Doctoral (PhD) Dissertation

Cultural Effects on The Pragmatic Abilities of EFL Production of Request and Refusal Speech Acts by Multilingual Jordanians in Jordan and Hungary

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ABSTRACT

The acquisition of pragmatic competence, defined as the ability to use language appropriately in social contexts, is a critical yet complex component of second language (L2) proficiency. While the facilitative role of multilingualism is recognized, the specific mechanisms and predictive factors for this advantage, particularly among Arabic speakers, remain underexplored. This study investigates the pragmatic abilities of Jordanian EFL users, comparing the production of request and refusal speech acts between bilingual (Arabic-English) speakers living in Jordan, and trilingual (Arabic-English-Hungarian) speakers living in Hungary. It examines how a constellation of cultural, individual, and multilingual factors collectively shape pragmatic production in L2 (English).

A sample of 52 Jordanian participants (26 bilinguals, 26 trilinguals) completed an online Discourse Completion Task (DCT) to elicit request and refusal production in L2. Their responses were analyzed for a range of pragmatic variables across textual, linguistic and discursive dimensions. Participants also completed questionnaires assessing self-rated proficiency, language skills, language-use patterns, language attitudes, and the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ). Statistical analyses included Pearson correlations, univariable linear regressions, and independent-samples t-tests to identify group differences and predictors of pragmatic behavior.

The results indicate that pragmatic competence is shaped by different developmental systems across multilingual profiles. Bilinguals exhibited a relational, L1-shaped pragmatic ability, prioritizing interpersonal alignment, on endearments, cognitive verbs, and affective mitigation. Trilinguals, by contrast, drew on a structurally explicit, globally aligned system shaped by a wider multilingual experience and more diversified language use, resulting in greater cohesion, clause complexity, and conventional politeness.

The study contributes to multilingual pragmatics by showing that pragmatic competence cannot be reduced to a single pathway of development. Instead, bilingual and trilingual speakers draw on different constellations of linguistic experience, identity, and communicative practice, revealing that pragmatic ability is plural, context-responsive, and shaped by the sociolinguistic environments in which multilinguals participate. Moreover, the findings uniquely address a central gap in Jordanian EFL pedagogy, where pragmatic instruction has typically centered on prescriptive norms without considering the diversity of multilingual communicative profiles. By demonstrating that bilingual and trilingual speakers build pragmatic competence through distinct

structural and interpersonal stances, the study points toward instructional models that integrate a holistic approach for the development of multilingual pragmatic strategies. This moves pedagogy beyond correction toward building purposeful, context-responsive communication.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EFL – English as a Foreign Language

Bi – Bilingual

Tri – Trilingual

MPQ – Multicultural Personality Questionnaire

JA – Jordanian Arabic

DCT – Discourse Completion Task

AE – American English

SLA – Second Language Acquisition

JL2S_ Jordanian L2 speakers

JNES_ Jordanian non-English speakers

Prof– proficiency

FL – Foreign Language

ILP_ Interlanguage pragmatics

ESL – English as a Second Language

ENS_ English native speakers

SRQ_ Scaled Response Questionnaire

ANOVA – Analysis of Variance

RQ_ Research question

H_ Hypothesis

Pro – (positive attitude scoring: Pro bilingualism/trilingualism)

Con – (Negative attitude scoring: Con bilingualism/trilingualism)

Ex. – Example

ISV – Internal-State Verb

SD – Standard Deviation

AP – Adjective Phrase

ELT – English Language Teaching

L1 – First Language

L2 – Second Language

L3 – Third Language

SPSS – Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

Depvar – Dependent Variable

Predictor – Predictor Variable

Coef – Coefficient

P – p value

Lci – Lower Confidence Interval

Uci – Upper Confidence Interval

M – Mean

N – Number of Participants

Tone Pos./Neg./Neut. – Tone (Positive / Negative / Neutral)

Pwr. – Power (Less / Equal / More)

Wrap – Wrap-up Move

Elab. – Elaboration Move

Core – Core Act (Head Act)

Verb Cog. – Cognitive Verb

Verb Emo. – Emotional Verb

Verb Vol. – Volitional Verb

Verb Comp. – Compulsion Verb

Ref. – Refusals

Req. – Requests

Pos. Dec. – Positive Declarative

Neg. Dec. – Negative Declarative

Pos. Int. – Positive Interrogative

Neg. Int. – Negative Interrogative

Pos. Imp. – Positive Imperative

Neg. Imp. – Negative Imperative

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CHAPTETR ONE: INTRODUCTION

Pragmatic competence refers to the ability to use language appropriately in social interactions, including performing speech acts such as requests and refusals (Kasper & Rose, 2002; Bachman, 1990). Although pragmatic development has been widely explored in second language (L2) contexts, relatively little is known about how Arabic-speaking multilinguals manage and produce these acts in their L2 English. This study addresses that gap by examining how bilingual and trilingual Jordanians produce requests and refusals in English, offering insight into how their language backgrounds and profiles shape pragmatic performance in an L2.

Requests and refusals are socially sensitive speech acts that often differ across cultural and linguistic backgrounds. In their seminal work, Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989) emphasized that the realization of such acts is shaped by sociocultural norms, which influence how politeness, directness, and appropriateness are perceived across speech communities. Among bilingual Jordanian speakers who have limited opportunities for authentic English interaction, speech act production may be strongly influenced by native-language conventions. In contrast, trilingual Jordanians living in multilingual environments like Hungary are likely to draw on a wider range of linguistic and pragmatic resources when using English. This variation in speech act realization underscores the influence of language experience, proficiency, and cultural exposure on pragmatic performance, hereafter referred to as pragmatic competence.

Since the 1980s, pragmatic competence has been a cornerstone of second/foreign language acquisition research. House and kadar (2024) underscore its importance, distinguishing it from linguistic competence by emphasizing the ability to use language appropriately in social and discursive contexts. Interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) studies, as highlighted by Kasper and Dahl (1991), focus on how L2 learners acquire and perform speech acts. However, acquiring pragmatic competence in L2 is often more challenging than mastering grammar or pronunciation. Pragmatic errors can be subtle, making them harder for learners to detect and correct (Rose & Kasper, 2001).

In multilingual contexts, pragmatic competence becomes even more complex, as learners must navigate multiple linguistic systems simultaneously. Kecskes (2015) argues that while first language (L1) pragmatic competence forms a foundation, it evolves under the influence of new sociocultural norms and additional languages. This dynamic interaction can enable the blending

of pragmatic competencies across languages. However, studies examining pragmatic competence in multilingual contexts remain scarce (Taguchi, 2019). Research suggests that multilinguals often exhibit superior pragmatic performance compared to monolinguals, particularly in written tasks (Alcón-Soler, 2012; Safont-Jordà, 2005).

Compared to the growing body of research on L2 pragmatic competence, studies focusing on third language (L3) pragmatics remain considerably limited. Much of the existing work has been rather Eurocentric, for example, L1 Catalan, L2 Castilian/Spanish, and L3 English, with findings suggesting that L3 learners may outperform L2 learners in certain pragmatic aspects, including the use of internal and external request modifiers (Safont-Jordà, 2003; Safont-Jordà & Alcón, 2012). However, this literature remains narrow in scope, both geographically and in terms of its analytical focus. Most studies emphasize modifier frequency and appropriateness, often neglecting broader sociopragmatic considerations such as context sensitivity, strategy use, and individual linguistic profiles. Moreover, very few studies examine L3 pragmatic performance outside the European context or among Arabic-speaking populations. This study addresses these gaps by comparing the production of requests and refusals in English among Arabic-English-Hungarian trilinguals and Arabic-English bilinguals, with particular attention to the pragmatic strategies and modifiers they employ. It also considers how language experience, cultural exposure, and multilingual identity influence their speech act performance.

In L2 contexts, pragmatic ability is often studied through ILP, which examines how non-native speakers perform and understand speech acts in a target language (Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993). This study compares two nonnative English groups: 1. bilingual Jordanians living in Jordan, who have fewer daily opportunities to use English, and 2. trilingual Jordanians residing in Hungary, who use English more frequently and also speak Hungarian as a third language.

To better understand their performance, participants were profiled using a multi-sectioned linguistic background questionnaire that gathered data on language proficiency, patterns of use, and multilingual exposure, as well as the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ), which assessed personality traits relevant to intercultural communication. To evaluate their pragmatic competence in English, a structured Written Discourse Completion Task (DCT) was employed. This DCT consisted of a series of situational prompts designed to elicit request and refusal speech acts across varying degrees of social distance and power relations (e.g., speaking to a friend, a teacher, or a stranger). Participants were instructed to write what they would naturally

say in each scenario, allowing for analysis of their strategic choices, use of modifiers, levels of directness, and sociopragmatic appropriateness. This combination of profiling instruments and speech act tasks enabled a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between individual multilingual backgrounds and pragmatic performance in L2 English.

Research into pragmatic competence has expanded considerably over the past two decades, yet investigations involving Jordanian English learners remain limited in both scope and depth. While foundational studies such as Al-Momani (2009) and Al-Shboul (2013) recognized gaps in Jordanian learners' ability to perform key speech acts appropriately, more recent evidence reinforces the persistence of these challenges. Hammouri and Al-Khanji (2023), in a large-scale study analyzing over 2,600 DCT responses, concluded that Jordanian university students continue to exhibit notable deficits in both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic English use.

These findings underscore a need for more targeted research, particularly studies that move beyond surface-level analysis and account for individual learner variables. Current literature also lacks attention to multilingual factors, with most studies focusing on monolingual or bilingual Jordanians and overlooking how additional language experience may shape pragmatic performance. Furthermore, existing work rarely examines learners situated outside of Jordan or exposed to diverse sociolinguistic environments.

