the discursive construction of politeness, and we have to unpick this on a case by case basis.

### **6.2.2 Complex offers**

This section analyses some samples of complex offer exchanges that were initiated verbally. Section 6.2.2.1 explores complex offers that included only one strategy, and Section 6.2.2.2 presents an example of a complex offer that employed two strategies. In addition to providing an account of complex offering

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<sup>94</sup> In some situations, such as conflicts or offence, people may feel inhibited in the moment (i.e. the absence of a reaction does not mean that interactants are happy with the behaviour). Moreover, people sometimes feel unable to articulate their real reaction due to unequal power or avoiding hurting others' feelings in equal power situations.

strategies, the examples here were selected to highlight certain phenomena found in the corpus such as how reoffering can be judged positively or negatively (Extract 16), invoking God in offers (Extract 18), and topics of offers that were not addressed in the literature such as offering comfort (Extract 17) and offering a turn of speech (Extract 20).

### 6.2.2.1 Using one strategy

This sub-section provides a discursive analysis of some complex offering negotiations that involve one strategy. It is important to point out that elaborated offering and reoffering sequences were the most commonly used strategies in the SA data. Extract 16 shows a reoffering strategy. While Sally was telling the women about an incident that happened with her husband that she had already told Faten about, Faten served coffee to her guests since she noticed that their cups were empty. Her action can be explained using Fukushima's term attentiveness (Fukushima, 2013: 19). In fact, most offers in the current SA data fall within a speaker's attempts to be attentive.

#### Extract 16 (Spontaneous, hospitable offer with a reoffering strategy)

1. Sally: *nigal hu: ʔida:rah ʔis- hij ʔida:rat ((department)),*  
transferred he administration ca- it administration ((dept.)),  
*hu: ka:n fi: ((place)), mudir farʕ.0*  
he was in ((place)), manager branch. 0

*Sally: He was transferred to an administration cal- it's the ((Administration's Name)). He was in ((Company's name)), as a branch manager. 0*

2. *Wa'ad: [ʔa:h hu: ((company's name))].*  
[aha he ((company's name.))]  
*Wa'ad: [Aha he's ((the company's name))]*

3. *Faten:[ʔa-ʕt'i:n-i: finʒa:l-ik]*  
[I-give-me cup-your.]

*Faten: [Give me your cup] ((As she extends her arm to serve the coffee to Wa'ad))*

4. Sally: *mudir farʕ ka:n.*  
manager branch was.  
*Sally: He was a branch manager.*

5. *Wa'ad: ʔa:h.*  
aha  
*Wa'ad: Aha.*

6. Sally: *ma: fi:h ʕala:q-a:t ħatta bi-ʔat-tili:fu:n, jaʕni:.*  
no there relationships even over-the-phone, mean  
*Sally: Which means no relationships, not even over the phone.*

7. *Wa'ad: ʔi:h ħilo.*

yeah good.  
 Wa'ad: Yeah, good.

8. Sally: *baʕde:n faʒʔah sʕa:r nival fi: ʔida:rat ((department)) ..*  
 later suddenly became transferred in administration ((dept.)) ..  
 Sally: *Then suddenly he was transferred to the ((administration's name)).*

9. *((Phone rings.))*

10. Faten: *Inas ji:l-i: [ʔal-waraq ʕan] ʔal-qahwah la: --*  
 Inas remove-F [the-papers from] the-coffee no --  
 Faten: *Inas, remove [the paper off] the coffee so it doesn't--*

11. Sally: *[ʔal-muhim] .. haði ʔal-ʔida:rah, wif jasʕi:r*  
 [the-important]..this the-administration, what happen  
*ʔaħja:nan jaʕtʕu:n-ah jidarib bana:t.*  
 sometimes give-they-him train girls

Sally: *[Anyway].. what happens in this administration is that sometimes he is expected to train ladies.*

12. ***((Faten stands up to take Wa'ad's cup to pour coffee for her))***

13. Wa'ad: *xala:sʕ ʔana: la: tsʕb-i:n li.*  
 finish I no pour-youF for me  
 Wa'ad: *I'm done. Don't pour any more for me.*

14. **Faten: *la:ʔ0***  
***no? 0***

**Faten: *No? ((Means you don't want?)) 0***

15. Sally: *ʕejjib.*  
 OK

Sally: *OK*

16. **Faten: *ʔabadan?***  
***never?***

**Faten: *Not at all?***

17. Wa'ad: *ʔabadan.*  
 never.

Wa'ad: *Not at all. ((She puts her hand on the cup))*

18. Sally: *ʔi:h ħatta ʔana: marrah jəbaʕt.*  
 yeah even I very full.

Sally: *Yeah even me. I feel very full, too.*

19. Inas: *<@ jbaʕət @>*  
*<@ full @>*

Inas: *<@ Full @>*

20. *Everybody @@@@*

21. Faten: *jbaʕət @@@.*  
 full @@@

*Faten: full @@@.*

22. *Sally: kajaft .. @@*

adjusted .. @@

*Sally: High on coffee .. @@*

In line 3, Faten offered Wa'ad some more coffee using both verbal and non-verbal moves; she used an imperative<sup>95</sup> which is a form widely used in Saudi Arabia when offering (Al-Qahtani, 2009: 225), by asking her directly to give her the cup as well as extending her arm in preparation to serve coffee (non-verbal gesture). The combination of both strategies increased the directness of the offer. Leech (2014: 182) considers direct offers the most generous and polite since they allow little or no room for the receiver to refuse the benefit. However, this offer was eventually refused. It can be claimed that refusals to direct offers are more sincere since they are more difficult to be refused and thus need more effort such as providing explanation or reasoning.

Indeed, Faten's offer lacked a satisfy move because it was either not heard or ignored by Wa'ad due to the fact that it overlapped with Sally's talk. The women continued their discussion (lines 4-11), and no attention was given to the offer. It seems that Faten did not accept that her offer was not taken up by Wa'ad, so she stood up and renewed her offer non-verbally (line 12). It seems that her intention was to give Wa'ad a second chance to clearly accept or reject the offer. This second attempt was refused immediately by explaining first that she had enough coffee, then by intensifying her refusal with a direct request using an imperative without hedges saying, '*Don't pour any more for me*' (line 13). Faten repeated her offer by confirming H's refusal saying '*No?*' (line 14) and '*Not at all?*' (line 16) in a rising intonation to find out if her guest's refusal was genuine and not limited to the immediate context, i.e. she might like to have more coffee later. These two attempts were separated by an interjection from Sally to gain Wa'ad's attention so she could continue what she was saying. These two attempts were refused by Wa'ad verbally and non-verbally. She said '*not at all*' and placed her hand on the cup to prevent her from pouring more coffee. The combination of verbal and non-verbal moves intensified her refusal and shows that it was sincere and non-negotiable. The action of placing her hand on the cup is conventionally used in Saudi Arabia to signal someone's refusal to have more coffee. The expression used implies that her refusal is not limited to this offer but also extends to any subsequent attempts of offering coffee. Surprisingly, although the offer was not

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<sup>95</sup> According to Brown and Levinson's (1987: 100) model, imperatives are considered a bald on record strategy, which entails the FTA being performed in the most direct and unambiguous way, and the speaker makes no effort to minimize the threat which the hearer might infer.



addressed to her, Sally (a side participant in this offer) indicated her refusal even before being offered in line 18. Sally's reaction signalled two things. First, she anticipated that her turn is coming after Wa'ad's. This highlighted the hospitality norm in Saudi Arabia, which is that a hostess offers drinks to each speaker in turn. It is impolite to offer some and ignore others. Second, it can be called collaborative refusal, parallel to collaborative disagreement (Geyer, 2008: 73),<sup>96</sup> that leads to illocutionary force of the refusal being strengthened since both of them formed a team.<sup>97</sup> The discussion then shifts to laughing at the expression Sally used to indicate her refusal, '*I'm full*', which does not sound idiomatic. The smooth transition from the offering/refusal interaction to laughter opened the window to the assumption that this behaviour might have been judged as unmarked politic/non-polite. In fact, Faten's offers were evaluated as very polite and appropriate by the three interactants. Wa'ad said that Faten's confirmation of her refusal showed courtesy and polite behaviour. In retrospect, it can be argued that it was perceived as positively marked politic/polite behaviour although it could be expected behaviour; that is, if we imagine Faten not repeating the offer, the absence of her reoffers would not be regarded as impolite or rude behaviour. This shows that the absence of certain expectations would not always result in negative perceptions as these expectations may be based on ideologies about one's own culture (Grainger & Mills, 2016: 17-18), rather than what usually happens in reality. Although the expectation in Saudi culture is to reoffer drinks and comestibles to one's guests, this was not the case in this group. Context and relational histories would determine evaluations.

Moreover, it is worth mentioning that despite the refusal, a further attempt to offer more coffee by Faten to her guests occurred about 15 minutes later. This was judged negatively by the guests as being annoying since they had refused earlier. It was considered negative and over-polite. It can be said that too much reoffering and insistence may be seen as a burden rather than politeness. This supports the relational work claims that over-politeness is often perceived negatively as it crosses the boundaries between appropriateness and inappropriateness (Locher, 2004: 90), and the addressees' reactions to over-polite and impolite behaviours might be roughly similar (Locher & Watts, 2005: 12; Watts, 2005b: xliv).

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<sup>96</sup> This collaborative behaviour was also seen in offering, defined in 4.6.2 and illustrated in Extract 9.

<sup>97</sup> Geyer (2008: 96) found that collaborative disagreement strengthens the co-constructed disagreement and leads to stronger association between first and second disagreement.

The following extract was taken from the beginning of the gathering. It includes an elaborated complex offer. Suha and Abeer have just entered the room and had taken off their Abayas, i.e. their Islamic cloak. Ahad wanted to make sure that the room's lighting was comfortable. She offered to turn on the floor lamp. Ahad's offer was truncated and latched onto Abeer's turn. She downgraded her imposition by giving them the option to refuse on the basis that it might cause them a headache, i.e. using an expander (line 2). Her behaviour shows that her main concern was her guests' comfort.

**Extract 17 (Spontaneous, elaborated offer of comfort)**

1. Abeer: *ʔismiʕi: ʔana: ʔa-gu:l-ik --0*  
listen-F I I-say-you --0

Abeer: *Listen to me--0*

2. Ahad: *tab-u:n ʔafayil lu-kum ʔal-ʔabazorah? willa tʕawir*  
want-youPI turn on for-youPI the- floor lamp? Or hurt  
*ru:s-kum.*  
heads-yourPI

Ahad: *Do you want me to switch on the floor lamp? Or would it give you a headache?*

3. Abeer: *X [X It is OK. X]*  
*X [X It is OK. X]*

Abeer: *X [X It is OK. X] ((In a very low voice.))*

4. Ahad: *ʔil-ħari:m jəum ʔal-xami:s ga:l-u: li-ʔum-i:*  
the-women day the-Thursday say-they to-mother-my  
*tʕaf-i:-ha:= tu:ʒaʕ ru:s-na:. gilt haða ʔant-um*  
switch off-F-it= hurt head-our. Said this you-PI  
*ja:-ʔil-ħari:m.*  
oh-the-women.

Ahad: *The women asked my mom on Thursday to switch it off= as it causes them a headache. I said women are always like this.*

5. Suha: *ʔaj gasʕd-ik haði?*  
which mean-you this?

Suha: *Which one? You mean this?*

6. Inas, Ahad, and Abeer @@@

7. Abeer: *tʕaf-i:-ha:, tʕaf-i:-ha. mitkaʕxah!*  
switch off-F-it, switch off-F-it. Chic!

Abeer: *Switch it off, switch it off. She is chic! ((She means Suha))*

8. Abeer: *ʔana: ma: ʔamda:ni:.*  
I no had enough time.

Abeer: *I didn't have much time.*

9. Suha: *ʔaj waħdah?*  
which one?

*Suha: Which one?*

10. *Ahad: ja: wi:l galb-i:*  
oh woe heart-my.

*Ahad: Oh my heart! ((Equivalent to Oh my God!))*

11. *Inas: min kiθr ma: tistana:-k. min kiθr ma: tistana:-k.*  
from many that wait-you. from more that wait-you

*Inas: Because she's waiting for you. Because she's waiting for you.*

12. *Ahad: <F ħatʕe:t-i: rumu:f? F>*  
<F put-F eyelashes? F>

*Ahad: <F You wore eyelashes? F>*

Abeer said something inaudible in a very low voice that was not heard by Ahad or the others (line 3). What she said could have been irrelevant to the offer. This made Ahad add a grounder to justify her offer. She indicated that her mother's guests on Thursday asked her to switch it off since it gave them a headache (line 4). It is obvious here that she added the grounder although her offer was not refused or accepted. It can be said she elaborated her offer to help the addressees decide on what would be good and comfortable for them. Suha responded to this offer by asking which floor lamp she meant (line 5). This was followed by laughter since Suha's question indicated that she was not listening. Abeer stepped in and concluded the negotiation by asking Ahad to turn it off. She marked and intensified her refusal by repeating her request to turn it off twice using an imperative. She further brought the interaction to an end by commenting on Suha's appearance saying, '*she is chic!*', and she did not have time to dress up like her. It seems that Suha did not like the compliment and redirected the focus to the offer by repeating her question about which lamp they meant. She appeared to show them that she did not know what they were talking about. However, her attempt was ignored and the discussion focused on complimenting her appearance (lines 10-12).

On interviewing, Ahad and Suha evaluated the offer as polite and appropriate, whereas Abeer as very polite and appropriate. When Suha and Abeer were asked about what they would do in such a situation, Abeer responded that she would turn it on and if the guests did not like it, they could ask for it to be turned off. Suha replied that she would just ask them whether they wanted the lamp on without elaboration. Ahad indicated that she was concerned for the comfort of her guests. If we imagine that Ahad had not offered to turn on the lamp, the ensuing interaction would not have been problematic. The absence of the offer would not have made the interaction impolite or rude. According to Fraser (1990: 233), people do not notice the presence of expected politeness norms, yet they do

notice their absence. Ahad's offer, especially in the manner that it was justified, seems to be a marked case of relational work.

It is very common for SA speakers to invoke God in their offers, which was found to be a very frequent behaviour among Arabs in general, e.g. Jordanians (Almutlaq, 2013: 228), Iraqis (Jasim, 2017: 303), and Egyptians (Morkus, 2009: 296). The following extract taken from the dinner sitting illustrates this notion. Yusra was telling her friends about an incident that had happened to her. She noticed that Lama and Inas had finished their shawarma sandwiches. She offered them another sandwich by simply attracting their attention and saying, '*By the way, girls*', with a rising intonation. She accompanied this with a non-verbal move by putting forward the available extra sandwiches (line 1).

**Extract 18 (Spontaneous, hospitable offer with a reoffering strategy)**

1. Yusra: *gumt gilt ʔana:-- . tara bana:t ?*  
           so said I . by the way girls?

*Yusra: So, I said --. By the way girls? ((She offers them extra shawarma sandwiches by raising them.))*

2. Lama: [*ʔana: jibaʕt*]. *ʔal-ħamdu-li-la:h*  
           [*I full*]. the-thank-to-God  
 Lama: [*I'm full*]. Thanks God.

3. Inas: [*la: fukran, wallah.*]  
           [no thanks, by God.]  
 Inas: [*No, thank you. By God*]

4. Yusra: *wallah wallah fi:h.*  
           by God by God there.  
*Yusra: There's more I swear to God, I swear to God.*

5. Inas: *la: fukran.*  
           no thanks.  
 Inas: *No thanks.*

6. Lama: *la: ((low voice.))*  
           no.  
 Lama: *No ((Low voice.))*

It seems that Yusra did not try to mitigate the threat to her face or use hedges to soften her offer (line 1). It also indicated that she considered her friends to be intimates and that they would not need to question her behaviour. This spontaneous offer was simultaneously refused twice: first by Lama in line 2 and second by Inas in line 3. Lama said that she was full and thanked God. Inas first stated her refusal directly, then she said the formulaic thanks, and lastly she invoked God. It seems that both speakers asserted their sincerity by invoking God

since invoking God among Arabs makes “others believe that what has been said is true” (Al-Issa, 2003: 594).

Despite Inas’s and Lama’s refusals, Yusra repeated her offer in line 4 when she said ‘*swear to God?*’ twice and emphatically maintained that there were more sandwiches. Hence, Yusra’s response aimed to assert her sincerity when she invoked God twice. It seemed that there was no room to question the sincerity of the offer. This reoffer was refused again by both addressees. First, Inas stated her refusal and thanked her. Second, Lama directly stated her refusal, saying ‘*No*’. It is obvious that Yusra attempted to make sure that her offer was heard by repeating it. She also wanted to make sure that their refusal was sincere. When she achieved her goal, the discussion was brought to an end. Her offer was evaluated as very polite and appropriate by Arwa and Lama, and Yusra evaluated it as being polite and part of showing proper hospitality. It is obvious that Yusra considered her behaviour as part of proper manners, whereas the responses of the other interactants’ indicated that Yusra’s offers were a marked case of relational work. It can be concluded that participants’ evaluations during the interviews showed a general tendency of speakers to downgrade the level of politeness of their own behaviours compared to the evaluations of other interactants of that behaviour.

### **6.2.2.2 Using more than one strategy**

Around thirteen verbal offers developed into complex exchanges using more than one strategy. Nine of them included both reoffering and elaboration strategies. The other four included either elaboration or reoffering sequences with embedded or collaborative strategies. Representative samples are investigated below.

In the following extract, an offer of information that involves reoffering and elaboration is provided. Suha was complaining about a problem she had regarding teeth whitening. This elicited a spontaneous offer from Ahad. She tried to offer information that might help solve Suha’s problem. She first ordered her to listen using an imperative and referred to her by name to get her attention, showing that what follows is addressed to her. The use of the name shows the intimacy between them. Edmondson (1981: 34) indicated that using a name can be seen as informal attention getting. She then asked about the desire of Suha to know the best solution for teeth whitening. She used exaggeration to make her offer look attractive to get attention, and maintaining that it is the best solution (line 1). However, although she gave the impression that Suha is the decision maker, she went on offering the information. This offer was supported by Nada’s agreement saying ‘*yeah*’ (line 2) which was intensified by repeating it.

**Extract 19 (Spontaneous, elaborated offer of information with a reoffering strategy)**

1. **Ahad:** *ʔismiʕ-i: Suha. tab-i:n ʔa-ʕʔ-i:k ʔil-ħal ʔil-ʔaħla:,*  
listen-F Suha. want-youF I-give-you the-solution the-best,  
*ʔaħla: ħal fi: ʔal-ħaja:h. saw-i: ʔil-qawa:lib tabaʕ*  
best solution in the-life. Make-F the-trays for  
[..] *ʔat- tabji:dʕ ʔal-manzili: =*  
[..] the-whitening the-house. =

**Ahad:** *Listen to me Suha. Do you want me to give you the best solution, the best solution in life? Make the trays for [..] home teeth whitening. =*

2. **Nada:** *[ʔa:h ʔa:h.]*  
*[yeah yeah.]*  
**Nada:** *[Yeah, yeah.]*

3. **Suha:** *ʔana: ʕindi:. ʔana: wif ʔa-gu:l-ik, ʔana:, ʔasna:n-i:*  
I have-I. I what I-say-you, I--, teeth-my  
*ʔa-sawi:-ha: taxajal-i:, tiʕrif-i:n ʔasna:n-ik lamma: tsʕi:r*  
I-make-it imagine-F, know-youF teeth-you when become  
*zaj ʔil-ʔa-, ʔil-ʔalam lamma: tiħtak fi: baʕdʕ-aha. 0*  
like the-a-, the-pain when grind in with-they.0

**Suha:** *I have it. What I told you. I--. Imagine I make my teeth. Do you know when your teeth become like, the pain when they grind with each other? 0*

4. **Ahad:** *ʔi:h tidr-i:n leʔʔ? ʔana: ba-ʔa-gu:l-ik fai. 0*  
yes know-youF why? I will-I-say-you thing. 0  
**Ahad:** *Yes, Do you know why? I'll tell you something.0*

5. **Suha:** *ʔana: ʔa-twaqqaʕ ʕind-i: ħasa:sijjah. 0*  
I I-think have-I allergy. 0  
**Suha:** *I think I have allergy. 0*

6. **Ahad:** *la: la: la: mihi:b ħasa:sijjah bas ʔa-ʕalm-ik. kam*  
no no no not allergy. But I-tell-you. How much  
*daraʒt-ik? kam ʔilli bi-l--*  
degree-your how much that in-I--  
**Ahad:** *No, no no. It is not allergy. But I'll tell you. What is its concentration percentage? What is-- ((Sound of side talk between Abeer and Nada))*

7. **Suha:** *madri wallah.*  
don't know by God.  
**Suha:** *I swear, I don't know. ((In a surprised tone.))*

8. **Ahad:** *la: la: ʔismiʕ-i:, gu:l-i: li kam bi-ʔal-mijah?*  
no no listen-F, tell-F to me how much the percentage  
*wa ʔana: ba-ʔa-ʕalm-ik kam tiħitʕ-i:n-ha:. 0*  
and I will-I-tell-you how much put-youF-it. 0  
**Ahad:** *No no. listen to me. Tell me how much its concentration percentage is, and I'll tell you how long you apply it. 0*

9. **Abeer:** *la: la: = ʔa-gu:l-ik-- 0*  
no no= I-tell-you-- 0

Abeer: No, no= I tell you --0

10. Ahad: *ʔiða:* *ka:n-at* -- 0  
if was-it 0

Ahad: *If it was--0*

11. Suha: *nis<sup>ʕ</sup>* *sa:ʕah* *ʔa-ħit<sup>ʕ</sup>-aha:*.  
half hour I-put-it.

Suha: *I apply it for half an hour.*

12. Abeer: *la:*.  
no

Abeer: *No.*

13. Ahad: *kam* *bi-ʔal-mijah?* *kam* *bi-ʔal-mijah?*  
how much the percentage? How much the percentage?

Ahad: *How much is its percentage? How much is its percentage?*

14. Suha: *ba-ʔa-fu:f* *ħij* *kam* *bi-ʔal-mijah.*  
will-I-see it how much the percentage.

Suha: *I'll check its percentage.*

15. Ahad: *fu:f-i:* *ʔiða:* *ka:n-at* *fəug* *ʔil- xamsah* *wa* *θala:θi:n*  
see-F if was-it above the-five and thirty  
*bi-ʔal-mijah.*  
the percentage.

Ahad: *See if it is above 35%.*

16. Abeer: *wallah* *Suha-- 0*  
by God Suha --0

Abeer: *By God Suha--0*

17. Ahad: *tara* *ħaði* *ʔil-ʔajja:ʔ*, *baʕde:n* *la:* *tiħit<sup>ʕ</sup>-i:n-ha:* *kil* *jəum=.*  
so this the-things, then no put-youF-it every day=.

Ahad: *Those things, then, don't apply them every day=.*

18. Suha: *ʔana:* *marrah* *bas.*  
I once only.

Suha: *I applied them only once.*

19. Ahad: *ħit<sup>ʕ</sup>-i:-ha:* *marrah* *waħdah* *fi:* *ʔil-ʔəsbu:ʕ*  
put-F-it once one in the-week

Ahad: *Apply it once a week.*

20. Suha: *jəum* *wa:ħid* *ħat<sup>ʕ</sup>-e:t-ha:* *ma:* *gidart* *min* *ʔal-ʔalam* *ʔilli:*  
day one put-I-it. No can from the-pain which  
*fi:* *ʔasna:ni:*  
in teeth-my.

Suha: *I applied it once but could not tolerate the pain of my teeth.*

21. Nada: *t<sup>ʕ</sup>abi:ʕi* *ʕafa:n-ik* *ʔawal* *marrah.* *bas* *baʕde:n*  
natural because-you first time. But later  
*tara* *ʔil--0*  
be the-- 0

*Nada: It is natural because it is the first time, but later the--0*

22. *Ahad: ʔi:h ʔi:h xala:s<sup>ʕ</sup>.*

yes yes finish

*Ahad: Yes, yes. It stops. ((Means the pain will vanish.))*

However, Ahad's offer to provide a solution for Suha's problem was refused indirectly by Suha. She first indicated that she had tried teeth whitening, and then explained her problem with the process. However, it seems that Ahad did not accept this refusal. She tried to offer more information by asking whether Suha knew the reason for her problem and then stating she would tell her something (presumably to help address the problem) (line 4). This attempt was latched by Suha providing what she thinks is the reason behind her problem. It seems that Suha did not like being told by Ahad what to do based on her reactions in lines 3 and 5. However, Ahad went on expanding her offer to convince Suha to listen (line 6). It seems that this attempt changed Suha's reaction as she admitted her lack of knowledge and invoked God (line 7). This was a turning point in the negotiation of this offer. It seems that Suha acknowledged Ahad's experience and knowledge in this matter. She started to listen and discuss the offered information. This was obvious when she ignored Abeer's attempt to interfere and participate in the negotiation (line 9) by latching onto Ahad's question. It seems that Ahad valued the information she had and latched onto Abeer's attempt to participate in the discussion by starting to provide more specific information. She intensified what she was offering by repeating her question twice (line 13). This was accepted by Suha as she provided answers to Ahad's questions and ignored Abeer's attempts to participate. They negotiated the offered information smoothly in several turns (13-22). Ahad's turns were regarded as supportive moves to her initiative offer, using expanders to provide more details. Ahad did not try to hedge her utterances; she used imperatives (e.g. *see; don't apply ..., apply it ...*).

In the interview Ahad's attempts at offering the information were evaluated as polite and appropriate. Abeer and Suha indicated that Ahad was trying to help. This belief was also shared by Ahad herself, who stated, "*I had the chance to keep quiet when she said her teeth are sensitive. Instead, because I have tried different concentration degrees, I would like her to benefit from my experience rather than quit teeth whitening. My aim was to help her benefit.*" Although it was obvious that Ahad's initial offer was negatively evaluated as impolite, which was obvious in Suha's latching onto Ahad's utterance, it seems that her further attempts are part of positively marked politic relational work. Her insistence in helping Suha was accepted and valued which was clear in Suha's cooperation in the negotiation, which was manifested in her answering Ahad's questions.



This variation in interactants' evaluation sheds light on two notions. First, it supports the claims of the discursive politeness approach that politeness evaluations are discursively constructed through an ongoing interaction; initial evaluations are not fixed. It appeared that participants' assessment of association rights and equity rights have been subject to discursive negotiation in this extract. It seems that Suha's perception of equity rights has changed in the process of the interaction unfolding as a result of Ahad's strong emphasis on association rights, i.e. insisting on reoffering and sharing her experience of teeth whitening to provide solutions. It seemed that the interactants had different perceptions of the components of sociality rights (i.e. equity and association) at the beginning of this offer exchange, and they discursively worked this out until they agreed on their shared rights and obligations in this context. Second, the judgments can be made on the basis of participants' interpretations of speaker's intentions. This contradicts the claims of discursive researchers that ascribing intentions to speakers to be polite or impolite are not components of politeness (e.g. Culpeper, 2010; Locher & Watts, 2005; Watts, 2003). However, it was obvious that this appears to be a key factor in the interactants' evaluations in this context. Suha modified her evaluation of Ahad's offer (providing a solution for Suha's problem with teeth whitening) based on the possibility that her intention was to sincerely help. Suha said, *"She was saying useful information to help me overcome my problem. Although I said my teeth are sensitive, she explained more to clarify the topic and convince me to give teeth whitening a second try."*

The following extract exemplifies an offer of a turn of speech<sup>98</sup> in which embedding and reoffering took place. There was some silence for about six seconds then both Faten and Sally started to talk simultaneously (lines 2 & 3). The offer occurred because one of them was expected to stop talking.

**Extract 20 (Spontaneous turn of speech offer with reoffering and embedded strategies)**

1. ...

2. *Faten:* [ʕala: ʔat<sup>ʕ</sup>-t<sup>ʕ</sup>a:ri:]  
[by the-way]

*Faten:* [By the way]

3. *Sally:* [ʕala: ʔat<sup>ʕ</sup>-t<sup>ʕ</sup>a:ri:] ba-ʔs-- @@@  
[by the-way] will-I-as-- @@

*Sally:* [By the way] I will as -- @@@

---

<sup>98</sup> This type of offer occurred in both the SA and BE data; however, it was simple with an acceptance response in the BE and complex in the SA.

4. *Everybody: @@@@*

5. *Faten: @@@ gu:l-i: bi- @@*  
       @@@ say-F b-@@  
*Faten: @@@ Go ahead b- @@*

6. *Sally: gu:l-i: jallah gu:l-i:.*  
       say-F come on say-F  
*Sally: Go ahead, come on, talk.*

7. *Faten: <@ la: la: gu:l-i: xala:s<sup>ɸ</sup> ʔant-i. @>*  
       <@ no no say-F finish you-F. @>  
*Faten: <@No, no, you go ahead. It is final. @>*

8. *Sally: ba-ʔa-sʔal-kum bas ʔant-um la: tugu:l-u:n lissa: li Nada.*  
       will-I-ask-youPI just you-PI no say-youPI not yet to Nada  
*lissa: jaʕni: ʔum-i: bi-tsawi: ʕazi:mah li wif ʔism-ah*  
       not yet mean. mother-my will-make party for what name-it  
*li-zoʕat Majid.*  
       for-wife Majid.

*Sally: I want to ask you, but don't tell Nada. Not yet, I mean. My mom is throwing a party for, umm Majid's wife.*

9. *Inas: ʔi:h.*  
       yeah.  
*Inas: Yeah.*

In ordinary talk, no one would allocate turns in advance, i.e. say you will speak first, then I'll speak second and X third etc.; rather the floor of turns is constantly negotiated and renegotiated as talk goes on (Archer, Aijmer, & Wichmann, 2012: 66; Cameron, 2001: 90; Edmondson, 1981: 41). This continual negotiation is an essential feature of the organization of natural conversation. According to CA, if the current speaker does not select the next speaker, the option is that one of the other speakers selects herself to start speaking. This is called “self-selection” by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974: 703).<sup>99</sup> When this option is activated, simultaneous speech could occur if more than one speaker self-selects at the same time. However, the normal pattern is that this situation has to be resolved, i.e. one of the self-selectors continues to hold the floor while the other “drops out” (Cameron, 2001: 91). Thus, offering the other the right to continue is essential due to the awkward situation of participants in the exchange talking simultaneously. However, the laughter in line 4 defused the potential problem. It is impossible for them to continue their talk simultaneously as they were addressing each other. Thus, one had to stop. Since Faten and Sally both offered each other the floor to talk, this falls within the expected unmarked behaviour because it is one of the turn-allocation options (Sacks et al., 1974: 703). However,

<sup>99</sup> Rules for the allocation of next turn in CA were discussed in Chapter 2.

in the above extract, both speakers offered that the other should take the turn, which created a complex situation. It seems that both of them wanted to display a good image of herself as being polite. They both used a direct strategy with no hedges: an imperative structure that strengthened the illocutionary force as well as their sincerity in offering. Sally added a persuasive phrase, saying ‘*come on*’, to convince Faten to accept her offer. It was essential that one of them had to withdraw her offer and accept the other’s offer. Faten stated and intensified her refusal by repeating the word ‘*no*’ twice (Abdel-Jawad, 2000; 228-229) and then reoffered the turn to speak by repeating exactly the same phrase, yet she intensified her offer by stating that it was non-negotiable. In this way, she showed that her offer was not negotiable and Sally’s response would not affect her decision. This was accepted by Sally as she started talking in line 8. Sally’s and Faten’s offers can be explained by the ordered set of rules for the allocation of the next turn suggested by Sacks et al. (1974).

During the interview, the first offer by each speaker was evaluated as very polite by Wa’ad and Faten. It was also regarded as polite by Sally, yet she considered the second offer by Faten as very polite. Faten added that, “*It was ok that Sally did not try to reoffer since the conversation has to go on.*” It seems that both offers fall within expectations of adequate behaviour, yet Faten’s reoffer in the manner used is regarded as positively marked politic behaviour since it saved that interaction from being atypical and hence inappropriate.

### **6.3 Summary**

These examples have provided evidence that the hostess did not mind being served by her guests, and her friends did not mind performing the duties of the hostess and acting as if they were at their own homes. This type of behaviour is typical in SA female friendship groups in this study. The gatherings of these friends are characterized by cooperative conjoint hospitality. It can be said that Fukushima's (2013: 19, 2015: 271) attentiveness and Spencer-Oatey's (2000: 14) association rights govern most of the offering behaviour among the SA friends in this study. For instance, most solicited offers seemed to be evaluated as polite because the speaker demonstrated attentiveness towards the explicit needs of an addressee.

The norm governing the offering interactions was that you continue to offer Arabic coffee or tea to your guests until they state their refusal. In this case, the offerer either accepts the refusal and the exchange is brought to closure or repeats the offer and generates a complex offer exchange. This behaviour may be perceived as part of the register used. It seems that what is perceived to be appropriate or politic behaviour among the ten friends is that the speaker must not insist on

offerings in informal and intimate situations. In fact, if they insist on reoffering, their behaviour could be considered as inappropriate and evaluated negatively as being over-polite. It seems that whenever a speaker invokes God, the sincerity condition is not under question.

Offering, acceptance, and refusal may be accomplished non-verbally. For example, according to Saudi norms when a guest places her hand on top of her cup this indicates her refusal to have more coffee; a guest taking her cup after coffee has been poured into it by the hostess shows her acceptance of having coffee. It was clear that it would be viewed as inappropriate to stop the talk to show hospitality or delay hosting duties or responses until silence occurred. Non-verbal communication was seen as the best solution in this case. It helps in managing the social atmosphere among friends. It seems that managing a friendly rapport takes precedence over performing hospitality verbally. Moreover, non-verbal offers were like verbal ones as both have the possibility to pass unnoticed, generate complex negotiation, get positive or negative reaction, and enhance or threaten interactants' face. Non-verbal moves can also form a complete complex exchange on their own without any supportive verbal ones. Moreover, non-verbal and verbal moves may be used together, which would increase the sincerity of the acts and strengthen their illocutionary force.

There was not much effort invested in negotiating offers unless they were refused or negatively evaluated. The absence of the second adjacency pair part was often interpreted as acceptance rather than implying rejection (Sections 6.1.1.1 & 6.2.1.1) as suggested in CA research (e.g. Liddicoat, 2011: 147). This was supported during interviews as most participants indicated that if the offeree does not want the offer, she would refuse. Thus, silence may often imply acceptance. The analysis showed that offers not only have refusal or acceptance responses; partial acceptance and refusals may also occur. For instance, someone refuses to be served as a formal guest, yet does not refuse to have more coffee.

Interactants' evaluations of a given behaviour are discursively constructed through an ongoing interaction. This construction may be altered or modified at any stage of the interaction. It appears that people are aware that norms are in continuous flux and vary from one situation to another. Depending on the situation, offers may enhance or threaten speakers' faces and/or addressees' faces. The analysis showed that when people behave in a way that acknowledges others' efforts, faces of both interlocutors may be enhanced. This is seen as marked politeness. For instance, when compliments accompany an acceptance, this usually increases the perception of politeness (Haugh, 2007a: 88). The analysis showed that appropriateness does not always entail politeness, whereas

politeness entails appropriateness. Thus, we can say that appropriateness is broader than politeness.

Variability in evaluations was found. Moreover, there was some degree of inconsistency between participants' evaluative reactions during the ongoing interaction and their evaluations during interviews. The absence of an evaluative reaction does not always imply that it is unmarked. Moreover, addressees' reactions are based on their interpretations of speakers' intentions besides other factors identified by discursive researchers, such as norms and experiences in similar contexts. However, there is no guarantee that addressees' interpretation would reflect the real intentions of speakers.

Moreover, what was striking in the analysis was that despite the variability in participants' evaluations, participants may provide similar justifications. This provided evidence that they unconsciously follow certain norms in their behaviours and evaluations, even if they do not categorise (im)politeness levels in the same way. Lastly, it was found that participants' evaluations during the interviews showed a general tendency to downgrade the level of politeness of their own behaviours compared to the evaluations of other interactants of these behaviours.

Finally, it was found that the relational work provides a useful model that can classify behaviours into categories based on politeness evaluations. However, it cannot provide sufficient explanation for the occurrence of such behaviours or the evaluations. Support by other models such as rapport management or the concept of attentiveness was needed. A revised framework for relational work will be provided in Chapter 9.

## **Chapter 7 Discursive Analysis of BE Offer Exchanges**

This chapter extends the data analysis presented in Chapter 6, which provided a discursive analysis of SA offers. It focuses on exploring how offering behaviour in BE female friendship groups was manifested within the relational work framework. To provide a comparable analysis of offers by SA and BE female friends, this chapter uses parallel headings to those employed in the previous chapter. It is first divided into two main sections: non-verbal offers (Section 7.1) and verbal offers (Section 7.2), and each section includes two sub-categories according to the degree of complexity of the offer exchanges, i.e. simple and complex. Each sub-section explores representative samples of offer exchanges. The samples were selected in order to present the most common offering behaviour, situations of offering that challenge the relational work framework, or offers with characteristics that had not been discussed previously, such as those with unclear responses or partial acceptance responses. Insights from the interviews and SRQ are included since participants' evaluations are the focus of the discursive approach to politeness. Both interviews and SRQ may help in understanding how participants evaluate a given action. Finally, the chapter ends with a summary of its main findings.

### **7.1 Non-verbal offers**

This section aims to identify any characteristics that can be attributed to non-verbal politeness, an area that has been neglected in the literature. The analysis first explores some simple offer exchanges that were accomplished non-verbally (Section 7.1.1). It then analyses representative samples of complex offer exchanges that were initiated non-verbally (Section 7.1.2).

#### **7.1.1 Simple offers**

The following section presents a discursive analysis of representative samples of some simple offer exchanges from the BE data. The extracts were carefully selected to address the different patterns found in offering behaviour as occurring in natural conversations.