Unlike most previous studies that compare Jordanian EFL users to native speakers, this research offers a within-group comparison of two multilingual Jordanian populations. Through a Written Discourse Completion Task (DCT), the study analyzes participants' use of request and refusal strategies, focusing on both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic dimensions. The study pays particular attention to the use of internal and external modifiers, levels of directness, and overall strategic variation. In addition, no studies in the Jordanian context have examined the pragmatic performance of trilingual speakers who possess a third language that is culturally and linguistically distinct from both Arabic and English. While some recent work has investigated Jordanian multilinguals in terms of language proficiency and attitudes, there remains a notable absence of research addressing how trilingual Jordanians with a non-Semitic, non-English third language such as Hungarian perform speech acts in English. Existing pragmatic studies have largely focused on monolingual or bilingual learners and have not explored the potential impact of a third language acquired in a European, multilingual environment. By situating these findings within the participants' distinct sociocultural environments, the research offers one of the first

empirically grounded accounts of how Jordanian multilinguals negotiate speech acts in English in relation to their broader linguistic and intercultural profiles.

The current study is situated at the intersection of pragmatics, multilingualism, and intercultural communication, with a specific focus on the sociolinguistics of Jordanian bilingual and trilingual speakers. Given the empirical and analytical complexities surrounding speech act production in additional languages, it is essential to contextualize this investigation within existing scholarly discourse. The following chapter reviews the key conceptual frameworks and empirical studies that inform this research, beginning with foundational theories in pragmatics and speech act realization, and proceeding to issues of multilingual pragmatic development and prior findings relevant to the Jordanian context.

In closing, this chapter has provided an overview of the study's purpose, significance, and context. Chapter Two presents a critical review of the literature that underpins this investigation, organized into sections addressing (a) core concepts in pragmatics and speech act theory, (b) theoretical models of pragmatic competence, (c) empirical research on interlanguage and multilingual pragmatics, and (d) prior studies focusing on Jordanian learners of English. This review establishes the conceptual and empirical foundation for the study's design and analysis.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Pragmatic Competence in Multilingual Contexts

Studies in applied linguistics have emphasized the significance of multilingualism in shaping pragmatic competence. Pragmatic competence refers to the speaker's ability to use language appropriately in varying social and communicative contexts, encompassing speech act realization, politeness strategies, implicature, and contextual language use (Kasper & Rose, 2001). Unlike grammatical competence, pragmatic knowledge is context-bound and culturally sensitive, often posing challenges to multilinguals who must negotiate differing sociocultural norms across languages (Taguchi & Roever, 2020).

Research suggests that multilingual speakers benefit from increased exposure to diverse cultural frameworks, which in turn may enhance their sensitivity to pragmatic variation. For instance, Martin-Laguna (2020) and Alcon-Soler (2018) demonstrated evidence for cross-linguistic pragmatic transfer in multilinguals, indicating that pragmatic routines acquired in one language can positively influence performance in others. Van Wonderen et al.'s (2023) meta-analysis further supports these findings by linking multilingual exposure in childhood to long-term pragmatic development.

These studies lay the groundwork for understanding how pragmatic skills develop in complex linguistic repertoires. Due to this complexity, further research is needed to clarify how the multilingual experience influences pragmatic performance in second language learners. The present study seeks to extend this line of research hopefully with pedagogical and theoretical implications that may clarify the multilingual pragmatic competence.

2.1.1. Development of Pragmatic Ability in L1 and Additional Languages

Pragmatic development in (L1) begins early in childhood, encompassing the acquisition of verbal communication acts such as speech acts, turn-taking, and discourse management. Ervin-Tripp (1990) and Ninio & Snow (1996) observed that even preverbal children engage in social behaviors through one-word utterances accompanied by non-verbal cues, effectively producing requests, acknowledgements, and expressions of desire. These early manifestations of pragmatic ability are deeply embedded in the child’s socio-cultural environment and are refined progressively through adolescence (Blum-Kulka & Snow, 2002).

However, the development of pragmatic competence in additional languages (L2/L3) is significantly more complex. Learners must navigate unfamiliar sociocultural norms and

communicative expectations, often without the benefit of immersive input. Factors such as metalinguistic awareness, age, cultural distance, and the potential for negative pragmatic transfer contribute to variability in outcomes. These challenges are magnified in multilingual settings, where speakers must adjust across multiple pragmatic systems (Taguchi, 2011; Ishihara & Cohen, 2010).

2.1.2. The Relation Between Multilingualism and Culture in the Context of Pragmatic Competence

The close relation between language and culture in general and multilingualism and culture in particular has been extensively studied not only by linguists but also anthropologists, sociolinguists, people dealing with semiotics and cultural studies as well as studies on materialities. Language is not only a vehicle of communication but also a repository of cultural knowledge and interpretive practices (Wardhaugh et al, 2002). Culture shapes what is considered appropriate, polite, or coherent in communication, thus becoming central to pragmatic awareness.

According to Alptekin (2002), acquiring a new language entails gaining access to new cultural frames of reference, a process of enculturation that is integral to learning how to use language meaningfully and appropriately. Moreover, the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis (1958) proposes that linguistic structures influence cognitive perception, implying that speakers of different languages may experience the world differently. Empirical work by Broditsky (2011) and others has provided evidence that language shapes not only how individuals express ideas, but also how they construct concepts such as time and space.

This linguistic relativity reinforces the necessity of cultural competence in pragmatic development. As multilingual speakers switch between languages, they are also shifting between culturally situated pragmatic norms. The ability to adjust to these varying expectations is a hallmark of multilingual pragmatic skill.

2.1.3. The Relation Between Multilingualism and Identity in the Context of Pragmatic Competence

Language is a key medium through which identity is expressed, negotiated, and reconfigured. Norton and Toohey (2011) describe identity as dynamic and constructed through language use in specific sociocultural contexts. Through language choices, multilingual speakers signal affiliations with particular communities, value systems, and social roles, thereby constructing and performing multiple, and at times, shifting identities.

Research by Pavlenko (2005) and Bucholtz and Hall (2004) emphasizes that multilinguals often experience shifts in self-perception depending on the language they use, with these shifts extending beyond vocabulary to influence pragmatic behavior, tone, and appropriateness in interaction. These identity shifts can influence the execution of speech acts, especially in intercultural interactions where language serves as a medium for communication and self-representation. The present research further highlights this shift by profiling the participants not only by their linguistic backgrounds, but according to their multicultural traits and language attitudes.

Producing a speech act such as a request or refusal in an additional language requires learners to consider not only linguistic norms but also their social positioning and the relational implications of their choices. For instance, the degree of directness or politeness in a refusal may reflect the speaker's cultural orientation, language background, and perceived identity within a given interactional context. These variables are particularly salient for multilinguals who must continually manage multiple pragmatic frameworks across their languages.

Thus, multilingual identity construction plays a pivotal role in pragmatic development, influencing learners' perceptions of appropriateness, relational dynamics, and communicative intentions. These intersections between identity, language, and pragmatics offer a critical lens for understanding variation in multilingual speech act performance. The following sections elaborate on how this interplay manifests in the realization of requests and refusals among bilingual and trilingual speakers.

In summary, this section has examined how pragmatic competence develops in L1 contexts, where immersion in social interaction fosters early and natural development, and in L2/L3 contexts, where learners face greater challenges due to cultural unfamiliarity and reduced input. It has also addressed the critical role of culture and identity in shaping multilingual speakers' pragmatic repertoires. The following section now turns to the theoretical underpinnings of speech act theory to further ground the present study.

2.2. The Pragmatics of Speech Acts

2.2.1 The Place of Pragmatics in Linguistic Theory

Pragmatics has emerged as one of the most dynamic and interdisciplinary fields in modern linguistics, bridging domains such as philosophy, anthropology, sociology, cognitive science, artificial intelligence, and language pathology (Huang, 2017). Its relevance extends beyond

theoretical linguistics to include practical applications in communication disorders, intercultural exchange, and L2 learning environments. In the study of pragmatic competence, two principal perspectives dominate: the Anglo-American "component view" and the European Continental "functional view."

From the Anglo-American viewpoint, pragmatics is considered one of the core components of linguistic theory, alongside phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics. It is concerned with meaning in context encompassing phenomena such as deixis, implicature, presupposition, reference, and speech acts (Huang, 2017). This approach is influenced heavily by Gricean theories, which introduced the cooperative principle and its maxims Quality, Quantity, Relation, and Manner as tools for decoding speaker intentions (Grice, 1989). Grice's model consists of two essential parts: a theory of meaning, where speaker meaning is based on reflexive intention, and a theory of conversational implicature, which posits that listeners infer unstated meanings based on shared conversational norms.

Building on these ideas, Relevance Theory (Sperber & Wilson, 1997) emerged as a competing framework. It maintains the Gricean assumption that communication involves inferring intentions but replaces the cooperative maxims with a single guiding principle: that human cognition and communication are optimized for relevance. In this model, listeners seek the greatest cognitive benefit for the least processing effort. This framework has proved particularly useful in L2 pragmatics, where learners must infer meanings with limited linguistic and cultural knowledge.

Contrastingly, the European Continental tradition, as articulated by Verschueren (1999), views pragmatics as a functional perspective on all language components. Rather than treating it as a separate module, it is seen as a holistic lens cognitive, social, and cultural applied across all linguistic behavior. This tradition emphasizes empirical work in areas such as intercultural communication, interlanguage pragmatics, and socio-pragmatic variation. While the Anglo-American school has advanced philosophical and cognitive models, we believe that the Continental approach has further enriched our understanding of pragmatic behavior across diverse linguistic communities. The current study posits that pragmatics, despite being a fundamental element of linguistic theory, cannot exist in isolation. To better understand its complexities, we need to approach it holistically, hence our utilizing of various pragmatic, linguistic and multicultural assessment tools to achieve that.

2.2.2. Speech Acts

Speech acts are among the most foundational concepts in pragmatics, offering a framework for understanding how language functions as action. Austin (1962), in his seminal work *How to Do Things with Words*, argued that utterances do not merely transmit information; they perform social actions. This insight overturned the traditional philosophical assumption that the primary function of language is to describe the world. Instead, Austin emphasized that even seemingly factual statements can serve pragmatic purposes depending on intent and context.

Austin introduced a tripartite model for analyzing speech acts:

- **Locutionary act**: the act of producing an utterance with propositional meaning.
- **Illocutionary act**: the speaker's intended function or force behind the utterance.
- **Perlocutionary act**: the effect the utterance has on the hearer.

For example, saying "The bag is light" might, at the locutionary level, describe a physical object. At the illocutionary level, it may function as a polite request for help carrying it, and at the perlocutionary level, it may result in the hearer offering assistance. As Yule (1996) and Hufford & Heasley (1983) note, this model captures how meaning is shaped not just by words but by context, speaker intent, and listener response.

Table 1. Searle (1969) extended Austin's work by formalizing five major categories of speech acts

Speech act type	Description	Example
Representatives	Representatives make statements that commit the speaker to the truth of the given claim.	"Earth is round"
Directives	Speech acts used by the speaker to persuade someone else to do something	"Give me a pen, please".
Commissives	Commissives are speech acts that commit the speaker to a future course of action; examples include promising, threatening,	"I'll be back"
Declarations	Declarations are speech acts in which the utterances cause instantaneous changes in the condition of affairs such as declaration of war, christening.	"I now pronounce you husband and wife"
Expressives	Speech acts in which the utterances indicate a state of mind such as Thanking, apologizing.	"Thank you so much"

This classification has proved especially relevant in applied pragmatics, where researchers examine how speech acts vary across linguistic and cultural boundaries. For instance, requests and refusals, central to the current study, correspond to directives and commissives, respectively. Searle's framework allows for analyzing not only what learners say, but how their utterances function in context.

In the present research, this distinction facilitates the analysis of pragmatic competence among Jordanian bilinguals and trilinguals when producing speech acts in English. By categorizing their utterances as either directive or commissive, the study explores not just the syntactic or lexical forms they use, but the illocutionary force they attempt to convey and how successfully these align with target-like English usage. For example, when a trilingual speaker issues a refusal using a culturally influenced hedging strategy from Arabic or Hungarian, this act can be examined through the commissive lens to assess whether it achieves its intended function without leading to pragmatic failure. Thus, Searle's taxonomy is not just theoretical but serves as an analytical scaffold for understanding how multilingual speakers adjust their request and refusal strategies across languages, and how these adjustments reflect broader cultural and linguistic influences. The framework is especially valuable in identifying mismatches between intended illocutionary force and perceived effect, which are often at the heart of cross-cultural miscommunication.

In second language acquisition, speech acts are crucial indicators of pragmatic competence. Learners must master not only linguistic forms but also culturally appropriate ways of expressing intent. Studies have shown that pragmatic failures often stem not from grammatical errors but from mismatched expectations about how speech acts should be performed (Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993; Taguchi, 2011). For instance, Jordanian EFL learners may transfer culturally specific norms of politeness or indirectness into English, resulting in speech acts that seem vague or overly elaborate to native speakers (Al-Momani, 2009; Al-Shboul, 2013).

The Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) conducted by Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989) provided foundational evidence for such phenomena. Their work showed that L2 learners develop interlanguage pragmatic norms—blends of L1 and L2 conventions. In the Jordanian context, this often manifests in the use of multiple supportive moves or formulaic politeness strategies, reflecting Arabic's emphasis on deference and hospitality (Al-Issa, 2003).

Furthermore, research in sociopragmatics emphasizes that effective speech act performance hinges not only on linguistic knowledge but also on the speaker's sensitivity to context—power relations, formality, and shared cultural expectations (Taguchi, 2015). Formal instruction alone is insufficient; learners must be exposed to authentic interactions to internalize these nuanced behaviors (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998).

What remains underexplored, however, is how multilinguals manage multiple pragmatic systems simultaneously. Most studies focus on bilinguals, often ignoring the additional complexities introduced by a third language and culture. This study addresses that gap by comparing the English speech act performance of Jordanian bilinguals in Jordan and trilinguals residing in Hungary, who also use Hungarian. By investigating requests and refusals, the research sheds light on how multilingual individuals adjust their pragmatic strategies across languages and sociocultural contexts. The inclusion of Hungarian provides a novel contribution to the field, especially since no existing studies have examined its role in shaping L2 English pragmatics for Jordanian speakers.

2.2.3. Foci Aspects of Speech Acts Analysis in the Study

Previous research on speech act realization has often approached pragmatic production from a single dimension, emphasizing either discourse sequencing or politeness strategies, but rarely integrating grammatical, textual, and interactional layers. For example, Ren and Han (2016) observed that L2 refusals were frequently incoherent due to missing or misordered discourse segments such as openings or justifications. Similarly, Barron (2023) highlighted how EFL learners simplify their syntactic structures in high-power or high-distance request scenarios, often avoiding complex sentence types and cohesive devices. These findings underscore the need to explore how text structure particularly clause complexity and the sequencing of discourse moves shape the intelligibility and appropriateness of speech acts. However, most existing work stops short of systematically quantifying these structural elements or linking them directly to pragmatic outcomes.

At the lexico-grammatical level, researchers like Ishihara and Cohen (2021) have drawn attention to learners' reliance on modal verbs and hedging devices. While useful, such inventories offer only a partial view. For instance, learners' verb choice, tense control, and use of evaluative adjectives often interact with the illocutionary force of the utterance. Yet these features are rarely examined in concert. Many studies also overlook how lexical openings such as indirect or preparatory phrases set up the speech act's social footing. Without attending to how these elements syntactically or sequentially, it becomes difficult to explain why certain speech acts succeed or fail.

In parallel, discursive strategies such as directness, politeness markers, tone, and perceived power relations remain central to pragmatic inquiry. Brown and Levinson's (1987) model

continues to anchor this domain, but more recent work such as Li and Taguchi (2023) show that multilingual learners do not always deploy such strategies predictably. For example, trilinguals might underuse politeness markers in formal contexts while overcompensating in informal ones. Despite the relevance of these strategies, they are often studied in isolation from the sentence-level or lexical environments in which they appear. This has created a disconnect between micro-pragmatic features (e.g., tone or directness) and the structural and lexico-grammatical mechanisms that convey them.

In our research, we aim to address the apparent gaps in prior studies regarding a holistic view of speech act realization analysis by adopting an integrated three-tier framework that includes text structure, text linguistics, and discursive strategies. Prior studies have often focused on one component at a time, leading to fragmented accounts of learner performance. Rather than isolating these elements, this study investigates how they co-occur and contribute collectively to pragmatic performance. This multidimensional approach reflects a growing consensus in the field that pragmatic competence must be understood not merely as an inventory of strategies or politeness markers, but as a situated, structured, and lexically encoded practice.

In doing so, the study refines existing analytical approaches and offers a methodological contribution: it demonstrates how integrating formal, textual, and pragmatic layers yields a richer understanding of learner competence. It also highlights how gaps in the literature such as the lack of clause-level analysis or interaction between structure and discursive strategies can be addressed through multidimensional, comparative investigation.

2.2.4. Pragmatic Foci: Directness and Indirectness Strategies in Speech Acts

Directness and indirectness represent two central pragmatic strategies that significantly shape how speech acts are interpreted across languages and cultures. Misalignments in these strategies often result in communicative breakdowns or misjudgments such as perceiving a speaker as rude or evasive especially when interlocutors come from distinct cultural backgrounds. In interlanguage pragmatics, the tension between these two strategies is particularly evident in acts like requests and refusals, which require careful balancing of speaker intent and social appropriateness.

Searle (1969) distinguished direct and indirect speech acts, arguing that indirectness often serves to mitigate the imposition of face-threatening acts. Indirect speech acts, such as “Could you pass the salt?”, rely on shared social knowledge and contextual inference, requiring the

listener to decode the speaker's intention (Mofidi & Shoushtari, 2012). Leech (1983) observed that indirectness functions as a politeness strategy by reducing the force of commands and requests. Indirectness, therefore, acts as a buffer, providing social flexibility in sensitive interactions.

Nevertheless, the preference for indirectness is not universal. In English-speaking cultures, indirectness is typically associated with politeness and social grace (Hickey & Stewart, 2005), whereas in high-context cultures like Jordan, indirectness may serve relational or hierarchical purposes. Al-Issa (2003) and Farghal and Al-Khatib (2001) observed that Jordanian Arabic speakers often prioritize social harmony and indirect cues over explicit statements. This variation highlights how indirectness is contextually constructed, reflecting both linguistic norms and cultural values.

Learners using more than one linguistic system often encounter difficulties calibrating these strategies across languages. Bella (2014) found that L2 and L3 learners may either overuse indirectness in inappropriate contexts or default to L1 norms that conflict with the target culture. Such mismatches underscore the challenge of acquiring context-sensitive pragmatic strategies in multilingual environments. Some studies report pragmatic transfer of indirectness from L1 to L2, while others highlight over-reliance on formulaic structures or hints. Synthesizing these perspectives shows that multilinguals must engage in continuous negotiation of directness strategies across communicative settings.

A more comprehensive understanding of these patterns emerges when considering Hall's (1976) framework of high- vs. low-context cultures. In high-context cultures like Jordan, much of the meaning resides in the social context rather than explicit verbal content, encouraging indirect forms of communication. In contrast, low-context cultures such as the United States rely more heavily on explicit verbal messages. These orientations affect speaker choices in terms of how much to say and how directly to say it.

Power, social distance, and imposition also shape the degree of directness a speaker employs. According to Keating (2009) and Spencer-Oatey (1996), power is not static but varies by context and participant role. Brown and Levinson (1987) further explain that relationships characterized by asymmetry (e.g., teacher-student) demand more deferential language than symmetrical ones (e.g., peer-peer). Likewise, social distance influences how much mitigation is needed, while the degree of imposition dictates the extent to which politeness strategies are used. For instance, a

high-imposition request like borrowing a car would typically demand more indirectness than asking for a pen.

Similarly, our study adopts a lower, equal and higher power relations framework for speech-act realization to assess how relative power asymmetry conditions the selection of directness levels, the deployment of mitigating supportive moves and cohesive devices, and tone choices to see whether these patterns hold similarly across requests and refusals in the bilingual and trilingual cohorts.

2.2.5. Linguistic Foci: Lexicon and Sentence Structure

Understanding the pragmatic realization of speech acts requires an in-depth examination of how sentence structure and lexical choices function jointly to convey speaker intention, mitigate face-threatening acts, and align with sociocultural norms. Classic studies, like Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), focused on how syntactic and lexical forms affect how direct and polite speech acts are. More recent research has built on this by looking at how multilingual speakers make these choices in different languages and situations.