##### **7.1.1.1 Simple offers without a response**

Twelve non-verbal offers were not followed by an immediate response, which was either delayed or absent. Three were offers of assistance, whereas the others were hospitable offers made while the participants were talking about other

topics. All of them were spontaneous. None of them were solicited by previous context. An analysis of a sample of each category is provided below.

Extract 21 presents two non-verbal offers of assistance in which one of the guests assisted the hostess in her duties. It took place between Clara and Gail (guests) and Alice (hostess).

### Extract 21 (Spontaneous offer of assistance with no response)

1. Alice: *-is, is obviously the, the hilarious, um-- where is it? "I was-- I was,*
2. *um, slagging off--,*
3. **((Clara removes her plate and cutlery to clear her place.))**
4. Alice: *um-- I was slagging off my job, blah-blah-blah-blah--"*
5. Clara: *Slagging off doesn't [sound X ]*
6. Alice: *@@@@.*
7. Gail: *[This is why--] this is why iMessage is so rubbish,*
8. *cause they're-- 0*
9. Alice: *"By the way, is that you in bed for The Assistant Room picture?"*
10. **((Clara clears the table for Gail.))**
11. Clara: *No. In bed?*
12. Alice: *Yeah, there's, there's, there's a picture of-- in The Assistant Room*
13. *of someone just having a coffee, like, in bed.*
14. Clara: *Oh, OK.*
15. Alice: *And she's just like, "Is that you?"*
16. *((Deleted part for around one minute))*
17. *@@@*
18. Gail: *It was very X.*
19. Alice: *@@@. OK. Great. So that's --,[ that's -- ]*
20. Gail: *[X] prospects eventually.*
21. Clara: *Sorry.<sup>100</sup> ((She wants to get up in order to take the plates to the kitchen))*
22. Alice: *OK, I'll get these.. Um I'll um, get the puddings.*

The women had finished their meal some time previously, and they were talking. While Alice was telling the women about a message she got from someone, Clara cleared the table by collecting her and Gail's plates and cutlery (lines 3 & 10). These actions were seen as offers of assistance by Clara during the interview.<sup>101</sup> She said, *"Non-verbal offerings to help clear the table, without asking. It is direct assistance, not asked for yet."* The offers were considered spontaneous as no one asked her for help. Doing something for someone before or without being asked is a non-verbal manifestation of attentiveness (Fukushima, 2015: 271). However, there was not any reaction to this attentiveness. It is obvious that the offers did not affect the ongoing interaction in any way. It seems that the

<sup>100</sup> The apology, 'sorry', was a request for Gail to move in order to enable Clara to go to the kitchen. It was not part of the offer to take the plates to the kitchen.

<sup>101</sup> Clara was the only interactant who responded and completed the interview and SRQ in her group (see Section 4.5).

interactants' attention was directed to Alice's talk, which was also evidenced in Clara's commenting on the talk (lines 5, 11, 14) while performing her offers. Performing the offers non-verbally and the absence of a response might be intended to enable the interaction to move on smoothly. That Alice did not respond to the offer may indicate her acceptance, based on several clues. First, if Alice wanted to refuse, she would react to express or imply her refusal. This was obvious when Clara stood to take the plates to the kitchen a minute later (line 21).<sup>102</sup> Alice immediately refused by taking the plates from Clara saying she would take them to the kitchen (line 22). Second, she did not seem to mind being helped by Clara or Gail as there were other instances in which the guests performed some of the hosting duties.<sup>103</sup> It seems that Clara's offers to assist Alice in her hosting duties (lines 3 & 10) were seen as part of the unmarked politic behaviour in this group. Thus, they passed unnoticed. However, the offers were evaluated as polite and appropriate on the SRQ. Clara indicated that "*I see it as polite<sup>104</sup> to help the host clear the table after a meal*". The reactions in the real context suggest that the offer is seen as unmarked, but the interview indicates that this participant saw it as marked although it was not made evident in the talk. This shows inconsistency between the participants' reactions during the live interaction and their evaluations during the interviews, an issue discussed in detail in Chapter 8. Although Clara's action is classified as bald on record, which is potentially the most face threatening strategy following Brown and Levinson's model (1987), it was obvious from both the absence of negative reactions during the interaction as well as the evaluations during the interviews that it was not face-threatening. It seems that the interactants placed more importance on association rights than equity rights.

The second extract exemplifies a hospitable non-verbal offer in which the response was absent. It took place between Elsa (hostess) and her guests (Helen and Janet). Elsa had served the main course to her guests. Janet was talking about a theme park she had visited with her friend. The friends engaged in the

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<sup>102</sup> This action was considered another offer (i.e. taking the plates to the kitchen) since the plates were left on the table for around one minute after collecting them. In addition, the reaction to this offer was different from the ones in lines 3 and 10.

<sup>103</sup> Such behaviour occurred around eight times in this group of BE friends. However, it was not detected in the other British groups. This shows that norms of appropriate behaviour differ from one friendship group to another and generalizations about entire cultural groups must be treated with caution.

<sup>104</sup> I shall highlight that the participants rely on their understanding of the term "polite", and I cannot be sure whether their understanding is like the technical one used by linguists as I have not provided any definitions of the term to them (see Section 8.2.1.7 for more discussion).



talk enthusiastically (lines 1-18), while Elsa was heating the chips in the microwave (lines 1 & 13).

**Extract 22 (Spontaneous, hospitable offer with no response)**

1. *[[((Elsa heats the chips in the microwave.))]]*
2. *Janet: And have [your mugshot] done as though you were wanted. Like an*
3. *[[undesirable.]]*
4. *Helen: [Have your mug-] [[aah=.]]*
5. *Elsa: And there's snitches that you look out for.*
6. *Janet: Um.*
7. *Elsa: So they've got little snitches around, and there's-- I think you have to*
8. *try and spot them and there's things like that you can do.*
9. *Helen: Nice.*
10. *Janet: And you get to go on the broomstick in front of the green screen.*
11. *Helen: Um.*
12. *Elsa: And you can go in the car as well, [can't you?]*
13. *[[((Elsa takes the chips out of the microwave.))]]*
14. *Janet: [And go in the car,] yeah. They've*
15. *got Privet Drive open at the moment. You can see inside it.*
16. *Helen: Nice=.*
17. *Janet: But I really wanted to go at Christmas because I absolutely love*
18. *Christmas.*
19. ***[[((Elsa places the chips on the table and sits in her seat.))]]***
20. *Janet: And I wanted to go when they've got an event on. Either like*
21. *Halloween or Christmas or-- 0*
22. *Elsa: They do it at Christmas, I think. 0*
23. *Janet: Something like that where it's like, more magical.*

After taking the chips out of the microwave, Elsa placed the plate on the dining table and sat down to eat her main course (line 19). By putting down the chips on the table, she implied that she offered the food to her guests and would like them to accept her offer and eat the chips (Haugh, 2007a: 88). There was not any reaction to the offer, either verbally or non-verbally. The women continued their meal and talk about the Harry Potter theme park. It seems that the offer of chips was not considered salient; their main attention was directed to the talk. If we imagine that Elsa did not serve the chips, the interaction would not have been affected in any way. It is a side dish, and the guests had not known that it would be served with the dinner. It seems that it was an extra thing to be served; however, it was not evaluated as something special. In the interviews, the offer was evaluated as polite and appropriate since Elsa avoided interrupting the talk. It seems that interruption is taken as an inappropriate action even if it means performing hospitable offers non-verbally, especially offers related to extra services rather than the main drinks or dishes. The interactants' reactions suggest that the offer should be considered as unmarked politic behaviour. Although a few minutes later the guests helped themselves to some chips, it was

ignored in the immediate context because interrupting the discussion to address this offer would likely render the interaction inappropriate. The absence of an immediate response was a sign of implicit agreement.

The third extract exemplifies a non-verbal offer with a delayed non-verbal response. The women were having their starter, which was salad. Elsa had placed some dips and bread in the middle of the table before she served the salad. After a while, Elsa noticed that none of the women had helped themselves to any bread or dip. She pushed the plate of bread closer to the women so they could have some (line 9) while they were chatting about babies teething.

**Extract 23 (Spontaneous, hospitable offer with no immediate response)**

1. *Helen: It's like last week, she ha- started getting right sneezy, and really*
2. *runny nose.0*
3. *Elsa: Um*
4. *Helen: And I'm thinking, Oh, she's coming down with a cold, and lady*
5. *turned around and said, "Oh, she's probably just teething." 0*
6. *Elsa: Aha.0*
7. *Helen: Apparently, everything is a sign of teething.*
8. *Janet: Apparently, really bad, [like rubbing behind their ears, like that,]*
9. ***[[Elsa moves the bread plate closer to the women, so they can help themselves to it more easily.]]***
10. *Janet: and having like a hot head is a sign of-- because Ann's first child*
11. *was completely different to her second child.*
12. *Helen: Aha.*
13. *Janet: And he sat there for weeks rubbing, going like this, and rubbing. And*
14. *she thought that he had like a skin allergy.*
15. *((Helen scoops Hummus and takes bread))*
16. *Elsa: Yeah. 0*
17. *Janet: And it wasn't. It was because all the- the jaw and everything was*
18. *sore so he just kept rubbing.*
19. *Helen: Well, that makes a lot of sense because the last few days she's*
20. *really been going for her ears.*
21. *Elsa: Um.*
22. *Helen: So, I bet that's it. I never thought.*
23. *Elsa: Yeah.*
24. *Janet: Yeah.*
25. *Helen: But yeah, the amount of things that-- it's teething and you don't*
26. *realize that it's teething.*
27. *[[Janet scoops some Hummus and takes bread.]]*
28. *Elsa: Don't kn--*
29. *X: Yeah.*
30. *...*
31. *Janet: One of my wisdom teeth decided to move the other day and I felt so*
32. *sorry for myself.*
33. *((Elsa scoops some Hummus and takes bread))*
34. *Elsa: Oh*
35. *Janet: I took myself to my bed last Sunday. I was just not having it.*
36. *...*

Elsa's action was considered an offer to take some bread even though it was already placed on the table. There was no immediate reaction to this offer. The women were busy discussing Helen's baby teething (lines 10-14). When Helen finished her contribution, she took some hummus and bread (line 15) while listening to Janet's utterance. Moreover, Janet took some hummus and bread (line 27) while they were still discussing the same topic (lines 16- 26). It seems that their roles as friends are more important than their roles as hostess and guests. According to CA research, preferred actions (i.e. acceptance of offers) are often performed directly with no or little delay and without hesitation or elaboration (Cameron, 2001: 97; Geyer, 2008: 36). The delay of the acceptance to this offer provides several possible inferences. First, it could be due to the fact that their attention was directed to the talk itself. Second, they were not ready or did not want to have bread at that moment. Third, whether or not Elsa moved the bread closer to them as a sign of offering did not affect their decision to have bread since they took hummus without the act of offering. In other words, the bread and hummus had been placed on the table in front of them a few minutes ago; thus, if they wanted, they could have had some. In addition, it seems that Elsa did not want to have some bread and hummus before her guests, so she moved the bread closer to them either to attract their attention to its existence or because she felt it was too far from them. She, indeed, took some after the guests had served themselves (line 33). Since the guests did not respond to the offer immediately and waited for a while before taking some bread, the offer was coded as simple with no second pair part. If we imagine that they did not take any bread, Elsa might have accepted that, or she might have produced another attempt later in a different and separate context, for instance, when she served the main course. Such an attempt would not be considered reoffering since a long interval (i.e. discussing several topics) would separate it from the first offer. As a result, this would not affect how the current offer is coded or evaluated.

When the participants were interviewed, the offer was evaluated as neither polite nor impolite and appropriate by Helen and polite and appropriate by Elsa. Helen indicated that it was the normal thing to do. Elsa stated, "*I was offering them the bread. I just sit there and then feel like they couldn't take it. But at the same time, there was a conversation going on.*" It seems that Elsa's intention was to avoid interrupting the conversation; i.e. she produced a non-verbal offer *because* there was a conversation going on. Elsa's action might fall within unmarked politic behaviour since there were no evaluative reactions to it.

The above extracts show that offers could be taken up non-verbally, and the response may neither follow the offer immediately nor be addressed to the offerer. Although both were coded as offers with no immediate response, it is

important to note that Extract 22 and Extract 23 differ in that there was a long interval between the offer and the non-verbal response (i.e. taking some chips) in the first one, whereas in the latter the non-verbal response was a few seconds after the action of the offer.

### 7.1.1.2 Simple offers with response

This section presents three extracts that include simple non-verbal offers that were accepted verbally, non-verbally, or both. As detailed in Chapter 5, no non-verbal offers were refused. Besides showing different response types, the three extracts were chosen to address a variety of situations. Extract 24 illustrates a solicited hospitable offer; Extract 25 involves spontaneous hospitable offers; and Extract 26 illustrates offers that aim to involve the other interactants in the ongoing talk.

Extract 24 took place between Susan (hostess) and Rachel (guest). Susan had placed hummus and other dips on the table earlier. The women were talking about Flora's holidays (lines 1-6). Rachel wanted to have some hummus (line 7), so she reached out to get some. Susan moved the plate of hummus closer to Rachel when she noticed this (line 8).

#### Extract 24 (Solicited, hospitable offer)

1. Susan: *Did you have a holiday this year?*
2. Flora: *Yeah*
3. Hilary: *@@@*
4. Flora: *I just got really knackered in like--*
5. Susan: *Fair enough.*
6. Flora: *in a couple of weeks.*
7. *((Rachel reaches over to get some hummus.))*
8. ***((Susan passes the hummus to Rachel))***
9. Rachel: *[Thanks.] ((Rachel takes some hummus.))*
10. Susan: *[Sorry.]*
11. ..
12. Rachel: *Peter said you went for a massage.*
13. Susan: *I did=. @@@*
14. Rachel: *<@ Nice= @>*

It seems that Susan wanted to make things easier for Rachel. It was a thoughtful move but unnecessary as the hummus was not out of Rachel's reach. Therefore, the offer was coded as a hospitable offer rather than an offer of assistance although the offer made it easier for Rachel to get some hummus. This non-verbal offer was appreciated and accepted by Rachel. She gave a formulaic thanks, then she took some hummus (line 9). The appreciation verbalized her acceptance which was apparent in her action too. Meanwhile, Susan apologized to Flora as her action caused her to shift her attention to Rachel rather than maintaining her

focus on Flora's talk. It seems that Susan thought that her offer had caused a hiatus in the ongoing talk. The apology shows that not giving full attention to the speaker is considered impolite, and this was obvious in her avoidance of performing a verbal offer. The apology was followed with a pause (line 11), then Rachel started a new topic, i.e. Susan having had a massage. The pause can be interpreted in two ways. First, Flora may have already finished her utterance and Susan's action did not cause a break in her talk. Second, Flora was affected negatively; hence, she might not want to continue her talk since Susan had not given her full attention, or she might just have lost the thread of what she was saying. Moreover, it seems that Susan's offer in this manner and the following apology signifies three things. First, it displays good management of hospitality as she was attentive to her guests' needs. Second, it assists Rachel in getting what she wanted more easily. Third, it shows that Susan was aware that there was something else needing her attention (i.e. attending to Flora's talk) besides her hosting duties. It shows her trying to manage conflicts in requirements – being a good host and being a good talking partner. It seems that managing appropriate association rights was Susan's concern in this extract. Thus, it appears enhancing to Susan's face.

Susan's offer was evaluated differently by the participants during the interview. Susan considered it as very polite and appropriate, Flora as polite and appropriate, and Rachel as neither polite nor impolite and appropriate. It is noticed that the speaker (i.e. Susan) evaluated her offer as more polite than the others did. It seems that Rachel downgraded the offer to show that she did not need Susan's help. It seems she did not consider it a requirement of good hospitality although she indicated that she would do the same. Flora also stated that she would do the same, but she might get herself some first. It might be that the offer is politic and therefore just expectable. Susan said that, "*Rachel reached for the hummus, so it is polite to notice that and then pass the hummus to her.*" The participants' reactions during the interview varied, which supports the claim regarding the variability of politeness evaluations. This discrepancy in participants' evaluations can be linked to Locher and Watts' (2005: 30) claim that there is no guarantee that the level of relational work a speaker invests in his/her behaviour will be perceived exactly in that way by the addressee; additionally, how the addressee perceives the speech act would also be considered more significant. However, Rachel's response during the interview is different from her immediate reaction. Her reaction suggests that she perceived the offer as positively marked since she explicitly stated her thanks. This in turn questions the validity and reliability of metalinguistic evaluations of politeness. Holmes and Schnurr (2005: 122) indicated that it is usually difficult to be sure about the

understanding of (im)politeness of particular utterances, even for members of the given COP. This issue was also found in the SA data. Whether the immediate reaction responses or the participants' responses during an interview should be given more weight in analysing politeness is an issue that needs further investigation, since what they say later may not align with what they did at that time (this will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 8).

The following extract shows a spontaneous hospitable offer that receives appreciation and complimenting behaviour. The women had their drinks and were talking about baby food. Elsa (hostess) was dishing up the starter, which was salad, on plates to serve it. She served the salad to the guests non-verbally (lines 10 & 13).

### Extract 25 (Spontaneous, hospitable offer)

1. *Helen: No, no you make it with um.. You either make it with .. whole milk,*
2. *or you can make it with .. the formula milk.*
3. *Janet: Oh, yeah. Because they sa- they used to say that, babies shouldn't*
4. *have milk, didn't they? Whereas now it's not the same advice as-- 0*
5. *Helen: No. she-- 0*
6. *Janet: Is honey still the same?*
7. *Helen: Honey's still the same. They can't have honey until they're one. 0*
8. *Janet: Yeah. 0*
9. *Helen: [and They can't have--]*
10. ***[[Elsa serves a plate of salad to Janet by placing it on the table.]]***
11. *Janet: [[Thank you very much]]. Mmm= ((complimenting tone/ she expresses her admiration to the salad.))*
12. *Elsa: [[Do-- ]]*
13. ***[[Elsa serves a salad plate to Helen by trying to place it on the table.]]***
14. *Helen: <F Yeah= F>, ((She takes it from her hand.)), that's fine. 0*
15. *Elsa: We'll do this and then I'll-- ((low voice))*
16. *Helen: Yeah=. Thank you very much. ((low voice))*
17. *ah--*
18. *Janet: That's delicious. ((low voice))*
19. *Helen: Umm=*
20. *[..]*
21. ***[[Elsa sits on her chair, and they all eat.]]***
22. *Elsa: So she- what? She won't --*
23. *((They continued their topic.))*

Elsa's offer to Janet was simultaneous with Helen's utterance 'and they can't have'. It seems that she chose to make the offer non-verbally to avoid interrupting the talk and delaying serving the salad until a moment of silence occurred. Since her guests saw that the salad was ready, it may have seemed inappropriate to wait for them to stop talking in order to serve it. If she waited, it may have been considered rude since it may imply that they are talking too much and should stop as the main business of these interactions was to talk rather than to perform

transactional actions (i.e. performing hospitality offers). The offer was appreciated immediately by Janet. She first uttered a formulaic thanks and then added an intensifier *'very much'* (line 11). She further used a *non-lexical appreciation response*<sup>105</sup> *'Mmm'* in an astonished tone, which may imply that she liked the salad. It seems that she positively liked what had been offered. Meanwhile, Elsa tried to say something but her utterance was truncated. She might have stopped because her attempt overlapped with Janet's appreciation. Whether she wanted to comment on the topic, respond to Janet's appreciation, request something, or offer the salad verbally to Helen was not clear. In line 13, Elsa served a plate of salad to Helen by trying to place it on the table in front of her. This offer was accepted both verbally and non-verbally by Helen. She first uttered the positive agreement in a loud voice, saying *'yeah'*, and she took the plate before Elsa could put it down, saying *'that's fine'* (line 14). It seems that she intended to minimize the threat of her action to Elsa. Helen's action could be perceived as impolite since she did not let Elsa complete what she was doing. Saying *'that's fine'* might show that she was orientating to the potential imposition signalled by taking the plate directly from Elsa. This possible interpretation may be apparent in Elsa's reaction when she latched onto Helen's utterance, indicating that they would start with this then they would have the main course (line 15). This was truncated by a lengthening agreement followed by extreme appreciation by Helen and a non-lexical appreciation response *'Mmm'*. The lengthening and intensification showed sincerity in her acceptance and appreciation of the food offered. This was followed by Janet's direct compliment about the salad's flavour in line 18, saying *'that's delicious'*, which is in turn followed by Helen's minimal response, *'Umm'*, indicating her agreement with Janet's compliment;<sup>106</sup> thus, it can be said that Helen added some intensification to the compliment. This was followed by Elsa taking her seat and shifting the focus of discussion to the topic they had been discussing previously. Elsa's action brought the offering and complimenting exchange to a closure.

When interviewed, the offer was evaluated as neither polite nor impolite and appropriate by Helen and polite and appropriate by Elsa. Helen thought that it was the normal thing to be done; *she said "I would do the same thing. To me it is*

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<sup>105</sup> This term is used in the study to refer to a vocalized sound that has little or no referential meaning but verbalizes the listener's admiration of something.

<sup>106</sup> The minimal response *'um'* is considered a brief acknowledgment of another speaker (MacCarthy, Matthiessen, & Slade, 2010: 58).

*the normal thing to do*".<sup>107</sup> Elsa believed that since she did not use any words she regarded it as only polite; *"I placed them so they were available for them but I didn't specifically give further instructions or I would have said it was very polite if I just said something or did more of that when I was offering it to them."* It seems that non-verbal offers are not preferred since they do not take into account the addressee's autonomy rights. They may imply a high degree of imposition. This goes in line with the general stereotypical assumption that Western cultures are more oriented to negative face (e.g. O'Driscoll, 1996: 25). The participants' appreciation and complimenting indicated that the offers were perceived as positively marked politic/polite behaviour although their responses in the interviews made it look less polite. Moreover, the offers were evaluated as less polite by the addressee than the speaker did during the interview. It seems that there is a tendency towards underrating the offers of others and to overvalue one's own offer during interviews. This might be why we all think we are 'polite' and often evaluate others as 'impolite'. This issue will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 8.

The following extract is taken from the pilot data. It is provided since it includes a unique case of offering, although it is not included in the quantitative data presented in Chapter 5. The offers were socially oriented, by which I mean that the aim was to engage all the participants in the discussion rather than just providing a service or an item. The offers were directed to maintain solidarity among friends. Moreover, what has been offered does not belong to the performers of the offers; it belongs to their friend (i.e. one of the participants).

The friends (Ann, Emily, and Ruby) were discussing Yara's love for cats. Ann told the others that her friend had texted her an image of an outfit, suggesting that she bought it, yet when she actually saw the outfit, she indicated that Yara should be the one to get it (line 2).

#### **Extract 26 (Spontaneous offer of involvement in the talk)**

1. *Ann: My friend sent me this yesterday, she was like you have to buy this,*
2. *and I got no, Yara has to buy this.*
3. *Yara: [What is it?]*
4. *Emily: [What is it?]*
5. *Ann: It is loading. ((She is holding her phone waiting for the picture to be loaded.))*

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<sup>107</sup> Although Helen provided the same pattern of categorization in Extract 23, the two situations were analysed differently for two reasons. First, the offers were not similar. The offer was addressed to the group and the bread was placed on the table in Extract 23, but the salad was offered individually in Extract 25. Second, the immediate reactions were different in the two extracts. There was no immediate response in Extract 23, but the addressees appreciated the offers in Extract 25.



6. Yara: *Is it cat related?*
7. Ann: *It is very much cat related*
8. Yara: *Yes. ((with excitement tone))*
9. Emily: *Do you like cats, Yara?*
10. @@@@
11. Yara: *I don't know, I think they are alright.*
12. @@@
13. Ann: *It is a cat outfit.*
14. Yara: *Ha! Wow= Oh my god. Yes. I actually need it. ((She gets the phone))*
15. Oh my god it is from H&M.
16. **((Yara hands the phone to Emily.))**
17. Emily: *That's shorts.*
18. Yara: *It's a pyjamas too*
19. **((Emily hands the phone to Ruby.))**
20. Ruby: *The top is amazing.*
21. Yara: *That is so cool= ((Yara got the phone back.))*
22. Ann: *The colours as well.*
23. Emily: *Yeah.*
24. Yara: *I need this.*
25. Ann: *I saw it in H&M at the weekend, so definitely got it in.*
26. Yara: *They got it in this country as well?*
27. Ann: *Yeah in this country yeah.*
28. Yara: *Was it in the big one.*
29. Ann: *It was in York.*
30. Yara: *I really do need that.*

Ann's comment was followed by an overlapping question in an enthusiastic tone by both Yara and Emily, who wanted to know what the outfit was (lines 3 & 4). As is evidenced by the exchange between Emily and Yara in lines 9-12, Yara is known to like cats a lot and wondered if the outfit was cat related (line 6). When Ann replied with yes, Yara got more excited, as is evident in her overwhelming reaction in line 8. Her excitement when she saw the outfit might have made the other women curious to see the outfit, although this was not expressed. They did not ask to see it or bend over to look at the phone. Yara offered to show Emily the outfit by handing Ann's phone to her (line 16), but her offer was not accompanied by any verbal action. Furthermore, Emily did not show any particular reaction; she simply accepted the phone non-verbally and immediately commented on the outfit. Her response did not show any appreciation.

Emily's response to Yara's offer indicated that she perceived it as unmarked politic behaviour. It seems that the offer did not affect the interaction and was part of politic behaviour in order to ensure that everybody was involved in the conversation. Yet if we imagine Yara not showing Emily the outfit, such behaviour would have been considered inappropriate and rude as it might have demonstrated that the others were excluded and their participation in the conversation was not welcomed. Moreover, Ann (the owner of the phone) did not mind her phone being passed to the other interactants to show them the outfit,

suggesting that the main concern was to involve everyone in the conversation and ensure the solidarity of the members in this group. It seems that equity rights were played down in this extract in favour of managing an appropriate amount of association rights.

Similarly, Emily offered Ruby the chance to see the outfit by handing Ann's phone to her (line 19), thereby proving that this offer was an essential part of the politic behaviour based on the norms of this group and the interactants' expectations. Such behaviour suggests that the primary participants considered it impolite to talk about something that the other interactants did not know about. Accordingly, it is acceptable to offer someone something not within the offerer's possession in order to treat someone as an essential member of the group. In other words, the offer shows the speaker's understanding and consideration of others' need to be involved as well as the speaker's orientation to social conventions. By offering, the speaker confirms both her and the addressee's proper membership in the group. In addition, the offers were accomplished by taking the action without waiting for the approval of both Ann (the phone's owner) and the addressee. Furthermore, the addressee (i.e. Ruby) showed non-verbal acceptance by taking the phone without hesitation and directly commenting on the outfit, thereby indicating that this offer was expected. Ruby appeared to be waiting for her turn to be offered the opportunity to see the outfit.

In the SRQ, three participants evaluated both offers as polite and appropriate, whereas one of them evaluated them as neither polite nor impolite and appropriate. This extract supports Locher and Watts' (2005: 29) proposition that individuals evaluate a certain behaviour as polite when it best corresponds to the addressee's own expectations of adequate behaviour. Ann indicated that it was important to allow the others to see the outfit. Yara also noted that the offerer aimed to demonstrate that she wanted the others to be involved in the conversation, thereby ensuring that they did not feel excluded. Thus, the absence of such an action could have affected the interaction negatively. For instance, had Emily not passed the phone to Ruby, such behaviour would have been interpreted negatively, especially as Ruby would have been the only one left out in this conversation. The participants' responses provided further evidence that the offer was considered unmarked politic behaviour.

In both cases, the offer was made non-verbally and accepted immediately without negotiation. The offerees did not show any particular reaction to the offer – either positive or negative – that allowed them to see the outfit. In fact, they directly commented on the outfit, making it obvious that neither offer was believed to require any effort of negotiation or appreciation. Rather, the main concern was to participate in the conversation about the outfit. Thus, the offer appeared to be

unnoticed as it did not receive any attention, as evident in the addressees' reactions. This analysis further supports the conclusion that the offer falls within unmarked non-polite/politic behaviour and demonstrates Locher and Watts' (2005: 11) argument that most relational work will be of an unmarked nature and will pass largely unnoticed.

### 7.1.2 Complex offers

This section aims to explore how non-verbal offers may be developed into complex exchanges. However, only one non-verbal offer exchange generated intricate negotiation, as was seen in Chapter 5. Therefore, an example of complex non-verbal offering from the pilot study is investigated here to provide further support. These two offers are analysed in two separate sub-sections: offers employing only one strategy (Section 7.1.2.1) and offers including two strategies (Section 7.1.2.2).

#### 7.1.2.1 Using one strategy

Only one non-verbal complex offer exchange was found in the data. It employed only one strategy, which was elaboration. It was elaborated in pre-head position; i.e. the speaker had told the guests what she was going to do before undertaking the offer. Elsa had just served the main dishes to her guests. There were some dips that came with the food.

#### Extract 27 (Spontaneous, elaborated, hospitable offer)

1. **Elsa: There's some dips to go with it, but I might just put them in the**
2. **bowl because --0**
3. *Helen: yeah. 0*
4. **Elsa: it might be a bit easier.**
5. ...
6. *Janet: that's <X nice X>*
7. *Helen: [Mmm] ((showing her admiration of the food.))*
8. **((Puts the dips in the middle of the table.))**
9. ... ((They are eating))
10. ((They dish up some dips))
11. ((Deleted part /talking about a technical issue while Elsa is heating her dish in the microwave.))

In lines 1 and 2, Elsa explained that there were some dips, but she wanted to put them in a bowl. This was truncated and latched by Helen's minimal response, 'Yeah'. Elsa went on by justifying what she was going to do, saying 'it might be a bit easier' (line 4). This was followed by a pause (line 5) and a compliment about the food from Janet (line 6). When interviewed, Elsa's utterance was not seen as an offer, but as a statement explaining what she was going to do and why. The

study only analysed offers that the interactants identified as offers, therefore her turns were coded as supportive moves in pre-head position, expander and grounder respectively. Her action in line 8 was seen as the actual offer by the participants. Thus, this offer exchange was coded as complex since it was elaborated over several turns before it was performed. There was no verbal response to the offer; it was followed by a pause. From a CA perspective, participants may be doing or implying something even when they do not say anything (Drew, 2013: 140). According to Davidson (1984: 103), silence occurring immediately after offering could indicate that it is possibly going to be rejected. However, the guests eventually took from the served dips. Thus, it seems that this silence was acceptance. It could be that the acceptance was not verbalized because they were all busy; Janet and Helen's attention was fully directed to eating their dinner at that moment, and Elsa was heating her dish in the microwave. The offer seems to be part of unmarked politic behaviour since it did not elicit any evaluative reactions from the participants. Their main concern was directed to admiring their main course, eating it, and discussing other topics.

Elsa evaluated the offer as polite and appropriate, whereas Helen evaluated it as neither polite nor impolite and appropriate. Helen said that it was the normal thing to be done. Elsa indicated that it is polite, *"because they're good friends, they know me well. They know that they would help themselves."* The participants' responses highlighted two issues. First, people are aware of the notion of frame which predisposes how they have to act in certain situations. Research on relational work (Locher, 2011: 192; Locher & Langlotz, 2008: 70; Locher & Watts, 2005: 11) has claimed that interactants do not pass judgments on relational work in a social vacuum, but rather based on their previous experiences or expectations about norms. The data in this study provided evidence for the applicability of their claim in explaining social behaviour. Second, people adjust their behaviour according to their relationship with others. That is, association rights play an essential role in determining expectations of appropriate behaviour. Third, it provided more evidence that offers were likely to be perceived as more polite by the speakers than by the addressees.

#### **7.1.2.2 Using more than one strategy**

In order to exemplify this issue, an example of a non-verbal complex offer is taken from the pilot data. As indicated above, only one complex non-verbal offer was found in the BE data (Extract 27). Thus, further support is needed to exemplify the notion of complexity in non-verbal offering, which was very limited (only two). Moreover, the following offer provides an example of collaborative non-verbal offering, which is the only example in the corpus.

The following interaction took place between four friends during a dinner at a restaurant. The waitress was serving the food. Ann, who was sitting opposite Yara, received her food. When the waitress served Yara, the table was a little crowded, so Ann and Emily moved their glasses to provide more space for Yara's plates. Yara's order included two plates: one for the steak covered by a lot of tomato sauce, as noted by Emily (line 11), and one for the potato.

**Extract 28 (Spontaneous, collaborative, elaborated offer of assistance)**

1. *Ann: I think that is mine.*
2. *Emily: Does it look like what you are expecting?*
3. *Ann: I think so.*
4. *Emily: It looks really good ...*
5. *Ann: What did you go for, Yara?*
6. *Yara: Steak. and I got some potatoes because it just came with tomato*
7. *sauce, and I thought --*
8. ***((Ann and Emily move their glasses and cutlery to provide some space for Yara's dish))***
9. *Yara: Oh thank you.*
10. *Ruby: I think its great wise plan, actually.*
11. *Emily: Just in case. There is quite a lot of em .. a tomato sauce*
12. *Yara: What is in it? ((Addressing Emily when she got her dish.))*
13. *Emily: It is Calzone Con Pollo.*
14. *Ann: Halo halo halo ((Repeating the word they were echoing when Emily ordered her dish))*
15. *All: @@@@*

Both Emily and Ann seemed to notice the lack of space on Yara's side of the table and the difficulty the waitress and Yara faced in putting the plate of potatoes on the far edge of the table since both Emily and Ann spontaneously tried to move their glasses and utensils to give Yara more space (line 8). This spontaneous non-verbal offer elicited an appreciative reaction by Yara (line 9), indicating that she considered this offer to be addressed to her, not the waitress. In addition, she apparently did not expect them to give her more space in order to feel more comfortable. It is clear that Yara positively evaluated their offer of more space. Ruby demonstrated a similar reaction when she indicated that this was a wise plan (line 10) although the offer was not addressed to her. Although this compliment could be related to Yara's decision to order a side dish (lines 6 & 7), Emily's following utterance in line 11 shows that the compliment was perceived to be related to the offer rather than the order. Ruby's utterance shows that an act may generate evaluative reactions from side participants, too. It seems that side participants' reactions may help in understanding politeness evaluations. Although it was accepted, Emily added a grounder for the offer. Emily tried to play down her action by saying *'just in case'* and showed concern about the large amount of tomato sauce which could hinder Yara's movement because she could

accidentally spill it (line 11). Since the offer was performed by two interlocutors (each moved her items to provide space) and then supported by Ruby's comment, it is considered a collaborative offering. It is also considered elaborated since Emily added a grounder to justify the offer.

The participants evaluated Emily and Ann's behaviour as polite and appropriate in SRQ. Ann said, "*It is polite to provide space on the table for Yara's dish to be served.*" Yara believed that they were trying to make it easier for her by making space for her food. She also indicated that she would do the same in such a situation. Ann and Emily provided the offer without asking or waiting for Yara's acceptance; this provided evidence that offering help when someone seemed to need it is an essential part of this group's practices. This was further supported by Emily's comment during the interview: "*It is a natural thing to want to help people and enable the process of social interaction in some way.*" Thus, offering help to a friend when needed is considered the appropriate/politic norm among friends when it does not contradict the norms of polite behaviour in wider society.

None of the non-verbal offers were refused in the contexts examined in the study. It seems that non-verbal offers in BE are limited to situations in which an offer is not negotiable, i.e. part of expected hospitality (e.g. offering food or cutlery to eat), taking care of someone's feelings (e.g. getting them involved in the talk) or fulfilling a need for immediate assistance (e.g. moving something closer to someone). Moreover, they are used as strategic actions to avoid interrupting the flow of talk. Like SA friends, participants place more importance on respecting the ongoing flow of talk among friends rather than overtly displaying generosity and hospitality.

## **7.2 Verbal offers**

This section will explore relational work management in verbal offer exchanges in the British female friendship groups. The analysis first looks carefully at selected simple offer exchanges that were accomplished verbally (Section 7.2.1). It then explores representative samples of verbal complex offer exchanges (Section 7.2.2).

### **7.2.1 Simple offers**

The following section aims to analyse some verbal simple offer exchanges following a discursive approach to politeness. Selected extracts will be investigated as it would be impossible to analyse all of the verbal simple offers discursively (n = 54). The analysis is mainly organized around two themes: simple verbal offers that had no responses and those that did.

### 7.2.1.1 Simple offers without a response

Like non-verbal offers, the second pair part was either absent or delayed in eight verbal offers. Half of the offers were addressed to the group, whereas the other half were addressed to a particular person. A representative sample of each case is explored below.

The following extract shows a simple verbal offer with no response, whether verbal or non-verbal. Janet was telling the other participants about a possible trip to Stratford with her mother (lines 1-5). She truncated her utterance. This was picked up by Elsa as a chance to perform her hosting duties.