For instance, Ishihara and Cohen (2022) point out that learners often acquire formulaic expressions like "Would you mind…" or "I was wondering if…", but their pragmatic appropriateness depends on how these formulas are embedded within broader syntactic structures. This highlights a growing interest in analyzing not just lexical politeness devices but how they are packaged within interrogatives, conditional clauses, or subordinate structures that enhance or hinder clarity and appropriateness.

Meanwhile, studies such as Farman, Pishghadam, and Khajavy (2025) have examined the dynamic interaction between syntactic features and processing constraints, showing that animacy and clause ordering affect how learners construct requests and refusals in real time. Their findings suggest that reliance on surface forms (e.g., using modals without embedded clauses) may reflect limited pragmatic depth, particularly in high-stakes or unfamiliar settings.

Earlier research by Safont Jordà (2005) and Bella (2014) concentrated on cross-linguistic transfer, specifically examining how learners incorporate L1 patterns into L2 speech acts, such as imperatives or the absence of hedges. However, more recent studies emphasize the necessity of analyzing this transfer within a more extensive textual and pragmatic context. Taguchi (2019), for example, observed that multilingual learners who demonstrated stronger pragmatic outcomes

were those able to coordinate sentence form with contextual appropriateness, rather than merely adopting polite vocabulary.

By shifting the focus toward how sentence-level structures (such as subordination or modality) intersect with lexical softeners and verb types, the present study aims to move beyond surface inventories of politeness to explore how such features co-function in real speech act realization.

The reviewed body of research reveal a growing awareness that lexical and syntactic choices do more than shape form, they influence the social intelligibility and cultural appropriateness of speech acts. Nevertheless, despite this progress, research has often treated lexical and syntactic elements as isolated variables or measured them without close attention to how they interact within actual utterances. This fragmentation is especially evident in multilingual contexts, where learners draw from more than one linguistic repertoire.

2.2.6. Textual foci: length and organization

Research has shown that speech act length can significantly differ based on speakers' language proficiency, pragmatic competence, and sociolinguistic factors. Cenoz and Gorter (2020) argue that multilingual individuals often exhibit variations in speech act length when producing requests or refusals, influenced by proficiency levels in each language. Typically, more proficient speakers tend to produce shorter, more concise utterances due to their greater pragmatic efficiency, while less proficient speakers use longer utterances as they may rely more heavily on explanatory strategies or supportive moves (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2021).

Studies by Félix-Brasdefer (2019) have noted that advanced multilingual speakers strategically modulate speech act length depending on cultural norms associated with each language. For instance, indirect cultures often encourage longer, more elaborate speech acts, including mitigations or supportive moves, while direct cultures favor brevity and clarity. Thus, multilingual speakers adjust their speech act length based on their sensitivity to these cultural-pragmatic differences, demonstrating sophisticated pragmatic awareness.

The organizational structure of multilingual speech acts is similarly influenced by linguistic proficiency and cultural familiarity. Kasper and Rose (2002) indicate that multilingual speakers frequently demonstrate distinct structural patterns when organizing speech acts in different languages, adjusting their use of openings, supportive moves, main acts, and closings. These organizational structures reflect pragmatic norms specific to each linguistic context. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain’s (1984) framework of speech act realization patterns highlights that multilingual

speakers strategically manage the organization of their speech acts by adhering to or deviating from conventionalized sequences, thus balancing politeness, clarity, and appropriateness in multilingual interactions.

We aim to address the text length and organization of speech act responses as a visible trace of interactional work rather than a shorthand for proficiency alone. Building on facework and politeness accounts (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Leech, 1983) and the CCSARP view of core vs. supportive moves (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989), we read longer responses as signaling more mitigation and cohesion (reasons, apologies, softeners, connectors), which shift with power, distance, and imposition and with face demands (Hyland, 2004).

2.2.7. Importance of speech acts in communication

Speech acts are not peripheral to language they are central to how speakers achieve social goals through communication. As contemporary pragmatics has shown, utterances are rarely neutral conveyors of information; they are goal-directed actions shaped by speaker intent, hearer interpretation, and the cultural context in which they are embedded (Culpeper & Terkourafi, 2017). Whether we are requesting, refusing, apologizing, or thanking, these speech acts operate as the functional building blocks of interaction, anchoring language in real-world use.

While foundational work by Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) introduced the notion that "saying something is doing something," more recent research has clarified how these performative functions depend on sociocultural knowledge and contextual appropriateness. For instance, the same request may vary in structure, tone, and perceived politeness depending on who is speaking, to whom, and under what circumstances (Taguchi & Roever, 2017). This reinforces the notion that pragmatic competence is not simply knowing language rules but understanding *how* and *why* language is used in particular ways.

Moreover, cross-cultural and L2 communication research has increasingly drawn attention to the consequences of pragmatic failure. As Ishihara and Cohen (2021) argue, even advanced L2 speakers may produce grammatically correct utterances that fall short pragmatically, leading to misunderstandings or perceived rudeness. This is particularly salient in intercultural contexts where assumptions about directness, politeness, or formality diverge between interlocutors. In such cases, speech acts become the litmus test of whether communicative intent aligns with social appropriateness.

The functional value of speech acts is also evident in their embeddedness within broader discourse structures. Requests and refusals, for example, do not occur in isolation but are typically preceded and followed by opening formulas, explanations, and mitigation strategies. Studies like Trosborg (2010) and Economidou-Kogetsidis (2015) have demonstrated that pragmatic success relies not only on the illocutionary act itself, but on the speaker's ability to manage interactional sequencing and face concerns across turns.

In multilingual settings, the production of speech acts is further complicated by the interplay of L1 transfer, linguistic repertoire, and sociocultural exposure. As Félix-Brasdefer (2021) notes, learners often draw on familiar strategies from their first language, which may or may not align with L2 norms. However, this transfer is not always detrimental multilingual speakers may also bring heightened metapragmatic awareness, enabling them to adapt more flexibly across communicative contexts.

These findings highlight why speech acts are more than linguistic tools. They are cultural performances that signal identity, manage relationships, and structure interaction. Pragmatic competence, in this sense, is not acquired through vocabulary lists or grammar rules alone but through situated, socially informed experience with how speech acts operate in specific communities.

2.2.8. The Role of Speech Acts in Communication and in Situated Contexts

Speech acts are fundamentally shaped by the context in which they are performed, including the social identities of the interlocutors, their relative power, the immediacy of the situation, and the cultural expectations surrounding interaction. Scholars such as Kasper and Rose (2002) emphasize that pragmatic choices are inextricably linked to situational and relational factors, and that effective communication in a second or foreign language involves the ability to adapt one's language to these shifting processes.

Research shows that interlocutor roles significantly mediate how speakers formulate both refusals and requests. Park and Oh (2019), in their analysis of Korean EFL learners, found that refusals to strangers were more likely to include apologetic and explanatory moves compared to refusals to peers. Such findings align with the way participants in the present study handle socially neutral but unfamiliar interactions, often opting for indirect refusals that prioritize politeness. Similarly, Wongsittikan (2022) highlights that refusals addressed to institutional superiors frequently contain a greater degree of deference, softening strategies, and justification.

In contexts where the speaker occupies a subordinate role, such as an employee or student, refusals tend to reflect institutional power structures rather than merely interpersonal rapport.

Requests are also sensitive to role and hierarchy. Wang and Halenko (2022) noted that the request strategies of Chinese EFL learners differed based on power imbalances, with speakers modifying the complexity and politeness of their requests according to whether the interlocutor was a peer or an authority figure. These observations are pertinent to this study, where participants' responses in both upward and downward power situations illustrate varying degrees of strategic language use, including the deployment of preparatory phrases, softeners, and modal verbs. What emerges is a pattern of adaptation that is responsive not only to linguistic competence but also to social positioning.

Cultural and situational scripts also play a critical role. According to Lee (2013), EFL learners often fall back on culturally embedded formulaic expressions in high-stakes situations, particularly when there is a risk of face threat. These routines, while pragmatic in function, also reveal how speakers internalize and reproduce patterns that are culturally familiar or socially validated. In this study, prefabricated utterances such as "I'm sorry, but…" or "I'd rather not…" frequently surfaced in contexts marked by formality or institutional hierarchy, demonstrating how learners utilize communicative pressure with pragmalinguistic conventions.

Pragmatics research in the jordanian context emphasized that the realization of speech acts is not only a matter of linguistic competence but also a reflection of sociopragmatic awareness. For instance, Al-Issa (2003) demonstrated that Jordanian speakers adjust the structure and indirectness of their refusals based on their relative power, employing more elaborate and mitigating forms when addressing superiors or unfamiliar interlocutors. Similarly, Al Kayed et al. (2020) observed that religious expressions and external pragmatic markers are often mobilized to soften refusals in socially sensitive contexts, revealing the deep entrenchment of cultural politeness norms in everyday interaction.

We argue that while existing studies have contributed valuable findings to the field of L2 speech act production, particularly among non-native speakers, there remains a need for continued exploration both within the Jordanian context and beyond. This need arises not from a scarcity of research alone, but from the inherently complex and context-dependent nature of speech act realization.

2.3. A Comparison Between Speech Acts in Jordanian Arabic and English

Studies on Jordanian Arabic (JA) speech acts are quite rare; JA is a dialect of the Arabic language spoken in Jordan. JA is the native language of over nine million people in Jordan's Hashemite Kingdom. It is a language without a written form; diglossia is a feature of Jordan's linguistic situation. Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is the widely used variety in education, media, and government communication. There are several sub-dialects of JA: Rural JA, Urban JA, and Bedouin JA (see Al-Wer, 2007).

A growing body of research within the Jordanian context has illustrated marked contrasts in how speech acts are realized in Jordanian Arabic (JA) versus English, particularly among EFL learners. These contrasts are not merely linguistic but sociopragmatic, shaped by culturally grounded communicative norms, values, and role expectations that govern interactional behavior.

In the case of Jordanian Arabic speakers and American English natives for instance, Al Shboul and Huwari (2016) studied the effect of individualism and collectivist cultural factors on refusal productions by Jordanian Arabic speakers (hereafter, JA) and American English speakers (hearafter, AE). The study included 15 native speakers of JA and 15 native speakers of AE. Al-Issa's (1998) Discourse Completion Test (hereafter, DCT) was customized for data gathering. Sequences of semantic patterns and the refusals' taxonomy established by Al-Issa (1998) were employed for data analysis. According to the findings, Americans employed more direct denial methods than Jordanians, who reported more indirect refusals.