#### Extract 29 (Spontaneous, hospitable offer with no response)

1. *Janet: Yeah. My mum was thinking that we could go to Stratford because*
2. *we've not been for ages and we always used to go there. ..We've not*
3. *gone because there's nothing really that I've wanted to see. There's*
4. *been a lot of historical plays and I'm not as hot on the historical ..*
5. *Shakespeare as I am on the--*
6. ***Elsa: If you want bread, help yourself.***
7. *..*
8. *Elsa: Um. Yeah, I've got four days to carry over, so I'm off the end of*
9. *September but away. And then I want to try and take a week. I will do*
10. *some extra hours when it's the induction in the open evenings.*
11. *Janet: Ah.*
12. *Elsa: So I might be able to use that time to take another day off,*
13. *Janet: Ah.*

Elsa had noticed that the guests had not taken any bread since her last offer (see Extract 23) when she served the starter about twenty minutes ago. This encouraged her to initiate a verbal offer for bread soon after she had served the main course. She first used an explicit conditional if-clause, a supportive move, in pre-head position within the same turn of the head act. She then asked them directly to help themselves. The use of an if-clause shows that the addressees are the main decision-makers, and hence are free to reject or accept the offer. It seems that equity rights, particularly autonomy-control, were prioritized. Moreover, the expression used implies that if they accept they would fulfil the offer by serving themselves rather than being served. This could explain why there was no response to the offer. In fact, it was followed with a pause. A pause occurring immediately after offering could be taken that it is possibly going to be rejected (Davidson, 1984: 104). However, the way Elsa interpreted the silence was not clear. She did not try to produce a subsequent move to show whether she took it as lack of understanding, difficulty of hearing, or doubt about the acceptability of the offer (Davidson, 1984: 103). Rather, she relaunched the truncated discussion about Janet's days off work. Elsa's action shows no apparent concern that there was no clear response to her offer since her

utterance framed the uptake of the offer as an action by the addressees rather than by her. The bread had already been placed on the table and within their reach. The offer acts more as a reminder of what has been served rather than offering a new item or service. This was obvious in Elsa's response during the interview; "*I was just taking the initiative to remind them that there was some bread there, and I was giving them the instruction that they could help themselves.*"

Elsa's offer was evaluated as polite and appropriate by Helen, whereas it was viewed as being very polite and appropriate by Elsa. It is obvious that Elsa considered her offer as more polite than her addressee did. Helen noted that the offer is polite since it was among friends, and she would probably say "*please help yourself*". Her comment shows that she is subconsciously aware that norms are continuously changing depending on the context. Thus, it goes in line with the relational work argument that the judgment of an utterance may differ from one context of practice to the next (Locher, 2011: 192). It appears that she preferred to soften the imperative by adding the word '*please*'. However, since the word *please* might make it harder for the addressee to refuse the offer (Leech, 2014: 161), the absence of a response could have a negative inference. It seems that the offer falls within unmarked politic behaviour considering the close relationship between the participants, which is marked by an informal register.

The following extract shows a solicited verbal offer with no immediate response. Susan asked Rachel whether she was excited about the event she would go to the day after. Rachel intensified her excitement by first saying '*I am*' then stated her agreement, '*yeah*' (line 2). Rachel's excitement might encourage Susan to want to know more about the event, which is manifested by her asking for more information about it (lines 3-4).

### **Extract 30 (Solicited offer of information with no immediate response)**

1. Susan: Are you excited for tomorrow?
2. Rachel: I am .Yeah.
3. Susan: What--, what is the event? I know it's the beer festival, but it's,
4.           like-- what sort of place is it?
5. Rachel: Uh, so it is-- .. uh .. , **I could show you on my phone.** Uh.., it's the
6.           brewery-- it's like the tap room of North Brewing Company, but
7.           [they've done] it out inside, so it's like -- 0
8. Susan: [OK.]
9.           So it is a brewery?
10. Rachel: [[Yeah.]]
11. Hilary: [[Yeah.]]
12. Rachel: It's where they brew the beer, but it's also, like, a bar on Friday.
13.        They [just have their,] like--
14. Susan:   [Can you show me?] ((low voice))



15. Rachel: *their taps connected to their-- 0*  
 16. Susan: *So every Friday it is?*  
 17. Rachel: *I think it's every Friday.*  
 18. Susan: *Oh.*  
 19. Hilary: *[but this is X--]*  
 20. Rachel: *[But this is like] a special event thing. But it's really nice inside.*  
 21. *They've decorated it really nicely*  
 22. Susan: *((Coughing.))*  
 23. Rachel: *and they've got all the big brewing things.*  
 24. X: *@*  
 25. Rachel: *They're really cool. ((gives the phone to Susan))*  
 26. Susan: *Cool=.*  
 27. Rachel: *And they have, like, a pizza van as well, but they're also fine with*  
 28. *you ordering a pizza there. Like, you can just order your takeaway*  
 29. *and get it there.*  
 30. Susan: *<F Ooh=F>.*  
 31. Rachel: *and I was like --((face expression))*  
 32. All: *@@@*  
 33. Susan: *Well, that's dinner sorted.*  
 34. All: *@@@*  
 35. Flora: *I love that we keep taking Ann to breweries.*  
 36. All: *@@@*

Rachel's answer was produced with disfluency, signalled by her multiple restarts and use of 'uh' as well as pauses; this could be interpreted as a sign of difficulty in explaining the requested information or remembering the details. This was resolved by Rachel's offer to show Susan the details on her phone (line 5). What is to be noted here is that Rachel did not directly offer to show the website. The offer itself takes the form of a mention of its availability, saying '*I could show you on my phone.*' Her utterance was seen as an offer by the interactants during the interviews. Moreover, the mentioning of it here, in this context, after Susan's asking about the event, invites understanding it as a solicited offer. However, Rachel continued providing some details about the event rather than performing the offer or waiting for Susan's response, although her phone was on the table in front of her. Whether her offer was insincere or her continuation is an attempt to produce self-initiated self-repair (SISR)<sup>108</sup> due to her initial disfluency was not clear. Not performing the offer did not affect the interaction as it went smoothly. This was obvious in Susan's reaction. Susan can be heard to be expressing interest in what might be said by paying attention to Rachel's talk, which is manifested in her overlap, saying 'OK'<sup>109</sup> (line 8), and then checking her understanding, saying, '*So it is a brewery?*' (line 9). This encouraged Rachel to

<sup>108</sup> SISR refers to situations "in which the repair is initiated and completed by the participant producing the trouble" (Hall, 2007: 513).

<sup>109</sup> 'OK' can be a minimal response of acceptance of the stance taken (Liddicoat, 2011: 191).

provide more information (lines 12-13). That Rachel did not make any attempt to show the website was picked up by Susan. She requested to see it (line 14). Her request overlapped Rachel's utterance; thus, it was not clear whether it was heard or not. The three women continued their discussion about the brewery event (lines 15-24). In line 25, Rachel gave the phone to Susan so she could look at the event's webpage. Susan took the phone while they continued their discussion about the event. This action has three possible interpretations. First, Rachel might have forgotten about her offer to show the website on her phone (line 5) and she interpreted Susan's utterance as a request, and hence she was fulfilling Susan's request (line 14). Second, Rachel intended to undertake her offer from the beginning but she was waiting for a sign of acceptance from Susan, hence she interpreted Susan's utterance in line 14 as an acceptance. Third, it might be that Rachel had not heard Susan's request (line 14) since Rachel smoothly continued her truncated utterance (lines 13-15) and did not show any immediate reaction to Susan's request. That is, giving the phone to Susan in line 25 was not affected by Susan's utterance (requesting to show her the phone). After Susan had taken the phone, she said 'cool' (line 26) in a lengthening tone. Whether she was collaborating with Rachel to show that she paid close attention to her talk (Coates, 1996: 119) or she was positively reacting to the offer remains debatable. Rachel continued providing more information about the event (lines 27-29), and the women were enthusiastically involved in the talk (30-36). Their negotiation was marked with laughter, which reflects speaker pleasure in the talk they create (Coates, 1996: 151). The laughter and the high degree of involvement in the talk supports the inference that the interaction, including the offer, fell within marked politic behaviour.

During the interviews, Rachel's offer was subject to variability in evaluation. Susan perceived it as very polite and appropriate, Flora as neither polite nor impolite and appropriate, and Rachel as polite and appropriate. This variability goes in line with the discursive approach. However, despite the variability, each interviewee provided the same justification for their evaluations. They all indicated that the offer aimed to clarify the information and enable better understanding for Susan. The responses during the interviews have highlighted three things. First, even participants may not have the ability to identify the perceived or intended degree of politeness since different evaluations were grounded in the same reasoning. Second, they attributed their evaluations to their interpretations of the speaker's intention although her intention was not declared during the talk. Third, despite the variability in politeness evaluations, they all agreed that the offer was appropriate. Despite the delay in fulfilling the offer, the offer is clearly open to a polite interpretation by the participants concerned, based

on their responses during the interview and reactions during the actual discourse. This extract has shown that due to the challenges and complexity of analysing casual conversation (Eggins & Slade, 1997: 24), investigating politeness discursively in spoken offer exchanges is not always straightforward and may lead to multiple potential analyses.

### 7.2.1.2 Simple offers with response

This sub-section explores four extracts representing different situations of simple verbal offers with different types of responses including verbal or non-verbal acceptance and refusal. The extracts were selected to cover a variety of situations including an offer to take the floor (Extract 31), an offer of information (Extract 32), an offer of assistance (Extract 33), and a hospitable offer (Extract 34).

The following extract illustrates two occasions where the speaker offered the speaking rights for a turn to another speaker. The women were talking about their experiences with two cable companies. Elsa uttered the minimal response 'ah' in line 6, which shows that she was following Janet rather than attempting to take the floor. When Janet did not talk further, it was seen as the end of her turn. It seemed that both Elsa and Helen wanted to say something, but their attempts overlapped (lines 7 & 8). Helen offered that Elsa should go ahead and say what she wanted to say (line 9), and Elsa also offered the next turn to Helen after she had completed her utterance (line 27).

#### Extract 31 (Spontaneous, turn of speech offer)

1. *Elsa: And you'll get like half price for six months, and then*
2. *Janet: Ah.*
3. *Elsa: somebody else will get-- they do all that, don't they, when you start.*
4. *Janet: And especially if you ring them up and tell them that you're going f-*
5. *from Sky. They're like, "< F Oh F>, come to us." .. so--*
6. *Elsa: Ah.*
7. *Helen : [A-]*
8. *Elsa: [A-]*
9. ***Helen: No, sorry, go ahead.***
10. *Elsa: I was saying I get some kind of loyalty discounts now, because I've*
11. *been with them for a while.*
12. *Janet: Yeah, um.*
13. *Elsa: I still ring them though every time.*
14. *((deleted part in which Helen commented on the services))*
15. *Elsa: They said to me about, "Look at your channels," because I was*
16. *saying, "Is there some way I can save money if I stay with you, blah*
17. *blah blah?" And that's when he's told me what I've watched, and you*
18. *could look at your channels. So you know, 0*
19. *Janet: Ah*
20. *Elsa: yes, it's made me stay with them. I am now spending a bit less, which*

21. *is good for me, but I've stayed with them because of that,*  
 22. *Helen: yeah.*  
 23. *Elsa: and not gone elsewhere.*  
 24. *Helen: uh.*  
 25. *Janet: um.*  
 26. ...  
 27. ***Elsa: So, what were you saying?***  
 28. *Helen: I was just going to say I think Jim's going to ((splutter)) -- we got Sky*  
 29. *this year. We got it in a Groupon.*  
 30. *Elsa: um, Yeah.*  
 31. *Helen: It was a really good package. But I think after this year, he's*  
 32. *probably just going to cancel it again, and either wait until he finds*  
 33. *another deal, unless we have something good from cancelling.0*

The conversational floor in ordinary talk is constantly negotiated and renegotiated as talk goes on (Cameron, 2001: 90; Edmondson, 1981: 41), which is an essential feature of the organization of natural conversation. According to CA, if the next speaker is not selected by the current one, one of the other speakers can select him/herself to start speaking. This is known as “self-selection” (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974: 704).<sup>110</sup> When this option is activated, simultaneous speech could occur as more than one speaker self-selects. However, this situation has to be resolved, i.e. one of the self-selectors continues to hold the floor and the other stops speaking (Cameron, 2001: 91). Sometimes this issue would be managed without any verbal negotiation as one of the speakers would simply drop out. If no one drops out, another mechanism for resolving overlap is likely to come into play (Levinson, 1983: 300-301). For example, one may offer the speaking rights to the other in order to resolve this situation because it would be odd if they both continue talking. This was apparent in Helen’s denial and apology, saying ‘no sorry’. Helen then offered Elsa the turn rights using an imperative, using the expression ‘go ahead’, which communicates that she wants the addressee to continue her talk (Edmondson, 1981: 152). The apology did not aim to minimize the effect of the offer; it seemed to be utilized to mark the accidental violation of the system of turn organization. The offer is governed by the turn allocation mechanism. Helen’s offer, hence, falls within expected unmarked politeness behaviour. This was also evidenced in Elsa’s reaction as she marked her immediate acceptance by starting her talk (line 10). The smooth negotiation of her talk with the participants (lines 10–25) provided further evidence for the evaluation of the offer as unmarked behaviour. Moreover, if we imagine that Helen did not relinquish the floor to Elsa, Elsa is likely to have offered her the turn. Thus, this offer is necessary for managing a smooth interaction. Its

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<sup>110</sup> Rules for the allocation of next turn in CA were discussed in Section 2.2.2.

absence would render the interaction non-normative. It seems that if one of the speakers offers the turn at talk or stops talking, it would be sufficient.

When Elsa finished her contribution and was sure that no one had anything further to add, which was marked with a silence (line 26), she leads the way back to Helen's attempt to speak with a question addressed to Helen (line 27). This seems to have been motivated by the fact that Helen offered her the floor earlier, so she wanted to pay back the debt to Helen. This was obvious in her response in the interview, "*Because I was remembering that she'd let me go first, so that she'd still have something to talk about. And that I was then giving her the opportunity to speak, and actually offering for her to do that at that point*". This confirms once again that these offers were governed by the ordered set of rules for turn allocation suggested by Sacks et al. (1974). The offer seemed to be valued by Helen as she minimized what she wanted to say by using the word '*just*', indicating it is not very important (line 28). It appeared that she did not expect Elsa to give her the floor back. Thus, Elsa's behaviour may be judged as more than just politic and could be open to an interpretation of politeness.

Although both offers were accepted without negotiation, the acceptance was expressed differently. Elsa's acceptance was more direct than Helen's; i.e. Elsa immediately started speaking, whereas Helen hedged her utterance. This shows that Helen's offer was essential to resolve the issue created by simultaneous talk, whereas Elsa's offer was not. If Elsa did not offer the next turn to Helen to say what she was originally planning to say, the ongoing interaction would not have been negatively affected. Helen may have taken the opportunity to self-select, or a new conversational topic may have been started. Thus, Elsa's offer shows that care is being taken to consider both interlocutors' faces and equity rights, i.e. our entitlement to be treated fairly and not exploited (Spencer-Oatey, 2000: 14-15). Both were made offers to take a turn to comment on the topic. The offers seemed to be perceived differently in the immediate context. Helen's offer seemed to be part of unmarked behaviour, whereas Elsa's offer might be positively marked. However, they were evaluated in the opposite way in the SRQ. Helen's offer was evaluated as very polite and appropriate, whereas Elsa's as polite and appropriate. Both Helen and Elsa indicated that it is very polite to offer the speaking turn to another person if both start talking at the same time. Helen added, "*I wanted to seem polite.*" It can be inferred that participants behave in line with the moral order<sup>111</sup> in order to create a positive image of themselves.

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<sup>111</sup> The moral order is "constituted through practices by which social actions and meanings are made recognizable as familiar scenes of everyday affairs, and so are open to moral evaluation (that is, as good/bad, appropriate/inappropriate, polite/not polite, impolite/not impolite and so on)" (Haugh, 2013a: 59).

Moreover, the participants downplayed Elsa's offer in the SRQ since they might see it as paying back the debt when they thought again about it (i.e. looking back at what had happened). This provides more evidence that participants' immediate reactions and metalinguistic evaluation may not coincide, an issue that has been found throughout the analysis.<sup>112</sup>

The following extract exemplifies a simple offer of information. Susan started to clear the table. The women were talking about the expenses of accommodation for university students. Hilary was telling them about her friend Paul's accommodation when he was studying in Newcastle (lines 4–5, 8, & 12). She seemed to forget the road's name, which was apparent in her truncated utterance (line 12). Rachel and Susan uttered the name of the road simultaneously (lines 13 & 14).

### Extract 32 (Spontaneous offer of information)

1. *Rachel: you know, you just couldn't really get anywhere lower than that.*
2. *So--*
3. *((Susan takes Rachel's plate to clear the table.))*
4. *Hilary: Well, Paul was paying loads in Newcastle. I don't know what it-- like,*
5. *[..] his grant didn't--*
6. *((Susan takes Flora's plate to clear the table.))*
7. *Susan: [Uh--]*
8. *Hilary: cover where he was staying. I don't know if [[he]] stayed in. 0*
9. *Susan: [[No.=]]*
10. *Rachel: Normally, in the-- in the first year, 0*
11. *((Susan takes Hilary's plate to clear the table.))*
12. *Hilary: Well, the first year he stayed in that dirt cheap on-- ..*
13. ***Rachel: [Ricky Road.]***
14. ***Susan: [Ricky Road.]***
15. *Hilary: [Ricky R]oad, yeah.*
16. *Susan: Which apparently, they a-- have actually demolished.*
17. *Rachel: Oh!*
18. *All: [[@@@@@]]*
19. *Susan: They've been [[saying it for, like ten years.]]*
20. *Rachel: [[Really? Ricky Road]]*
21. *All: [[@@@@@]]*

When they offered the name of the street, their attempts did not mark disagreement with what Hilary had said, lack of interest in what she had said, or any desire to change the topic.<sup>113</sup> On the contrary, it seems that Susan and Rachel had noticed Hilary's struggle to remember the name of the road, and they spoke in order to provide it. The function of their contribution was to support Hilary

<sup>112</sup> This issue is discussed in detail in Section 8.6.

<sup>113</sup> Linguistic parallel, i.e. saying the same thing at the same time, in friends' talk maximizes solidarity between friends (Coates, 1996: 80).

in holding the floor rather than to take the floor away from her or to highlight her failure of memory. Coates (1996: 125) argues that an important feature of female friends' talk is that when speakers are struggling to find the right word, jointly constructed talk may occur in which others help to find the needed word. This is also an important aspect of turn taking in which interactants predict one another's turns and continue the speaker's utterance. This sometimes overlaps with the current speaker's talk. The overlap of both Susan and Rachel's second word, i.e. 'Road', with Hilary's uttering the name of the first word, i.e. '*Ricky*', was neither perceived as an interruption nor as being rude. It was a sign of enthusiasm,<sup>114</sup> which was apparent in Hilary's agreement saying '*yeah*' and Susan's providing further information about the building (line 16). This was followed by everyone's laughter. The laughter asserted that this offering exchange of information behaviour fell within expected unmarked politic behaviour.

In the interviews, the offers were evaluated as neither polite nor impolite and appropriate by Rachel, but neither appropriate nor inappropriate by Flora. Susan evaluated it as very polite and appropriate. She assumed that remaining silent would perhaps embarrass Hilary by highlighting her failure to remember the name. It seems that the offer was intended to save Hilary's face rather than enhancing the speakers' faces. Rachel indicated that it is appropriate as offering the information aided the flow of conversation. Flora added that if she had known the name, she would have instinctively done the same. Her response provided evidence that our attention to the relational work in a given encounter is done at subconscious level; thus, we might be unable to pass precise conscious judgments on the politeness level invested in what we have said. This is apparent in the variability of participants' evaluations during interviews. Despite their inconsistency, the participants' metalinguistic evaluations provided further support that the offers were part of the expected unmarked politic behaviour. Finally, it is important to note that although the offers were produced by two speakers, they were coded as simple ones rather than collaborative complex offering. They were simultaneous and exactly the same. The occurrence of one did not add to the illocutionary force of the other.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Tannen (1981: 138) found that overlap was used cooperatively by New Yorkers as a way of showing enthusiasm and interest.

<sup>115</sup> This differs from the offer exchange in Extract 28 in which both performers moved different items to make room for Yara's dish. The absence of one's action would affect satisfying the offer successfully, thus it was classified as collaborative complex offer exchange. On the other hand, in this extract both interactants simultaneously made exactly the same utterance and the absence of one's utterance would not affect the ongoing conversation in any way.

The following extract includes two offers of assistance that were solicited by previous context. The first one was solicited by a comment and a need by the prospective receiver (line 3), and the other one was solicited by Rachel's need for assistance (line 17).

### Extract 33 (Solicited offers of assistance)

1. Susan: *Well, I mean, check that it's fully hot.*
2. All: @@@
3. Hilary: *I'll get a piece of bread. ((Extends her hand to take one.))*
4. **Flora: *That's the one. ((She passes piece of bread to Hilary since it is closer to her.))***
5. *((Hilary takes the bread.))*
6. ..
7. Flora: *Oh, that's --*
8. Susan: *Oh.*
9. Rachel: *Might want to make a [X wrap X].*
10. Hilary: *Whoa.*
11. Rachel: *I didn't realize @@*
12. All: @@
13. Rachel: *Crazy. =*
14. All: @@@@
15. Rachel: *Yeah, it's healthy @@@.*
16. All: @@@
17. *((Rachel scoops some chicken onto her plate. The chicken pieces are underneath a circular loaf of flat bread. Thus, she has some difficulty managing to hold the bread that covers the chicken and also scooping chicken onto her plate at the same time.))*
18. Rachel: @@
19. **Flora: < @ Do you want me to hold this?@> I feel like that might be**
20. **helpful. Or I could just-- oh-- ((She holds the bread so Rachel can serve herself easily.))**
21. Hilary: *Put it on the bread.*
22. Susan: *Is it all right?*
23. Hilary: *< @Yeah @>, it's fine.*
24. Flora: *It looks hot.*
25. ...
26. @@@

Susan had just served the main course, and she warned the women that the plate was very hot, in order to ensure their safety (line 1). She first uttered the word 'well', a pragmatic marker, to introduce and hedge the warning, i.e. *well* minimizes any possible threat (Archer et al., 2012: 74, 78). This was met with laughter. Hilary wanted to start eating, so she stated that she wanted to get a piece of bread and reached over to get one (line 3). The plate was not close to her. Thus, Flora got one piece and passed it to Hilary since the bread was closer to her, saying '*that's the one*' (line 4). Flora might have interpreted Hilary's comment as a pre-request implicative, not a request, which projects that she might need to request



assistance in order to reach over to the bread; hence she made an offer.<sup>116</sup> The offer was accomplished both verbally and non-verbally. The expression used seemed to serve two functions. First, it highlights the offer verbally. Second, it confirms that Flora was fulfilling Hilary's need for some bread. This offer was accepted non-verbally by just taking the bread. It was then followed by silence, showing that the offer exchange is finished. The encounter then shifts to comments on Rachel's plan to make a chicken wrap. The exchange was characterized by humour and laughter (lines 7–16). The absence of an evaluative reaction, i.e. direct non-verbal acceptance with no appreciation and the smooth shift to a new topic, suggests that the offer falls within unmarked politic relational work.

Rachel tried to get some chicken onto her plate, but she had some difficulty managing holding the bread that covered the chicken while dishing up chicken onto her plate (line 17). This caused her to laugh at herself (line 18). Flora noticed Rachel's struggle, which was shown in Rachel's laughter. Flora then offered to hold the bread for Rachel, using an interrogative *'Do you want me to hold this?'*<sup>117</sup> in a laughing tone. It seems that her laughing was supportive to Rachel's laughter. Flora provided a grounder to her offer in which she projected her intention to help (line 19) and an expander in which she started to give another option (line 20). However, the expander was truncated and followed by the pragmatic marker *'oh'*, which registers a change of state in knowing something (Liddicoat, 2011: 191; Schegloff, 2007: 118). This was apparent in Flora's reaction as she decided to hold the bread without waiting for Rachel's acceptance, despite her previous attempt to get her acceptance using supportive moves. Since Rachel continued putting chicken on her bread, this may imply that she non-verbally accepted the offer. That Flora truncated her utterance and provided the offer without waiting for Rachel's acceptance provided further evidence that offering help when someone seems to need it is an essential part of practices within these friendship groups. It is more important than considering their autonomy rights. In other words, association rights take priority over equity rights when a need for help arises. This was further supported by participants' comments during the interview. For instance, Susan indicated that *"I think I would have said similar things. If a problem arose I would offer to help to make things easier."* Flora said she did these actions to be polite so her friends could get food easily. She added that if she had just left them to struggle that would have been rude. Their comments

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<sup>116</sup> Schegloff (2007: 90) argues that the preferred response in such situations is to "pre-empt the need for a request altogether by offering that which is to be requested".

<sup>117</sup> Curl (2006: 1257) argues that "offers of remedy of problems deduced from previous talk are always produced with the syntactic format [do] you want me to X".

provided evidence that the absence of offering help when needed would be evaluated as rude. Thus, offering help to a friend when needed is considered the appropriate/politic norm when it does not contradict the norms of polite behaviour in wider society. Moreover, the offers were evaluated as polite and appropriate by Susan and Flora, whereas as neither polite nor impolite and appropriate by Rachel. This supports Locher's (2006: 252) claim that we cannot expect everybody to agree on the level of relational work employed.

The following extract demonstrates a refusal to a spontaneous simple hospitable offer. As discussed in the quantitative analysis in Chapter 5, only seven simple offers were refused out of 81, and the refusal was expressed verbally in all of them. It was also found that most refusals to offers in the corpus gathered for the study were accompanied by expressions of gratitude. Susan cleared the table after they had finished their dinner. She noticed that Hilary's cup was empty and asked Hilary if she wanted a drink (line 3), using an interrogative structure '*Do you want a drink now?*', placing a high value on the other's wants. According to Haugh (2007a: 89), generosity in English appears to involve avoiding imposition by asking directly what others want rather than making assumptions.

#### **Extract 34 (Spontaneous, hospitable offer)**

1. *Rachel: But I don't know why it is because there are suburbs in Edinburgh.*
2. *They do exist. [Just no- X]*
3. **Susan:** ***[Do you want a drink now?] ((low voice))***
4. *Rachel: [[No students live in them.]]*
5. *Hilary: [[Oh, no. thank you.]] ((low voice))*
6. *((Susan walks to the kitchen.))*
7. *Flora: I think, uh, Adam-- you remember Adam? Not sure what--*
8. *Rachel: Oh yeah.*

Her offer overlapped with Rachel's talk. However, it seems that the offer did not interrupt Rachel for several reasons. First, Rachel was talking with Flora. Neither Susan nor Hilary was involved in the talk. Second, the offer exchange did not affect the ongoing talk as both Rachel and Flora continued their discussion smoothly. Third, the offer exchange was performed in low voice which indicates that care was given to avoid any potential interruption to the ongoing talk, and that the offer is being presented as an aside to the "main business" of the talk. This offer was refused immediately by Hilary. She first said the minimal response '*Oh*', which marks information receipt, i.e. she heard the offer (Schegloff, 2007: 118). She then stated her direct refusal saying '*No*', then expressed her appreciation of the offer saying '*thank you*' (line 5).<sup>118</sup> Hilary's refusal was taken

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<sup>118</sup>Jasim (2017: 204) found that gratitude was commonly used by British English speakers when refusing an equal status addressee.

as a sincere refusal rather than a ritual one. This was evidenced by Susan's reaction as she went to the kitchen and did not try to insist or reoffer. This translates to a belief that Susan took care of her obligation as host as well as her obligation to respect the independence of Hilary by not imposing too much. It is clear that there was not much effort made in negotiating this offer. This smooth, effortless exchange of offering and refusal, which overlapped with Rachel's and Flora's talk, indicates that this interaction is considered part of unmarked appropriate politic behaviour in this context.

The offer was evaluated as very polite and appropriate by both Susan and Flora, whereas it was seen as neither polite nor impolite but appropriate by Rachel. This variability in the evaluation supports the relational work assumptions. Flora commented that, "*[Susan] is being very attentive of her guests, and I would do the same if people had finished their drinks.*" Thus, this offer can be explained using Fukushima's term attentiveness (Fukushima, 2013: 19). It seems that being attentive to your guests' needs is part of expected politic hospitality.

It can be concluded that simple verbal offer exchanges may be appreciated, accepted verbally or non-verbally, refused, and have no adjacent second pair part. They could display politeness, attentiveness, or pass unnoticed.

## **7.2.2 Complex offers**

Around 22 offer exchanges were categorized as being complex in the BE corpus. This section is dedicated to providing discursive analysis of some BE complex offer exchanges that were initiated verbally. A representative sample of each strategy that may characterize complex offering negotiation is addressed. Section 7.2.2.1 presents complex offers that were developed using only one strategy, and Section 7.2.2.2 provides examples of complex offers that included more than one strategy.

### **7.2.2.1 Using one strategy**

This sub-section presents a discursive analysis of some complex offering negotiations that involve one strategy. It is essential to point out that the elaboration strategy was the most frequently one used; it was found in 20 verbal complex offers. The following extract illustrates this strategy. It includes a typical interaction in the BE data that occurs when guests arrive. It represents how greetings and first offers of drinks are accomplished. In two gatherings, this was accomplished in three stages: greetings, simple offer to take a seat, and complex offer to have drinks using elaboration. The hostess first asks her guests if they would like a drink, then she elaborates providing choices and finding out their specific preferences. On the other hand, the third gathering (Alice's group) had a

typical structure except that the drinks offer was achieved in a simple exchange rather than a complex one as Alice did not provide options. She just offered them juice.

The following extract took place between Elsa (hostess) and her guests (Helen and Janet). The women have just arrived at Elsa's house. She greeted and then invited them (lines 1-8). She then pointed to the dining table, which she had set in advance, so that they could sit down (line 9). This exchange was marked with laughter showing their pleasure in seeing each other.

**Extract 35 (Spontaneous, elaborated, hospitable offer)**

1. Janet: <@[Hello.]@>
2. Elsa: <@[Hello] @>
3. ((Greetings and Laughter))
4. Elsa: Come on in.
5. Janet: Thank you.
6. Elsa: Hi, there you are.
7. Helen: Hi=, how are you?
8. Elsa: Come on in. ((Greetings))
9. ((Elsa points to the dining table so they can sit.))
10. **Can I get you a drink?**
11. Janet: Uh=
12. Helen: Yeah, wha- what y- you've got?
13. **Elsa: I've got pink open, if you want that.**
14. Helen: Yeah, pink sounds good, pink sounds good.
15. Janet: Tea, please.
16. **Elsa: A cup of tea. Do you want normal, or do you want--?**
17. Janet: No. X.
18. Elsa: How are you?
19. Helen: OK. We're good, can't judge anything.
20. Janet: Yes=, not doing too bad.

Elsa then offered them some drinks, saying 'Can I get you a drink?' *Can* in offers means asking for permission rather than ability (Leech, 2014: 148); i.e. Elsa is sure about her ability to get the drink but she is seeking permission to offer it. This was accepted by both guests. Janet replied with the pragmatic marker, 'uh', in a lengthening tone. Helen responded with direct acceptance saying 'yeah'. Davidson (1984: 112) asserts that *yeah* and *uh* may signal weak agreement. However, Helen elaborated her acceptance by asking for further details about the options they had, saying 'what you've got?' (line 12). It seems that their decision depends on the options available to them. This question confirmed their roles as hostess and guests since it confirmed that Elsa is the provider of the drinks. Elsa supported her initial offer by giving them the most valuable option she had, which was wine: 'I've got pink open. If you want?' (line 13). She even used a conditional if to downgrade the imposition of her offer indicating that their desire is the main

decision maker. Moreover, she made clear that the bottle of wine is already open in order that the addressees would understand that their compliance with the offer would not create a cost to her or impose on her. This was met with a strong acceptance by Helen. She first used the pragmatic token *'yeah'* and then intensified her acceptance by repeating her response, *'pink sounds good'*, twice (line 14). It seems that *yeah* was used to introduce her strong agreement rather than forming a possible rejection-implicative as suggested by Davidson (1984: 112). After that, Janet indicated her acceptance of the drinks offer using an elliptic form, saying *'tea please'* (line 15). This provided evidence for my argument that Elsa did not give them the only option available, rather she provided the most valuable thing she had other than regular hot drinks (e.g. tea or coffee), and this was understood by the guests. Elsa first confirmed Janet's answer by repeating it. She then asked about specific details concerning how Janet wanted her tea. Again, the supportive move did not aim to avoid acceptance, rather it aimed to better satisfy the guests' wants. This was followed by Janet's direct refusal of the options and indicating what she wanted (her choice was inaudible – line 17). When Elsa achieved her goal, she ended the discussion by asking the women how they were (line 18) and started preparing drinks for them.

In the interviews, the offer was evaluated as very polite and appropriate by the interlocutors. Helen stated, *"It is the usual thing to ask once a guest has arrived. It was said using friendly language."* Her response indicated that the offer in this manner falls within the expected behaviour. This was also obvious in Elsa's response; *"Because as soon as they've come in I've offered them a drink, so I'm being that good host and I would always do that when people come in, I'd offer them some kind of refreshment."*

The elaboration in drinks offering would have been provided regardless of whether Helen had asked the question in line 12 or not. At the beginning of a gathering, a hostess usually starts with the most general offer of drinks then adds the options available to the guests. The supportive moves mainly aim to provide options rather than seek acceptance as the acceptance is provided or implied after the initial offer. It is so much part of the politic behaviour at a dinner setting that it could scarcely be left out; this type of elaboration in initial drinks offering occurred in two sets of data (i.e. Elsa's and Susan's groups).

The following extract shows an offer exchange that was built collaboratively. In this case, the women met for dinner at the researcher's house.<sup>119</sup> They were

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<sup>119</sup> It is important to point out that although the dinner was held at my home, I was an observer and Susan was the hostess. The venue did not affect the roles as Susan was the one who had invited her friends. The venue was determined according to Susan's preference.

about to leave. They offered to share a taxi with Susan (hostess) or they could walk with her.

**Extract 36 (Solicited, collaborative offer of assistance)**

1. Susan: *I feel like that's a good-- ..*
2. Flora: *Mm.*
3. Susan: *a good time.*
4. Flora: *Um,*
5. Hilary: *A--*
6. All: *@@@*
7. Susan: *Are you--. So you're getting a taxi back?*
8. Hilary: *Yeah, probably .. I think we might as well.*
9. Susan: *OK.*
10. Rachel: *What do you-- what are you gonna do, do you think?*
11. Susan: *I think I'm gonna-- it's just I didn't really want to walk through town*
12. *on Friday night. 0*
13. **Flora: You could get a-- 0**
14. Susan: *But-- 0*
15. **Flora: a taxi with us to Headingley.**
16. ...
17. Susan: *I could .. I mean, I don't mind walking .. just as far as I did, because*
18. *it wasn't actually that far. So it's just from here to the Light. 0*
19. Hilary: *Yeah.*
20. Flora: *Or we could--0*
21. **Rachel: We could walk with you and then get an Uber [when you get]**
22. **Hilary: [That's true.]**
23. **Rachel: on the bus.**
24. **Flora: That's true .. Yeah.**
25. **Rachel: Yeah? Shall we do that?**
26. **Hilary: Yeah, [[cause X ]]**
27. Susan: *[[That'd be nice,]] thank you.*
28. Flora: *[Yeah.]*
29. Hilary: *[Yeah.]*
30. Flora: *Have a little walk. 0*
31. Susan: *And then-- cause then I can just-- cause I've got a day rider, so I*
32. *can just get those literally to the door then.*
33. Flora: *Yeah, yeah.*
34. Rachel: *Cool.*
35. Hilary: *That sounds good.*
36. Susan: *Cause X, yeah-- I cause if I got the train.. I would*
37. *[still have to get back from Horsforth.]*
38. Hilary: *[You may as well walk. Yeah.]*
39. Susan: *Cool. Thank you.*
40. All: *@@@*
41. *((They stand to leave.))*

They were bringing the gathering to an end by commenting on what a good time they had had (lines 1- 6). After that, Susan seemed to be trying to solicit an offer from them. She hesitantly asked them if they were getting a taxi back in the same way as they had travelled to the dinner, uttering the initial words of her question

without completing it and then reformulating it. This uncertainty indexes her attempt to revise what has been said or search for different means of expression. The action is considered self-initiated self-repair (SISR) (see fn. 108, Section 7.2.1.1). Finally, she was successful in the repair and formed her question using a declarative sentence with high intonation (line 7). Hilary replied that they would probably get a taxi as they did on their way to the dinner. This was met with the word 'OK' by Susan (line 9). Although 'OK' functions as closure for a sequence (Edmondson, 1981: 152; Liddicoat, 2011: 189), her attempt to hint for an offer was not ignored. Rachel inferred that Susan might be concerned about getting home. Rachel hesitantly asked Susan about her plans (line 10), which was apparent in her attempt to reformulate her question (i.e. SISR). This encouraged Susan to state her hint for an offer more clearly. She first tried to state her plan; however, she truncated her utterance by directly indicating her unwillingness to walk through the city centre on Friday night (lines 11–12). This was latched with an offer by Flora to join them in the taxi (lines 13, 15). It seems that soliciting an offer was Susan's intention from the beginning,<sup>120</sup> but she was indirect and hesitant to avoid losing face if her hint was not fulfilled. This was apparent in her subsequent turn. She latched and overlapped Flora's turn saying '*but*' to introduce contradictory information. There was a pause after Flora's offer. The pause may signify a moment of uncertainty or mental planning (Archer et al., 2012: 97), which was shown in Susan's hesitation. Susan modified her utterance by indicating hesitantly that she did not mind walking and that it is not far (lines 17–18). Although she stated that she did not mind walking, her utterance did not function as a refusal rather it was an attempt to save her face. This was followed by Hilary's agreement (line 19). It seemed that neither Hilary nor Rachel supported Flora's initial offer to Susan. This was picked up by Flora as she attempted to re-examine her offer by trying to add another option (line 20), which was latched by Rachel's offering Susan that they would walk with her (line 21). It seems that Rachel aimed to collaborate with Flora's attempts to help Susan by providing other options. This was also supported by Hilary, saying '*that's true*' (line 22). That Hilary's utterance overlapped Rachel's signals that she is collaboratively interested in the offer (see fn. 114, Section 7.2.1.2). The overlap did not affect Rachel's utterance as she continued it (line 23), indicating that they would get an Uber<sup>121</sup> when Susan got on the bus. Rachel did not only offer to walk with Susan; she also offered to wait until Susan got on the bus. This was

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<sup>120</sup> It seems that prompting an offer is more preferable than performing a request (Levinson, 1983: 343; Schegloff, 1979: 49) since through hinting for an offer speakers can reduce their degree of accountability for the social action if it is turned down (Haugh, 2015: 136).

<sup>121</sup> A worldwide online transportation company.

also supported by Flora's agreement (line 24). It seems that Rachel imposed changes to their plan (i.e. walking with Susan to the bus stop), and both Hilary and Flora expressed explicitly their agreement to these changes. Flora's and Hilary's positive reactions encouraged Rachel to ask the others whether they agreed to undertake the new plan (line 25). By using 'we', referring to herself, the other offerers, and the addressee, she made clear that all of them are co-decision makers. This was accepted by all the participants. The offer was appreciated by Susan as she stated her positive opinion, saying *'that'd be nice'*, and *'thank you'*, showing gratitude (line 27). Although Susan stated her acceptance, she went on justifying it by indicating that she had a day rider<sup>122</sup> (lines 31–32, 36–37). Her grounders may aim to reduce the threat to her face as she was the one who prompted the offer in the first place. This was followed by the others' acknowledgment and support (lines 33–35, 38). These were appreciated again by Susan (line 39). The exchange was brought to an end by everyone's laughter (line 40) and everyone leaving.

Since Susan repeated her appreciation and tried to justify her acceptance, it seems that she perceived the offer as positively marked polite behaviour. This was also apparent in her response in the SRQ as she evaluated the offers to be very polite and appropriate. She added that it was very polite that they offered to change their journey in order to make her feel more comfortable. The discursive struggle over managing the negotiation of this offer sequence politely was noticed by the interactants. The offerers evaluated their offers as polite and appropriate. They indicated that their intention was not to let Susan walk alone. Their responses implied that their intention as speakers formed the basis of their evaluation, since they referred to the speaker in their justification of their evaluations rather than the addressee. For instance, Flora said, *"She was trying to offer Susan a way of getting home and not having to walk on her own."* Moreover, Rachel said about her offer, *"I wanted to offer the best solution to make sure Susan wasn't walking alone"*. It seems that that participants judge politeness according to speakers' intentions regardless of addressees' reaction even though they may not be very good at judging the intentions. In other words, they cannot get into people's heads to figure out the "real" intention but they tend to judge behaviours based on their understandings of speakers' intentions. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 8.

What is interesting in this offer is that Flora started it on behalf of the other friends (Rachel and Hilary). Whether the other performers of this offer were willing to be committed to this action was not considered by the speaker; this is obvious in the

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<sup>122</sup> A day rider ticket allows a person to make as many journeys as s/he wants for one day on local buses.



pronouns used in the offers, i.e. *us* (line 15), and *we* (line 21). It is a collaborative offering from the beginning. The offer in this manner creates several inferences. First, it indicates the close relationship among the friends as the speaker did not judge that controlling their actions or imposing on them was an obstacle to the offer; i.e. precedence was given to association rights. Second, it enhances the group's solidarity. Finally, it can be claimed that fulfilling someone's need for help and taking care of someone's feelings take precedence over autonomy-control within friendship groups, which means that people should not be unduly controlled or imposed upon. The offer was discursively and collaboratively produced by the three friends; particularly, the initial attempt was collaboratively modified and supported. Similarly, the reactions were discursively modified and constructed until they all agreed on an appropriate action. For instance, Hilary did not positively react to the initial offer, yet she developed a positive reaction to the modified attempt.

Up to now, two strategies that can make up complex offering negotiation have been presented, i.e. elaborated and collaborative offering. Reoffering strategy is exemplified in two extracts in the following section since it is mostly accompanied by other strategies, particularly elaboration.

### 7.2.2.2 Using more than one strategy

Six verbal offers were developed into complex exchanges using more than one strategy. Four of them included two strategies in which elaboration was accompanied by reoffering (three) or collaboration (one). The other two included three strategies. They were either embedding or collaboration with both elaboration and reoffering sequences. Representative samples are investigated below.

The following extract shows how a reoffering sequence and elaboration developed a complex offer exchange. The combination increases the complexity of the exchange. The women were eating and talking. Susan noticed that Flora had a cracked glass. She offered to change it.

#### **Extract 37 (spontaneous, elaborated, hospitable offer with a reoffering strategy)**

1. *Flora: But I kept forgetting they were there, @@ or, like, there to do that,*
2. *like, as well as their other stuff. 0*
3. ***Susan: Umm. I just noticed the crack in glass. There's some there.***
4. *..*
5. *Flora: That's fine.*
6. *Susan: Um-- 0*
7. *Flora: I'm being careful. I'm holding it gently, I think.*
8. *All @@*

9. Rachel: *Maybe,*  
 10. All @@@  
 11. Rachel: *Maybe maybe it's egg.*  
 12. All @@@@  
 13. Flora: *Oh?*  
 14. Susan: **OK, quite a big one. Do you want a different glass? 0**  
 15. Flora: *No, that's all right.*  
 16. Susan: **Are you sure?**  
 17. *((Flora nods her approval.))*  
 18. ...  
 19. Susan: *Um, yeah. I couldn't watch it. And I haven't caught up yet.*  
 20. All: [@@@]  
 21. Flora: [*<@ That's all right. @>*]  
 22. Susan: *[[ I feel sort of X responsibility or-- 0*  
 23. X: *[[< @ X @>]]*  
 24. All: *[[@@@@]]*  
 25. Flora: *<@ That's OK. @> 0*  
 26. Susan: *some <@ thing @>*  
 27. Rachel: *It is good.*  
 28. Susan: *Is it?*  
 29. Rachel: *Yeah .. It is.*  
 30. Hilary: *What about Victoria?*  
 31. Rachel: *Mm-hmm. Yes, there is--*  
 32. Susan: *Sorry, Yeah.*  
 33. All: @@@  
 34. Susan: *Cause I said last week I'll-- I'll try and watch it*

Susan indicated that she had just noticed Flora's cracked glass (line 3). The back channel 'umm' registers that she was gaining some time to plan her words or that she knew that what she was about to say might be awkward (i.e. dispreferred). Susan's face could be threatened through admitting she gave her guest a cracked glass and this could be an indication of not giving appropriate attention to her hosting obligations. Her attempt to explain that she had just noticed the crack confirmed that she felt threatened. That her remark has latched onto Flora's utterance may have indicated her sincerity that she had not noticed the crack in the glass before her utterance. Susan's utterance was followed by a pause during which Flora looked at the crack since she had not seen it. It seems that Flora was evaluating the crack, which was apparent in her subsequent utterance, saying 'That's fine' (line 5). This was followed by Susan attempting to say something (line 6); however, Susan's attempt was latched by Flora saying she was being careful (line 7), which supported her previous evaluation of the glass. This could be interpreted in two different ways. First, the latching seemed to be unplanned as Susan's attempt to talk might not have been heard by Flora. Second, Susan

might have misprojected a transition relevance place (TRP).<sup>123</sup> She might think that Flora had finished her utterance in line 5 and when she realized that Flora had not finished, she dropped out. Flora's response was followed by an exchange of humour and laughter by the side participants<sup>124</sup> (lines 8–13). The intervention of the side participants, i.e. their laughter and Rachel's comment, showed that Flora's reasoning in her refusal had been more than expected or needed and was perceived to be funny. This provides evidence that side participants may show negative or positive reactions to a given behaviour even if they were not addressed, not only the addressee. It seems that attention could be shifted to another topic. Nevertheless, Susan stepped in by first providing a grounder, saying it is a big crack, then offering to change the glass by asking about Flora's desire to have a different glass (line 14). The offer was immediately refused by Flora. The latching between the offer and the refusal suggested that the refusal was sincere. However, Susan did not withdraw the offer; instead, she reaffirmed it using a confirmation move in a conventional manner, saying '*Are you sure?*' (line 16). This was met by Flora's nod showing her refusal. This was followed with a pause (line 18).

The pause suggested that Susan accepted that Flora's refusal was sincere, so the exchange could be closed. This was marked by Susan's attempt to lead the way back to their unfinished talk, which was related to a TV series they had been watching (line 19). She told them that she had not watched it yet. Her attempt was initialized with some hesitation as she started with back channels '*um*' and '*yeah*'. It seems that the hesitation was marking the transition back to the previous topic. This attempt was accepted by the interlocutors as they engaged with her in the talk and laughed. Flora's involvement in the new topic (line 21) showed that she perceived Susan's acceptance of the refusal (i.e. not changing the glass) to be politic.

However, despite the engagement of Flora and the others in that new topic, it seemed that Susan was not entirely done with the offer. Susan referred back to the offer of changing the cracked glass by expressing her sense of responsibility (line 22). It seems that Susan used her sense of responsibility as a way to convince Flora to accept the offer. This was perceived with laughter and Flora's

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<sup>123</sup> A transition relevance place (TRP) refers to the end of turn constructional units at which the turn at talk could legitimately pass from one speaker to another (Levinson, 1983: 297) (see Chapter 2).

<sup>124</sup> The recipients in each talk may either be addressees or unaddressed side participants. An addressee is the person(s) to whom the talk is directed, whereas the side participant is not directly addressed. Both have recognized rights to respond to the talk but their degree of responsibility to do so varies in each talk exchange. (Kádár & Haugh, 2013: 88).

confirming that it was OK. That Susan projected herself as guilty to convince Flora to accept the offer did not affect Flora's refusal to have another glass. This might prove the sincerity of the refusal. The negotiation was brought to an end by the intervention of the side participants, Rachel and Hilary. Rachel indicated that the glass was acceptable to use (line 27). This was questioned by Susan as she tried to confirm whether this was truly the case. This was approved by Rachel (line 29). It seems that Rachel considers herself a very intimate friend of Flora to have the right to help her in refusing the offer although it was neither addressed to her nor was her help requested. Hilary then stepped in and relaunched the unfinished topic which was related to a TV series by asking about Victoria (line 30). It seemed that they felt that the negotiation of the offer had been over-extended: it took more time than expected or needed. They intervened in order to bring the negotiation to a closure. This was picked up by Susan as she apologized in line 32 for leading the discussion back to the offer; she then commented on the new topic.

The initial offer is clearly open to a polite interpretation by the participants. However, whether the participants maintain seeing the offering exchange as realizations of politeness remains debatable. The laughter might suggest that it falls within unmarked politic behaviour. Flora's reaction, i.e. trying to reassure Susan that it was OK, shows that she perceived the offer as a marked case of relational work. The intervention by the side participants to end the negotiation suggests that the exchange was perceived negatively as impolite or overpolite. This provides evidence that someone's behaviour may negatively or positively affect the side participants, not only the addressee. According to Haugh (2013a: 62), interpersonal evaluations, including (im)politeness, are relative to a complex range of production and recipient footings (Goffman, 1979).

On interviewing, they evaluated the offer as polite and appropriate. Flora and Rachel indicated that they would do the same. Flora added that she may even get her guest another glass anyway because it might be unsafe. Her response indicated that she considered the addressees' safety more important than their freedom of action. Her answer in the interview questioned the sincerity of her refusals or the accuracy of her comments. It may suggest that her response during the interview was subject to her knowledge of appropriate norms rather than her evaluation of the actual context. It gives the impression that she refused to avoid imposing on Susan. Susan indicated that the offer is polite because it was in relation to Flora's safety. Although both considered safety in their responses, safety was ignored in the immediate actual discourse, i.e. the offer was refused and not accomplished. However, Susan's reference to her sense of responsibility (line 22) suggests that she was oriented towards this issue despite

the fact that no immediate action was taken to safeguard Flora's safety in the actual discourse. This claim is supported by a subsequent event in which Susan offered her guests another round of drinks twenty minutes later. This is shown in lines 24 and 26 in the following extract.

**Extract 38 (A continual to the offer exchange in the previous extract)**

1. **Susan: Do you want another drink?**
2. *Hilary: I'm all [right.]*
3. *Flora: of the [X exotic X] drink, actually.*
4. *Susan: Of the exotic tropical.*
5. *Rachel: The same=, yes.*
6. *Hilary: Was it as exotic as [X]?*
7. *Flora: [*< @The very same. @>*]*
8. *All: @@@@*
9. *Flora: It was just as exotic.*
10. **Susan: You sure? You want some-- ((looking at Hilary.))**
11. *Hilary: Yeah, I'm all right. Thank you.*
12. *Rachel: Thanks very much.*
13. *Flora: Thank you.*
14. ..
15. *Hilary: X much.*
16. *X: Umm*
17. ((Susan goes to the kitchen to bring Juice for Rachel and Flora.))
18. *Hilary: Do you know when a-- .. exhibition about prosthetics ends?*
19. *Because I keep meaning to go.*
20. *Rachel: Oh, like October, I think.*
21. *Hilary: Good.*
22. *Rachel: In Leeds?*
23. *Hilary: Yeah, it's at [the art gallery.]*
24. **Susan: X [a different glass.]**
25. *Floral: Sorry?*
26. **Susan: I'll get you a different glass.**
27. *Flora: Sure, thank you.*
28. *Susan: Yeah.*
29. *Flora: Mm.*
30. ...
31. *Rachel: Is it free?*
32. *Flora: Oh yeah.0*
33. *Hilary: Yeah.*
34. *Rachel: Good*
35. @@@.

Susan offered her guests another round of drinks in line 1 when she noticed that their glasses were almost empty. Flora and Rachel accepted another glass of juice (lines 3 & 5), whereas Hilary refused (line 2).<sup>125</sup> When Susan was in the

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<sup>125</sup> Providing a thorough analysis of this offer exchange is not my concern here. The focus here is on providing further evidence for the offer exchange regarding the cracked glass in Extract 37.

kitchen to get the drinks (line 17), she made an offer to Flora to get her a different glass (24 & 26), using a declarative statement. This is despite the fact that the complex offer exchange regarding having a different glass had been closed with a refusal twenty minutes ago, during which time the interactants engaged in several topics. It seems that her aim was to inform Flora about changing the glass rather than asking for her approval. This was supported by Flora saying '*Sure*' and using an appreciation token '*thank you*' (line 27). It is apparent that this offer is related to the cracked glass since Susan did not offer to change Rachel's glass and both women were still having the same drink, i.e. there was no need to change the glass to avoid affecting the flavour of their drinks.

Susan's and Flora's actions in this subsequent extract suggest several explanations. First, Susan was not satisfied with Flora's refusal twenty minutes before, but she respected her decision and freedom of action at that moment (i.e. refusing to change the glass). Second, Flora's action here (immediate acceptance) suggests that her refusals in Extract 37 aimed to avoid imposing on Susan, i.e. she did not want Susan to go to the kitchen just to change the glass. However, when Susan was already in the kitchen for other business (getting drinks for them), she did not negotiate the offer and immediately accepted it. Third, their actions in this extract are in line with their responses during the interviews in which Flora's safety was highlighted. Fourth, giving a guest a cracked glass threatened Susan's face and fulfilling the offer would enhance her face as a good hostess. This was apparent in her relaunching an offer that had been closed twenty minutes before. Fifth, the smooth offering and acceptance of this offer in Extract 38 – despite the intricate negotiation of the same offer earlier (Extract 37) – provided evidence that equity rights were prioritized in Extract 37. It is clear that imposition avoidance and freedom of action governed the negotiation of the offer despite the views expressed in the interviews, which consider Flora's safety a priority. Finally, it seems that the refusals in Extract 37 were sincere, and the same offer was accepted when the circumstances were different (i.e. Susan was in the kitchen and changing the glass would be easier). This provided further evidence that no action is inherently polite. Politeness is situated and interactants' evaluative reactions to the same behaviour may vary from one situation to another depending on the context.

It can be concluded that the interactants' real reactions during the actual discourse form the basis of politeness investigation in this issue since the actual conversation shows how politeness evaluations were discursively constructed through discourse production (including the intricate negotiation of the initial offer which ended with a refusal and the reproduction of the offer twenty minutes later) and how side participants were affected by the negotiation (commenting on

Flora's refusal and intervening to end the negotiation of the offer), an issue their responses in the interview did not address. This shows how recordings of natural conversation would provide invaluable data that data elicitation techniques such as DCTs and role-plays fail to shed light on. The relaunch of a settled offer exchange after getting involved in various topics for around twenty minutes would not be provided by any type of data elicitation techniques.

The above analysed complex offer exchanges included either one or two strategies. The following extract illustrates a complex offering negotiation that combines three strategies: embedded offering, elaboration, and reoffering. It is worth pointing out that this is the only embedded offering found in the BE data. It took place between Elsa, Helen, and Janet. The women were talking about how to get rid of some of their clothes. Elsa suggested having a swapping party (line 1). After they responded positively to her suggestion, she offered to hold a swapping party (line 4). Her offer seems more spontaneous as the other women had not expressed their willingness to have a party. This was clear in her reply during the interview: *"It's just we started the discussion and then I came up and offered to have the swapping party at my house."* It seemed that Elsa wanted to offer to host a swapping party earlier in the interaction when they started the discussion about how to get rid of their stuff, but she wanted to make sure they would like the idea before making the offer. The sincerity of her offer is not in question; had she not been truly sincere in making the offer, she would not have made it in the first place.

**Extract 39 (Spontaneous offer with embedded, elaboration, and reoffering strategies)**

1. *Elsa: Do you fancy a bit of a swapping party one time? 0*
2. *Janet: Yes.*
3. *Helen: <F Yeah, F> that'd be good.*
4. ***Elsa: If you do, I'll sort out, put some stuff in a bag and sort those out.***
5. *Janet: Yeah, I'll try and get some stuff that's actually appropriate for giving*
6. *to other people.*
7. ***Helen: I don't know if you'd be interested, there's a girl I know, .. I've***
8. ***only met her once, but she's a- ah- she's friend of Dan's-- Dan***
9. ***knows a lady that makes, she's called the ((name)) and she***
10. ***makes a lot of cakes, American-style cakes, and sells them at***
11. ***brownies , 0***
12. *Janet: Yeah. 0*
13. ***Helen: and she sells them at the stalls. And she invited us to a charity***
14. ***night which she runs every year, and we met this girl called***
15. ***Lizzie who works with Temple Spa,***
16. *Elsa: Oh Yeah yeah. ((Yawning))*
17. *Helen: and she does like spa nights and stuff. 0*
18. *Janet: Ooh, very nice.*
19. ***Helen: I don't know if that'd be a-- 0***

20. *Elsa: Yeah, I have been to Temple Spa before.*  
 21. *Helen: Yeah.*  
 22. *Elsa: I don't know if it was before you started coming. John does it.*  
 23. *Helen: Oh alright.*  
 24. *Elsa: I don't really use much of their stuff,*  
 25. *Helen: OK.*  
 26. *Janet: I don't know. But it's worth thinking about.*  
 27. *Elsa: I was wondering whether to-- I was going to have one with Laura,*  
 28. *doing her jewellery and fudge,*  
 29. *Janet: Yes.*  
 30. *Elsa: I thought that might be a nice idea.*  
 31. *Janet: Um*  
 32. *Helen: Yeah.*  
 33. *Elsa: They're quite cheap really, they're not-- if people are interested, and*  
 34. *it isn't like you have to have a big presentation for that, is it?*  
 35. *Helen: No, no.*  
 36. *Elsa: It's a bit of a different night to some of the others, but you can kind of*  
 37. *have the look.*  
 38. *Janet: Yeah*  
 39. *Helen: Yeah.*  
 40. *Janet: I like smelly ones because they're good for presents. Even if I*  
 41. *wouldn't buy a lot for myself - because I've got bits - but I find them*  
 42. *really good for presents.*  
 43. *Elsa: Yeah, that sort of thing is probably good towards Christmas, isn't it?*  
 44. *Janet: [Yeah.]*  
 45. *Helen: [Yeah.]*  
 46. ...  
 47. ***Elsa: But yeah, I could do a swapping party.***  
 48. *Helen: Yeah, no, a swapping party would be good.*  
 49. *Janet: Sam loves that dressing gown I gave him.*  
 50. *Helen: Does he?*

Although the addressees showed their enthusiasm for the suggestion, Elsa first introduced her offer using conditional *if* and then stated her offer (line 4). It seems that she wanted to assure their freedom of action. That they liked the suggestion does not imply their acceptance. This was immediately accepted by Janet. She first used the token 'Yeah' and then stated her plan for the party (lines 5-6). However, Helen offered another idea. She first minimized the imposition of her offer, stating that she did not know whether they would be interested in her offer. The offer was expanded and elaborated in several turns (lines 7-19). It was separated by back channels such as *oh* and *yeah* by Elsa and Janet. Vocalizations such as *Umm*, *Oh*, *yeah*, *sure*, and *right* during other speaker's talk signal that the addressee is following the speaker and wants him/her to go on (McCarthy et al., 2010: 58). Helen's offer may act as indirect refusal to Elsa's. This was obvious in Helen's response during the interview as she said, "As *Elsa had hosted a few evening events recently, I was offering to host a similar themed event.*" It seems that she did not object to the idea of having a swapping party.



What she objected to is the idea that Elsa would host it. This shows partial refusal. On line 19, she repeated the imposition minimizer, saying *'I don't know'* and using an if conditional. She assures them that she does not want to impose on them and that they are the main decision makers. This was interpreted by the addressees as meaning that she has completed her offer and they are welcome to reply, which was shown by Elsa's latching onto Helen's utterance (line 20). Again, Elsa developed her refusal indirectly over several turns (lines 20-24). She first indicated that she had been to Temple Spa before, and then she indicated that she did not use their products (line 24). It seems that she invested much effort in refusing by providing an excuse based on her experience. According to CA, refusals are dispreferred responses to offers (Levinson, 1983: 336; Liddicoat, 2011: 150). They thus need to put more effort into planning, shown in one or more of the following features: delay of delivery within a turn or across several turns, mitigated or indirect action, and accounts or explanations of why such action is taken (Tsui, 1994: 58). This explains the manner in which Elsa and Helen expressed their refusals. It seems that Elsa wanted to maintain Helen's face. The refusal was accepted by Helen saying *'OK'*<sup>126</sup> (line 25). On the other hand, Janet verbalized her uncertainty, saying *'I don't know'*, which may be interpreted as a hedged refusal. She then used *'but'* to introduce her favourable stance, saying that *'it is worth thinking about'* (line 26). It seems that she wanted to avoid stating her refusal to maintain Helen's face; thus she made her decision somewhat ambiguous and open to future negotiation. The conversation shifted to mentioning other themed events (lines 27-45). After the discussion ended, there was a pause. Elsa reproduced a second attempt at her earlier offer, which was to hold a swapping party (line 47). This time the offer was accepted by Helen (line 48). It can be said that the offer has received a preferred action from both addressees; thus the exchange can be closed. This preferred action was developed discursively in a number of turns. Using natural data allows to show how reactions were discursively constructed through discourse production and they did not simply appear in adjacent pairs. The acceptance was picked up by Janet. She introduced another topic on line 49, which the interactants engaged in easily. The smooth transition to a new topic supports our claim that the exchange reached a *Satisfy*.

The effort employed in expressing refusals suggests that this offering behaviour has been judged as positively marked politic. Both Elsa's and Helen's offers were evaluated as very polite and appropriate in the SRQ. Elsa acknowledged the

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<sup>126</sup> *'OK'* often marks that the speaker is satisfied with the current outcome in an ongoing encounter, or implies that the exchange is closed (Edmondson, 1981: 152; Liddicoat, 2011: 189-190; Schegloff, 2007: 120).

effort Helen was making to provide other options to the offer so that they could come to a successful conclusion. Elsa said, *“I felt that she was making an effort to take in suggestions of the parties that we could hold.”*

### 7.3 Summary

The analysis has shown that offers are governed by the groups' expectations of appropriate behaviour, which are influenced by the wider culture. This was apparent in participants' responses during interviews as they considered some offers as being the normal thing to be done. Lay persons subconsciously know that norms of polite behaviour are continuously changing according to the context and the nature of their relations with other interlocutors. Thus, association rights (Spencer-Oatey, 2000: 14) play a crucial role in defining our expectations of appropriate behaviour. It can be seen that on certain occasions, offers were oriented to sociality whereas in others to autonomy.

Offers were used as a tool to manage solidarity and rapport among friends. It was found that offers do not always entail that a service or item is provided. Offers could be socially oriented, in which the aim is to support proper membership in the group and maintain solidarity (i.e. involve other participants in the dialogue or activity), manage smooth interaction (i.e. offering turn of speech), or offering information to save someone's face. The absence of such offers may result in non-normative interaction. Moreover, offering assistance to a friend when needed is considered the appropriate/politic norm if it does not contradict the norms of polite behaviour in the wider society. Being attentive to the needs of the other (Fukushima, 2015: 271) has a crucial role in offering behaviour among the ten BE females. It seems more important than considering their autonomy rights.

Most of the hospitable offers were seen as part of politic behaviour as their absence would affect the ongoing interaction negatively and their presence may not cause an evaluative reaction. Appreciation and complimenting were employed to show that an offer was perceived as positively marked politic/polite behaviour. When people invest a lot of effort in expressing refusals, this created the possibility that the offer has been judged as positively marked politic behaviour. Moreover, responses to hospitable offers may be delayed due to involvement in conversations about other topics. It seems that participants value their roles as friends more than their roles as hostess and guests. It was found that the absence of a response could indicate that it is possibly accepted rather than ignored or refused. The analysis showed that offers could be taken up non-verbally, verbally, or both. Partial acceptance or refusal may also occur.

It was found that an offer could be evaluated differently by the participants, as proposed by Locher (2006: 252). Moreover, differences between interactants' immediate reactions and metalinguistic evaluations were detected. What they said in the interview may not match precisely what they did at that time. Although how the addressee perceives the act would be significant, it was found that participants judge politeness according to their interpretations of speakers' intentions despite the addressee's reaction. It was found that side participants may take part in the discursive struggle over politeness evaluations. A given behaviour may negatively or positively affect not only the addressee but also the side participants as they may intervene to show evaluative reactions to some behaviours.

The analysis has shown that non-verbal offers were used as strategic actions to avoid interrupting the flow of talk. Performing the offer non-verbally saves the performer from interrupting the talk and, hence, being rude. Thus, non-verbal offers proved to be a significant part of managing relational work since they may influence the interaction negatively or positively. However, non-verbal offers seem not to be favoured by BE speakers. During interviews, BE participants did not positively evaluate them. Non-verbal offers were limited to situations where addressees' autonomy did not have an essential effect since they imply a high degree of imposition. Non-verbal offers were used in situations in which an offer is not optional, i.e. part of expected hospitality like the SA corpus (e.g. offering food or cutlery to a guest), considering someone's feelings and group's solidarity (e.g. getting them involved in the talk), or fulfilling a need for immediate assistance (e.g. moving something closer to someone).

To sum up, it seems that the interactants knew when to engage in verbal or non-verbal offers as well as in simple or complex offers. Offers were governed by the interactants' shared norms which have been constructed through their own histories of specific social practices. These are discursively negotiated as the interaction develops, considering several factors including the context and their relationships.

In this and the previous two chapters, I have presented a quantitative and discursive account of offer negotiations as part of ongoing ordinary spoken discourse among members of female friendship groups in Saudi Arabia and Britain. In the following chapter, I will bring together the analyses from Chapters 5, 6, and 7 in order to answer the research questions as well as discuss and interpret the study's findings.

## Chapter 8 Discussion

The study provides both a quantitative and a qualitative analysis of offering behaviour in spontaneous conversations among young female friends in Saudi Arabia and Britain. The quantitative analysis explored the dominant interactional norms and patterns of offering, and the qualitative analysis investigated discursive politeness as manifested in offer negotiations.

This chapter presents a discussion of the main results reported in Chapters 5, 6, and 7. It provides answers to the questions the study was designed to answer:

1. What are the main interactional characteristics of offers in female friendship groups in Saudi Arabia and Britain?
2. How do Saudi and British female friends manage their relational work in offer negotiations as part of ordinary talk?
3. To what extent does descriptive quantitative analysis help in identifying politeness behaviour?
4. To what extent do non-verbal offers affect relational work management among interactants?
5. What are the underlying factors that contribute to participants' evaluations of (im)politeness in the friendship groups?
6. Are the evaluative reactions gleaned from actual discourse more, or less, useful than those obtained using metalinguistic instruments?

The chapter addresses these six research questions by summarizing key findings and providing interpretations of these findings. It clarifies the relationship of these results with reference to previous research and explores some possible reasons to account for the research findings. Before discussing the results, I should clarify that this study does not suggest that native female speakers of SA or BE all act alike. It sets out, nonetheless, to explore the dynamics of offering interactions in female friendship groups.

### **8.1 What are the main interactional characteristics of offers in female friendship groups in Saudi Arabia and Britain?**

Table 16 below presents a summary of the descriptive statistics of the study's findings. It provides totals and percentages of the main interactional aspects in offer exchanges in both SA and BE groups. It is clear from Table 16 that the number of offers produced by Saudi females was higher than those produced by the British females. Although the counts were based on recorded talk of nearly

equal length (i.e. eight hours each), no one can claim that Saudis tend to make more offers than British people. It is most likely that the difference can be attributed to the norms of serving Arabic coffee to guests in Saudi Arabia. Arabic coffee is served in small cups with a capacity of around 20 millilitres, and each person is expected to drink several cups. Considering the size of cups and glasses in Britain, this might lead to the higher number of offers by SA groups. My interpretation is also confirmed by the distribution of hospitality offers. There were 10% more hospitality offers in the SA data than in the BE data. In addition, the total counts of the other topics, including offer of assistance, information, and others, were about equal in the SA and BE data. The offers of these other topics were 30 in the SA data and 32 in the BE data, which provides further evidence that the frequency of offering situations was similar among young female friends in both cultures.

As seen in Table 16, some similarities and differences concerning the distribution of the interactional features were found between the BE and the SA data. A quick review of the table shows that the sub-categories were roughly distributed in a similar manner across the two groups. In other words, the dominant sub-categories were similar in both SA and BE data, but their degree of occurrence may vary to some extent. For example, simple offer exchanges were more frequent than complex offer exchanges in both the SA and BE corpus; however, BE participants demonstrated a greater preference for simple offer exchanges.

The discussion of the first question, *“What are the main interactional characteristics of offers in female friendship groups in Saudi Arabia and Britain?”*, is divided into six sub-sections. The first five address the main categories of the coding framework employed in the study. The discussion is based on comparing the percentages for each category rather than its frequency. This aims to increase the accuracy of the comparison since the total number of offers were not the same in the two groups. Finally, Section 8.1.6 presents a conclusion based on the interpretations of the findings.

**Table 16 Summary of the interactional features of offers in SA & BE groups**

Group		SA		BE	
Total Number of Offer Exchanges		143		104	
		Tot.	%	Tot.	%
Communication Type	Verbal offers	76	53.1%	76	73.1%
	Non-verbal offers	67	46.9%	28	26.9%
Stimulus of Offer	Spontaneous offers	111	77.6%	92	88.5%
	Solicited offers	32	22.4%	12	11.5%
Complexity of Offer Exchanges	Simple offers	98	68.5%	81	77.9%
	Complex offers	45	31.5%	23	22.1%
Strategies of Complex Offers	Elaborated offers	24	39.3%	21	67.7%
	Offer-reoffering sequence	24	39.3%	6	19.4%
	Collaborative offers	6	9.8%	3	9.7%
	Embedded offers	7	11.5%	1	3.2%
Offer Topics	Hospitality offers	113	79%	72	69.2%
	Offer of assistance	13	9.1%	10	9.6%
	Offer of information	12	8.4%	14	13.5%
	Other	5	3.5%	8	7.7%
Total Number of Supportive moves		102		86	
Supportive Moves	Expander	48	47%	44	51.1%
	Grounder	23	22.5%	16	18.6%
	Explicit conditional	3	2.9%	11	12.8%
	Confirmation of H's response	16	15.7%	10	11.6%
	Imposition minimizer	12	11.8%	5	5.8%

### 8.1.1 Offer topics

Table 16 shows that offer of hospitality was the most frequent topic of offering behaviour, constituting around three quarters of all offering exchanges. It can be said that the conclusions of the study mainly refer to offers of hospitality among female friends. It seems that hospitable offers in hostess/guests setting are a focal constituent of unmarked politic relational work. This was evidenced in the fact that most participants employed simple exchanges. Their absence would probably be evaluated negatively. According to Fraser (1990: 233), people do not notice the presence of behaviour that aligns with expected politeness norms, yet they do notice its absence. This result also showed that the participants did not tend to make offers if they were not obliged to do so. If the recordings had taken place in another setting, it is possible that the number of naturally occurring offers would have been very low, i.e. the number of other offer topics was around 30 in both corpora. The high frequency of hospitality offers and the limited number of other offer topics suggest that offers are not frequent in settings that do not require showing hospitality. It may explain why offers have been neglected in the literature compared to other speech acts such as requests and apologies. It also corresponds to Rabinowitz's (1993: 90) conclusions that offers were not very common in spontaneous ongoing conversations.

It is also worth mentioning that few hospitable offers were performed by guests. This behaviour occurred in all three SA groups, but only in one of the BE groups. This could suggest that cooperative conjoint hospitality forms a greater part of Saudi friendship relations than in corresponding British relations. This is seen as an indication of intimacy and closeness between the SA friends in this study. However, the differences in hospitable behaviour could be due to the fact that the SA groups met more regularly in each other's homes. Based on this small scale study of a small number of friendship groups, it would be unreasonable to assume generalizable cultural differences. The presence of such behaviour in only one of the BE groups provided evidence that norms of appropriate behaviour may vary within one national culture. Even if the broad social context in which a given behaviour occurs is kept constant, the judgment of that behaviour may differ from one friendship group to the next (Locher, 2011: 192; Locher & Watts, 2005: 16). Mills (2003: 146) states that "It is essential that we recognize variation within cultural groups", as well as across them.

### 8.1.2 Communication type: Verbal and non-verbal offers

Table 16 demonstrates that non-verbal offers were part of the overall offering behaviour by both SA and BE females. It was clear that non-verbal offers were a significant part of SA offering behaviour since they constituted around half of all

offers by SA participants. Non-verbal offers may be considered a bald on record strategy in which the speaker does not pay much attention to mitigating potential face threat. The frequency of non-verbal offers by the SA females in this study may correspond to Al-Qahtani's (2009) finding, in her DCT-based investigation of offers by Saudi and British females, that bald on record and positive politeness were more frequent among Saudi females' offers. Non-verbal offers are the most direct form of an offer in which the offer is undertaken regardless of the offeree's potential reaction. The frequency of non-verbal offers among SA females is consistent with other studies which found that directness is the expected behaviour in intimate situations among Arabs as it is seen as a way of expressing affiliation, closeness, and group-connectedness (e.g. Mills & Kádár, 2011: 28; Tawalbeh & Al-Oqaily, 2012: 94).<sup>127</sup> For example, Al-Qahtani (2009: 216) found that the Saudi females chose to perform offers non-verbally when they offered help to their mother instead of asking her whether she accepted or refused their offer. Ahmed (2017: 185) found that non-verbal apologies – involving kissing the offended person's forehead and hand, doing certain actions, and keeping silent – function as a means of “strengthening the social and family bonds among Iraqi Arabs”. This can also be explained by the argument that non-verbal behaviours are used systematically among Arabs to amplify politeness (Samarah, 2015: 2006). The finding suggested that the SA participants in this study did not invest much discursive work in offering, particularly hospitable offers. It seemed that the flow of talk or discussion was more important than showing hospitality. Thus, they avoided interrupting their friends verbally just to perform hosting duties. In other words, socializing takes precedence over hospitality. On the other hand, non-verbal offers were not as popular for BE participants since they constituted only around a quarter of the identified offers. Considering that non-verbal offers are more direct than verbal ones, the difference between SA and BE participants in this aspect corresponds to the findings of Qari's (2017: 310) study of requests and Al-Qahtani's (2009: 225) investigation of offers, which is that Saudi speakers generally tended to be direct in their requests and offers whereas British participants were systematically more indirect. This could be explained by the assumption that British culture has a tendency towards negative politeness values. Stewart (2005: 117) describes British English as “an avoidance-based, negatively-oriented culture”. Accomplishing an offer non-verbally indicates that the speaker has not waited for the addressee's response. Thus, this may entail that the addressee's freedom of action was not considered to be of great

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<sup>127</sup> On the other hand, indirectness in Arabic would be seen as a marked form, possibly showing distance and annoyance (Grainger & Mills, 2016: 160).



importance in this particular offering context.<sup>128</sup> Verbal offers provide a clear opportunity for the addressee to refuse if she wants to; they can also be withdrawn or modified by the offerer. However, if these non-verbal offers did not occur, their absence would affect the interaction negatively. This result provided evidence that non-verbal offers are an essential part of unmarked politic offering in the relational work framework. According to Locher and Watts (2005: 11), a great deal of relational work carried out in verbal interaction will be of an unmarked nature and will go largely unnoticed (i.e. politic/appropriate). However, I argue that this assumption is equally – or even more applicable to – non-verbal interaction as both types of moves may prompt intricate reactions (complex offer exchanges) or cause one utterance responses or pass unnoticed (simple offer exchanges). More discussion of non-verbal behaviour as part of relational work is provided in Section 8.4.

### 8.1.3 Stimulus of initiate offers

Most offers (more than three quarters) were spontaneous and not solicited by the preceding context in both SA and BE. The high number of spontaneous offers may be explained by three factors. First, since most offers were hospitable offers, the hostess tried to show hospitality before it was requested. Thus, waiting for her guest to hint for an offer could be judged as impolite. In this respect, Flora (BE guest) commented about the hostess's offer of spoons immediately after serving the dessert to the guests in order for them to be able to eat it, *"It is polite because Susan was offering a spoon before anyone had to ask for one."* Moreover, Sally (SA participant) commented about the hostess's offer of coffee to her guest when she noticed that the coffee cup was empty. *"Faten offered coffee when she noticed that her [Wa'ad's] cup was empty. She did not wait for a request to have more coffee."* Second, the women in this study tended to avoid soliciting an offer from an interlocutor as they might subconsciously have concerns about their face and others. This corresponds to the view that face is discursively negotiated within social interactions and can be enhanced, damaged, or threatened in the interaction (Goffman, 1967: 7; Locher, 2004: 52). Face is "in the eye of the beholder" (Terkourafi, 2008: 52), not inherent within an individual as suggested by Brown and Levinson (1987). In other words, if a guest's hint for an offer was not fulfilled with an offer, this could damage her face and vice versa. Third, this finding may suggest that Saudi and British young

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<sup>128</sup> The addressee can sometimes refuse non-verbally or verbally if she notices the action of the offer before it is completed. For example, when offering to pour someone more Arabic coffee (which can be done non-verbally), it is conventionally understood that the offeree can place her hand on the coffee cup (i.e. non-verbal refusal) to signal that she does not want more coffee (i.e. freedom of action to refuse) (see Extract 16).

females tend to avoid hinting or requesting to initiate an offer in order to avoid imposing on others. In other words, they may be more oriented to the addressee's right to autonomy (Spencer-Oatey, 2002). However, one can assume that the imposition is not entirely removed since the hostess is performing the offer. It seems more preferable for the hostess to make an offer rather than the guest asking because the offer can be justified by the hostess's obligations, whereas the request may indicate that the hostess was not taking good care of her obligations. As a result, soliciting an offer would appear less impositive than making a request. In addition, the analysis showed that there was no obvious relation between whether the offer was spontaneous or solicited and whether it was accomplished verbally or non-verbally in either the SA or BE corpora.