The differences between the two selected groups reflect deeply ingrained cultural values. For example, when it came to the content of explanation/excuse, Jordanian participants tended to be less direct and provide explanations other than their own refusal inclination. AE participants, on the other hand, tended to be more direct, and they frequently cited their own preferences as a reason for refusal. Jordanian participants, for example, rarely provide explanations such as "I have to study," whereas AE responses were common. In doing so, Jordanians may feel that studying is under their own control and that they can accept the invitation/offer, request, or suggestion if they truly want to, so such explanations may not be acceptable. This is consistent with (Lyuh, 1992), who associates the less use of such explanations (i.e. I have to study) by Koreans, as a collectivistic culture, to the fact that they may consider studying to be an unacceptable explanation because they can control the situation.

The act of requesting in English by Jordanian EFL learners also reflects significant pragmatic transfer. Al-Ali and Alawneh (2010) found that learners often drew on L1 Arabic structures when constructing requests in English, producing speech acts marked by excessive mitigation or unconventional sequencing. Factors such as limited L2 proficiency, strong L1 pragmatic routines, and an emphasis on status hierarchies contributed to these deviations. Notably, the preference for indirectness was not only retained in the L2 but at times exaggerated due to learners' uncertainty or desire to avoid impoliteness.

A more recent study by Huwari et al. (2023) corroborates and expands on these findings. Their examination of refusal strategies employed by Jordanian and American participants substantiates the assertion that Jordanian speakers are predisposed to utilize ambiguous or subversive expressions when declining offers or requests. This tendency to mitigate directness was particularly pronounced in scenarios involving hierarchical relationships, suggesting that Jordanian speakers are not simply avoiding confrontation but are actively managing interpersonal rapport through culturally appropriate pragmatic strategies. Together, these studies underscore the depth and consistency of L1 influence on speech act realization among Jordanian learners of English.

What emerges from these studies is a complex picture of pragmatic behavior shaped by deep-seated cultural frameworks. Speech acts in Jordanian Arabic reflect a high-context communication style, where meaning is conveyed through implication, shared background knowledge, and relational cues. In contrast, English especially in its American form tends to favor low-context communication, with an emphasis on explicitness and speaker intention. Jordanian EFL learners must therefore contend with not only linguistic differences but also contrasting assumptions about how meaning is constructed and interpreted.

We bring these studies comparing the speech act realization of Jordanian Arabic with native English speakers to highlight a few key points: first, the high-context nature of the Jordanian community and how it shapes indirectness, justification, and mitigation in L1 speech act production; second, the influence of sociocultural expectations regarding politeness, hierarchy, and group cohesion, which often leads to pragmatic transfer when Jordanians use English.

These cross-cultural contrasts between implicit, relationship-centered strategies of Arabic and the more explicit, autonomy-driven norms of English help contextualize how bilingual and trilingual Jordanian speakers may construct requests and refusals in English. Whether through

retained indirectness, overelaboration, or shifts in modal use and justification structures, these pragmatic tendencies are likely to surface in patterned ways across both groups, especially when one of them had acquired and a new third language system such as Hungarian.

2.4. Multilingual Pragmatic Competence

Multilingual pragmatic competence has increasingly been understood not merely as the accumulation of multiple linguistic codes, but as a highly adaptive and socially responsive capacity. Recent research emphasizes that multilingual speakers often exhibit enhanced sensitivity to contextual cues, particularly when navigating speech acts such as requests, refusals, or apologies across diverse social situations. This perspective reflects a broader shift in applied linguistics, where pragmatic performance is no longer seen as a set of prescriptive norms, but rather as a negotiation of meaning shaped by the interlocutors' intentions, sociocultural affiliations, and interactional goals.

Studies conducted in multilingual contexts have shown that exposure to multiple linguistic systems can enhance metapragmatic awareness—the ability to reflect on and adjust language use in real time. For instance, learners with proficiency in more than two languages tend to demonstrate greater flexibility in selecting speech act strategies based on perceived social distance or power dynamics. This was particularly evident in a study by Wu (2022), where multilingual EFL learners outperformed their bilingual peers in adjusting request strategies depending on the authority status of the interlocutor. Such findings support the notion that multilinguals do not simply add linguistic systems but develop a heightened capacity to interpret complex interactional cues and adjust their language accordingly.

In the field of instructional pragmatics, recent scholarship has moved beyond the provision of formulaic expressions, arguing instead for experiential learning grounded in real-life scenarios. Henderson and Reed (2025) have emphasized that pragmatic competence is best developed through reflective tasks that position learners within authentic social interactions, where they are required to align linguistic forms with culturally appropriate intentions. This type of instruction promotes the development of sociopragmatic sensitivity awareness of how contextual factors such as status, familiarity, and imposition shape the interpretation of speech acts. Such an approach is particularly relevant in multilingual contexts, where learners are often required to navigate distinct sets of sociocultural expectations across their languages.

Further theoretical support for this dynamic view of pragmatic competence is found in the work of Kecskés (2022), who proposes a socio-cognitive model in which pragmatic knowledge is co-constructed through interaction. From this perspective, multilinguals develop pragmatic competence not as a static set of rules but through repeated engagement with diverse communicative norms. This helps explain why multilingual individuals often exhibit nuanced performances in situations involving ambiguity, indirectness, or politeness. Rather than relying solely on fixed strategies, they draw upon a wider repertoire of pragmatic behaviors learned through cross-cultural exposure and social experience.

Although earlier studies often focused on how multilingualism supports structural language learning, more recent investigations emphasize that the real strength of multilinguals lies in their capacity to manage interactional appropriateness. This is not to say that multilingual speakers are immune to pragmatic failure; rather, their diverse linguistic histories provide a broader set of resources to draw upon when encountering unfamiliar situations. As multilingualism becomes more prevalent in globalized societies, research continues to show that pragmatic competence in such learners is deeply shaped by language exposure, social orientation, and the degree to which communicative choices are contextually responsive and culturally informed.

These observations point to a crucial need for theoretical frameworks that do not merely contrast linguistic forms across languages but rather account for the intercultural negotiations and identity work involved in multilingual communication. The next section explores such frameworks by examining how both cross-cultural and intercultural perspectives contribute to our understanding of pragmatic behavior in multilingual speakers.

2.4.1. Theoretical perspectives: Cross-Cultural and intercultural perspectives

Cross-cultural and interlanguage pragmatics investigate pragmatic competence and pragmatic failure at both the pragmatic and sociopragmatic levels. Cross-cultural pragmatics has taken a sociolinguistic approach, focusing on the comparison of speech acts performed by speakers from various cultural backgrounds. Even though the two terms cross cultural and interlanguage pragmatics are used interchangeably, they do not refer to the same inquiry (kecskes 2013). Interlanguage pragmatics takes a second language acquisition viewpoint and fixates on the pragmatic advancement of second and foreign language learners. Interlanguage pragmatics is the study of how language learners acquire and apply pragmatic competence.

Regardless of the differences between the two lines of research, interlanguage pragmatics encompasses cross-cultural pragmatics in some sense. Cross-cultural pragmatics is the belief that individuals from two communities or societies conduct their interactions (whether spoken or written) according to their own rules or norms, frequently resulting in a collision of expectations and, ultimately, misconceptions about the other group (Boxer 2002: 151). According to Kecskes (2013), the problem with interlanguage pragmatics is that it represents a monolingual and cross-cultural rather than a multilingual and intercultural viewpoint, because all of its conceptual resources (Gricean theory, politeness theory, and the interlanguage hypothesis).

Cross-cultural pragmatics on the other hand, studies the strategies and linguistic forms employed in the formulation of speech acts. Each speech community has its own set of values and beliefs that form the foundation of its culture. Because the speech acts they produce reflect their culture, different cultures do not produce or comprehend speech acts in the same way. The comparison of distant cultures yields very interesting results, and there are numerous studies on speech acts developed in Asian and Western cultures (Cheng, 2012). Differences interestingly enough exist not only between languages but also between speech communities. For example, speakers of various varieties of English or Spanish exhibit significant differences in the formulation of some speech acts.

Important questions come to mind when we acknowledge that pragmatic differences not only occur across cultures with different languages, but within communities speaking the same language, where does multilingualism fit into all of this? How does pragmatic competence develop and manifest itself through the scope of multilingualism? And does pragmatic competence develop in L2 and in additional languages the same way it does for l1?

2.4.2 The development and change of pragmatic competence in multilinguals

The development of pragmatic competence in multilingual individuals is neither linear nor uniform but rather shaped by ongoing negotiation of meaning across languages and the sociocultural norms they encode. Unlike monolingual speakers, whose pragmatic abilities typically evolve through sustained immersion in a single linguistic and cultural environment (Kasper & Rose, 2002), multilinguals must constantly recalibrate their communicative behavior depending on the language in use, the social relationship with their interlocutor, and the situational context (Kecskes, 2013). This continuous adaptation reflects what Jessner (2008) terms the dynamic nature of multilingual competence characterized by variability, non-linearity,

and the influence of cross-linguistic and cross-cultural experience. Moreover, pragmatic development in multilinguals is not solely determined by linguistic knowledge; it is also mediated by cultural familiarity and individual agency, as speakers choose whether to conform to or resist target language norms based on identity considerations and communicative goals (Haugh & Chang, 2020). In this sense, multilingual pragmatic competence emerges as a flexible and context-sensitive system, shaped as much by social interaction and identity positioning as by linguistic input.

Recent research has begun to expand the exploration of this development beyond the conventional native- nonnative and bilingual boundaries. A meta-analytic review by van Wonderen et al. (2023) investigated whether multilingual exposure supports children's pragmatic development. Although the review did not identify consistent overall advantages for multilingual children in comparison to monolinguals, it revealed that multilinguals often displayed more different uses of non-verbal cues and demonstrated greater sensitivity to their interlocutors. These findings suggest that pragmatic development in multilinguals may not be immediately evident in standardized assessments but become more salient in spontaneous interaction, where adaptability and contextual awareness are key.