It is important to note that solicited offers occurred more frequently in the SA data. Although solicited offers were not common in either corpus, a Chi-Square test was performed to find out if the difference in soliciting an offer between SA and BE was statistically significant. The Chi-square statistic was ( $df = 1$ ,  $\chi^2 = 4.8318$ ;  $p$  value .0279). It was found that the difference was statistically significant since the  $p$  value is less than the significance level (0.05). It appears that soliciting an offer in SA is more frequent, and thus perhaps more acceptable, than in BE. This analysis would seem to be substantiated through evaluations made by participants in Grainger and Mills' (2016: 128) study exploring (in)directness across cultures. Zainab, who is bilingual in Arabic and English, stated that in her view it would be more acceptable in Arabic-speaking cultures to hint for an offer and then wait for it to be made rather than making a request, which is not the case in Britain. It seems that the degree of imposition is understood differently. Non-verbal and solicited offers in the BE context tended to be limited to instances where freedom of imposition is minimized due to urgent factors such as an immediate need for help.

#### **8.1.4 Complexity of offer exchanges**

The analysis showed that simple offer exchanges were the most typical offering behaviour in both Saudi and British female friendship groups. Most offers were either accepted at the first attempt, or – in a few cases - the *Satisfy* move was absent. This suggests that the participants in this study did not invest much discursive work in offering, especially hospitable offers. They avoided engaging in ritual refusals and reoffering. The lack of more ritualized offers could be seen as an indication of informality and intimacy. This leads to the conclusion that most offers do not take place unless their absence might have negative inferences. The high frequency of simple offers can also be justified by borrowing the notion of "preference" system/organization from CA (Levinson, 1983: 333; Liddicoat,

2011: 144) as most were accepted from the initial attempt.<sup>129</sup> Although preference is seen as a purely structural concept in CA, it can be explained from a politeness standpoint as interlocutors' attempts to maintain each other's face (Geyer, 2008: 37) and to show comfort and support (Pomerantz, 1984: 77). Thus, this is what would make the preference notion a normative one or a frame.

Like other Arabs, Saudis' offering behaviour has been stereotyped to be a battle of offers and refusals. Indeed, several studies found that this norm is followed by most Arabs (Al-Khatib, 2006: 274; Alaoui, 2011: 13; Grainger et al., 2015: 66). They often judge an offer as insincere if the offerer does not insist. The addressee must reject the offer several times to enhance their face by demonstrating that they are not greedy. However, my findings indicate that the norms of politeness in these friendship groups are different from the stereotypical view of Saudi culture. This deviation can be, first, explained within a discursive approach to politeness. Accordingly, social norms are conceptualized as dynamic constructs rather than static entities (Mills, 2003: 110; Watts, 2003: 8). The norms of appropriate behaviour are in flux, shaped and altered by the same members of society (Locher, 2004: 85; 2008: 521). This deviation is most likely to occur in situations where intimacy levels are very high between the interlocutors because otherwise it may be perceived negatively. In this respect, Hua et al. (2000: 93-94) found that gift offering and acceptance in equal power relationships (e.g. between friends) in China are characterized by a more straightforward offer-acceptance pattern (i.e. simple offer exchange), whereas participants would engage in ritual reoffering and refusals in contexts of unequal power relations. This shows that ritual refusals to offers might be seen as a sign of formality and placing distance between participants which supports our findings. That is, there seems to be a belief that as the social distance between interactants decreases, the offer's degree of imposition decreases and in turn the offerer's sincerity is increasingly unquestioned. It seems that the participants in this study know exactly when a tactful refusal is necessary and when it is not. Second, the assumptions about Arab offering behaviour may no longer be true among the younger generation in Saudi society. The fact that the Saudi participants in this study were young – their age ranged between 27 to 33 years – may be the reason behind the deviation. Several studies have found that age is an important variable that affects people's behaviour (e.g. He, 2012: 48; Hua et al., 1998: 99). Qu (2013: 162), for instance, found that impositional hospitality, where the host repeatedly insists on providing food and drink, has become less acceptable among the younger generation in China due to “the societal structural transformation that promotes social equality,

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<sup>129</sup> In CA, acceptance is considered the preferred second pair part to an offer while refusal is the dispreferred one (Levinson, 1983: 336) (see Section 2.2.2).

privacy, and individual freedom.” Thus, older people may behave differently in their offering behaviour, even among friends. Third, some traditional practices within Saudi Arabia may be in a process of change as a result of changes in the socio-economic environment. Life is getting more expensive and economically demanding as a result of the consequences of the global financial crisis of 2007-2008 and, in particular, the austerity measures implemented by the Saudi government to help offset the reduction in oil prices. Getting external help within the home<sup>130</sup> has become more expensive and difficult. As a result, people in Saudi Arabia are forced to depend more on themselves rather than on foreign helpers, who were easily available previously. More Saudi females now work outside the home compared to the past.<sup>131</sup> Thus, there is a shift in Saudi society from being inter-dependent to independent (Al-Khateeb, 2010),<sup>132</sup> which seems to be reflected in these friendship groups’ offers and hospitality behaviour. Fourth, it seems that due to the influence of Western cultural values as a result of the English media as well as study and training programs outside the Kingdom, Saudis have become more concerned about individualism and imposition on others.<sup>133</sup> These factors seem now to have affected their conceptualization of politeness in offers by reducing their imposition and placing more value on the individual’s freedom of action. This may be manifested in their avoidance of insistence and repetition in offers.

However, the ten young Saudi females in this study did engage occasionally in complex negotiation of offers. Table 16 demonstrates that complex offer exchanges were relatively infrequent in both SA and BE offers. Focusing on the strategies that make up complex offer exchanges, reoffering was more frequent and elaborated in SA offers than BE offers,<sup>134</sup> which aligns with the findings of Grainger et al. (2015: 65-66). However, it was not as frequent among SA participants as previous research suggested, an issue discussed in detail above. Elaboration was the most frequent strategy employed in the negotiation of complex offer exchanges, whereas reoffering does not seem to be a key part of politic behaviour among BE speakers in this context. This contradicts Barron's

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<sup>130</sup> It has previously been the default in Saudi Arabia that each family had at least one house maid, usually Asian or African, who does the household chores.

<sup>131</sup> See Extract 9 where the friends asked the hostess to rest and let them serve themselves, referring to her as ‘having been at work all day’.

<sup>132</sup> Al-Khateeb employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches to investigate the sociological and economical changes in Saudi society.

<sup>133</sup> A perspective that has been widely shared within Saudi public opinion, yet, to the best of my knowledge, has not been empirically examined.

<sup>134</sup> This is also discussed when describing the differences in relational work between the two cultural groups in Section 8.2.2.

(2005: 150) findings that offers were realized through a number of turns in English; however, her findings were based on free DCTs, in which respondents were required to write both sides of an open dialogue for each situation, and hence they may not reflect real contexts. Offers as well as acceptances and refusals achieved their illocutionary force and fulfilled their sincerity condition in the initial attempt. It seemed that repetition of the act was not needed to reinforce the sincerity of the speaker and did not seem to affect how the genuineness of the offer was perceived by the addressee. Reoffering can be seen as face-threatening. It threatens the speaker as she may be seen as pushy, and it entails imposition on the addressee. The analysis revealed two other special patterns of offering that have not been addressed in previous research. These are collaborative offering and embedded offering. It seems that these were absent in previous research because they do not occur frequently in talk. This could also be due to the methodological approaches adopted in previous research (e.g. DCTs or role-plays), which did not investigate offers in natural contexts. Collaborative offering in spoken discourse could be a result of the collaborative nature of dialogue in general, in which dialogue is seen as a joint activity that involves a mutual and constant coordination between participants (Bertrand & Espesser, 2017: 50). In collaborative offering, it seems that the illocutionary force of the offer is increased, whereas in embedded offers the second offer acts as a refusal to the first offer and its illocutionary force as a refusal is increased since the focus shifts from the first offer to the second (embedded) offer.

### **8.1.5 Supportive moves**

It was found that SA and BE female speakers do not differ substantially in their use of supportive moves (see Table 16). Supportive moves were employed mainly to add sub-details to the original offer or to enhance its attractiveness to the addressee. They mostly serve persuasive functions in the offers. Thus, they usually strengthen the offer rather than mitigate its effect. This runs counter to the claim made by Brown and Levinson (1987) that offers are face threatening acts. Expanders and grounders were the most common supportive moves accompanying the offers in both SA and BE offers (making up to 69%). This corresponds to Pohle's (2009: 299) finding in her investigation of offers in business negotiation that expanders and grounders were the most frequent supportive moves. The results also showed that imposition minimizers as a supportive move were more frequent in the SA data than the BE data, although it was not frequent in either set of data (11.8% compared to 5.8%). This does not mean that SA speakers pay more attention to the issue of imposing on others. This could be explained by the fact that imposition is not a key consideration when producing the head act of an offer in SA since speakers tended to employ

supportive moves to reduce the imposition. This is supported by Qari's (2017: 312) finding that Saudi participants appeared to prefer using direct request strategies softened by supportive moves before and after the head act. On the other hand, imposition is important from the beginning for BE speakers; as a result, they did not need to reduce the imposition of their offer by adding a modifier because this has already been addressed in the head act. This supports Larina's (2005: 32) view that reducing the imposing nature of a request in English communication is typically manifested through the choice of linguistic forms and strategies for the head act of the request. This argument is also evidenced in the difference between the two sets of data in the proportion of solicited and non-verbal offers, as these were more common in the SA data. In addition, it is noticeable that the use of explicit conditionals in the BE offers was around four times more frequent than in the SA ones. This aligns with Drew's (2018: 73) finding that conditional forms were one of the most frequent structures in invitations in English. Barron (2005: 161-162) argues that explicit conditionals are a negative politeness strategy since it lessens the directive force of the act by stressing its conditionality. It makes clear that the addressee is free to reject the offer. It seems that the BE participants considered their addressee's volition more than the SA speakers, which is also evidenced in the distribution of non-verbal offers.

The corpus also showed that supportive moves were often not realized in close proximity to the head moves that they were supporting. This corresponds to Pohle's (2009: 299) findings of offers in business negotiation; however, she did not provide a statistical measure of her claim and she indicated that this finding might be restricted to business offers. This issue has not been addressed in other previous studies (e.g. Barron, 2003; Blum-Kulka et al., 1989) due to their reliance on DCTs, which do not allow for speech acts being built up over more than one turn. But as my data is situated within a naturalistic context, such discursive constructions can again be seen. Therefore, it is necessary to expand the concept of supportive moves to cover longer stretches of talk extending over several turns since this is what happens in real talk.

### **8.1.6 Conclusion**

It can be seen that the descriptive quantitative analysis enabled the identification of the dominant norms and patterns in offering in Saudi and British female friendship groups. It helped in refuting some of the stereotypes about both cultures. In this respect, as a member of Saudi society, I was surprised by the results of the quantitative analysis. For instance, I thought that Saudi people would tend to insist on offering all the time despite the context, especially

hospitable ones, and would not pay attention to issues of imposition. My expectation was similar to the findings of previous studies that adopted less naturalistic methods, such as DCT (e.g. Al-Khatib, 2006; Al-Qahtani, 2009). The findings of the current study showed that even the assumptions we have about our own cultures may no longer exist or may be inaccurate stereotypes. The quantitative analysis provided a clear vision about what is common and what exactly goes on in offers as part of natural spoken discourse. More discussion about this is provided below in Section 8.3. It would seem from this that what we think we would do is different from what we really do. This was also typically found in studies about grammaticality judgments (Bever, 1970: 346; Gleitman & Gleitman, 1979: 121; Rosado, Salas, Aparici, & Tolchinsky, 2014: 50) and language variation (Labov, 1966: 455).<sup>135</sup> Thus, the findings of DCT studies must be treated with caution if they aim to describe actual language use. They can be used to find out strategies, syntactic structures, and semantic formulas but not real language use in cross-cultural politeness studies.

## **8.2 How do Saudi and British female friends manage their relational work in offer negotiations as part of ordinary talk?**

The answer to this question is discussed in two sub-sections. The first sheds light on the similarities (Section 8.2.1) in offering behaviour between Saudi and British female friends whereas the second deals with the differences (Section 8.2.2). The discussion is then summed up in the conclusion (Section 8.2.3).

### **8.2.1 Similarities**

A lot of similarities were found in the ways the members of the SA and BE female friendship groups manage relational work in their offering behaviour. The main similarities between SA and BE female friends are first summarized below in eight main categories, and then each is discussed in detail in the following sub-sections:

1. Offers were motivated by two main goals: (1) maintaining harmonious and friendly rapport between the friends and (2) displaying hospitality.

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<sup>135</sup> Labov (1966: 455), for example, explains that “most of the respondents seemed to perceive their own speech in terms of the norms at which they were aiming rather than the sound actually produced”.

2. Normative and politic discursive behaviour:
  - Most offers appeared to be part of expected politic behaviour as they did not generate reactions from the addressee.
  - It seems that attention was not given to offers unless they were refused or highly positively evaluated.<sup>136</sup>
  - Accepting initial offers and the refusal of offers for the first time as well as not insisting on reoffering may constitute normative behaviour by the twenty female friends.
3. Attentiveness:
  - Attentiveness governed most offering behaviour by the participants in this study.
  - Being attentive was considered part of the appropriate norm.
4. Responses and politeness perceptions:
  - Acceptance was mostly conveyed through appreciation tokens, non-verbal actions, or the absence of a response.
  - Strong appreciation or intricate negotiation was limited to situations in which the offered item or service was perceived as extra by the addressee.
  - Refusals were mostly accompanied with gratitude.
5. Norms and social frames:
  - The analysis has shown that people follow certain expectations (i.e. norms and frames) when conducting their offers.
  - Participants in this study were aware that the norms of appropriate behaviour are in flux, and they subconsciously adapted their offering behaviour
6. Sociality rights
  - Association rights played a significant role in defining participants' expectations of appropriate behaviour.
  - Offers were sometimes oriented to sociality, but in other situations to autonomy within the same group in both SA and BE friendship interactions.
  - Although involvement and association enhanced the existence of some offers, interactants valued their desire to not be imposed upon.
  - Autonomy rights seemed more important than displaying hospitality among the friends in this study.

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<sup>136</sup> The literature may lead to the conclusion that it would probably be the case for highly negatively evaluated behaviours too; however, there is not enough evidence for such a conclusion in my data.



7. Inconsistency in evaluations were very common across individuals from the same group, or even within the same individual over time.
8. Politeness, whether marked or unmarked, always entailed appropriateness, but not vice versa.

### 8.2.1.1 Motivating goals of offers

It seems that offering behaviour by the friends in both the SA and BE corpora was guided by two main goals. First, the friends in all six groups were found to hold a rapport-maintenance orientation (Spencer-Oatey, 2000: 30), in which they wanted to maintain the current quality of their relationship and the level of rapport. In other words, their main goal was to maintain the harmonious and friendly rapport between them. As part of this goal, it was found that offers do not always include providing a service or an item. Offers could be socially oriented in order to maintain proper membership in the group (e.g. involving other participants in the activity), manage smooth interactions (e.g. offering a speaking turn), or offer information to save someone's face. This was part of the politic offering behaviour by the friends in all six groups because the absence of such offering behaviour may result in non-normative interaction. For example, leaving your friend struggling to remember some information could embarrass her. This goal seems to govern all the offering negotiations since negative evaluations were almost absent in the SRQ. The evaluation rank "impolite" was not chosen by the BE participants in any instance and occurred only six times in the SA evaluations.<sup>137</sup> Moreover, the rank "very impolite" was not used by any participant in this study. Second, displaying hospitality was the main underlying reason behind the occurrence of most offers due to the setting, which was hostess/guest setting. Participants tended to behave in line with the moral order (Haugh, 2013a: 59) to constitute a positive image of their persons, e.g. serving drinks to guests is a sign of hospitality, and all participants knew this. Taking a close look at the interview responses, it can be inferred that most hospitable offers were considered by the participants to be part of unmarked politic behaviour as their presence may not

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<sup>137</sup> The impolite evaluation was chosen by only one of the participants on each occasion. Three related to hospitality offers that interrupted the talk, and two of these were considered impolite by the speakers themselves, whereas the other one was seen as impoliteness by only one of the addressees (it was an offer of tea to the group). Two were non-verbal hospitable offers (offering Arabic coffee). They were seen as impolite by Suha (guest) because they were accomplished non-verbally without uttering any conventionalized expressions for the offer. However, Suha was the performer in one of them, whereas the other one was performed by the hostess. The last one was evaluated by the speaker (Ahad) as impolite because she thought that she offered to bring soft drinks after she had served the dinner rather than before it. It can be seen that four of the impolite evaluations were chosen by the speakers, an issue highlighted in detail in Section 8.2.2.4.

lead to evaluative reactions and their absence would be likely to result in negative evaluations. It seems that participants followed the normative expectations of such a setting to avoid being perceived as impolite. Finally, it could be concluded that the two guiding goals of offers – maintaining friendly rapport and displaying hospitality – may account for the similarities between the SA and BE female friendship groups.

### 8.2.1.2 Normative and politic discursive behaviour

The most salient similarity between SA and BE offers within the six friendship groups was that many offers did not generate reactions from the addressee. They seemed to be part of the expected politic behaviour. This supports Locher and Watts' (2005: 11) arguments that most of our relational work is of an unmarked nature, and interlocutors may not show any evaluative reaction when a certain behaviour is shaped by the expectation of the interlocutors. Thus, no effort was found in negotiating expectable hospitable offers, especially when they were accepted. It can be claimed that attention was not given to offers unless they were refused or highly positively evaluated. When people invested a lot of effort in expressing refusals, it created the possibility that the offer was judged as a positively marked behaviour. This supports the view of politeness as a marked form that “does more social interactional work than mere politic behaviour” (Eelen, 2001: 73-74). Over-politeness was negatively perceived by some of the participants during the interviews. For example, Flora (BE guest) talked about the hostess offering guests to sit when they entered: *“I still consider this a kind offer but feel there’s no need to be overly polite.”* In addition, Nora (SA participant) commented about Dana’s reoffers to order food as being over-polite:<sup>138</sup> *“Her reoffers were over-polite; this may be because she felt shy or embarrassed if she did not bring food.”* This finding supports the claims of relational work theorists that over-politeness is often perceived negatively (Locher, 2004: 90), and the addressees’ reactions to over-polite and impolite behaviours might be roughly similar (Locher, 2006: 256; Locher & Watts, 2005: 12; Watts, 2005b: xlv). It seems that over-politeness in these groups was interpreted as a sign of formality and distance, which is incompatible with the bond of being close friends.

Accepting initial offers, accepting the refusal of offers for the first time, and not insisting on reoffering may constitute normative and politic discursive behaviour among the twenty female friends based on the reactions of the interactants during

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<sup>138</sup> The friends were at Dana’s house. Rana (guest) had brought a salad and a main dish prepared by her mother for dinner. Dana asked her guests what they wanted to eat for dinner and offered to order more food. They refused, saying that the food Rana brought was enough, but Dana insisted on ordering more food. This insistence ended up with a refusal.

both their conversations and interviews as well as the limited number of reoffers in the quantitative analysis. Too much reoffering and insistence can sometimes be seen as a burden rather than politeness among close friends. Indeed, some negative comments about insistence were made during the interviews. For example, Elsa (BE speaker) said about repeating offering her guests to choose the slice of dessert that they preferred the following:<sup>139</sup> *“I’d say when we got to the third one that I was just being polite rather than very polite.”* Wa’ad (SA participant) commented about Faten’s continuous reoffering to serve coffee despite Wa’ad’s refusals that, *“I had already told her that I did not want [to have more coffee]. I consider this [her insistence] annoying.”* This finding contradicts the findings of previous research (e.g. Al-Khatib, 2006; Barron, 2003, 2005). The reoffering tendency in other studies stems from the nature of experimental data, such as open DCTs and role-plays, in which participants write or enact what they think they would say in a given situation, rather than what they actually say in spontaneous talk (Archer et al., 2012: 15). This does not mean they are deliberately deceptive, but it seems that they are filtering their reported behaviour through their ideological stance of what they believe constitutes proper behaviour, and they are choosing to believe that they behave properly. Another explanation for the difference is that the current study focused on female friendship groups, which may differ from the practices of other groups, whereas the previously mentioned studies investigated reproductions of different contexts. It is also possible that the negative perception of reoffering is an artefact of the small amount of data in this study; thus, more data might yield different results.

### 8.2.1.3 Attentiveness

Most offers fall within the speaker’s attempts to be attentive. Attentiveness is defined as “paying attention to the others by ... reading the atmosphere in a situation and anticipating or inferring the other party’s feelings, needs and wants through a potential recipient’s verbal and non-verbal cues” (Fukushima, 2015: 271). It seems that Fukushima’s (2013: 19, 2015: 271) attentiveness governs most offering behaviour among the participants in this study as it is considered part of the appropriate norm. This was obvious during the interviews, as follows:

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<sup>139</sup> There were two types of dessert – two slices of cheesecake with Belgian chocolate and two slices of strawberries and cream cheesecake. Elsa asked her guests about their preferences. Helen chose the chocolate cheesecake, but Janet did not state her preference. Elsa repeated asking her about which type she preferred, but Janet replied saying *“I’d have either.”* Elsa then repeated her offer by first choosing the strawberry type which left Janet with the two options to choose saying, *“So I quite fancy that one so I don’t mind. You can have either.”* After that, Janet picked the chocolate one.

BE data:

Clara commented about Gail's offering space to her in order to be able to get back to her seat:<sup>140</sup> "[It was a] non-verbal offer to help Clara achieve what she will need to do before being asked. If Clara had returned and needed to ask, this would not be an offer anymore, but just following the request."

Elsa (hostess) said when she was asked about her offering napkins non-verbally to the guests while they were eating and talking, "I was able to offer it to them. They didn't have to ask me. I offered before they needed it and realized then they would have had to ask me. That's what makes it polite."

SA data:

Suha commented about Nada's (guest) non-verbal offer to move a side table (which was between them) closer to her when the hostess was serving them the dinner: "It was a polite gesture from her – considering moving the table closer to me – so I would be more comfortable eating my dinner."

Ahad said about Suha's offer to pour coffee for Inas when she noticed that Inas was reaching out for the coffee thermos, "It is polite. I would do the same. If someone wanted to take something that was closer to me, I will immediately do it instead of her. It is part of good tact."

It was found that attentiveness was demonstrated by offering both material things (such as drinks or food) and non-material things, including actions, such as offering a speaking turn, offering information, or helping someone in trouble, before or without being asked (Fukushima, 2015: 272). It seemed that the participants chose to be attentive to avoid negative consequences, ensure the comfort of others, and construct a good image of themselves.

#### **8.2.1.4 Responses and politeness perceptions**

Acceptance was mostly expressed through appreciation tokens, non-verbal actions such as taking the item, or the absence of a response. The analysis showed that the absence of the second pair was interpreted as acceptance and did not result in ill-formed or deviant interaction as was suggested by Coulthard and Brazil (1992: 52) and Stubbs (1983: 131). This finding corresponds to a very well-known saying among Arabs: "*Silence is a sign of agreement.*" This attitude was also supported by the BE women. Strong appreciation or complex negotiation was limited to situations in which the offered item or service was seen

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<sup>140</sup> Clara and Gail were sitting next to each other. Clara cannot move from her seat unless Gail moves. When Clara needed to go to the bathroom, she asked Gail to move. As soon as Gail had heard that Clara had vacated the bathroom (i.e. the sound of the door), Gail stood to allow Clara to get back to her place (i.e. before Clara entered the room).

as important or extra by the addressee. For instance, Faten (SA hostess) said, comparing between the addressees' attitudes when she was offering them coffee (i.e. no use of appreciation tokens) and when she offered them salad (i.e. appreciation tokens were used), "*Both women thanked me when I offered them salad because offering food is not like offering coffee.*" Such behaviour may be explained by what Sifianou (1992: 42) states about Greek culture:

Members of the same in-group see it as their duty to help and support each other, both morally and financially, so they find no obvious reason for thanking or apologizing, unless for something they conceive of as being very serious or beyond the normal duties of the performer of the action

The gratitude was seen as an effort to enhance face and perform positively marked relational work, which confirms Fukushima's (2013: 22) finding that appreciation of attentiveness leads to a positive evaluation. Moreover, extra linguistic capital manifested through attentiveness was mostly subject to positively marked/polite interpretation. This was strongly evidenced in the interviews. For instance, Suha (SA speaker) commented on Ahad's (hostess) complimenting a guest during an offer of coffee,<sup>141</sup> saying, "*It was very polite. The style she used was very lovely as it contained a compliment and a word highlighting the offer.*" In another context, Clara (BE speaker) said about the hostess offering to get some dips (Ketchup, mayonnaise, and pickles) during dinner that "*the offer was polite because these were two additional items to the dinner which are being offered*". These responses showed that some offers were seen as marked politeness because they were more than what was expected. This confirms postmodern approaches' view of politeness as giving a "tip" (Watts, 2005b: xxxix), "giving more" than necessary (Locher & Watts, 2005: 25), or "putting in more than casual effort" (Eelen, 2001: 75). Moreover, refusals were mostly accompanied with gratitude which may mitigate the refusal. This is consistent with the findings of previous research that speakers tend to express their appreciation when turning down an offer in order to mitigate the illocutionary force of their upcoming refusal (Al-Kahtani, 2005: 45; Jasim, 2017: 204; Morkus, 2009: 302). This shows that they appreciate the offer regardless of their refusal. That is, the refusal does not imply a negative evaluation of the offer itself.

#### **8.2.1.5 Norms and social frames**

The discursive analysis has shown that there are certain expectations that people follow when conducting their offering. This was also strongly apparent in

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<sup>141</sup>Ahad (hostess) said when she served coffee to Nada (guest), "*tafad' al-i ja: zami:l*". This is translated as "*Here you are, pretty.*" The expression '*here you are*' showed the offer and the word '*pretty*' indicated a compliment.

participants' responses during interviews, as they frequently attributed their behaviour and evaluations to norms of adequate behaviour, which may be influenced by the wider culture. Consider the following representative responses from both sets of data:

BE data:

Clara said about the hostess offering the guests drinks once they have arrived, "It's always customary to offer someone a drink when they arrive."

Helen said about the hostess offering the guests drinks once they have arrived, "It is the usual thing to ask once a guest has arrived."

SA data:

Ahad said about using the expression '*sami:*' when she offered coffee to her guest, "It is common to say such expressions when you offer someone coffee."

Lama said about Arwa's offer (guest) of bringing dessert with her to help Yusra (hostess), "It is part of our customs."

Lay persons seem subconsciously aware of the notion of frame, which predisposes how we act in certain situations. The current study provides strong support for the claims postulated by discursive approach researchers that judgments are made with the norms of a particular COP in mind (e.g. Locher, 2011: 192; Locher & Bousfield, 2008: 7; Locher & Watts, 2005: 16). It was also found that the participants based their evaluations on a set of rules they had acquired in previous situations. In other words, the judgments were made based on people's cumulative experiences and knowledge acquired through socialization (Escandell-Vidal, 1996: 645; Locher, 2004: 85, 2011: 192; van der Bom & Mills, 2015: 198).

The participants in this study were aware that the norms of polite and appropriate behaviour change from one situation to another, and they subconsciously adapt their offering behaviour. The groups have a set of norms that may deviate from the norms of the wider culture. Kádár and Haugh (2013: 95) spoke of localized norms (such as within families or groups of friends or other group-based norms) and societal/cultural norms as shaping the moral order that underpin all evaluations of politeness. Culpeper (2008: 30) tried to pinpoint this by introducing the idea of four types of norms – including personal, cultural, situational, and co-textual norms – that shape interaction. Personal norms refer to the sum of one's social experiences, cultural norms are the sum of one's experiences of a given culture, situational norms refer to the sum of one's experiences of a given situation in a given culture, and co-textual norms are the sum of one's experiences of a given interaction in a given situation in a given culture.

Awareness of these different layers of norms was apparent in participants' responses during the interview. It seemed that precedence was given to the contextual norms (Culpeper, 2008: 30) or localized ones (Kádár & Haugh, 2013: 95) in friends' talk. During the interviews, context was referred to several times in both the BE's and the SA's responses. Participants indicated that they may behave differently in other contexts. Consider the following examples:

BE data:

Yara said about her offer of a day-rider ticket to her friends if they wanted to take the bus, "In this context, actually, I think it is very polite possibly. I think the language is quite informal, but I think that was OK because I was talking to my friends so it is fine. If I were speaking, say, to the waitress, I would say, '*Would you like this bus ticket?*' because I don't know her. But I think in the context the language is very polite."

Elsa said about her moving the bread plate closer to the ladies so they could have some, "It was probably appropriate within the context that it was during the conversation."

SA data:

Wa'ad said about Sally (guest) asking Faten (hostess) to let them serve themselves instead of her doing the hosting duties, "If she was an older lady, I would offer to pour and serve coffee instead of her. If she was around my age, I may not do it. This depends on the situation and context."

Nora said about Dana (hostess) asking them what they wanted to order for dinner, "My evaluation is based on this situation and context. It may not be acceptable to ask such a question on other situations."

Another finding was that people may unconsciously adjust and negotiate the norms and language which they bring along into the conversation, thereby supporting Locher and Watts' (2005: 16) claim that interactants will be unconsciously oriented towards social frames, norms, expectations, and so on. It seems that they do not engage in conscious logical/rational processing for every speech act, as suggested by Brown and Levinson (1987: 58). This was evidenced during the interviews, because participants could sometimes neither remember why they behaved in a certain way nor provide reasoning for their evaluation even though they evaluated the behaviour to be appropriate. In such cases, responses such as "*It is a difficult question*" and "*I don't know*" were provided. For example, Elsa said when she was asked about an offer of a drink to Helen, "*I did offer her something to drink. I can't remember that. Sorry I can't. I'm not sure about it.*" Suha said about Ahad's attempts to convince them to order dinner by indicating that there would not be any imposition on her, "*I honestly cannot evaluate it [Ahad's behaviour] in this situation.*" Moreover, Ahad said about her reoffer to Abeer to have more dessert by asking Abeer to serve herself using an imperative,

saying “*Go and serve some dessert to yourself, Abeer*” that, “*I am now surprised how I said that. You want me to tell you why; I honestly don’t know.*”

### 8.2.1.6 Sociality rights

It appears that association rights (Spencer-Oatey, 2000, 2002) play a crucial role in defining our expectations of appropriate behaviour. Offers were sometimes oriented to sociality, but in other situations to autonomy within the same group. There were situations in which interdependence was regarded as the appropriate norm, whereas autonomy might control the behaviour of the same interactants in similar situations in other contexts. This runs counter to Scollon and Scollon's (1995: 55) proposition that social relationships with low power difference and low social distance correspond to a solidarity politeness system, in which a high level of involvement strategies is expected throughout the interaction. The offers in general shifted from independence to involvement depending on the situation. It seems that these two aspects were found in both SA and BE friendship interactions. What determines their dominance is the situation itself with regard to norms of expected behaviour, urgency of an offer, degree of required attentiveness, and/or the ongoing speech. For example, offering assistance to a friend when needed is perceived as being more important than considering her autonomy rights. Flora (BE speaker) talked about helping her friend when she noticed her struggling to get some bread which was far from her: “*If I’d have just left her to struggle, that would have been rude.*” Wa’ad (SA speaker) justified her offer by saying, “*She was in need of help*”.<sup>142</sup>

On the other hand, there is strong evidence in the interactions of the members of both SA and BE groups that interactants valued their desire not to be imposed upon, although involvement and association enhanced the existence of some offers. Respecting equity rights, particularly autonomy rights, is more important than displaying hospitality among close friends, as manifested in the limited number of reoffers. During interviews, the idea of avoiding imposition was very common. For instance, Elsa (BE speaker) mentioned asking her guests if they were ready when she offered dessert after the main course: “*I was taking the initiative there to actually ask them if they were ready, because we could have had a break if they didn’t want it [the dessert] at that time. So I was giving them the choice rather than just serving it up at that time.*” Abeer (SA speaker) pointed

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<sup>142</sup> Sally was trying to find an account on Instagram. However, she could not find it. Wa’ad helped her by looking up the correct spelling of the account.



out, “*I would consider that my friend is on a diet. Her interest is more important than showing hospitality.*”<sup>143</sup>

This contradicts the generalizations of some cultural groups as oriented towards positive or negative politeness (e.g. Brown & Levinson, 1987; Scollon & Scollon, 1995). Furthermore, it supports the discursive researchers’ view that we have to move away from making generalizations about (im)politeness at the cultural level and move toward an understanding of how meaning is dynamically negotiated among participants in real talk (Cheng, 2003: 10; Locher & Watts, 2005: 11; Mills, 2009: 1053; Zayts & Schnurr, 2013: 198) since (im)politeness practices may deviate from the general societal norms (Culpeper, 2008: 30; Locher, 2015: 6). This variation also goes in line with the discursive approach argument that social norms and cultural values are not static entities, but rather in a continual state of change. From a relational work perspective, I would suggest that the politic behaviour for all participants in this study could be best described as a collection of strategies demonstrative of involvement or independence depending on the situation in both SA and BE friendship groups. This supports Watts’s (2003: 258) argument that no objective method would predict which forms of behaviour in a social interaction will be politic.

### 8.2.1.7 Inconsistency across evaluations

A further key insight from the analysis of both the SA and BE corpora was that evaluations are not often constant across individuals from the same group – or even within the same individual over time. Variability was detected in approximately 76.4% of SA evaluations and 73.8% of BE evaluations. The same offer in the same context by the same participants may be evaluated differently from one occasion to another, although all contextual factors are kept the same. This confirms that variability in evaluations is to be expected (Grainger & Mills, 2016: 11; Haugh, 2013a: 56; Locher, 2011: 191; van der Bom & Mills, 2015: 202). This variability can be explained from several perspectives.

First, seeking consistency in defining what is considered politic seems a dynamic matter. This confirms the discursive view that “cultural norms may not always be recognized as ‘politic’ and ‘appropriate’ by all interactants. Rather, what is considered to be ‘politic’ is dynamically negotiated among participants as the interaction unfolds” (Zayts & Schnurr, 2013: 190). This may explain why participants’ evaluations of relational work in this study were sometimes altered

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<sup>143</sup> Ahad offered Abeer a smaller piece of dessert (compared to the others) since Abeer was on a diet. She justified her offer during the interaction saying, “*ʕaʕa:n-ik təsaw-i:n <diet>*” (translated as “*Because you are on diet.*”). Avoiding imposing on Abeer was positively evaluated by all of the interactants during the interviews.

or modified at some stage of the interaction, that is, when their succeeding evaluative moments may not have aligned with previous ones. Politeness may have very different values associated with it as the interaction progresses; it does not have agreed-upon values in all situations. Their interpretations of the concept is constantly changing. This could be a result of the non-static nature of the norms that determine our relational work (Locher, 2004: 85, 2008: 521; Locher & Watts, 2008: 78).

Second, differences in interactants' personalities and their understandings of other's personality could also account for the variability in the evaluations. In her work on impoliteness in casual conversations, Wang (2008: 131) found that good understandings of others' personalities within a friendship group led her participants to rationalize behaviours in different ways, for example, judging otherwise inappropriate behaviour as not impolite.<sup>144</sup> Moreover, the inconsistency in evaluations could be caused by the underlying factors on which our evaluations were based, such as understandings of speaker's intentions and relationships. These are discussed in detail in Section 8.5.

Third, the evaluations are formed based on individuals' experiences in previous interactions with others (Culpeper, 2008: 30), which are never exactly the same across individuals (Kádár & Haugh, 2013: 94). Thus, differences in the totality of individuals' past experiences may account for the variability of their evaluations.

Finally, it could be that participants did not agree on how to define the different degrees of politeness<sup>145</sup> or even did not know how to classify the level of politeness in the examined interaction. The participants sometimes provided similar justifications for certain behaviours despite the variability across the group or within individuals in their classifications of the evaluations. In this respect, Davies (2018: 133) distinguishes three levels of evidence in evaluations: classifications of behaviours, assessments of people, and rationales. She (2018: 146) argues that the rationales for the evaluations provide the strongest level of evidence because they represent the ideological basis that drive the "evaluative moments in talk". It seems that the variability is found more in the classification rather than the rationale for these evaluations. There is an inconsistent relationship between the classifications and the rationales. It seems that our

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<sup>144</sup> Wang (2008: 132) explained that participants changed their evaluations to "not impolite" for one of their friend's inappropriate behaviour even though it was against what they believed to be the appropriate norms. This adjustment was attributed to their understanding of the friend's personality.

<sup>145</sup> I did not provide definitions of the terms *polite*, *impolite*, or *neither polite nor impolite* in the SRQ as I wanted to access lay persons' understandings of these concepts.

ideologies of proper behaviour may be similar despite the variability in the evaluations.