While prior research such as Safont Jordà (2013) has emphasized the pragmatic advantages of multilingualism particularly among trilinguals in managing politeness and face-threatening acts, other recent studies present a more challenging and sometimes contradictory picture. For instance, Wu (2022), studying Mongolian multilingual learners of English, discovered that higher linguistic proficiency did not always correlate with stronger pragmatic competence. Learners with advanced grammatical skills often demonstrated weaker performance in pragmatic appropriateness, suggesting that pragmatic development may lag behind or proceed independently of grammatical advancement.

Further evidence comes from the domain of third language acquisition. In a study on Uyghur–Mandarin English trilinguals, Yu and Li (2025) examined how refusal strategies were transferred across the participants' three languages. They found that cross-linguistic influence was highly selective. Some pragmatic forms such as indirect refusals or mitigated expressions transferred more easily, while others did not, highlighting the idea that pragmatic transfer is not wholesale but strategy-specific. This supports the "Scalpel Model" of multilingual development, which

views learners as capable of selectively drawing on pragmatic knowledge from their other languages depending on communicative goals and context.

It is hoped that this research will help provide a better and clearer understanding of the multilingual pragmatic competence, how it develops, changes and manifest itself through L2 speech act production.

2.5. Multilingual pragmatic competence of speech acts

Following the discussion of how pragmatic competence evolves and adapts in multilingual individuals, speech acts offer a concrete and widely studied domain through which such competence can be observed and assessed. Speech acts such as requests, refusals, apologies, and compliments require not only linguistic accuracy but also sociocultural sensitivity. For multilingual speakers, particularly bilinguals and trilinguals, the challenge lies in selecting contextually appropriate forms across multiple languages, each governed by distinct sociopragmatic conventions.

Bachman's (1990) model distinguishes between illocutionary competence and sociolinguistic competence in pragmatic competence. Sociolinguistic competence includes the ability to choose appropriate communicative acts and strategies for carrying them out. The ability to carry out speech acts as well as send and receive intended meaning is referred to as illocutionary competence. Speech acts are an important aspect of pragmatic competence. According to Ellis (1999), pragmatic competence is the knowledge that the speaker or hearer uses to engage in communication, including how speech acts are successfully performed. As a result, the capacity to perform speech acts overlaps with pragmatic competence to a large extent.

Speech act theory has been a predominant research topic in multilingual pragmatics. L2 pragmatics study focuses primarily on speech acts (Kasper & Dahl, 1991) and, to a lesser extent, conversational structure and conversational implicature (Alcón Soler & Martnez-Flor, 2008; Bardovi-Harlig, 2005).

This makes the study of speech acts particularly valuable in multilingual pragmatics, not only for identifying competence levels but also for tracing the influence of language dominance, transfer, and sociopragmatic awareness (Kecskes, 2013). To understand how this has been approached in prior research, the following section surveys the range of speech acts that have been most frequently investigated in multilingual and second language pragmatic studies.

2.5.1. In general – which speech acts have been studied

Since the development of speech act theory by Austin (1962) and further refinement by Searle (1969), a considerable body of research in interlanguage pragmatics has focused on how second and multilingual learners perform various communicative functions. Scholars have consistently emphasized that speech acts are central to pragmatic competence (Ellis, 1999) and have therefore become a primary tool for assessing this dimension of language learning. Among the most commonly studied speech acts are requests, apologies, refusals, compliments, complaints, and expressions of gratitude, each of which reveals how learners handle politeness, face management, and sociocultural appropriateness in the target language.

Over the years, interlanguage pragmatics research has explored a range of speech acts, with particular emphasis on apologies, complaints, and expressions of gratitude. Studies of apology behavior have shown notable variation across cultural groups; for instance, Chen, Lu, and Wei (2021) analyzed Chinese EFL learners' apology emails and found frequent use of explicit apology formulas and offers of repair, highlighting both pragmalinguistic awareness and the influence of academic context. Similarly, Elmas, Öztüfekçi, and Özdemir (2021) compared Turkish and Arab EFL learners' apology strategies and observed cross-cultural differences in the use of regret expressions and explanatory elements.

In the domain of complaints, Zhu (2025) examined complaint strategies used by Korean and Chinese speakers in TV discourse, noting their preference for indirectness as a face-saving device in hierarchical interactions. Moreover, the field of interlanguage pragmatics has traditionally prioritized the study of a set of canonical speech acts, with requests, apologies, and refusals being among the most frequently investigated (Kecskes, 2019) due to their complexity, cultural sensitivity, and pedagogical relevance. Accordingly, the next section will focus specifically on research into request and refusal speech acts, where multilingual learners often face both significant challenges and opportunities for pragmatic development.

2.5.2. In particular – Requests and Refusals

Requests and refusals are two of the most common speech acts in human communication, and they are employed often in everyday social interactions (Jalilimehr, Pazhakh, & Gorjian, 2012). A request may endanger the addressee's face by restricting his or her freedom of action, whereas a refusal may imply disapproval of the addressee's request or suggestion. Both may also threaten the speaker's face if the addressee does not respond favorably.

Blum-Kulka and Olshtain's (1984) classifications of speech acts of requests have been widely used in studies to analyze the pragmatic competence of particular study groups (Alzeebaree & Yavuz, 2017). These classifications encompass three degrees of directness, namely, direct, conventionally indirect, and non-conventionally indirect. According to Alzeebaree and Yavuz (2017), the degree of directness in requests varies between speakers based on their pragmatic knowledge and ability to understand the contextual meaning of utterances. As a result, the level of pragmatic competence of the speakers is critical in assessing their responses and directness in requests.

The speech act of request is one that has received the most attention in the field of interlanguage pragmatics, and both longitudinal and cross-sectional studies have been conducted on how people make requests (Economidou-Kogetsidis 2008). Generally speaking, studies on L2 request speech acts showed a positive relationship between proficiency and production, where improved request productions are the result of increased proficiency. Al Gahtani and Roever (2012) used a cross-sectional design to investigate L2 requests from learners at four proficiency levels. Lower-level learners used fewer first-pair parts and uttered the request early, relying on the interlocutor to elicit more information, according to the findings. The interlocutor also adjusted to the level of proficiency of the learners in order to keep complications to a minimum. The effects of the social context variable Power were minimal but discernible at high levels of proficiency.

Similarly, the ability to generate a speech act of request was tested by Taguchi (2006) In a spoken role play task in 59 Japanese college students with English at two different proficiency levels. The results showed that overall appropriateness was significantly influenced by L2 proficiency.

As opposed to the research on pragmatic competence in L2, research on L3 has been scarce. Cenoz (2003) investigated requests made by university English learners in the Basque country and discovered that Blum- Kulka's intercultural style hypothesis could be confirmed for English language learners who spoke Spanish or Basque as their first language. According to the author, advanced English language learners appeared to have developed an intercultural style, which is reflected in the similarity of request performance in Spanish and English as well as the differences from requests formulated by other native Spanish speakers. Jorda and Soler (2012) investigated the impact of bilingualism and instruction on the use of request modifiers by third

language learners. Bilinguals outperformed monolinguals in terms of the number of internal and external modifiers used both before and after instruction, according to their findings.

In the case of Refusals, a speaker is supposed to decline an invitation or request by making a face-threatening gesture toward the responder or listener and restricting the listener's needs; as a result, the speech actions of refusal call for pragmatic competence (Hsieh,& Chen,1996). These speech acts call for pragmatic proficiency since speakers may choose to express refuse by using a facial expression or by simply saying "no." When expressing a denial, a speaker must employ one of three speech acts: (a) an expression of remorse (such as "I'm extremely sorry"); (b) a direct refuse (such as "I can't attend your birthday party; and (c) an explanation (such as "I have an important exam").

A growing body of research investigated the speech act of refusal in L2 in recent years. Similar to the case of requests, increased proficiency in L2 refusals reported improved production of said speech acts. Taguchi (2013) reported a significant proficiency effect on appropriateness ratings and speech rate in examining twenty native English speakers and 59 Japanese students of English at two different proficiency levels in the production of requests and refusals in a role play task.

One of the few studies that dealt with l3 refusals on the other hand, is the study by Safont and Soler (2012) which explored the advantages of teaching the speech act of refusal from a discourse perspective on pragmatic knowledge in third language learners. It also investigates how differently receptive and productive bilinguals use linguistic, sociopragmatic, and pragmatic information when preparing for and carrying out English refusals. The study included 52 receptive and 40 productive bilinguals of Catalan and Spanish. Both receptive and productive bilinguals enhanced their attention and pragmalinguistic awareness of refusals in English, according to research findings, while the latter appeared to exhibit a higher degree of metapragmatic awareness. Additionally, effective bilinguals demonstrated better communicative sensitivity, mostly in the form of empathy for the listener and a hearer-oriented approach to discussion.

The complexity of request speech acts is well-established in pragmatics literature (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989), as are refusals (Codina-Espurz, 2013). The investigation on the speech acts has primarily focused on the impact of social factors (such as power and distance relations between interlocutors, as well as the extent of imposition) and proficiency level on production.

Despite the reported increase in output as proficiency improves, foreign language learners exhibit less sociopragmatic development than second language learners (Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei 1998) and are frequently unable to adjust their production to the relative status of the interlocutor in terms of Brown and Levinson's (1987) variables of Power, Distance, and Degree of Imposition

Thus, due to the paucity of request and refusal studies in the multilingual context, the current study is hoped to add value to that body of research by uniquely considering the role of individual differences in pragmatic development by employing different linguistic background tests, in addition to the multicultural personality questionnaire. We believe that accounting for third language learners' pragmatic awareness and production may broaden the scope of research on pragmatic competence acquisition, therefore It is hoped that this study will provide important insight that can be translated into policy, educational practices, and intercultural positivity.

2.6. Teaching and learning speech acts in the classroom: facts or fiction?

One advantage of learning pragmatics is that learners can understand language meanings from a broader intercultural perspective. Learning the fundamentals of pragmatics will enable them to be more sensitive to people's intended meanings. Many learners fail pragmatically when they are involved in the actual act of communication while learning a foreign language and how to communicate in it. They may simply translate speech acts from their mother tongue to the target language in order to convey meaning and function. Such issues could be the result of a blatant lack of explicit instruction in pragmatics and the communicative load of language.