### 8.2.1.8 Politeness vs. appropriateness

The analysis shows that politeness, whether marked or unmarked, always entails appropriateness, but not vice versa. All of the offers evaluated as politeness (i.e. whether polite or very polite) or politic (i.e. neither polite nor impolite) in the SRQ were considered appropriate. Politeness can be found in any utterance considered appropriate by the other participants (Locher, 2004: 71). On the other hand, none of the offers judged as impolite were considered appropriate.<sup>146</sup> It seems that participants defined appropriateness in the same way as it was not subject to variability. I think they saw it as being relevant to the context and norms. For Spencer-Oatey (2000: 3), politeness is a question of appropriateness. Meier (1995b: 387) replaces the term politeness with appropriateness, referring to socially acceptable behaviour. However, the current study found that the term *appropriateness* is broader than politeness. It indexes marked and unmarked politic behaviour as suggested by the relational work framework (Figure 2). That is, politic behaviour can be equated with appropriateness in laypeople's perceptions (Locher, 2006: 256).

It can be concluded that members of the six groups were systematically similar to each other in the sense that they all wanted to perform politic relational work. These groups constructed their set of expectations of politic behaviour. However, these may not reflect the norms of the wider society or other groups within the same community.

### 8.2.2 Differences

SA and BE female friends showed very few differences in managing relational work in their offering behaviour. These were:

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<sup>146</sup> Only six evaluations of impoliteness were detected in the SRQ (these are provided in fn. 137, Section 8.2.1.1); thus, this assumption may need more empirical support.

1. SA speakers frequently use religious expressions in their offering interactions, whereas religious expressions were never employed in the BE offering interactions.
2. Although reoffers were not very frequent among the female friends in the current study, they were more common and elaborated among the ten SA females than their British counterparts.
3. The SA females displayed more positive evaluations of non-verbal offers than the BE ones in the current study.
4. During interviews, a general tendency to downgrade the level of politeness of one's own offers compared to others' evaluations was detected in the SA responses, whereas the BE speakers were inclined to evaluate their utterances as more polite than their addressees do.

These differences are discussed in the following four sub-sections.

### **8.2.2.1 Religious expressions**

The main difference between Saudi and British females' offering behaviour was in the use of religious expressions. The analysis of the Arabic data in the study revealed that religion plays a vital role in the negotiations of offers. Reference to God was widely used in offers, refusals, and gratitude among the SA females,<sup>147</sup> which is consistent with previous research on politeness within a range of cultures in the Arabic-speaking world (e.g. Al-Issa, 2003: 594; Almutlaq, 2013: 228; Jasim, 2017: 303; Morkus, 2009: 296; Samarah, 2015: 2006). Invoking God mostly strengthens the illocutionary force of the act, which supports Al-Qahtani's (2009: 239) finding that speakers use God's name when they sense the addressee's reluctance to accept an offer. This could be a result of the ideology that using expressions containing a reference to God is likely to gain the social approval of the addressee (Jasim, 2017: 303), confirms the truth value of the proposition (Abdel-Jawad, 2000: 239; Al-Issa, 2003: 594; Almutlaq, 2013: 225), and amplifies politeness (Bouchara, 2015: 91; Samarah, 2015: 2015). On the other hand, the female BE participants in the study never invoked God in their offer negotiations. This may be attributed to the fact that religion does not play a conventional role in their verbal communication as Britain is a much more secular society. The difference corresponds to Al-Qahtani's (2009: 238) finding, an issue that Brown

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<sup>147</sup> It occurred about 85 times in the overall identified extracts. However, this number is limited to the transcribed offer exchanges and does not represent all of the recorded conversations (as I only transcribed speech related to offer negotiations). Hence, reference to God during the female conversations over eight hours of recorded talk would be far higher than this number.

and Levinson's model failed to explain in her study of offers due to the absence of such a strategy in their model.

### 8.2.2.2 Reoffering and elaboration

Although reoffers were not very common among the friends in the study, they were more frequent and elaborated among the ten SA females than their British counterparts.<sup>148</sup> For instance, offering the speaking turn to the other speaker when simultaneous speech occurred was accomplished with one attempt in the BE data but through two attempts in the SA data. Offering information was mainly accomplished via complex negotiation among the SA friends, whereas such offers were mainly achieved through simple exchanges among the BE friends. This finding is in line with research conducted on offers (Grainger et al., 2015: 67) as well as other communicative acts such as gratitude (Al-Khawaldeh, 2014: 263), greetings (Bouchara, 2015: 91), and refusals (Jasim, 2017: 283). Grainger et al. (2015: 66-67) conclude that insisting more than once in British encounters would infringe on autonomy rights, whereas it is more common and expected in the Arabic speech community. This corresponds to the view that elaboration and repetition are characteristics of the Arabic communicative style (Feghali, 1997: 359; Samarah, 2015: 2007).

### 8.2.2.3 Perceptions of non-verbal offers

Another difference was that SA speakers showed more positive evaluations of non-verbal offers than their BE counterparts, as evidenced in the difference in frequency of such offers in the two sets of data (see Section 8.1.2). Moreover, during the interviews, SA respondents called for non-verbal offers in situations where a verbal offer took place. For example, Abeer said about Ahad (hostess) that she had asked Suha (guest) where her cup was to pour coffee for her, "*She was supposed to take the cup and pour coffee for Suha without asking unless she did not know where her cup was or there were more than one cup on the table.*" Rana indicated, "*She must bring and serve them without asking, whether the guests were younger or older, because it is within her hostess duties*" when she was asked about Dana's (hostess) offer to bring more coffee. This shows that non-verbal hospitable offers were part of expected politic hospitality among the SA friends. However, a call for a non-verbal offer occurred only once in the BE interviewee responses. Rachel said about Susan asking them to pick the strawberry cheesecake if they wanted to go for it or wait for the chocolate cheesecake when she was placing the former on the table, "*I would have phrased it the same way, or perhaps just gestured.*" It can be claimed that BE female

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<sup>148</sup> This is also discussed in the quantitative findings (see Section 8.1.4).

speakers valued their desire to not being imposed upon more than the SA speakers as non-verbal offers were accomplished without checking the speaker's volition.

#### **8.2.2.4 Perceptions of one's own offer**

When examining the participants' evaluations during the interview, I noticed that SA speakers have a general tendency to downgrade the level of politeness of their own offers, whereas the BE speakers tend to evaluate their utterances as more polite than their addressees do. This can be attributed to Leech's (1983) Modesty Maxim which says that one should not express beliefs that show a speaker thinks highly of him/herself.<sup>149</sup> According to Leech (1983: 137), the Modesty Maxim is more powerful in Eastern cultures than Western cultures. Another explanation of these opposing tendencies could be that it is a result of differences in hospitality ideologies between the two cultures. Offering Hospitality is a very important social value in Arab societies (Emery, 2000: 205; Feghali, 1997: 353; Migdadi, 2003: 132). Speakers might believe that they are just behaving according to the expected norms, whereas addressees value the hostess's display of hospitality. On the other hand, a BE guest might accept a certain amount of generosity from the hostess but weighs this up against the desire of not being imposed upon (Grainger et al., 2015: 53). It can be said that the BE hostesses' concern to display hospitality for their guests in this study was not equally perceived by the guests and hostesses, which goes in line with the expected variability in politeness evaluations. The study shows that, despite the similarities discussed, the rights and obligations of appropriate hospitality behaviour still differ between the two cultures.

#### **8.2.3 Conclusion**

In sum, to answer the second research question based on the previous discussion, it was found that offering in Saudi and British female friendship groups was mostly oriented towards maintaining the ongoing friendly rapport. Offers were mostly part of unmarked expected politic behaviour, and complex negotiation was restricted to situations in which offers were highly positively evaluated. Non-verbal offers and reoffers appeared to be more expected among the SA friends than their BE counterparts. Reference to God has a vital role in offer negotiations among the Saudi females, whereas it was absent in the BE data. What is seen as polite or politic in a particular situation was determined by attentiveness, sociality rights, context, and norms, and these vary from one

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<sup>149</sup> Hua et al. (2000: 92) found that Chinese speakers tend to downgrade the value of the gift in gift offering because they wish to be modest.

situation to another. It was found that evaluations of a particular behaviour were subject to variation.

It could be hypothesized that Saudi and British females share more similarities than differences in the tendencies of their offer performances within friendship groups, which contradicts previous research (e.g. Al-Khatib, 2006; Al-Qahtani, 2009; Alaoui, 2011). This contradiction could be due to the methodological practices of these studies which view culture as a static construct, whereas the discursive approach takes a more dynamic view of culture, which moves away from stereotypical generalizations to focus on the emergent meanings or the negotiation of meaning rather than pre-existing ones. Indeed, Grainger et al. (2015: 67), who followed a discursive approach, conclude that Arabic and British cultures are not diametrically opposed when it comes to hospitality. It seems that the differences found in previous research were associated with ideologies about cultures rather than real practices. For Mills and Kádár (2011: 42), not all members of a given culture will speak according to the norms stereotypically associated with their culture. The current study does not deny the existence of differences at the ideological level. The similarities between the twenty friends in the two cultural groups can be explained using the “in-group ritual” concept. In-group ritual refers to the customary practices formed by smaller social groups and may represent a different type of ritual practice than “normative” practices of the wider society, that is, social ritual or other groups (Kádár & Bax, 2013: 73). As a result, friends’ practices of offering in the current study may differ from those of the wider society as well as other groups within the same society. No culture is homogeneous.

Moreover, the framework of relational work here enabled an explanation of why certain behaviours are perceived as appropriate and politic by the interactants in the given friendship encounters, even though such behaviours may be considered negatively inappropriate from an outsider’s perspective. This supports the applicability of the relational work framework in investigating politeness, as was found by Zayts and Schnurr (2013: 194). However, the relational work framework was not able to identify the underlying regularities and factors that manage offering negotiations. For example, what sorts of rights and obligations affect people’s behaviours or what makes certain behaviour politic? The analysis needed support from other models. In this respect, rapport management helped with unfolding some of the underlying regularities. Therefore, it is suggested that the relational work frame work could be improved by adding some concepts of the rapport management framework. This is discussed in detail in Chapters 2 and 9.

### 8.3 To what extent does descriptive quantitative analysis help in identifying politic behaviour?

The analysis has shown that descriptive quantitative analysis is useful in identifying politic behaviour. It reveals what are frequent and infrequent offer behaviours among the twenty female friends. However, it cannot be used alone to understand what is considered politic in a particular context. It needs further support using discursive analysis of the interaction. This view is discussed in detail below.

Politic behaviour is defined as “behaviour, linguistic and non-linguistic, which the participants construct as being appropriate to the ongoing social interaction” (Watts, 2003: 276), and it indexes a wide variety of social behaviour that includes both non-polite (i.e. neither polite nor impolite) and polite behaviour (Locher, 2006: 256). Locher (2006: 256) points out that the term politic can be considered equivalent to appropriateness in lay people’s perceptions. According to Locher and Watts (2005: 11), the majority of relational work carried out will be of an unmarked nature and will go largely unnoticed, i.e. it is politic. However, Locher and Watts’ (2005) model would not be sufficient to identify patterns of politic usage in the corpus, although it provides a good model for the qualitative analysis of the data. First, the problem of relational work as a concept is that it does not provide any systematic way that helps the analyst to clearly identify what is politic in a particular context and explain why it is regarded as politic. Second, Locher and Watts (2005: 11) indicate that the notion of frame and habitus<sup>150</sup> account for structuring our social norms and expectations, which guide instances of relational work. However, how we can use these to identify the norms in a particular context is unclear in their model. Thus, it can be said that the model as currently stated is of limited use in drawing conclusions about what is considered politic in a given context.

However, the analysis carried out here has shown that quantitative measures can be employed as a guide to determine what is politic in a particular context. In any situation, there are expected sequences of formulaic or unmarked politeness, and people who deviate from the expected formulae may be perceived as behaving impolitely or over-politely. Moreover, these behaviours are likely to be frequent since they are in line with participants’ expectations. In other words, they are expected because we are used to them.<sup>151</sup> Being politic is a matter of being

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<sup>150</sup> See fn. 17, Section 2.1.2.1.

<sup>151</sup> This argument is also supported in the discursive analysis. Participants pointed out that some offers were the normal thing to be done. Comments like *‘this is what people usually do’* were common (see Extract 15, Extract 23, Extract 25, and Extract 27).



normal in a given social situation, and what is normal is the behaviour that one is used to observing. However, Locher and Watts (2005) did not consider frequency in identifying politic or polite behaviour, although Watts (2003: 278) defines unmarked behaviour as one that occurs frequently and hence looks neutral and normal. Dickey (2016: 204) states:

Watts does not clearly discuss the result of frequency in making certain behaviours politic and does not use quantitative methods in any of his analyses. Instead he discusses isolated examples that do not allow the reader to judge the extent to which particular expressions are frequent in specific contexts.

According to Terkourafi's frame-based model, linguistic expressions are polite because of the regular co-occurrence between them and their extra-linguistic contexts of use (Terkourafi, 2005: 247). Terkourafi (2002, 2005) argues that what is frequent in a given context is polite in this situation and is considered unmarked politeness. The disadvantage of Terkourafi's view is that it requires a large number of actual examples of usage for each lexical expression investigated. In addition, it retains to some extent the traditional view of politeness that certain expressions are inherently polite since it focuses on the lexical level. Building from her analytical position, I claim that quantitative analysis helps in identifying politic patterns in the behaviour under investigation. My observation shows that people have certain frequent patterns in their offers. These frequent patterns were non-salient. Therefore, I suggest that what is frequent in a given context is likely to be unmarked and politic since Locher and Watts claim that the majority of relational work is politic. Frequency within a descriptive analysis enables the analyst to draw conclusions and provides a more comprehensive picture of what is seen as politic in a particular context. My view is different from Terkourafi in that I consider the frequency of certain behavioural patterns – including acts and strategies whether verbal or non-verbal – not lexical expressions. Therefore, my approach neither requires such an extensive corpus as in Terkourafi's frame-based approach nor retains the assumption that politeness is inherent in words because the focus here is on a more abstract level of language. It looks at the transactional and interactional components of discourse.

My view that politic behaviour would be frequent does not contradict the view that norms are in flux and change from context to context. Although norms are constantly renegotiated (Locher, 2004: 85, 2008: 521; Locher & Watts, 2008: 78), I believe that each individual has some prior expectations of the appropriate norms when s/he enters an interaction and behaves according to this knowledge. Escandell-Vidal (1996: 645) points out that behaving politely is an acquired knowledge not a natural ability. It is thus a kind of competence people acquire through time (Locher, 2004: 85). This highlights that what is constituted at the

moment of the interaction draws upon prior encounters and socio-cultural resources available to interlocutors. That is, single interactions do not exist in isolation, but are connected to similar ones in the speaker's past and future. Interactants are not expected to construct norms on the spot from scratch. They are repeating behaviours according to their past experiences. When people engage in a new interaction, they adjust to the context and adapt their behaviours according to the renegotiated norms in that encounter. As a result, the behaviours that they have acquired in past experiences would not be frequent if norms have changed, and vice versa. This again supports my claim that what is regarded as politic would be frequent in a given situation.

Finally, Locher (2015: 8) advises that "theories should not simply be applied without a holistic analysis of the data extracts we are analysing." Although she is against quantitative analysis, I claim that quantitative analysis allows us to provide a holistic description of the investigated phenomena, e.g. offering behaviour among friends. However, this quantitative approach is insufficient to investigate the discursive struggle over politeness. Qualitative analysis is needed to highlight this issue.

My approach shows that the quantitative view is helpful in providing a comprehensive picture of what is considered politic in a given context. Other parts of relational work such as over-politeness or impoliteness cannot be addressed by investigating the frequency of certain behaviours in a given context. Quantitative analysis can support qualitative analysis in identifying unmarked politeness in discursive approaches, yet it cannot stand alone since investigating the evaluative reactions is at the core of discursive approaches. Discursive analysis is needed to investigate how these patterns are evaluated and to explore the values these practices index.

#### **8.4 To what extent do non-verbal offers affect relational work management among interactants?**

The discursive analysis in the current study has demonstrated that non-verbal offers play a significant role in the development of relational work and evaluations of politeness. The study has shown that non-verbal offers can affect the ongoing conversation, e.g. change the topic or prompt a reaction, and cause evaluative reactions, e.g. appreciation. This is important because non-verbal behaviour has been neglected in the field. This section aims to highlight and explore the evidence for this finding.

Non-verbal offers might generate reactions from the interactants and may cause complex negotiation, as evidenced by the fact that such offers were not favoured

by BE participants and their use was limited to situations in which displaying association is more important than considering the addressee's autonomy (e.g. fulfilling a need for an immediate assistance, part of expected hospitality, or confirming the group's solidarity). Such offers helped build up the discursive nature of face as some of these non-verbal offers enhanced or threatened the face of interlocutors. Non-verbal offers sometimes showed that the performer was attentive to the needs of others and this in itself entailed politeness. Ahmed (2017: 184) found that non-verbal apology among Iraqis involves a degree of politeness because the apologizer perceives that verbal behaviour will not be enough to convince the addressee to accept the apology. In both cases, it appears that doing an action non-verbally adds something to the interaction.

Moreover, it was found that non-verbal offers were often part of unmarked politic behaviour and might pass unnoticed. They were used as a strategy to avoid wasting time when negotiating expected norms or when an immediate need for help was noticed. When Faten (SA speaker) was asked about her non-verbal offers of pouring coffee for her guests, she stated *"It is illogical to waste our time in saying offering expressions every time we offer our guests something or to appreciate every cup [of coffee] or anything expected. Socializing is more important."* Participants' comments indicated that the absence of these non-verbal offers may be noticeable and could be considered to be inappropriate and, hence, negative evaluations may arise. This provided further evidence that such offers were a crucial part of the politic behaviour. For example, Clara (BE speaker) said, *"I would expect someone to offer to pour drinks for me/offer the jug for me to pour after they have done their own. They do not need to speak this, just passing or pointing works."*<sup>152</sup> Suha (SA speaker) also responded that *"It is impossible to serve myself and ignore the person sitting beside me. This would be very rude. Generally, pouring coffee without asking her [Ahad] is better than not pouring coffee for her at all."*<sup>153</sup> Such offers were used as strategic actions to avoid interrupting the flow of talk among the friends. It was found that non-verbal offers saved the offerer from interrupting the talk and, as a result, being seen as rude (Weatherall & Edmonds, 2018: 11).

Furthermore, it was argued that non-verbal offers appeared to be a sign of low distance and intimacy among interlocutors in the current corpus, as seen in

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<sup>152</sup> Gail (guest) poured juice in her glass. She then pointed to Clara to see if she wanted to have juice as she had noticed that Clara's glass was empty too.

<sup>153</sup> All the friends were talking. Nada and Ahad were sitting beside each other, and the coffee thermos was on the table in front of them. Their cups were empty. Nada (guest) poured coffee for herself and then for Ahad without asking Ahad if she wanted to have another cup of coffee.

Section 8.1.2.<sup>154</sup> However, it is also frequently used among non-acquaintances. For example, consider a situation when you are walking towards a door, and the person in front of you holds the door open for you until you reach it (non-verbal offer). S/he usually leaves without waiting for an expression of gratitude. It seems that s/he might not expect any reaction from your side. There are also situations in which you thank the offerer, but s/he does not respond verbally to your thanking because s/he leaves before hearing it or simply replies with a smile. This example shows that such non-verbal offers between non-acquaintances is part of unmarked politic behaviour. However, if you are not close and have to speed up to reach the door, this offer may have negative inferences. Non-verbal offers may have different evaluations and can display intimacy or distance depending on the context. This contradicts Leech's (2014: 182) generalization that direct offers, including non-verbal ones, are the most generous and polite strategy because they save the receiver from trying to provide a polite response that avoids imposing on the offerer. Therefore, discursive researchers argue that politeness is not inherent in utterances, but this claim must also include non-verbal acts. What we can claim about non-verbal offers is either that their force is stronger than verbal ones or they are employed for actions that people are not likely to refuse despite their politeness degree. This was apparent in the fact that none of them were refused in the BE data and only five were refused in the SA data. This assumption is parallel to Ahmed's (2017: 184) claim that non-verbal apologies were arguably stronger than verbal apologies.

It was also found in the study that speakers could combine both verbal and non-verbal moves to accomplish offers. This could be a common strategy of offers, particularly when offering an item or immediate service. Hua et al. (2000), in their analysis of gift offering in Chinese, found that five of the seven strategies identified in the data were related to using a supportive verbal move with a non-verbal move of handing the gift over. Meanwhile, the refusal and acceptance might be non-verbal<sup>155</sup> or verbal accompanied by a non-verbal move. It seems that the illocutionary force and sincerity for such a combination is stronger than having either a verbal or non-verbal move alone. This provides further evidence that non-verbal behaviour may affect linguistic politeness as it might act to support or mitigate what is said.

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<sup>154</sup> Grainger and Mills (2016: 2) argue that indirect requests or hints might be interpreted as indicating a distant relationship between interactants; as such, they might be evaluated as impolite or inappropriate among close friends.

<sup>155</sup> Edmondson (1981: 33-36) provides several examples of responses to speech acts, such as summons and requests, that have been achieved non-verbally or both verbally and non-verbally.

To summarize, it was found that relational work management among interactants was affected by non-verbal offers. These offers play significant roles in the discursive struggle over politeness during an ongoing interaction. Moreover, the analysis in the current study has shown that its analytical framework, which was based mainly on the relational work framework, can account for non-verbal offers in the same way as verbal ones. Thus, I suggest that any discursive politeness approach can be expanded to adequately account for non-verbal instances of manifestations of (im)politeness because both verbal and non-verbal behaviour can similarly affect the constructionist nature of politeness and face-work.

### **8.5 What are the underlying factors that contribute to participants' evaluations of (im)politeness in the friendship groups?**

The interviewees' responses in the current study unveiled some of the dominant factors on which politeness evaluations were based. These were: norms, context, interpretations of speaker's intention, relationship with other interactants, and politeness connotations of some lexical and syntactic structures. Differences in how we perceive these factors in a given situation may also account for the variations in lay evaluations. For example, the same behaviour within the same context may be evaluated differently because of variances in our relations with the speakers and/or how we perceive their intentions. Norms and context were discussed in Section 8.2.1.5 when describing relational work management among friends. This section investigates the other factors that were not referred to in the relational work framework. These include interpretation of the speaker's intention, relationship with other interactants, and politeness connotations of some lexical and syntactic structures.

The most common factor to which the females in the study traced their evaluations was their interpretation of the speaker's intention. The following responses showed how interviewees referred to their understandings of the potential speakers' intentions to justify their evaluations:

BE Data:

Elsa said, "I felt that she [Janet] was trying to help because she did know the name."<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> The women were talking about movies. There was a movie that Helen could not remember. Janet tried to help her by providing a movie name that might match what Helen had in mind.

Elsa said about Helen passing her plate to Elsa when Elsa was clearing the table, “She's tried to be helpful and she's offered to help me by passing it to me rather than me just having to deal with it myself.”

Yara said about Emily moving the glasses to provide more space for Yara's plates, “I think because they were trying to be convenient and make space for my food to make it easier.”<sup>157</sup>

#### SA Data:

Abeer said, “Since Nada was tired, Suha was trying to let her relax.”<sup>158</sup>

Suha said about Ahad offering them several choices of food that they can order to meet their preferences, “I believed that she was trying to find out what we wanted and she respected our preferences.”

Sally said about Faten's offer of advice to give her kids yogurt and garlic in order to boost their immune system, “Since my kids get sick a lot, she wanted to help by providing information that might help me.”

These examples contradict the initial claims of discursive researchers that ascribing intentions to speakers to be polite or impolite are not components of politeness (e.g. Mills, 2002: 76, 2003: 244); in other words, intentionality is resisted in politeness approaches. However, this view was softened in subsequent work when investigating impoliteness; some discursive researchers indicated that it is the interactants' perceptions of speakers' intentions, not the intentions themselves, that determine whether an act is perceived as impolite or not (Culpeper, 2008: 32; Locher & Watts, 2008: 80), though others would disagree with this view of intentions (e.g. Bousfield, 2008: 72-73; Davies, 2009: 178; Haugh, 2013a: 53; Terkourafi, 2008: 62). It was obvious from participants' responses in the current study that interpretations of speaker's intention were a key factor in their evaluations of polite behaviours, too. These interpretations may not reflect the speaker's real intention. They are constructed by “drawing on a range of different types of evidence” (Mills, 2005: 269). Although these interpretations are hypothesized, they play a significant role in politeness assessment. Similarly, Savić (2018: 70) found that intention attribution played a vital role in the lecturers' perceptions of (im)politeness and in/appropriateness in student email requests written in English at a Norwegian university. My finding is also evidenced in the fact that how addressees interpret a speaker's intentions has some consequences because it affects their reactions, feelings, face, and experiences, which in turn influence their subsequent relationships and

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<sup>157</sup> See Extract 28.

<sup>158</sup> Nada wanted to move in order to reach out for the coffee thermos, which was closer to Suha. Suha immediately took the thermos and Nada's cup to pour her coffee.

interactions.<sup>159</sup> The interpretation of the speaker's intention is one of the main elements in constructing an interactant's evaluations and reactions, which is the focus of politeness1. My argument here neither contradicts politeness1 approaches, which investigate hearers' assessment, nor supports the claims of politeness2 approaches, which focus on speakers' intentions (e.g. Brown & Levinson, 1987; Leech, 1983). I believe it is placed within a politeness1 view because it considers the speaker's intention from the addressees' point of view, namely, their uptake of these intentions. Addressees' perception is still considered key to understanding politeness.

The nature of the interactants' relationships determines their evaluations of politeness and appropriateness. Evaluating someone as a close friend can justify subsequent social actions to be appropriate and polite that might not be appropriate and polite in another situation.<sup>160</sup> Such actions would be a sign of intimacy and in-group solidarity. Respondents attributed their behaviour to the nature of their close friendship relationships with the other interactants. The following responses exemplify this factor:

BE data:

Clara said about Alice (hostess) asking her guests to help themselves to the dinner after she had served all the dishes on the table, "We did not need to be served our food individually as we are all close friends."

SA data:

Faten said about her guests offering her to relax and let them serve themselves, "It is polite due to the intimate and informal nature of our relation."

For Long (2016: 10), behaviours index the expectations that participants hold regarding the nature of their relationships with others. This also confirms the view that interpersonal and relational implications are the driving force in determining whether a given behaviour is polite or not (Haugh, 2015: 158; van der Bom & Mills, 2015: 200). This may also explain the deviations of the current friendship groups' practices from the ideologies of the larger culture. It seems that the illocutionary force of their offers, refusals, and acceptances were taken for granted because they are friends, which was demonstrated by the large amount of simple offer exchanges. Evaluations depend on what a speaker thinks of

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<sup>159</sup> Haugh (2013b: 50) provides evidence that, regardless of a speaker's real intention, the hearer's interpretations of the speaker's intention exist because these interpretations have real-world consequences.

<sup>160</sup> Individuals behave differently depending on whether they are with equals, such as friends, or superiors, such as in manager–employee interactions (Scott, 1990: 176).

him/herself (Haugh, 2007a: 68) and the speaker's interpretations and reactions to who says what under what circumstances (Spencer-Oatey, 2000: 19).

In addition, it was found that the linguistic structure of an offer affects its evaluations. Contradictory to the strong claim of discursive approaches that no utterance is inherently polite or impolite (e.g. Eelen, 2001: 15; Mills, 2003: 83; Watts, 2003: 159; Locher & Watts, 2005: 29), the current analysis showed that interviewees' responses occasionally associated a certain degree of politeness with some linguistic structures, although they were aware of the role of context in determining the politeness degree (see Section 8.2.1). Consider the following responses:

BE data:

Flora commented on Susan's offering them to sit when they have arrived saying "*take a seat, if you want*", "It wasn't incredibly polite as she didn't say please, but as I know her, I feel that doesn't matter."

Helen said about Elsa's utterance when she offered them Horlicks,<sup>161</sup> "I would possibly say '*Would anyone else like a ...*' instead of '*Does anybody else want ...*'."

SA data:

Abeer commented on Ahad using the expression "*sami*."<sup>162</sup> when she offered coffee to Inas, "It is very polite because she used the expression '*Sami*:'."

Suha commented on Ahad's utterance when she served her dessert,<sup>163</sup> "I would use better expressions, such as '*tafad<sup>l</sup>al-i*'."<sup>164</sup>

The responses showed that the Arabic expressions "*Sami*" and "*tafad<sup>l</sup>al-i*" as well as the English word "*please*" and expression "*would you like ...*" may imply some degree of politeness in offers. However, the relational work as part of the discursive approach to politeness failed to explain this issue due to its reliance on participants' evaluations and rejection of speech acts. I do not claim here that politeness is inherent in the form (politeness2). I propose that people associate certain degrees of politeness with some linguistic behaviours, and these associations are part of the conventionalized norms. However, these

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<sup>161</sup> Elsa was preparing tea for the women after they had finished their meal. She stated that she would go for a Horlicks because it was getting late. She then asked the women if they wanted the same, saying "*Does anybody else want the Horlicks?*"

<sup>162</sup> "*sami*" is an elliptical form of the expression '*by the name of God*'.

<sup>163</sup> Ahad was serving dessert to her guests. She served a small piece to Abeer because she was on a diet. Suha was teasing Abeer about eating dessert while she was on diet. Ahad served dessert to Suha saying, "*Take it. Shut up, I will give you the big piece. But @@<@ you should've said I got the big one @>*"

<sup>164</sup> "*tafad<sup>l</sup>al-i*" is a conventionalized offering expression used in Arabic. It is equivalent to '*here you are*'



associations are not fixed. They are subject to continuous re-evaluations and negotiations every time they occur in a context. In other words, they are associated with a certain degree of politeness out of context, and a given context may support this association or refute it (i.e. reduce or alter). For example, the term *please* is considered a sign of being polite, as manifested in parents asking their children to use such a word in their requests. However, it may deliver impoliteness in certain situations based on several factors (e.g. contexts, experiences, and relations), and this does not deny the politeness degree conventionalized with such a word. My view explains why certain expressions such as *please* or *excuse me* and certain conventionalized structures may often give the impression of being polite. It also explains how swear words such as *damn it* are mostly judged as impoliteness even out of context. It explains why some linguistic choices are made in a given situation, an issue discursive approaches cannot explain (Grainger, 2018: 20). I do not call for a politeness2 approach in which politeness is inherited in linguistic expressions. I believe that both the traditional (politeness2) and discursive (politeness1) approaches have extreme views regarding this aspect, and we may need to be halfway between them.<sup>165</sup>

To answer the fifth research question, a thorough investigation of the interviewees' responses showed that our expectations of polite or appropriate behaviour are based on five factors: norms, experiences with similar contexts, relationships among interlocutors, the interpretation of the speaker's intentions, and the lexical and syntactic structure of a message. The interviewees' responses in the study confirmed Spencer-Oatey's (2000: 31) view that four factors affect people's choice of rapport management strategies: participants' relationships, content of the message, rights and obligations, and situations. Factors determining what counts as appropriate and polite are not fixed; they are discursively negotiated in each situation. This explains why normative behaviours of a given group may deviate from normative behaviour in the larger society and why variability in evaluations occurred in this context.

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<sup>165</sup> There has been a move to establish a kind of a middle ground between traditional (politeness2) and discursive (politeness1) approaches to account for politeness (e.g. Davies, 2018; Grainger, 2011, 2013; Haugh, 2018).

## **8.6 Are the evaluative reactions gleaned from actual discourse more, or less, useful than those obtained using metalinguistic instruments?**

The analysis showed some inconsistency between the evaluative reactions in the talk itself and evaluations during interviews. Inconsistency between what participants think and what they did or said was also found by van der Bom and Mills (2015: 195). This inconsistency in interactants' evaluations can be interpreted from two opposing perspectives.

On the one hand, the twenty women in the study may have felt too inhibited to express their opinions or real reactions because of the desire to keep up good relations during the interaction and beyond (these are ongoing relationships). This could be due to the main goal of the interaction which is maintaining the current quality of the relationship and the level of rapport, namely, holding a rapport–maintenance orientation (Spencer-Oatey, 2000: 30). Indeed, none of the offers judged as impolite by any participant during the interviews generated negative evaluative reactions from the interactants during the real interaction. In a similar vein, one of the participants in Grainger and Mills' (2016: 125) investigation of indirectness commented that English people would avoid expressing what they feel or think in order to keep things looking fine on the surface. This was also stressed by one of the participants in van der Bom and Mills' (2015: 196) investigation of politeness when she said that she held back her real opinions in order to avoid confronting her friend with what she sees as the truth. This issue questions the validity of basing understandings of politeness on interactants' reactions only.

On the other hand, what may account for this inconsistency is that although norms of appropriate behaviour are constantly subject to change (Locher, 2011: 192), our views or beliefs of appropriate behaviour can appear as fairly static because of our ideologies of cultural values as being good or bad.<sup>166</sup> These ideologies may have some impact on the way the participants think they should behave (Grainger & Mills, 2016: 26); however, these thoughts may not accurately represent all interactions within the culture (Mills & Kádár, 2011: 42). Thus, it could be that the participants' evaluations during the interviews were based on their ideologies of tendencies at a cultural level rather than in the given interaction. Locher and Watts (2005: 17) assert that asking participants about their evaluations of what they were doing is flawed since their conscious

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<sup>166</sup> These ideological stereotypes are mainly associated with the values of the elite class of a country or a representation of a fictional golden age in the past (Grainger & Mills, 2016: 17-18).

evaluations might not correspond to what they perceived at that time. This indicates two problems. First, the reliability of research instruments that depend on eliciting responses about language use such as role-plays and DCTs is not high. Second, many people do not have the experience or metalinguistic skills needed to articulate the levels of politeness they intended or interpreted (Holmes & Schnurr, 2005: 122). For instance, Mills (2003: 45) posited that even consulting the interactants, as she did in her own research, does not provide any guarantee of getting “what really went on”. Thus, the validity and reliability of lay persons’ metalinguistic evaluation are not guaranteed.

In conclusion, it was found that the evaluative reactions in the talk itself and evaluations during interviews may not be consistent. They may sometimes even be contradictory. It seems that participants’ responses during interviews were quite subjective. Other factors may have affected their responses. For instance, they do not have the experience of looking at data from an analytical point of view; in other words, it seems an odd thing to do because they are not linguists. Thinking back about the interactions also might have allowed them to pick up any potential threat that might not have been noticed during the conversation. However, the interviewees also might not have agreed on acting the way they did in a real context. They might have felt too inhibited to show their real reaction during conversation. Unfortunately, we can never know which reaction (if any) is the “real” one. Analysts should use all the evidence they have to provide a thorough analysis of what happened, even when this is conflictual. Here we can refer to understandings of frequent behaviour in a given situation to discover the expected norms and ideologies that rationalize a given behaviour.

## **8.7 Summary**

This chapter has provided a discussion of responses to the research questions. It has shed light on the similarities and differences of offer negotiations among Saudi and British female friends in ordinary spoken discourse. In general, the young females in this study shared more similarities than differences in the interactional structure and relational work management of their offering behaviour. Most offers, especially hospitable ones, appeared to be part of the unmarked politic behaviour and did not generate intricate reactions from the addressees. It has been shown that offering behaviour was governed by attentiveness, shared norms, sociality rights, and frames in both SA and BE data, and the dominance of each factor may vary from one situation to another. Moreover, the frequent interactional structures were similar in both the SA and BE data, but their degree of occurrence may vary to some extent. The differences between the SA and BE offers centred mainly on how certain behaviours were

perceived in each cultural group rather than having very different practices. For example, non-verbal offering was found in both corpora, but it was more frequent and positively evaluated in the SA data. Although reoffers were not frequent in either SA and BE data, they occurred more often and were more likely to be elaborated in the SA data. The major difference lay in the use of religious expressions, which occurred only in the SA data.

In addition to the discussion of the similarities and differences in the communication of offers between SA and BE female friends, insights about relational work have been provided. It is shown in this study that investigation of non-verbal offers enabled in-depth understanding of the negotiation of relational work and managing rapport between the interactants even though most politeness research has usually focused on verbal communication. Thus, any approach to study politeness has to consider that a great amount of our relational work and rapport management might be done non-verbally. Variations in politeness evaluations were detected and could be caused by the underlying factors that affect interactants' evaluations such as interpretations of intentions and nature of relationships among interactants. This thesis reinforces the point that metalinguistic evaluations do not always correspond to real-world interactions, but they reflect ideologies of appropriate behaviour. The descriptive quantitative analysis enabled the recognition of dominant norms and patterns in offering among members of Saudi and British female friendship groups, and hence helped in the identification of what is considered politic in a given context. It also helped in refuting some of the stereotypes associated with each culture. However, it needs support from the qualitative analysis in order to investigate the discursive struggle over politeness. This study argues for combining both approaches in order to better explore the holistic and moment-by-moment understandings of politeness norms in a specific situation.

The analysis of the findings in the context of the existing literature shows that the relation between communication of offers and discursive politeness could be explained in terms of the interaction between combinations of the evidence: quantitative analysis of interactional features, discursive analysis of the ongoing interaction, and metalinguistic evaluations. The analysis provides the basis for some conclusions, which will be reported in the following chapter.

## Chapter 9 Conclusion

This chapter brings together the conclusions of the previous chapters to show how this study contributes to our understanding of discursive politeness and cross-cultural pragmatics. Before providing the conclusions of the study, this will be contextualised through a brief outline of the research. The chapter then provides a summary of the study's findings along with its main contributions, implications, strengths, and limitations. Finally, the chapter ends with some suggestions for future research.

The thesis has made an attempt to investigate offering interactions in SA and BE female friendship groups. A discursive theoretical approach informed both my approach to data collection and analysis. Recordings of spontaneous natural talk in six female friendship groups, with 20 participants in total, in dinner settings were used as the primary data collection method. Follow-up interviews were conducted and SRQ administered to determine the participants' perceptions of their and their interlocutors' offering behaviour. The analytical framework of the study mainly employed the relational work and rapport management frameworks (see Chapter 2). In addition, the study also proposed new practices in its analysis of politeness (see Chapters 2 & 4), drawing on some of the tools developed in CA during the discursive analysis. I also carried out a quantitative analysis of some phenomena identified by discourse analysis – particularly the structure of exchange (Edmondson, 1981) – to identify politeness patterns in offers as they occur in everyday interactions. The study explored both verbal and non-verbal politeness in offer negotiations.

Through careful investigation of the conversations, 143 offer exchanges in the SA corpus and 104 in the BE corpus were identified. A coding framework of offer exchanges was established to capture the main characteristics of the interactional structure of offer negotiations in ordinary spoken discourse (see Chapter 4). Offer exchanges were classified according to whether offers were initiated verbally or non-verbally, offer topics, complexity of offer exchanges, and stimulus type of initiative offer. Supportive moves that accompanied an offer were explored. These categories were analysed quantitatively by comparing their frequencies and percentages across the SA and BE groups (see Chapter 5).

Following the quantitative analysis, representative samples of offer exchanges were selected for the discursive analysis (see Chapters 6 & 7). The selection criteria were as follows: 1) The selection should roughly reflect all topics of offers, i.e. offers of hospitality, offer of information, offer of assistance, and topics that

were not addressed in previous research; 2) The selection should include all possible exchanges identified in the data and reflect the variation within them, e.g. different types of responses and strategies; 3) The selection should reflect as widely as possible the features found in both verbal and non-verbal offers. In the previous chapter, I answered the research questions as well as discussed and interpreted the findings of the study. The following section outlines the main findings of the study in relation to its questions.

## **9.1 Summary of the main findings**

This section is divided into three sections that are parallel to the three components of the aims of the study outlined in Chapter 1 (Section 1.3). These were cross-cultural goals, which aimed to compare relational work strategies and the interactional structure of offer exchanges across the SA and BE female friendship communities; theoretical goals, which intended to propose new methods for the relational work framework in order to fully unpack politeness in a social practice; and methodological goals, which intended to compare reactions and evaluations obtained through interviews and natural conversations.

### **9.1.1 Cross-cultural findings: Comparing offering behaviour between SA and BE female friends**

This section summarizes the findings related to the first two questions of the study. To answer the first research question, *“What are the main interactional characteristics of offers in female friendship groups in Saudi Arabia and Britain?”*, I compared the frequency distribution of some aspects of the interactional negotiation of offers<sup>167</sup> in natural talk among the twenty Saudi and British female friends (Chapter 5). The data collected in the study suggests that, despite the minor differences, the young female friendship groups in Saudi Arabia and Britain had remarkable similarities in the interactional characteristics of offer negotiations. The differences were centred around the degree of occurrence of some categories rather than being major differences in the dominant categories of interactional structures of offer negotiations. For example, although intricate negotiation of offers was not frequent in either set of data, it was found that the BE speakers tended to avoid complex negotiation of offers more than the SA speakers did. It seems that the participants tended to use the same interactional structures, but not necessarily to the same extent.

Offer of hospitality was the most frequent type of offer in both sets of groups. Thus, the conclusions of the study are mainly related to hospitality among female

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<sup>167</sup> See the coding framework of offers in Chapter 4.

friends. Most offers were spontaneous in both SA and BE corpora. Soliciting an offer seemed not to be favoured by the speakers. Both SA and BE female speakers inclined towards being involved in simple offer exchanges rather than complex ones. It was also noticed across all groups that most offers were accepted without any complex negotiation. Generally, both SA and BE speakers showed similar tendencies in their use of the strategies that made up complex offer exchanges. It was found that elaborated offers and offering-reoffering sequences were the most common strategies, whereas collaborative offers and embedded offers were limited in both corpora.

However, there were some differences concerning the distribution of these strategies. Reoffering was more customary by the SA speakers, whereas elaboration was much more frequently chosen over the other strategies by the BE speakers. There were no substantial differences in the distribution of supportive moves across the two sets of groups. The most common supportive moves accompanying the offers in both SA and BE interactions were grounders and expanders. Explicit conditionals were more common in the BE data, whereas imposition minimizer and confirmation of H's response were more frequent in the SA offers. The analysis also showed that supportive moves could occur in a separate turn from the head move in both English and Arabic offers, which reinforces the importance of a discursive approach. Last but not least, the analysis showed that about half of the SA offers and a quarter of BE offers were achieved non-verbally. It can be said that such offers helped in managing the ongoing social activity among the friends.

To answer the second research question, "*How do Saudi and British female friends manage their relational work in offer negotiations as part of ordinary talk?*", a discursive analysis of some representative samples of offer exchanges was undertaken (Chapters 6 & 7). The frameworks of relational work and rapport management were employed to explore perceptions of appropriateness and politeness in offer negotiations. Similar to the quantitative analysis, the discursive analysis showed that the twenty SA and BE female speakers shared more resemblances than differences in their offering behaviours.

Regarding the similarities, it can be said that most offers among friends fell within the interactional function of communication, in which the main concern was to communicate friendliness and good manners, alongside having a transactional function, in which transfer of service, things or information occurred.<sup>168</sup> Although

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<sup>168</sup> The goal of transactional discourse is to efficiently transmit information, while the aim of interactional discourse is establishing and maintaining social relationships. The two types of discourse can never be entirely separated from one another (Kasper, 1990: 205).

the majority of offers in the study were part of hospitality, it seems that hospitality offers were of minor importance to the verbal interaction. Maintaining association rights and friendly rapport were more important than overtly displaying hospitality by the twenty female friends. For example, when a speaker was faced with competing discourse norms such as maintaining social interaction among the group while also fulfilling hosting obligations, she had to account in some way for any clash of underlying regularities of these norms. The speaker would show that she noticed them and desired to maintain a politic manner by performing non-verbal moves to communicate hospitality and at the same time avoiding the interruption of their talk to perform a normative hospitable offer, such as offering a cup of coffee to a guest. Moreover, displaying attentiveness was one of the motivations of most offering behaviour by the study participants.

It was seen that most offers were considered to be normal and common-sense behaviour by the participants. Thus, they were seen as being part of unmarked politic behaviour. This was evidenced by the fact that most offers were simple and did not lead to complex negotiations. Strong appreciation or complex negotiation was limited to situations in which the offered item or service was seen as weighty or extra by the addressee. Insisting on offering or refusing was not considered normative behaviour by the female friends. Acceptance was mostly expressed through appreciation tokens, non-verbal actions, or the absence of a response. Refusals were mostly accompanied with appreciation tokens.

It was obvious that both association and equity rights (Spencer-Oatey, 2000, 2002, 2005) governed the offering behaviour and were subject to discursive negotiation. Offers were sometimes oriented to sociality, but in other situations to autonomy within the same group in the interactions of both SA and BE speakers. The dominance of each type of rights was not static. This confirms the view of the discursive approach that norms are in flux, i.e. they are “constantly negotiated, and renegotiated and ultimately change over time in every type of social interaction” (Locher, 2006: 264), which is an issue speakers were aware of and they thus subconsciously adapted their offering behaviour. Moreover, inconsistency in perceptions of politeness across individuals was detected. However, the participants sometimes provided similar rationalizations for certain behaviours despite the variability across the group or within individuals in their classifications of the evaluations, thus it can be concluded that the variability was more on the classification of the behaviour rather than the rationale for the evaluations (Davies, 2018: 133).<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> See Section 8.2.1.7 for detailed discussion.



On the other hand, very few differences regarding the management of relational work in offer negotiations between the SA and BE speakers were observed. These were centred around four areas. Firstly, religious expressions were commonly used by the SA speakers, whereas such expressions were not found in the BE corpus. Secondly, despite the limited number of reoffers in both sets of data, reoffering was more elaborated in the SA data than the BE data. Thirdly, non-verbal offers were perceived more positively by the SA speakers than their BE counterparts. Finally, I observed that during interviews SA speakers tended to downgrade the level of politeness of their own offers compared to others' evaluations, whereas the BE speakers had a tendency towards evaluating their utterances as more polite than their addressees did.

Finally, I would like to highlight that although one of my research aims was to explore the appropriate norms in the negotiations of offers by SA and BE female friends, I do not claim that the conclusions of the study can be generalized to people with similar backgrounds to the study participants.

### **9.1.2 Theoretical findings: The analysis of politeness within a discursive approach**

Research questions 3, 4, and 5 aimed to explore new practices that would improve the effectiveness of discursive politeness analysis. These included: using quantitative analysis to identify politic behaviour, exploring non-verbal politeness, and determining the underlying factors that may influence interactants' perceptions of politeness.

To answer the third research question, "*To what extent does descriptive quantitative analysis help in identifying politic behaviour?*", the conclusions of the quantitative analysis were discussed in relation to the definitions of politic behaviour. The analysis showed that descriptive quantitative analysis can be employed as a guide to help in identifying what is politic in a particular context since politic behaviour is defined as behaviour that occurs frequently in a particular context (Watts, 2003: 278) and quantitative analysis can identify which behaviours are frequent and infrequent in a particular context. However, quantitative analysis alone cannot be used to understand what is considered politic in a particular context since investigating the evaluative reactions as well as the variability of judgments are at the core of discursive approaches. Quantitative analysis can neither capture the interactants' reactions nor the variability of evaluations in a given context. Moreover, it is important to highlight that other parts of relational work such as over-politeness or impoliteness cannot be addressed by investigating the frequency of certain behaviours in a given context.

Concerning the fourth research question, *“To what extent do non-verbal offers affect relational work management among interactants?”*, instances of non-verbal offers were carefully analysed, both quantitatively and qualitatively (i.e. discursively). The analysis showed that non-verbal offers were like verbal ones as both have the possibility to pass unnoticed, generate complex negotiation, get a positive or negative reaction, and may enhance or threaten interactants’ face. Most of these non-verbal offers were perceived as politic/polite behaviour by participants. Interviewees commented that the absence of such offers on some occasions would affect the interaction negatively. Thus, non-verbal offers proved to be a significant part of managing relational work since they may influence the interaction negatively or positively as well as triggering no particular evaluative reactions. This claim is also supported by my finding that non-verbal offers seemed not to be favoured by the BE participants in this study.

The fifth research question, *“What are the underlying factors that contribute to participants’ evaluations of (im)politeness in the friendship groups?”*, was designed to provide theoretical insights into the investigation of politeness. The interview data shed light on the factors that may have influenced participants’ choices of offering behaviours. According to the participants’ responses, knowledge of norms, context, interpretations of speaker’s intention, relationship with other interactants, and politeness connotations of some lexical and syntactic structures played a significant role in participants’ evaluations of the offering behaviour. It is assumed that differences between the participants in how they perceive and interpret these factors in a given context may explain the variability within lay persons’ evaluations of politeness.

### **9.1.3 Methodological findings: Reactions in interviews vs. natural data**

The last research question was *“Are the evaluative reactions gleaned from actual discourse more, or less, useful than those obtained using metalinguistic instruments?”* Throughout the discursive analysis, I observed inconsistencies between the evaluative reactions in the interactions and the evaluations made during the interviews in some situations. Whether the analyst should rely on the reactions of interactants during the talk or on their metalinguistic evaluations in subsequent interviews is a difficult question to answer. No one can say whether the reaction during the talk (if any) or the evaluation was the “real” one due to several factors. On the one hand, the reactions during the talk may not reflect the interactants’ real evaluations. It could be that interactants felt too inhibited to express their real reactions during the actual talk because they wanted to maintain friendly rapport, i.e. keep up their good friendship relations during the

interaction. This could be attributed to the main goal of the interaction, which is maintaining the current level of the relationship. On the other hand, it could be that evaluating behaviours (or, at least those that are not immediately salient) is an unusual activity for a non-linguist and participants may not be used to thinking about language in this kind of way which might affect the accuracy of their insights. They may also not want to be seen as too judgemental of others as there are still social pressures here. Conversely, for some people, the interview context might mean that they re-evaluate what was going on and gain insights that they had not had before since the interview context is quite unpredictable in some contexts. Thus, the study concluded that analysts should make use of all the available evidence to provide a thorough analysis of what happened. The analyst needs to weigh up these different forms of evidence carefully but try to work with them both, even when they are in conflict (see Section 8.6 for further details).

## **9.2 Revisiting the relational work framework**

While I found relational work a sound framework for the study of politeness, some shortcomings were encountered during the analysis. The relational work proposal for how we should analyse behaviour did not seem to be sufficiently elaborated. It is evident that relational work has provided categories for classifying what is going on, but it fails to explain why certain evaluations are made, why certain behaviours generate these evaluations, and why speakers choose to behave in a certain way. Locher and Watts claim that interactants do not pass judgments on relational work in a social vacuum, but based on their previous experiences or expectations about norms as well as rights and obligations pertaining to their person (Locher & Watts, 2008: 78; Locher & Langlotz, 2008: 170). The notion of face as used by Goffman (1967) is also central to relational work. However, how the notion of contextual norms is applied in practice is not fully addressed in the relational framework due to its focus on the emergence of politic behaviour and its evaluation rather than exploring the norms (Culpeper, 2008: 29). Why a particular behaviour is perceived as normative is not explained in their model. Their conceptualization of rights and obligations remains vague. Relational work fails to explain what sort of rights are in effect that lead to certain behaviours being considered politic. The model thus needs support and so some modifications are suggested in the study.

Firstly, I suggest borrowing Spencer-Oatey's (2000, 2002, 2005) concept of sociality rights to better explain how rights affect our relational work. What I propose here is that relational work be used to classify behaviours into categories according to the interactants' perceptions, and the notion of sociality rights be used to explain what sorts of rights guide behaviours in a given context, since

this would also guide one's evaluations of these behaviours as politic, polite, or impolite. Relational work would tackle the participants' perceptions of appropriateness and politeness, whereas rapport management provides concepts and predictive factors that enable the researcher to interpret what is going on in a given interaction.

Secondly, Locher and Watts (2005: 11, 29) propose that the relational work model considers all aspects of verbal behaviour. However, it was found that non-verbal communicative acts may also affect the management of relational work among the interactants during a social practice. The analysis in this study has shown that its analytical framework, which was mainly based on the relational work framework, can account for non-verbal offers in the same way it investigates verbal ones. Thus, the scope of relational work must be expanded to cover all aspects of communication since the concept relational work refers to "all aspects of the work invested by individuals in the construction, maintenance, reproduction and transformation of interpersonal relationships among those engaged in social practice" (Locher & Watts, 2008: 96). It is concluded that the framework of relational work can equally consider both verbal and non-verbal behaviours, even though the original authors of the framework focused on verbal behaviour in their analyses.

Thirdly, evaluations of relational work are connected with social norms, which account for our expectations of appropriate/politic behaviour in a given context (Locher & Watts, 2005: 11). However, the model does not provide any systematic guide that an analyst can follow to clearly identify what the dominant norms are in a particular context and hence identify what is politic. Watts (2003: 278) defines unmarked behaviour as that which occurs frequently and hence looks neutral and normal. According to Locher and Watts (2005: 11), the majority of relational work carried out will be of an unmarked nature, i.e. politic. However, Locher and Watts (2005) did not explicitly employ frequency in identifying politic or polite behaviour. The relational work model claimed that expected sequences of formulaic or unmarked politeness are likely to be frequent. I inferred that what is most done in everyday spontaneous interactions is what is expected and what is expected is politic. This inference is also largely backed up by my interview data. For this reason, I suggest that quantitative measures can be employed as a guide to determine what is politic in a particular context since being politic is a matter of a behaviour occurring frequently and being perceived as expectable in a given social situation. This would allow the analyst to draw conclusions and offer a more complete picture of what is seen as politic in a particular context and explain why it is seen politic. My approach neither calls for considering the frequency of linguistic expressions in a given context nor retains the assumption that

politeness is inherent in words. The focus here is on a more abstract level of language; it considers the frequency of certain behavioural patterns as part of the transactional and interactional components of discourse, including acts and strategies whether verbal or non-verbal. If the pattern was widely used in the corpus, it is considered appropriate and politic. If not, it is either positively or negatively marked and must be investigated considering the interactants' evaluations; for a detailed discussion of how to use frequency in identifying politic behaviour see Section 8.3.

Fourthly, Locher and Watts' (2005) conceptualization of marked and unmarked politic behaviour did not seem sufficiently precise. Politic behaviour refers to "[l]inguistic behaviour which is perceived to be appropriate to the social constraints of the ongoing interaction, i.e. as non-salient," (Watts, 2003: 19) and goes largely unnoticed (Locher & Watts, 2005: 11). On the other hand, politeness (marked politic) refers to linguistic behaviours that are perceived positively as going beyond what is expectable, i.e. salient behaviour (Watts, 2003: 19). However, it was found that the absence of an evaluative reaction did not always imply that it is unmarked (e.g. Extract 2, Extract 15, Extract 21 & Extract 31). This was evidenced in the inconsistency between the participants' reactions during the interactions and their metalinguistic evaluations during the interviews. It seems that the categories of the relational work are complex as was suggested by Locher and Watts (2005). Although the definitions above suggested a hard line between politic behaviour and politeness, the relational work figure<sup>170</sup> seemed to suggest a fuzziness around the boundaries between the categories, which was stated in their 2005 paper (Locher & Watts, 2005: 12). The current study also suggests that there seems to be no clear-cut boundary between them. I think it is difficult if not impossible to draw this line, and the two categories of politic behaviour, i.e. marked and unmarked,<sup>171</sup> may sometimes overlap. Thus, even if the behaviour was unnoticed, it could be salient (marked) or relatively routine (unmarked), so politic behaviour is that which is considered to be appropriate to the social constraints of the ongoing interaction, whether salient or not. Analysts can make use of metalinguistic evaluations to help deal with such situations.

Finally, based on the above suggested modifications to the framework of relational work, I argue that politic behaviour can be identified as follows:

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<sup>170</sup> See Figure 2 in Chapter 2.

<sup>171</sup> See Culpeper (2011: 419) and Leech (2007: 203) for a similar comment.

1. Verbal or non-verbal behaviour that is perceived to be appropriate to the expected norms in a particular context.
2. Patterns of behaviours that are observed empirically to be frequent and normal in a specific social practice.
3. Behaviour that may pass unnoticed or be positively evaluated and this is subject to variability. Thus, the two components of politic behaviour, i.e. marked and unmarked, may overlap, and it can sometimes be difficult to distinguish them.
4. Behaviour that could be marked or unmarked. Whether it would be seen as salient or not depends on collecting of evidence gathered through observation, i.e. quantitative analysis and reactions during the interaction itself, and metalinguistic evaluations.

In conclusion, it can be said that the modifications suggested for relational work call for investigating politeness from two different angles. The first one is within a politeness<sup>1</sup> view in which participants' evaluations of relational work management during social practice must be explored. The second one is related to politeness<sup>2</sup> in which investigation of politeness is determined by the features of a given interaction (e.g. via quantitative counts of interactional characteristics of offer negotiations). It deals with the features, rights, relations, and factors that affect our behaviour as both pre-existent and renegotiated. Thus it seems that my approach can be positioned between politeness<sup>1</sup> and politeness<sup>2</sup>. It brings together different layers of the conceptualization of politeness in social practices and thus this combination can help unpack social behaviours and meanings using different perspectives. It can also act to address the criticisms that have been levelled at both politeness<sup>1</sup> and politeness<sup>2</sup> approaches (see Section 2.1.2). In fact, a move to establish a kind of a middle ground between politeness<sup>1</sup> and politeness<sup>2</sup> has been recently advocated by several researchers in the field (e.g. Davies, 2018; Grainger, 2011, 2013; Haugh, 2018).

### **9.3 Implications of the study**

The study has provided a number of theoretical and practical implications for politeness and cross-cultural pragmatics. Firstly, it calls for combining the use of relational work with other frameworks because relational work alone cannot always explain what is going on. It needs theoretical support to deal with issues such as what sort of rights are in effect that lead to certain behaviours being considered as politic. Adopting some aspects from the rapport management framework can help address these limitations as concepts such as sociality rights complement relational work by providing more insights into what sort of social expectations/concerns regarding the treatment of others affect our relational

work. The second suggestion is that politeness research should move beyond the original theories of politeness and combine them with other methodologies or research strands from other linguistic disciplines, an issue also highlighted by Locher (2015: 7) but is still underexplored. I used some aspects of discourse analysis and CA in my investigation of politeness.<sup>172</sup> It was shown that both of these methodologies can be helpful in exploring politeness in an ongoing interaction. I advocate that combining different approaches may strengthen our conclusions in the analysis of politeness.

Moreover, I showed that quantitative analysis can be helpful in identifying the dominant normative frames. It can be used to provide a holistic picture of the dominant practices in a particular communicative event. However, one must bear in mind that quantitative analysis is a secondary tool in politeness analysis. It supports the discursive analysis – and cannot stand alone – since exploring perceptions of politeness is at the core of discursive politeness research. In addition, the study showed that both verbal and non-verbal behaviour lead to evaluative reactions from interactants. They may also involve complex negotiation, so they may not pass unnoticed. I suggest that any study of politeness must be expanded to adequately account for non-verbal instances of (im)politeness.

The findings of quantitative and discursive analyses have challenged some of the taken-for-granted assumptions about offers. It was seen that offering behaviour has sometimes shifted from the stereotypical ones associated with Saudi and British cultures. For example, it has been claimed, stereotypically, that Arabs frequently engage in ritual reoffering and refusal (Al-Khatib, 2006: 274; Alaoui, 2011: 8; Bouchara, 2015: 73); however, it was found that reoffering was not commonly done by the ten SA females. Moreover, the results ran somewhat counter to the stereotype that British and Arabs are very different (Al-Khawaldeh, 2014: 5; Hamza, 2007: 1). My findings suggest that there are not substantial differences in the negotiation and management of interpersonal relationships between the twenty SA and BE female friends. The current cross-cultural study was not limited to comparison between nations as one unit, but focused instead on comparing similar communities of practice in two cultures, i.e. young female friendship groups. It seems that in some contexts other relational norms may outweigh the cultural stereotypical norms; and, as a result, other modes of behaviour would dominate the interaction. The research results have established

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<sup>172</sup> Several researchers advocate the use of CA in the analysis of discursive politeness (e.g. Haugh, 2007b, 2011; Piirainen-Marsh, 2005); yet it is still underexplored (see Chapter 2).

that the discursive approach facilitates our understandings of negotiations of emergent norms within small groups.

Some discursive researchers (e.g. Haugh, 2013: 61-62; Kádár & Haugh, 2013: 91-92) have argued that the analysis of politeness has to move away from a simplistic speaker–hearer model of interaction to a full consideration of the multiple layers of participation status, including ratified (addressee and side-participants) and unratified (bystander and overhearer).<sup>173</sup> The study has shown that side participants may have evaluative reactions to some offers (see Extract 16, Extract 28 & Extract 37). It argues that the evaluation of all ratified participants, whether they were addressed in the action or not, are important when analysing perceptions of politeness.<sup>174</sup> For example, if two in a group of friends are in dispute, their behaviour could affect others present, although they may not be directly involved in the disagreement. One of the side participants may initiate talk to smooth over the issue. Her contribution may be accepted, ignored, or refused. It may be positively or negatively evaluated. Despite this, she has the right to react, e.g. talk and release the tension between the others, and no one can deny that the dispute may have affected her negatively. In this way, the action is not only evaluated or reacted to by the immediate addressee but also the others in the context. This was also apparent in collaborative offerings in the study (see Extract 9 & Extract 36). Others aiding or supporting someone's offer is proof that politeness is evaluative in the eyes of all ratified participants in the talk, not only of speakers and addressees. Side participants may contribute to alter or modify someone's utterance. Thus, their evaluations and reactions are important since the behaviour may negatively or positively affect them. It seems that all ratified participants are emotionally and physically attached to the encounter. They may have evaluative reactions to what occurs during an interaction, whether addressed or not. Thus, any study of relational work must be expanded to consider the evaluative reactions of all participants in a given encounter and should not only consider speakers and addressees, in line with the recommendation by Haugh (2013a: 61-62) and Kádár and Haugh (2013: 91-92).

The current study continues the debate concerning pragmatics research instruments. The conclusions confirm the importance of employing a mixed-methods approach. Without the combination of natural data, interviews, and SRQ, it would be impossible to find out that there might be conflicts between

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<sup>173</sup> See Goffman (1981) for a full account of the participation framework.

<sup>174</sup> No claims concerning unratified participants are made here because all interactions in the study involved only ratified participants (see Section 4.2.1). I do not intend to imply that other types of participation should not be considered in the analysis of politeness.



evaluative reactions in the interaction itself and evaluations made during interviews. It would also be impossible to conclude that the absence of some behaviours would necessarily lead to negative evaluations. Equally important, interviewing the participants helped to gain a deeper insight into the factors that govern their behaviours in particular contexts (see Section 8.5). I believe that in politeness research, researchers need to look at both natural data and metalinguistic evaluation to explore all of the evidence that can deepen our understanding of the discursive negotiation of politeness. This would lead to more valid and reliable results. My findings also emphasize that assumptions about language use must be built upon natural data rather than methods that elicit participants' ideologies about their language (such as DCTs) since actual behaviour may differ from our view of what is the appropriate behaviour in a particular context. Furthermore, the study can be a guideline for those who are interested in the study of politeness in natural conversations from a cross-cultural perspective. It has provided a replicable strategy from data collection to data analysis. In particular it has developed a methodological foundation for adopting naturally occurring conversations in cross-cultural studies (e.g. by focusing on micro-contexts of small social groups in two cultures) and has presented an analytical framework that captures the macro and micro features of ongoing interactions, e.g. the use of quantitative counts of some discourse aspects and the use of some CA concepts to understand some of the discursive struggle over politeness. The methodological and analytical framework of the study can therefore be applied to studying other contexts for cross-cultural research in order to avoid the pitfalls of making generalizations about a culture.

Finally, the research results have implications for the field of teaching English or Arabic as a foreign language as it helped in refuting the stereotypes regarding offering behaviour in both cultures. Foreign language teachers in Saudi Arabia often teach language relying heavily on textbooks (Almusallam, 2015: 42) without exposing students to what native speakers of the language would really say and do in authentic contexts, or what their own values and norms are within their own speech community. Thus, the findings of this study can be used for developing pragmatically rich course exercises that incorporate knowledge about how Saudi and British female speakers truly do things with words. In addition, the findings of such a study are of great value to translators by improving their awareness of differences and similarities between the two cultures. Such knowledge will help them to avoid altering the politeness level produced in the source language when transferring it to the target language as a result of being influenced by their stereotypical knowledge of the target culture.

## 9.4 Contributions of the study

The study has a number of contributions to the field of politeness and cross-cultural pragmatics, which reflect the strengths of its methodological and analytical framework. These contributions are centred around the novelty of the study's data in cross-cultural research, the originality of its analytical framework, and its methodology, which includes creating a coding scheme of offers as part of spoken discourse and using a mixed-methods approach to understanding politeness.

The main contribution of the study lies in its use of recordings of natural data as the main source of data, so it can be said that the findings of the study reflect the actual offering behaviour by both BE and SA female friends. The study has avoided the shortcomings of most previous cross-cultural studies which have heavily relied on elicited data, such as DCTs, in which the linguistic performance might not resemble actual language use. The natural data drawn on in this study allowed the examination of offers over multiple turns of interaction rather than isolated utterances. Using natural data opened the door to using such data in future cross-cultural research since it provided evidence to counter the argument that natural data cannot yield comparable sets of data.

The approach taken in the study employed a combination of analytical approaches in order to become more multi-functional (see Chapter 2). The study implemented a postmodern approach to politeness research to explore the normative patterns of relational work used by Saudi and British females in their offers to friends. To strengthen the analytical framework of the study, I combined two postmodern frameworks, i.e. relational work and rapport management, which allowed me to fully unpack the discursive negotiation of politeness in social practice. I also employed some CA concepts in the discursive analysis of the interaction to better explain participants' reactions. These methods allowed me to identify more evidence to provide a better explanation of what was going on. I also integrated quantitative methods of some aspects of spoken discourse analysis with the discursive approach to politeness, which is originally qualitative in nature, in order to develop a more in-depth framework that can provide holistic and moment-by-moment understandings of politeness norms in a given context. My approach addressed some of the limitations of previous studies, which mainly adopted one analytical model in the investigation of politeness. It is hoped that the study adds to the body of politeness research.

The study did not only focus on verbal communication, but also accounted for non-verbal behaviour in the investigation of politeness. It revealed how non-verbal behaviour affected the discursive struggle over politeness during an

ongoing interaction. It is claimed that the study has addressed an important gap in previous politeness and cross-cultural research which, to date, has largely neglected non-verbal acts and mainly focused on linguistic behaviour.

In addition, the study did not only explore politeness from an etic perspective, i.e. the perspective of the outside researcher, but also from an emic perspective, i.e. the participants' perceptions of the appropriateness of their own and their interlocutors' behaviours in a given context. I considered the perceptions of speakers, addressees, and side participants, not only of speakers and addressees. All of this enabled the elicitation of participants' perceptions of intentions, relationships, contextual factors, and norms. Using recordings of natural talk alone cannot sufficiently unveil a participant's conscious perception of a given behaviour. Specifically, interviews and SRQ data unveiled information that the researcher may not be able to capture from detailed analysis of interactions alone.

Finally, the study created a taxonomy of offers as part of extended spoken discourse which was not available in previous literature. Creating the taxonomy on the basis of real talk allowed it to shed light on some categories of offers that had not been identified in previous research such as offers of information, collaborative offers, and embedded offers. It addressed the interactional characteristics of offer negotiations rather than strategies based on isolated speech acts. Moreover, basing my taxonomy of offers on real data allowed me to identify that supportive moves can work across turn boundaries. They can be developed over a number of turns in the interaction rather than being adjacent to the head act at the utterance level. This then changes our classic understanding of speech acts as a "one shot" construction with all elements produced together. Establishing such a taxonomy may encourage researchers to investigate the interactional characteristics of other speech acts as part of longer stretches of natural spoken data.

## **9.5 Limitations of the study**

Like other studies, the present study has encountered some limitations, which need to be acknowledged as they warrant attention for future research. Before proceeding with this section, it is important to remind you that limitations concerning the data and the measures taken to control as much as possible their influence were discussed in Chapter 4 (Section 4.5). These were related to the researcher's participation in the Arabic interactions, limited metalinguistic data in one of the BE groups, and the impossibility of validating non-verbal offers due to the absence of video recordings. This section is concerned with the limitations that were not attended to during the study.

The first limitation is related to the small number of participants. Since the present analysis was based on the talk of only ten people from each culture, it is impossible to generalize conclusions to the cultural group to which friendship groups members belonged. For instance, even though simple offer exchanges appeared to be the dominant behaviour among the study participants, more evidence is needed to claim that such behaviour is typical of young female friendship groups. However, even though the generalizability of the study may be limited, I believe that it may still reflect tendencies of both BE and SA speakers in young female friendship groups.

The second limitation lies in the fact that only one kind of context, i.e. young female friendship talk over a dinner setting, was investigated. The practices found in the study may not be shared by other friendship groups. Nonetheless, it is equally impossible to ignore the possibility that those characteristics might be typical of young female friendship groups. Whether the current findings can be extended to other participants and/or other contexts of interaction, including different power, gender, age, and relationships, is still under question.

Another limitation is related to the restricted topics of offers. Although narrowing the context of investigation allowed me to access comparable sets of natural data, it resulted in limited variability in the nature of the identified offers. The majority of the offers were part of hospitality (approximately three quarters of the total number of offers in both SA and BE corpora). A few instances of other topics of offers occurred such as offers of assistance and information. I wonder whether offers in which a major service is provided (i.e. seen as extras), such as offering to lend an expensive watch or dress, or offering payment for something (e.g. a restaurant bill), would generate the same kinds of offer structures as seen here. In order to ensure the authenticity of data, I did not intervene to create situations that would solicit such topics. As a result, it can be said that the findings of the current study mainly reflect hospitality offers and cannot be generalized to account for other types of offers.

Finally, for the convenience of the participants, only three interviews in the study were conducted face-to-face. Most oral interviews were conducted via phone with both SA and BE participants at their request (see Section 4.4). Indeed, due to my residency in Saudi Arabia, face-to-face interviews with the BE participants would have been difficult. Moreover, most of the BE speakers preferred to take part in interviews via email instead of conducting oral interviews, although they were offered the option to have the interview via Skype or phone. The flexibility of the mode of the interview aimed to avoid adding any burden on people who are already busy, hence I encouraged them to complete the data collection process in a way that suited them. This limitation might have impacted the current study

as it made it difficult to obtain more elaborate responses (through prompts and probes) and to ensure correct understanding of certain questions, although participants were asked not to hesitate to ask me if they had any queries.

## **9.6 Suggestions for future research**

The study has opened up further research dimensions, some of which address the above limitations. One possible way to expand our knowledge in the field is to carry out research with a similar design but including different topics and participants. Replicating the study with a greater number of female friends is needed. Although the results may be indicative of tendencies of young female friendship groups in both Britain and Saudi Arabia, the findings may be challenged by other friendship groups in both societies. For instance, friendship groups comprising members of a different age (younger or older) or gender (males, mixed genders) may behave differently. It is recommended for future research to explore offers among other friendship groups as well as other contexts such as workplaces, educational institutions, and public places.

The study has integrated quantitative methods in investigating politeness and combined two models to provide a more in-depth analysis of discursive politeness. Further research is needed to test the proposed analytical framework and examine the feasibility of extending it to other politeness studies. The same applies to the conclusions related to non-verbal management of relational work and rapport. Further research on non-verbal politeness in the negotiation of other speech acts as well as other contexts is also needed. Moreover, the coding framework proposed for the quantitative analysis of offer exchanges needs to be extended to and tested on a larger amount of SA and BE data in various contexts, as well as offers from other languages. Some elements of the offer exchanges such as the development of supportive moves over longer stretches of discourse and offer strategies received marginal attention, but would definitely lend themselves to interesting future studies.

Offering is a social activity that could be used as a central means of maintaining social solidarity (e.g. membership in a group) or transactional goals (e.g. hospitality or offer of information). Like other speech acts, offers are social actions whose illocutionary force would affect any ongoing interaction. For example, the offerer mostly expects a response from the recipient, thus offers can initiate a sequence of actions in which both participants engage in forms of mutual understanding. The study has provided insights into how some offers and responses were collaboratively developed or embedded. It would be interesting to explore other possible sequences of reactions that other types of offers may initiate.

The findings of the study suggest that there are a number of factors that might affect our perceptions of politeness other than norms and context. These include interpretations of speaker's intention, relationship with other interactants, and politeness connotations of some lexical and syntactic structures. Further research is needed to explore in greater depth how these factors affect perceptions of politeness<sup>1</sup> as well as find out more factors that may play a role in our perceptions of politeness in other contexts. Moreover, further evidence is needed to explain how differences in perceiving such factors in a given situation may account for the variability in lay evaluations of politeness.

Grainger and Mills (2016: 85) found that what is considered conventional indirectness in British English was regarded as too direct in Zimbabwean English. Therefore, although SA and BE speakers showed similar tendencies in their offers, their interpretations of these behaviours may be different. Further research is needed to investigate whether politeness and appropriateness are defined similarly in SA and BE. Moreover, distinguishing marked (polite) and unmarked politic behaviour in some situations was not an easy task due to disagreement in evaluations. There were elements on which people did not always agree on with respect to the degree of politeness and appropriateness. It was also observed that none of the offers that were seen as instances of impoliteness were considered appropriate. However, only six instances of evaluations of impoliteness were detected in the data, thus further empirical research is needed to explore the relationship between (im)politeness and appropriateness in more contexts.

Finally, interlanguage pragmatics was beyond the scope of the present research, so future pragmatic research is needed to explore Arabic and English language learners' ability in negotiating offers. Further research is needed to highlight the social situations in which a pragmatic transfer from Arabic to English and from English to Arabic in relation to the negotiation of offers could result in misjudgement and miscommunication. In addition, the factors that may influence positive or negative pragmatic transfer should also be studied.

## **9.7 Concluding remarks**

This chapter has highlighted the conclusions of the study while also offering future recommendations. Overall, despite the aforementioned limitations, the thesis has expanded the body of scholarship on politeness and cross-cultural communication. From a theoretical perspective, it is hoped that the study contributes to politeness research by testing the applicability of relational work. It proposes a new analytical approach in which quantitative analysis can be used to help in the identification of politic behaviour and test the validity of relational

work in exploring non-verbal communication. It contributes to cross-cultural pragmatics, in particular to identifying what would constitute making appropriate offers. From a practical and empirical perspective, it helps in understanding culturally specific norms of making offers in Britain and Saudi Arabia by female friends. Awareness of each other's appropriate norms of communication is of great importance to achieving successful intercultural communication. The focused contrastive discussion of offer interactions between female friends in SA and BE is useful in developing a better understanding of cross-cultural pragmatics since it takes a discursive view of culture and does not assume any generalizations about the British and Saudi nations. It also opens the window to the possibility of using natural data in cross-cultural studies. These contributions allow me to claim that the study has laid the groundwork for other research related to politeness and cross-cultural pragmatics, particularly to provide a guide to cross-cultural pragmatics research into the use of other communicative acts.

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## Appendix A Scale Response Questionnaire and Interview Questions

1. Do you consider X utterance/ behaviour in item no. X an offer?

\_\_\_Yes    \_\_\_No

2. If so, how would you evaluate her behaviour on the following two scales:

a. ___Very polite	___ Polite	___Neither polite nor polite	___ Impolite	___ Very impolite
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b. ___ Appropriate	___ Neither appropriate nor inappropriate	___ Inappropriate
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3. Why do you rate the utterance/behaviour that way?

4. Why did you say that utterance/do that action? (this question is addressed to the speaker)

5. If you were not the speaker, answer the following question: (this question is addressed to the other participants)

What would you say if you were in that context? And why? (E.g. would you do the same thing? Would you use the same expression? Would you remain silent ...etc?)

## Appendix B Information Sheet

### **Research Project Title: A Discursive approach to Offering in Women's Talk: A Comparison between Saudi Arabic and British English Speakers.**

You are being invited to take part in a research project on how British and Saudi women express themselves in ordinary, informal talk between friends. Before you decide on taking part or not, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

#### **1. What is the project's purpose?**

The main purpose of this study is to examine how female Saudi and British native speakers express themselves in ordinary, informal talk between friends.

#### **2. Why have I been chosen?**

You have been chosen as a participant based on the fact that you are either a native speaker of Saudi Arabic or a native speaker of British English.