A consensus has emerged through early studies in the 1980's and 1990's that pragmatics is teachable, instructed learners were found to outperform their non-instructed counterparts (Kasper & Rose, 1999). In the following decade, studies compared different teaching methods for learning outcomes to address the question of effective instruction. The field has been dominated by the comparison of explicit and implicit teaching methods. In general, studies have shown that explicit metapragmatic explanation (for example, information about which linguistic strategies to use when refusing someone's invitation) is more useful than an implicit condition that promotes learning through input exposure and consciousness-raising. Moreover, a positive effect of explicit intervention was observed on the development of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge. For instance, Takahashi (2001) used an open-ended DCT and a measure of confidence in selecting request forms administered on a pre-post basis to improve pragmatic performance involved in the development of English request strategies by Japanese EFL learners.

To a large extent, explicit instruction was found to aid in the development of both proficiency and confidence. However, Recent research indicates that the depth of processing is closely related to effective instruction (Taguchi, 2015). Studies have shown that learners can be purposefully taught to notice pragmatic elements and process those features at a deeper level (for example, determining why specific refusal methods are employed in a given context) while still receiving the benefits of implicit teaching.

Over time, L2 pragmatics pedagogical issues have changed. Early studies on the teachability of pragmatics have given way to debates about the most effective teaching strategies and resources. The field has gone past the dominance of the noticing hypothesis and the contrast between explicit and implicit teaching. Input processing for example is one of the SLA theories that researchers are recently using to describe both the cognitive and social aspects (VanPatten, 2017), as well as Cognition Hypothesis (Kim & Taguchi, 2015).

In the general sense, the importance of pragmatics in language teaching cannot be overstated. Pragmatics is essentially the functional study of language and language teaching. Because of this, pragmatics is considered a theory of linguistic performance. The previously mentioned definition of pragmatic competence by Ellis (1999) suggests that successful performance of speech acts constitutes pragmatic competence, thus, a sense of significance arises as to why pragmatics and speech acts ought to be taught. Especially when we consider that Second language (L2) learners' pragmatic performance often appears to fall short of ideal expectations. Even the most competent learners appear to struggle with L2 pragmatics in real-world situations at times (Pishghadam & Sharafadini, 2011). Researchers believe that pragmatic competence can be developed through pragmatic instruction because learners' pragmatic failure is clearly due to a lack of knowledge of certain language forms that are socially appropriate in the target language community. Several scholars claimed a positive effect of instruction on second language (L2) pragmatics. Research on instruction in second language (L2) pragmatics has made fundamental contributions to the teaching of pragmatics in an L2 and a foreign language (FL) context and has shown the benefits of instruction versus exposure in various aspects of pragmatics (Bardovi-Harlig & Griffin, 2005).

2.6.1. Teaching practices and learning outcomes

The integration of pragmatic competence into second language (L2) curricula is widely recognized as essential for enabling learners to communicate effectively and appropriately in the target language. While grammatical accuracy remains a foundational goal, the ability to

understand and produce language in a socially contextualized manner is a critical marker of proficiency. A significant body of research has therefore investigated the efficacy of different teaching practices on developing learners' pragmatic awareness and production.

A study was conducted by Alcón and Guzman (2010) to evaluate the impact of pragmatic instruction on the awareness of refusals among foreign language learners. Participants were exposed to English-language audiovisual pragmatic input from the Stargate television series, with social distance and speech act type (refusals to requests) as controlled variables. The authors employed retrospective verbal reports to examine whether teaching had an impact on learners' knowledge of refusals in an environment where English was a second language. The results of this study demonstrated how pragmatic training can increase students' attention to and awareness of the pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic concerns involved in producing refusals.

Moreover, Meta-analytic syntheses show that instruction produces robust gains in learners' pragmatic awareness and performance, with explicit approaches (e.g., metapragmatic explanation, guided noticing) consistently yielding larger effects than implicit exposure alone (Jeon & Kaya, 2006; Plonsky & Zhuang, 2019). These effects hold across outcomes (awareness, comprehension, production), and are moderated by factors such as instructional duration, assessment type, and delivery mode (face-to-face vs. computer-mediated).

2.6.2. Factors affecting speech act learning in another language

Speech-act learning in an additional language is not a single skill but a composite of pragmalinguistic resources (forms and formulae), sociopragmatic judgments (appropriateness relative to power, distance, and imposition), and metapragmatic monitoring during production. Outcomes therefore vary with who the learner is, what the communicative task demands, and where the language is used (e.g., classroom, workplace, study-abroad, community). Ishihara and Cohen (2014) contend that three groups of factors influence the successful use of speech acts learning strategies, including learner characteristics, task nature, and contexts for language use. The use of interlanguage pragmatics learning strategies and pragmatic performance strategies is influenced by learner characteristics such as age, gender, language aptitude, language learning styles, and personality factors. Similarities and differences between L1 and L2, differences in sociopragmatics norms and pragmalinguistic forms of the two languages, differences in politeness considerations, and other aspects of the attended speech act all play a significant role in the pragmatic performance strategies.

To begin with, many studies have found differences in speech act expressions among learners with varying levels of L2 proficiency (e.g., Felix-Brasdefer 2003; Trosborg 1995). These studies focused on whether proficiency influences speech act production, as evidenced by the types of linguistic expressions used. Trosborg (1995) compared linguistic expressions across three L2 proficiency groups using a role play method to elicit speech acts of requests, complaints, and apologies. The findings revealed that advanced learners used more mitigating expressions to reduce the potential threat, closely resembling native speaker patterns.

Moreover, Higher proficiency level learners seem to exert native-like patterns in their choice of linguistic expressions in speech acts as compared to lower proficiency learners. Taguchi (2006) for example, investigated Japanese English learners' requests for role plays in terms of appropriateness and linguistic criteria. The findings suggested that high-proficient people were better at controlling linguistic items. As enlightening as these revelations concerning the quality of speech act production are, language proficiency remains a singular component of a multivariate pragmatic view on appropriate speech act production. Especially, when the target language is a second or a foreign one. Thus, pragmatic competence should be tested beyond the sentence level to see if learners can create speech actions with an acceptable level of efficiency, considering factors like discourse management, use, attitude or need opportunities.

Aside from language proficiency, the impact of motivation in the acquisition of interlanguage pragmatics has been investigated by some studies (Cook, 2001; Takahashi, 2005). These studies investigated the connection between general language learning motivation and interlanguage pragmatics acquisition (ILP). We mentioned earlier that L1 pragmatic acquisition happens in a rather natural subconscious way where a child gradually integrates into her/his environment and speech community, both linguistically and socially. The process in L2 however is affected with a degree of consciousness by language attitude, one of which is motivation. According to the literature, individual differences also affect the acquisition and development of ILP (Kerekes, 1992; Niezgoda and Rover, 2001). As a result, motivation, as an individual difference, is crucial to the acquisition of ILPs. The link between motivation and ILP acquisition has, however, only been examined in a small amount of research. Additionally, Interlanguage pragmatic motivation was studied from two perspectives: general pragmatic motivation and speech-act-specific motivation, which represent learners' motivation to acquire the pragmalinguistic forms and sociopragmatic norms of performing speech acts. A study by Tajeddin and Moghadam (2012)

aimed to define and describe motivation for acquiring interlanguage pragmatic competence. According to the findings, EFL learners are highly motivated to learn English language pragmatic features from both motivational perspectives. Regression equations indicated that while speech-act-specific motivation predicts pragmatic production in EFL learners, general pragmatic motivation does not.

A less occurring number of research investigated Individual differences as a driving factor in foreign language speech act production, Taguchi (2013) investigated the influence of individual differences (ID) characteristics on changing pragmatic abilities among L2 English learners 48 Japanese EFL students from an English-medium institution in Japan took part in the study. They took a pragmatic speaking exam (k=12) that evaluated their capacity to create two speech acts: requests and views, under high and low imposition scenarios. Three ID characteristics were tested (proficiency, attitude toward English study, and lexical access skill), and their impacts on changes in appropriateness and fluency of speech act production were evaluated. Individual characteristics had a substantial influence on pragmatic improvement, although the effects differed across appropriateness and fluency.

Moreover, EFL scholars have identified a link between learning another language and the development of multicultural personality (MP) attributes such as cultural empathy, open-mindedness, flexibility, emotional stability, and social initiative (Cervone and Pervin, 2015). According to Dewaele and Botes (2020), these characteristics are at the top of the hierarchy that makes up a person's conduct. Van Der Zee and Van Oudenhoven (2000) proposed a concept of intercultural competence (personality) that considers an individual's involvement in another culture. Individuals are culturally competent, according to them, when they can speak well in another cultural milieu, feel comfortable conversing, and enjoy connecting with people from diverse cultures. Furthermore, language theorists have placed a high value on the idea of intercultural competence. According to Whaley and Davis (2007), intercultural competence is an individual's capacity to interact effectively across cultures.

Several studies explored the relationship between multilingualism and personality factors (MPQ). Dewaele and van Oudenhoven (2009) were the first to look at how social characteristics (multilingualism) influence personality qualities measured by the MPQ. A question concerning the number of languages known was also included in the questionnaire. There were 27 individuals who were beginning bilinguals (EFL learners), 43 who were trilinguals, and six who

were quadrilingual. The results showed that the multilingual group scored much higher on open-mindedness and cultural sensitivity than the bilinguals, but significantly worse on emotional stability.

Researchers urge researchers to investigate EFL students' MP qualities to investigate the relationship between multilingualism and the development of MP traits (Dewaele and Botes, 2020). According to Bahrami and Narafshan (2018), adding culture and cultural knowledge in the curricula of EFL programs is one of the most important prerequisites for developing MP traits in EFL learners. According to him, learning a language apart from cultural association would not result in good learning, and learners will be unable to obtain accurate interpretations of linguistic elements and authentic texts.