#### **3. Do I have to take part?**

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form which you will keep a copy of, and you can still withdraw at any time. You do not have to give a reason.

#### **4. What will happen to me if I take part?**

You will be invited to a dinner and will be asked to invite two to three female friends to the dinner. The dinner may take place at the researcher's home or your place. The venue as well as the time will be determined according to your comfort. The researcher will provide the drinks and food upon your request; you do not have to provide anything. The dinner is expected to take approximately two hours but this will depend on the topics being discussed and some flexibility is followed. There is not any fixed topics to be discussed. The dinner must be as natural as possible.

If you agree to volunteer in the next stage, you will be invited to attend a 40 minute follow-up interview during which you reflect on some of your and your interlocutors' behaviour and fill out the scale response questionnaire. The time and the venue of the follow-up instruments will be set according to what is convenient to you.

#### **5. What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?**

We foresee no disadvantages from taking part in the research (see details in point 8 on privacy issues).

#### **6. What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

A free dinner is an immediate benefit for those people participating in the project. Generally, it is hoped that this work will contribute to improving cross-cultural understanding.

#### **7. Will I be recorded, and how will the recorded media be used?**

Dinners and Interviews will be recorded. The audio recordings will be used only for analysis. No other use will be made of them without your written permission, and no one outside the project will be allowed access to the original recordings. Recordings will be transcribed. Transcripts will be anonymous, i.e. they will not

include any of your personal data. Your name will not be linked with the research materials, and you will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research. The recordings will be destroyed irreversibly two years after the research has ended.

**8. Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?**

All the information that we collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. Only the researcher involved in the project may access the recordings, and only anonymized transcripts will be used in data analysis. Your personal data will be stored separately and it will not be handed over to anybody. You will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications resulting from the research.

**9. What type of information will be sought from me and why is the collection of this information relevant for achieving the research project's objectives?**

You will be asked to attend a dinner during which you have natural conversations with your friends in any topic you like. After that, you will be interviewed and asked to provide your opinion on certain parts of the interaction. You will determine their degree of appropriateness on a scale response questionnaire according to your perceptions. There are no right or wrong answers. We look for your opinion as it forms the base of the analysis. It is not an evaluation of your knowledge.

**10. What will happen to the results of the research project?**

The data collected in this project will be used as inputs for a PhD thesis, and in articles to be published in academic journals, as well as academic conference presentations. You will not be identified in any report or publication. The data collected will not be used for other than research purposes.

**11. Who is organising and funding the research?**

The research is supervised by the School of Languages, Cultures, and Societies at the University of Leeds, and the External Joint Supervision Program at King Saud University.

**12. Contact for further information**

<p><b>Researcher Name:</b> Inas Almusallam</p> <p><b>Address:</b> College of Applied Studies and Community Service , King Saud University, Riyadh 11495, Saudi Arabia</p> <p><b>Email:</b> mliia@leeds.ac.uk</p>	<p><b>Supervisor name:</b> Dr. Bethan Davies</p> <p><b>Address:</b> School of Languages, Cultures, and Societies, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT</p> <p><b>Email:</b> B.L.Davies@leeds.ac.uk</p>
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Thanks a lot for taking the time to consider this information sheet.

## Appendix C Consent Form

Consent to take part in the research titled: A Discursive approach to Offering in Women's Talk: A Comparison between Saudi Arabic and British English Speakers.

	Add your initials next to the statement if you agree
I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated [__/__/20__] explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.	
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time before June 2018 without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. I understand that withdrawal after this date is impossible as the data will have been analysed. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline. If I want to withdraw, I can contact the researcher via her email ( <a href="mailto:mliia@leeds.ac.uk">mliia@leeds.ac.uk</a> ). If I withdraw, any data held about me at that time will not be used and will be destroyed.	
I give permission for the researcher to have access to my anonymized responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research.	
I agree for the data collected from me to be used in relevant future research in an anonymized form.	
I agree to take part in the above research project and will inform the researcher should my contact details change.	

Name of participant	
Participant's signature	
Date	
Name of the researcher	Inas I. Almusallam
Signature	
Date*	

\*To be signed and dated in the presence of the participant.

Once this has been signed by all parties the participant should receive a copy of the signed and dated participant consent form, the letter/ pre-written script/ information sheet and any other written information provided to the participants. A copy of the signed and dated consent form should be kept with the project's main documents which must be kept in a secure location.

## Appendix D Speaker Sheet

To be filled by the researcher

Date of recording: \_\_\_\_\_

Place: \_\_\_\_\_

<p>First speaker:</p> <p>Speaker's Name: _____</p> <p>Speaker's Code: _____</p> <p>Native speaker of:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">__ Arabic __ English</p> <p>Education: _____</p> <p>Occupation: _____</p> <p>Age: _____ yrs.</p> <p>Contact info. _____</p>	<p>Second speaker:</p> <p>Speaker's Name: _____</p> <p>Speaker's Code: _____</p> <p>Native speaker of:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">__ Arabic __ English</p> <p>Education: _____</p> <p>Occupation: _____</p> <p>Age: _____ yrs.</p> <p>Contact info. _____</p>
<p>Third speaker:</p> <p>Speaker's Name: _____</p> <p>Speaker's Code: _____</p> <p>Native speaker of:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">__ Arabic __ English</p> <p>Education: _____</p> <p>Occupation: _____</p> <p>Age: _____ yrs.</p> <p>Contact info. _____</p>	<p>Forth speaker:</p> <p>Speaker's Name: _____</p> <p>Speaker's Code: _____</p> <p>Native speaker of:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">__ Arabic __ English</p> <p>Education: _____</p> <p>Occupation: _____</p> <p>Age: _____ yrs.</p> <p>Contact info. _____</p>

**What is the nature of the relationship between the speakers in this conversation?**

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**Comments:**

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## Appendix E Scale Response Questionnaire and Interview Answer Sheet (Alice's Group)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please answer the attached questions about each extract. If your answers to more than one line number are similar, just write "as my answers in extract (no. X), line no. (X)."

Extract	line	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5
1	14					
1	19, 27					
1	29					
2	7					
3	5, 7					
4	3					
5	2, 3					
6	3					
6	7, 8, 14					
7	6, 8					
7	26					



7	9, 27					
8	16					
9	2, 4					
10	6					
11	9					
12	4					
13	8					
14	3, 5, 11					
15	6					
16	3					
17	3, 10					
18	16, 21					
19	4					
20	10					
20	14					
20	26					

**Thanks a lot for your participation**

## Appendix F Transcription Conventions

The following conventions have been adapted from Du Bois et al. (1992):

[OK]	Square brackets indicate speech overlap. Double or triple square brackets are used to distinguish this overlap from previous ones.
X	The letter X is used to indicate either a speaker whose identity is unclear or an unintelligible syllable or word.
. , ?	A period is used to indicate a falling intonation with a conclusion point (i.e. final intonation contour); a comma expresses a continuing intonation; a question mark indicates a high rising terminal intonation contour (i.e. appeal intonation contour).
--	Two hyphens show that a whole intonation unit was left unfinished (i.e. truncated intonation).
-	A single hyphen is used to indicate an unfinished word (truncated word)
=	In order to show lengthening of sounds, an equal sign is used.
..	Two periods indicate a short pause (3 seconds or less).
...	Three periods or more are used to indicate a medium or very long pause (4 seconds or more).
@	This symbol represents laughter.
0	Zero is used to indicate that there is no pause between the speakers turn (i.e. latching).
<X words X>	Transcriber's best guess at unclear utterance/words.
<F words F>	This indicates that the words enclosed by the angle brackets have the quality of loudness.
<@ words @>	This indicates that the words enclosed by the angle brackets have the quality of laughing.
<OK>	Code switching from Arabic into English.
((COMMENT))	Double parentheses are used to accommodate the transcriber's comments.
"words"	Quoted speech

## Appendix G The SA Interviewees' Responses Transcription

### Chapter 5:

1. "أنا عارفة أنه أروى تسوي <diet> فما تبغى تزيد في الحلوى، فقلت لها تفضلي بعرض أنه هي ممكن ترفض تقول لا أو تقبل مو مثل لو قدمته لها بدون ما أقول شيء."

ʔana: ʕa:rf-ah ʔinn-ah Arwa tsawi: <diet> fa-ma: tibya: tizi:d fi:  
I know that-it Arwa make <diet> so-not want more in

ʔal-ħala: fa-gilt la-ha: 'tafadʕal-i:' bi-ʕardʕ ʔinn-ah hij mumkin  
the-dessert so-said to-her here you are in-offer that-it she may

tirfidʕ tugu:l la: ʔau tigbal mu: miθil lau gaddamt-ah la-ha:  
refuse say no or accept not like if offer-it to-her

bidu:n ma: ʔa-gu:l fai  
without not I-say thing

"I know that Arwa was on diet, so she might refuse to have more dessert. By saying 'here you are', I gave her the chance to refuse or accept [the offer]. It is not like if I offered it [the dessert] nonverbally to her."

2. "أنا بأستمر أصب قهوة لضيوفي بدون ما أسألهم إذا هم ما يبغوا حيرفضوا."

ʔana: ba-ʔastamer ʔa-sʕib li- dʕəju:f-i: bidu:n ma: ʔa-sʔal-hum  
I will-continue I-pour for-guests-my without not I-ask-them

ʔiða: hum ma: jiby-u: ħa-jirfuʕ-u:  
if they not want-they will-refuse-they

"I would continue to pour coffee for my guests without asking them verbally. If they did not want, they would refuse."

### Chapter 6:

3. "هي ما تبغى تقاطعنا و احنا نتكلم."

hij ma tibya: tiga:tʕi ʕ-na: wa ʔiħna: ni-tkallam  
She not want interrupt-us and we we-talking

"She did not want to interrupt us while we were talking."

4. "لأنه نقدر نخدم نفسنا يعني هي هذا شيء كرم منها. الشيبس كانت موجودة على الطاولة قدامنا."

li-ʔannuh ni-gdar ni-xdim nafs-ina: jaʕni: hij haða fai karram  
because we-can we-serve self-our mean she this thing generosity

min-ha: ʔal-fibs ka:nat mau:zu:dah ʕala: ʔatʕ-tʕa:willah giddam-na:  
from-her the-crisps was available on the-table front-us

"Because we could serve ourselves, I mean it was generous of her. The crisps were on the table in front of us."

5. "المفروض ما عدت العرض بالذات بيننا، كنت مؤ- آه .. يعني <over-polite> بزيادة."

ʔal-mafru:dʕ ma: ʕidt ʔal-ʕardʕ bi-ʔað-ða:t be:n-na, kin-t  
the-should not repeat the-offer in-the-speacially between-us, was-I

mu:ʔ- ʔah .. jaʕni: <over-polite> bi-zja:dah  
pol- um .. mean <over-polite> in-very

**"I should not have repeated the offer in our group; I was very over-polite."**

6. "أنا مو لازم أسأل و أستنى ضيفتي عشان تقبل أو أستناها تطلب مني أقدم لها عشان أضيفها. أنا بأضيفها

وإذا هي ما تيغى حترفض. يعني من الأدب إني أستمر أصب لها شاي وقهوة لين تقولي بس."

*ʔana: mu: la:zim ʔa-sʔal wa ʔa-stana: dʕeif-i: ʕafa:n tigbal*  
I not must I-ask and I-wait guest-my because accept

*ʔau ʔa-stana:-ha: titʕlib min-i: ʔa-gadim la-ha: ʕafa:n ʕa-dʕeif-ha:.*  
or I-wait-her request from-me I-serve to-her because I-serve-her

*ʔana: ba-ʕa-dʕeif-ha: wa ʔiða: ma: tibya: ħa-tirfidʕ. jaʕni: min*  
I will-I-serve-her and if not want will-refuse mean of

*ʔal-ʔadab ʔinn-i: ʔa-stamir ʔa-sʕib la-ha: ja:j wa qahwah*  
the-politeness that I-continue I-pour for-her tea and coffee

*lein tu-gu:l-i: bas*  
until she-say-me enough

**"I don't have to wait for an acceptance or a request to serve my guest. If she did not want, she could refuse. It is polite to keep on serving coffee or tea until my guest asks me to stop."**

7. "مو منطقي أنه نستناهم لين يخلصون حكي لأنه ممكن يسترسلون وما تخلص السالفة ويخلص وقت القهوة بدون ما تأخذ حلي"

*mu: mantʕiqi: ʔinna ni-stana:-hum lein jixalsʕ-u:n ħaki: li-ʔannah*  
Not logical that we-wait-them until finish-they they because

*mumkin jistarsil-u:n wa ma: tixaləsʕ ʔas-sa:lfah wa jixalsʕ*  
probable elaborate-they and not finish the-talk and finish

*wagt ʔal-qahwah budu:n ma: ta:xið ħala:*  
time the-coffee without not take-F dessert

**"It would be unreasonable to wait for them to finish talking as they may elaborate their discussion and coffee time would pass without her having dessert."**

8. "لأنها هي كانت تشرب قهوة فلازم أعطيها حلي. و العادة أننا ناكل الحلي مع القهوة و أنا ما أعطيها

حلي قبل القهوة ولا كانت هذي ثاني مرة أقدم لها الحلي. الجلسة تحكم إذا نخدم بدون رسميات يعني

بدون ما نجلس نقول سمي أو تفضلي كل شوي، مثلاً مع الناس اللي تمونين عليهم--، في البداية قلت

سمي بس بعدين تلاقيني أقدم و احنا نسولف فما أبغى أقطع السالفة. ففي هذي الحالة لما قدمت الحلي

لندي أنا اللي كنت أسولف عن رياضة البطن فما كان في وقت أقول سمي أو تفضلي "

*li-ʔanna-ha hij ka:nat tijrab qahwah fa-la:zim ʔa-ʕʕi:-ha ħala:.*  
because-she she was drink coffee so-must I-give-her dessert

*wa ʔal-ʕa:dah ʔan-na: na:-kil ʔal-ħala: maʕ ʔal-qahwah wa ʔana:*  
and the-norm that-we we-eat the-dessert with the-coffee and I

*ma: ʔa-ʕʕi:t-ha: ħala: gabil ʔal-qahwah wala: ka:nat haði θa:ni*  
not I-give-her dessert before the-coffee nor was this second

*marrah ʔa-gadim la-ha: ʔal-ħala: ʔal-ʕalsah tiħkim ʔiða: nixdim budu:n*  
time I-serve to-her the-dessert the-sitting govern if we-serve without

*rasmija:t jaʕni: budu:n ma: nizlis nu-gu:l sami: ʔau*  
formality mean without not stay we-say by the name of God or

*tafadʕal-i kil jwai, maθalan maʕ ʔan-na:s ʔilli: tumu:n-i:n*  
here you are every time for example with the-people who intimate-youF

ʕaleɪ-hum-- fi: ʔal-bida:jah gilt sami: bas baʕde:n tila:gi:n-i  
 on-them-- in the-beginning said by the name of God but later find-youF-me  
 ʔa-gadim wa ʔiħna: nu-solif fa-ma: ʔa-bya: ʔa-gtʕaʕ ʔas-sa:lfah. fa-fi:  
 I-serve and we we-talk so-not I- want I-interrupt the-talk so-there  
 haði ʔal-ħa:lah lamma: gadamt ʔal-ħala: li-Nada ʔana: ʔilli kint  
 this the-situation when served the-dessert to-Nada I who was  
 ʔa-solif ʕan rija:dʕat ʔal-baʕʕan fa-ma: ka:n fi: wagt ʔa-gu:l  
 I-talk about exercise the-abdomen so-not was there time I-say  
 sami: ʔau tafadʕal-i  
 by the name of God or here you are

“Since she was drinking coffee, I had to offer her dessert. The norm is that we have dessert with coffee. I had neither offered her dessert before coffee nor was it my second offer. The setting and situation govern whether we use offering expressions or not. For example, I used an expression when I offered coffee for the first round, but later you can see that I was serving while we were talking so I did not want to interrupt the talk. In this case, when I offered Nada the dessert, I was talking about abdominal exercises. Thus, there was no time for using offering expressions.”

9. "بس الناس اللي مو مؤدبة هي اللي ما تطلع برا مع ضيوفها للباب"  
 bas ʔan-na:s ʔilli: mu: muʔadab-ah hij ʔilli: ma: titʕlaʕ bara  
 only the-people who not polite-F they that not go out out  
 maʕ dʕəju:f-ha: li-l-ba:b  
 with guests-her to-the-door

“Only rude people would not walk their guests to the front door.”

10. "احنا من عاداتنا أنه نوصل الواحد لحد الباب، هذا يدل على حسن الضيافة إلا إذا كان عدد الضيوف كبيرفهننا خلاص لأنه ما تقدرين تمشين مع كل أحد للباب"  
 ʔiħna: min ʕa:da:t-na: ʔinnah nu-wasʕil ʔal-wa:ħid li-ħad ʔal-bab,  
 we of customs-our that-it we-deliver the-one to-edge the-door  
 haða jadul ʕala: ħusun ʔadʕ-dʕija:fah ʔilla: ʔiða: ka:n ʕadad  
 this show on good the-hospitality except if was number  
 ʔadʕ-dʕəju:f kabi:r fa-hina: xala:sʕ li-ʔannuh ma: tigdr-i:n timf-i:n  
 the-guests large so-here OK because not can-youF walk-youF  
 maʕ kil ʔaħad li-l-ba:b  
 with every one to-the-door

“Walking a guest to the door is part of our customs as a sign of good hospitality. However, if you have a huge party with many guests, it would be impossible to walk everyone to the door.”

11. "لو إنهم ضيوف غُرب، أشوفه غير مناسب و بأصر على إني أضيفهم بنفسي. وبحكم علاقتنا أشوفه مناسب"  
 lau ʔinnu-hum dʕəju:f yurb, ʔa-fu:f-ah ye:r muna:sib wa ba-ʔa-sʕir  
 if that-they guests distant I-see-it not appropriate ad will-I-insist  
 ʕala: ʔinn-i ʕa-dʕejjəf-hum bi-nafsi: . wa bi-ħukum ʕala:qat-na:  
 on that-I I-serve-them by-myself and due to relationship-our

ʔa-fu:f-ah muna:sib  
I-see-it appropriate

**"If they were formal/distant guests, I would consider it inappropriate and would insist on doing it myself. Thus, due to the nature of our relationship, I consider it appropriate".**

12. "عادي يعني هي لو ما قدمت هذا العرض عادي يعني < it will be OK > ما يآثر، هي بس اختصرت الوقت"

ʕa:di: jaʕni: hij lau ma: gadam-at haða ʔal-ʕardʕ ʕa:di: jaʕni:  
OK mean she if not offered-F this the-offer normal mean

<it will be OK> ma: jiʔaθir, hij bas ʔixtasʕr-at ʔal-wagt.  
<it will be Ok> not affect, she just shortened-F the-time

**"OK, I mean whether she said it or not, it wouldn't affect. She just made it quicker to answer the question".**

13. "يعني مو كل الأمور ممكن إنه أنا أدكر الشخص اللي قدامي أو أقول للشخص اللي قدامي، مو كل الناس تقبلها. أنا ممكن تدخلت في الأمر بدون ما يعينني الموضوع."

jaʕni: mu: kil ʔal-ʔumu:r mumkin ʔinn-ah ʔana: ʔa-ððakir  
mean not every the-matters possible that-it I I-remind

ʔaf-faxsʕ ʔilli: gida:m-i ʔau ʔa-gu:l li-l-faxsʕ ʔilli: gida:m-i, mu:  
the-person who front-me or I-say to-the-person who front-me, not

kil ʔan-na:s tigbal-ha:, ʔana: mumkin tidaxalt fi: ʔal-ʔamr  
all the-people accept-it I possible interfered in the-matter

budu:n ma: jaʕni:n-i: ʔal-mawdʕu:ʕ  
without not relate-me the-subject

**"There are situations in which I do not have to remind the person in front of me or tell her. Not everyone would accept this help. I might interfered in that situation although it was not my business."**

14. "أنا ما قصدت إني أعرض عليها. المفروض إنه أمل نفذت اللي طلبته منها علطول وجابت الصحون و العشاء. أنا ما كنت أبغاها تضيع الوقت بترتيب المكان"

ʔana: ma: gasʕadt ʔinn-i ʔa-ʕridʕ ʕalei-ha:. ʔal-mafru:dʕ ʔinn-ah  
I not meant that-I I-offer to-her the-presupposition that-it

Amal nafað-at ʔilli: tʕalab-t-ah min-ha: ʕalatʕu:l wa ʔa:bat  
Amal did-F which request-I-she from-her immediately and brought

ʔsʕ-sʕuħu:n wa ʔal-ʕafa:. ʔana: ma: kint ʔa-bya:-ha: tidʕajiʕ ʔal-wagt  
the-plates and the-dinner I not was I-want-her waste the-time

bi-tarti:b ʔal-maka:n  
in-arranging the-place

**"I did not mean to offer. Amal was supposed to immediately do what I asked her to do which is bringing the plates and dinner immediately, so I didn't want her to waste time fixing the place."**

15. "عادي هذا الشئ الطبيعي اللي المفروض يتسوى."

ʕa:di: haða ʔaf-fai ʔatʕ-tʕabi:ʕi ʔilli: ʔal-mafru:dʕ jitsawa:  
Ok this the-thing the-normal that the-presupposition do

**"It is the normal thing to do."**

16. "كان بإمكانني إنني أسكت لما قالت أسناني حساسة، بس أنا عشاني جربت كل الدرجات أنا عرفت إنه هي -- أنا حبيت إنها تستفيد من تجربتي بدل ما تبطل تسوي تبييض منزلي. قُصدي كان إنني أساعدها و أفيدها بهذا الموضوع"

ka:n bi-ʔimka:n-i ʔinn-i: ʔa-skit lamma: ga:l-at ʔasna:n-i: ḥassa:sah ,  
Was in-ability-my that-I I-quiet when said-F teeth-my sensitive  
bas ʔana: ʕaʕa:n-i ʔarrabt kil ʔad-daraʕa:t ʔana: ʕaraft ʔinn-ah  
but I because-my tried all the-degrees I knew that-it  
hij-- ʔana: ḥabe:t ʔinn-aha: tistifi:d min taʔrubt-i badal ma:  
she-- I liked that-she benefit from experience-my instead not  
tibat<sup>sil</sup> tisawi: tabji:d<sup>ʕ</sup> manzili: gas<sup>ʕ</sup>d-i ka:n ʔinn-i: ʔa-sa:ʕid-ha:  
quit make whitening home aim-my was that-I I-help-her  
wa ʔa-fi:dha: bi-haḏa ʔal-mawd<sup>ʕ</sup>u:ʕ  
and I-benefit in-this the-subject

"I had the chance to keep quiet when she said her teeth are sensitive. Instead, because I have tried different concentration degrees, I would like her to benefit from my experience rather than quit teeth whitening. My aim was to help her benefit."

17. "هي كانت تقول معلومات مفيدة عشان تساعدني في حل مشكلتي، مع إنني قلت لها إن أسناني حساسة، أه- .. شرحت زيادة عشان توضح لي الموضوع و تقنعني أجرب التبييض المنزلي مرة ثانية."

hij ka:nat tu-gu:l maʕlu:ma:t mufi:dah ʕaʕa:n ti-sa:ʕid-ni: fi: ḥal  
She was she-say information useful because she-help-me in solution  
muʕkil-ti: , maʕ ʔinn-i: gilt la-ha: ʔinna ʔasna:n-i: ḥassa:sah ʔah-  
problem-my with that-I told to-her that teeth-my sensitive umm-  
faraḥ-at zəja:dah ʕaʕa:n tuwad<sup>ʕ</sup>iḥ li: ʔal-mawd<sup>ʕ</sup>u:ʕ wa  
explained-she more because clarify to-me the-subject and  
taqniʕ-ni: ʔa-ʔarib : tabji:d<sup>ʕ</sup> manzili: marrah θa:njah  
convince-me I-try whitening home time second

"She was saying useful information to help me overcome my problem. Although I said my teeth are sensitive, she explained more to clarify the topic and convince me to give teeth whitening a second try."

18. "عادي إنه سالي ما عادت العرض لأنه خلاص لازم الحديث يأخذ مجراه"

ʕa:di: ʔinn-ah Sally ma: ʕa:d-at ʔal-ʕard<sup>ʕ</sup> li-ʔannah xala:s<sup>ʕ</sup> la:zim  
Ok that-it Sally not repeated the offer because enough must  
ʔal-ḥadi:θ ja:xiḏ maʕra:-h  
The-talk take flow-its

"It was OK that Sally did not try to reoffer since the conversation has to go on."

## Chapter 8:

19. "فاتن قدمت قهوة لما لاحظت إنه فنجالها فاضي، ما استنتت لين تطلب قهوة زيادة"

Faten gadam-at qahwah lamma: la:ḥaḏ<sup>ʕ</sup>-at ʔinn-ah finʕa:l-ha: fa:d<sup>ʕ</sup>i: ,  
Faten served-F coffee when noticed-F that-it cup-her empty  
ma: ʔi-stan-at lein tit<sup>ʕ</sup>lib qahwah zəja:dah  
not wait-F until She-requested coffee more

**“Faten offered coffee when she noticed that her [Waad’s] cup was empty. She did not wait for a request to have more coffee.”**

20. "تلتزيمها كان مؤدب بزيادة يعني <over>، يمكن عشان حسنت إنها مستحبة أو محرجة إذا ما جابت أكل"

*talzi:m-ha: ka:n muʔadab bi- zəja:dah. jaʕni: <over> jimkin*  
insistence-F was polite in-more mean <over> may be

*ʕafa:n ʕass-at ʔinn-aha: mistaʕj-ah ʔau moʕraʕ-ah ʔiða: ma:*  
because felt-F that-she shy-F or embarrassed-F if not

*ʕa:b-at ʔakil*  
bring-F food

**“Her reoffers were over-polite; this may be because she felt shy or embarrassed if she did not bring food.”**

21. "أنا قلت لها من أول لا ما ابي ، أنا اشوفها بثارة."

*ʔana: gilt la-ha: min ʔawal la: ma: ʔa-bi: , ʔana:*  
I said to-her from first no not I-want I

*ʔa-fu:f-ha: biθa:rah*  
I-see-it annoying

**“I had already told her that I did not want [to have more coffee]. I consider this [her insistence] annoying.”**

22. "كانت حركة مؤدبة منها إنها فكرت تقرب الطاولة مني عشان أكون مرتاحة أكثر وأنا أكل عشاى"

*ka:n-at ʕarakah muʔadab-ah min-ha: ʔinn-aha: fakar-at tigarrib*  
Was-F move polite-F from-her that-she think-F closer

*ʔatʕ-tʕa:willah min-i ʕafa:n ʔa-ku:n mirta:ʕah ʔakθar*  
The-table from-me because I-be comfortable more

*wa ʔana: ʔa-kil ʕafa:-ji*  
and I I-eat dinner-my

**“It was a polite gesture from her– considering moving the table closer to me – so I would be more comfortable eating my dinner.”**

23. "مؤدب، أنا بأسوي نفس الشيء، لو أحد بيبي ياخذ شئ كان جنبي عطول بأجيبه له بدال ما أخليه. هذا من اللباقة"

*muʔadab, ʔana: ba-ʔa-sawi: nafs ʔaf-fai, lau ʔaʕad jibi:*  
polite, I will-I-do same the-thing if someone want

*ja:xið fai ka:n ʕanb-i ʕalatʕu:l ba-ʔaʕi:b-ah la-h bada:l*  
take thing was near-me immediately wil-bring-it to-him instead of

*ma: ʔa-xli:-h . haða min ʔal-laba:qah*  
that I-leave-him this from the-tact

**“It is polite. I would do the same. If someone wanted to take something that was closer to me, I will immediately do it instead of her. It is part of good tact”.**



24. "كلهم تشكروا لما قدمت لهم سلطة لأنه تقديم الأكل موزي تقديم القهوة"

kulu-hum tifakar-u: lamma: gadamt lu-hum sala tʕah li-ʔannah  
All of-them thank-they when served to-them salad because

tagdi:m ʔal-ʔakil mu: zai tagdi:m ʔal-qahwah  
serving the-food not as serving the-coffee

"Both women thanked me when I offered them salad because offering food is not like offering coffee."

25. "كان مؤدب جداً الأسلوب جميل جداً فيه كلمة توضح تقديم القهوة و كلمة فيها مدح"

ka:n muʔadab zidan ʔal-ʔuslu:b zami:l zidan fi:h kalimah  
was polite very the-style lovely very in it word

tuwadʕiħ tagdi:m ʔal-qahwah wa kalimah fi:h-a: madħ  
clarify serving the-coffee and word in it-F compliment

"It was very polite. The style she used was very lovely as it contained a compliment and a word highlighting the offer."

26. "العادة لما تقدمين القهوة نقول هذي الجمل."

ʔal-ʕa:dah lamma: tigadm-i:n ʔal-qahwah nu-gu:l haði  
The-common when serve-youF the-coffee we-say this

ʔal-ʒumal  
the-sentences

"It is common to say such expressions when you offer someone coffee."

27. "هذا جزء من عاداتنا."

haða ʒuzʔ min ʕa:da:t-na:  
this part from customs-our

"This is part of our customs."

28. "إذا كانت حرمة كبيرة بأخذ منها و أعرض إني أصب و أقدم بدالها، بس إذا كانت بنت قدي ممكن لا.  
هذا يعتمد على الحالة و السياق."

ʔiða: ka:n-at ħurmah kabi:rah ba-ʔa-xið min-ha: wa ʔa-ʕridʕ  
If was-F lady old will-I-take from-her and I-offer

ʔinn-i: ʔa- sʕib wa ʔa- gadim bida:l-ha: bas ʔiða: ka:n-at  
That-I I-pour and I-serve instead of-her but if was-F

bint gad-i: mumkin la: haða jiʕtimid ʕala ʔal-ħa:lah  
girl age-my possible no this depend on the-situation

wa ʔas-sija:q  
and the-context

"If she was an older lady, I would offer to pour and serve coffee instead of her. If she was around my age, I may not do it. This depends on the situation and context."

29. "تقييمي مبني على هذي الحالة و السياق، يمكن ما يكون مقبول إنه نسال مثل هذا السؤال في حالات  
ثانية"

taqji:m-i: mabni: ʕala haði ʔal-ħa:lah wa ʔas-sija:q, jimkin  
evaluation-my based on this the-situation and the-context may be

ma: juku:n maqbu:l ?innah ni-s?al miθl haða ?as-su?a:l fi:  
no be acceptable that we-ask like this the-question in  
ħa:l-a:t θa:njah  
situations other

**"My evaluation is based on this situation and context. It may not be acceptable to ask such a question on other situations."**

30. "ما أقدر صراحةً أقيمها في هذي الحالة"

ma: ?a-gdar sʕara:ħah ?a-qajim-ha: fi: haði ?al-ħa:lah  
not I-can honestly I-evaluate-it in this the-situation

**"I honestly cannot evaluate it [Ahad's behaviour] in this situation."**

31. "أنا ألحين مستغربة من نفسي كيف قايلة ذا الكلام تبيني أقول ليش ، مدري صراحة"

?ana: ?alħi:n mistayrib-ah min nafs-i: keɪf ga:jl-ah ða  
I now surprised-F from self-my how said-F this

?al-kala:m tabi:n-i: ?a-gu:l leɪf madri leɪf madri  
the-speech want-me I-say why don't know why don't know

sʕara:ħah  
honestly

**"I am now surprised how I said that. You want me to tell you why; I honestly don't know."**

32. "هي كانت بحاجة للمساعدة"

hij ka:n-at bi-ħa:zah lil-musa:ʕadah  
She was-F in-need for-help

**"She was in need of help".**

33. "أنا بحط في اعتباري إنه صاحبتني تسوي <diet> مصلحتها أهم من الضيافة."

?ana: ba-?aħitʕ fi: ?iʕtiba:r-i: ?innah sʕa:ħibt-i: tisawi:  
I will-put in consideration-my that friend-my do

<diet> masʕlaħat-ha: ?aham min ?adʕ-dʕija:fah  
<diet> interest-her more important than the-hospitality

**"I would consider that my friend is on a diet. Her interest is more important than showing hospitality."**

34. "المفروض أخذت الفنجال وصبت لسهي بدون ما تسألها إلا إذا كانت ما تعرف وين فنجالها أو إذا كان فيه أكثر من فنجال على الطاولة"

?al-mafru:dʕ ?axað-at ?al-finza:l wa sʕab-at li-Suha  
The-presupposition take-F the-cup and pour for-Suha

budu:n ma: ti-s?al-ha: ?illa: ?iða: ka:n-at ma: tiʕrif we:n  
without not she-ask-her unless if was-F not know where

finza:l-ha: ?au ?iða: ka:n fi:h ?akθar min finza:l ʕala:  
cup-her or if was there more than cup on

ʔatʕ-tʕa:willah  
The-table

**“She was supposed to take the cup and pour coffee for Suha without asking unless she did not know where her cup was or there were more than one cup on the table.”**

35. "هو الواجب إنها تجيبهم وتقدمهم بدون ما تسأل سواء كانوا الضيوف أصغر أو أكبر سنأ لأنه هذا من مهامها كمستضيفة"

hu: ʔal-waʕib ʔinn-aha: tiʕi:b-hum wa tigadim-hum budu:n ma:  
it the-oblivatory that-she bring-them and serve-them without not  
ti-sʔal sawa:ʔ-an ka:n-u: ʔadʕ-dʕəju:f ʔasʕyar ʔau ʔakbar  
ask whether was-they the-guests younger or older  
sinn-an li-ʔannah haða min maha:m-ha: ka-mustadʕi:f-ah  
age because this within duties-her as-hostess

**“She must bring and serve them without asking whether the guests were younger or older because it is within her hostess duties”**

36. "مو معقول. إننا نضيع وقت ونقول كلمات للتقديم كل ما ضيفنا ضيوفنا أو إنهم يقولون شكراً كل ما عطيتهم فنحال أو أي شئ عادي. السواليف أهم"

mu: maʕgu:l ʔinna-na: ni-dʕajiʕ wagt wa nu-gu:l kalima:t  
not illogical that-we we-waste time and we-say words  
lil-tagdi:m kil ma: dʕajf-na: dʕəju:f-na: ʔau ʔinn-hum  
for-serving every that serve-we guest-our or that-they  
jugu:l-u:n fukran kil ma: ʕatʕe:t-hum finʕa:l ʔau ʔai fai  
say-they thanks every that give-them cup or any thing  
ʕa:di: ʔas-sawali:f ʔaham  
normal the-talking more important

**“It is illogical to waste our time in saying offering expressions every time we offer our guests something or to appreciate every cup [of coffee] or anything expected. Socializing is more important.”**

37. "مستحيل أصب لنفسى و أطنش الشخص اللي جالس جنبى، هذا يعتبر قلة أدب مرة. بشكل عام إنه أصب لها قهوة بدون ما أسئلهما أفضل من أنه ما اصب لها أبد"

mustaħi:l ʔa- sʕib li-nafsi: wa ʔa- tʕanif ʔaf-faxsʕ ʔilli: ʕa:lis  
impossible I-pour for-my self and I-ignore the-person who sitting  
ʕanb-i: haða juʕtabar gilat ʔadab marrah bi-fakil ʕa:m  
besides-me this considered lack politeness very in-shape general  
ʔinnah ʔa- sʕib la-ha: qahwah budu:n ma: ʔa-sʔal-ha: ʔafdʕal min  
that I-pour for-her coffee without not I-ask-her better than  
ʔinnah ma: ʔa- sʕib la-ha: ʔabadan  
that not I-pour for-her never

**“It is impossible to serve myself and ignore the person sitting beside me. This would be very rude. Generally, pouring coffee without asking her [Ahad] is better than not pouring coffee for her at all.”**

38. "لأنه ندى كانت تعبانة فسهي كانت تحاول تخليها ترتاح"

liʔannuh Nada ka:n-at taʕba:n-ah fa-Suha ka:n-at taħa:wil  
because Nada was-F tired-F so-Suha was-F trying

tixali:-ha: ti-rta:ħ  
let-her relax

"Since Nada was tired, Suha was trying to let her relax."

39. "أنا أعتقد إنها كانت تحاول إنها تعرف وش نبي و احترمت ايش نفضل"

ʔana: ʔa-ʕtagid ʔinn-aha: ka:n-at taħa:wil ʔinn-aha: ti-ʕrif  
I I-think that-she was-F trying that-she know

wif na-bi: wa ʔiħtarm-at ʔeɪf ni-fadʕil  
what we-want and respect-F what we-prefer

"I believed that she was trying to find out what we wanted and she respected our preferences."

40. "عشان عيالي يمرضون كل شوي و هي تبي تساعد فعتنتي معلومة ممكن تساعدني"

ʕafa:n ʕija:l-i jimrudʕ-u:n kil fwai wa hij ta-bi: ti-sa:ʕid  
since kids-my get sick-they always and she F-want F-help

fa-ʕaʕat-ni: maʕlu:mah mumkin tisa:ʕid.ni:  
so-give-me information may help-me

"Since my kids get sick a lot, she wanted to help by providing information that might help me."

41. "هو مؤدب بحكم الميانة اللي بيننا و أنه ما فيه رسميات في علاقتنا"

hu: muʔadab bi-ħukum ʔal-mija:nah ʔilli: be:n-na: wa  
it polite due to the-intimacy that between-us and

ʔinn-ah ma: fi:h rasmija:t fi: ʕala:qat-na:  
that-it not there formality in relation-our

"It is polite due to the intimate and informal nature of our relation."

42. "هو مؤدب جدًا لأنها قالت كلمة سمي."

hu: muʔadab zidan liʔinn-aha ga:l-at kalimat Sami:  
it polite very because-she said-F word by the name of God

"It is very polite because she used the expression 'Sami:'."

43. "بأستخدم كلمات أفضل مثل تفضلي"

ba-ʔa-staxdim kalim-a:t ʔafdʕal miθl tafadʕal-i:  
will-I-use words better such as here you are

"I would use better expressions, such as 'tafadʕal-i:'."