Al Doghan et al. (2019) contends that individuals' intercultural abilities improve when they are exposed to a foreign-language situation. Building on this foundation, the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ) is an effective and informative tool for this study precisely because it bridges the gap between simple language counts and the actual intercultural competencies theorized to develop from language acquisition. While the number of languages spoken (Korzilius et al., 2011) indicates the breadth of linguistic exposure, it does not directly measure the resulting psychological adaptations. The MPQ operationalizes the very "intercultural abilities" that Al Doghan et al. (2019) argue are cultivated in foreign-language situations. It moves beyond linguistic capability to assess key traits for successful intercultural interactions

2.7. The Pragmatic Competence in English of Two Different groups of Jordanian Arabic L1 (JA) Speakers

The majority of Jordanian scholars have compared how native speakers of Jordanian Arabic produce speech acts with how Jordanian EFL learners and native speakers of American or British English realize similar speech acts. (e.g., Banikalef, Maros, Aladdi, & AlNatour, 2015). Even though Jordanian students begin studying English in Grade 1 (six years old) in primary schools and continue until Grade 12 (18 years old) in secondary schools, they still struggle to communicate effectively with English native speakers. Many researchers have identified this issue, stating that Jordanians lack the necessary pragmatic competence, preventing them from communicating effectively in the target language (Al-Momani, 2009; Al-Shboul, & Maros 2013; Bataineh, 2014).

Much of this pragmatic incompetence in English can be traced back to the domain specific status of the language in Jordan. According to Rababah (2002), students in Jordan learn English in their native Arabic-speaking country because there are few opportunities for them to practice the language in real-world situations. Even English-language graduates in Jordan, he continues, have trouble communicating in English, and they frequently lack the vocabulary needed to fully express themselves while speaking to others.

This lack of knowledge on the practices and sociocultural norms of English has been reported by several Jordanian L2 speech act studies. Al Issa (2003) for instance investigated the realization patterns of refusal strategies by Jordanians and Americans in the Jordanian context. The primary goal of was to determine whether there was evidence of pragmatic transfer from Arabic to English, as well as the reasons for this transfer. Data was gathered using a written DCT. These interviews were conducted to determine the motivators for pragmatic transfer from L1. The findings indicated pragmatic transfer in terms of the frequency, type, number, and content of the semantic formulas used. Furthermore, when compared to American refusals, Jordanian participants tend to refuse in lengthy, elaborate ways and employ less direct strategies, particularly when the interlocutor is of a higher social status.

Moreover, Al-Ali and Alawneh (2010) investigated mitigating devices in requests made by Jordanian English learners. According to them, three major factors influence IL performance: language ability, L2 pragmatic knowledge, and L1 transfer. Pragmatic transfer occurred because of over-initiating requests with expressions such as 'excuse me' (from Arabic afwan) and 'hello' (from Arabic marhaba). Learners also transmitted certain cultural conventions by using expressions of gratitude, well-wishing, and obligation that are common in Arab culture.

In Jordan, scholars such as Al-Momani (2009) and Al-Shboul (2013) claimed that research on Jordanian L2 speakers' pragmatic competence is sparse, and thus little is known about JL2Ss' pragmatic competence. Many Jordanian students go to England to complete their high school education, according to Al Adaileh (2007). Therefore, the present study enriches an already scarce field of pragmatic studies in the Jordanian context by investigating the pragmatic abilities of bilingual Jordanians living in Jordan in comparison with those of trilingual Jordanians living in Hungary.

2.7.1 Distinguishing between two communities of English as an additional language user: JA in Jordan (mainly bilinguals) and JA in Hungary (mainly trilingual)

Beginning in the 1990s, English was taught alongside Arabic in all Jordanian schools to children as young as six years old. This gave English a distinct position in Jordan (Drbseh, & hasan 2013). Many schools in Jordan include English as a mandatory subject, and it is also taught at universities. Additionally, many private language schools and institutes in Jordan offer English language courses for both children and adults. The Jordanian government also places a high importance on the teaching of English and is continuously working on improving the quality of English language education in the country.

The increasing dominance of the English language in all spheres of life is unquestionable in the aftermath of the Jordanian government's current policies enhancing the status of English (Alomoush & Matarneh, 2010). The linguistic importance and prestige that English has attained stems from the fact that English is the only compulsory foreign language taught to schoolboys and schoolgirls in the country In the Jordanian community, the use of English expressions signifies that people, mainly young, educated people, regard English positively as an insurer of social prestige and modernization. Additionally, the religious and conservative nature of the Jordanian community favors English words such as 'period' and 'underwear' to avoid using their considered Taboo/offensive equivalents in Arabic (Alkhatib & Sabbah, 2008).

In the past, there were only a few teachers, and English tuition was limited to a handful of schools scattered across Jordan, but now English instruction is available throughout the country, including the most remote villages and towns. World Bank (2007) reported that Jordanians are motivated to study English for a variety of reasons, including the desire to study or work abroad, to secure a good job in Jordan, to be more informed about international events, and to develop a better understanding and appreciation of "the values and traditions of people from various parts of the world" (104).

That said, it is important to note that the use of English is not only affiliated with Western cultural values. Pennycook (1994) proposed that the widespread use of English is also linked to pragmatic goals pursued. Even though English is placed on a high pedestal in Jordan and is looked at positively in academic and social circles, Jordanian English speakers still face difficulties in both speaking and writing. Furthermore, it was discovered that most English language textbooks used in Jordanian educational institutions lack speakers' knowledge of how

conversations work and the specific socio-cultural norms and practices for the target language (Zayed, 2014).

Measuring the development of L2 pragmatic competence is a significant task itself, given that pragmatic competence is multifaceted (e.g., multiple varieties of a language, globalized English, etc.) and should not be limited to appropriation in the target language. Recent applied linguistics scholarship, for example, has highlighted Translanguaging practices to highlight how speakers draw on prior linguistic repertoires to improve meaning-negotiation, enact certain identities, and engage in knowledge construction (Wei 2018). Furthermore, Liddicoat (2020) emphasized the importance of language learning in assisting learners in employing "language repertoires in instances that enable agency both over language (in the choices they make about how to use their language resources) and through language (in the social possibilities they realize for themselves through their language repertoires" (p. 17).

2.7.2 The context of English speech acts learning in Jordan

There has not been much research done on or investigation of the use of speech actions in schools. According to Rueda (2006), three tasks must be carried out in the classroom if pragmatic competence is to be developed: (1) providing appropriate target language input; (2) raising learners' pragmatic awareness of the instructed aspect; and (3) setting up real-world opportunities for pragmatic knowledge practice. According to Bardovi-Harlig (2001), teaching is at the very least facilitative if not necessary since many pragmatic characteristics of the target language cannot be learnt without it, or at most, they are learned more slowly.

The impact of a lesson plan created by Shrouf (2009) on Jordanian secondary school students' acquisition of politeness techniques was examined. Requests, apologies, and compliments were the three speech acts that were covered. Two groups made up the study's subjects: an experimental group and a control group. A Discourse Completion Task (DCT) was completed by the two groups as a pre-test. Because the two groups didn't know enough about politeness methods, their results were quite subpar. The outcome was highly positive since the experimental group's pupils' academic performance greatly outperformed that of the control group. The researcher emphasized the point that students should be trained in the use of politeness strategies.

Zayed (2014) examined the use of the five speech acts of apology, compliment, greeting, request, and thanking by Jordanian EFL teachers and students. 30 female EFL instructors and their students from the basic stage from the public schools of the Second Directorate of Education

in Amman participated in the study. Three teachers were recruited from each grade level. A classroom observation checklist was used as the study's instrument to look at how EFL teachers and students used these speech actions in the classroom. The study's findings showed that even though EFL teachers and students had more practice using the speech acts of greeting, requesting, and thanking than using the speech acts of apology and complement, neither group had properly mastered any of the speech acts.

To the researcher's knowledge, not much research investigated teaching EFL speech acts in the Jordanian context. Most scholars who investigated the Jordanian EFL speech acts based their research on sociocultural norms, religion and occasionally gender variations, in which an emphasis was put on the output, rather than the input of speech act production. One might ask, how and when are these EFL speech acts used in the Jordanian context then? In some sense, we would argue that EFL usage in Jordan is domain specific, which means there is a limited English language usage outside academic circles, with some exceptions of course. Therefore, it would be interesting to see how and when the EFL speech acts are utilized in a strictly Jordanian Arabic environment.

2.7.3 The usage of English speech acts in Jordan

Jordanian EFL/ESL users are still among the understudied populations. In general, there is agreement that ILP research in Arabic is still immature (Al-Issa, 1998; Bataineh, 2004; Jarbou, 2002). With the exception of one ILP research (Al-1998 Issa's refusal study), the bulk of studies including identifiable Arab subjects have been done from a cross-cultural viewpoint. In terms of language use, it has been discovered that detecting cross-cultural disparities in language expression and socio-pragmatic norms of communicative acts can aid in the reduction of cross-cultural communication issues (Meier, 2010). Which explains the less apparent communicative breakdowns produced by more aware and knowledgeable speakers of the target language socio pragmatic norms. The body of literature asserting the former claims is immense, and even though we know very little about Jordanian EFL learners' pragmatic abilities which obviously contradicts pragmatics' significant position in communicative language testing, this adds the cherry on top reason to an already scarce yet interesting study concerning EFL speech acts of Multilingual Jordanians.

Numerous research has noted this issue and confirmed that Jordanians are unable to effectively communicate in the target language because they lack the requisite pragmatic ability (Al-

Khresheh, 2010; Al-Momani, 2009; Bataineh & Aljamal, 2014). Research on speech acts in the setting of Jordan has shown that even JL2Ss with high English proficiency lack pragmatic ability (Al-Momani, 2009; Al-Shboul, et al., 2012; Rababah, 2002). These claims run in parallel with the domain specific thesis, as Jordanian learners still lack a pragmatic competence in the target language for a number of reasons one of which could be due to a limited Fl usage.

Tahaineh and Daana (2013) Investigated the two most relevant social psychological variables: Jordanian EFL female undergraduates' motivation orientations (instrumental & integrative) and attitudes toward learning the target language and its community. The Attitude/ Motivation Test Battery was used to survey 184 students majoring in English language and literature at Al Balqa' Applied University-Princess Alia University College-Amman, Jordan. (1) Interest in Foreign Languages (2) Parental Encouragement (3) Motivational Intensity (4) Degree of Integrativeness (5) Degree of Instrumentality (6) Attitudes toward Learning English (7) Attitudes toward English-speaking People (8) Desire to Learn English were the eight domains used to achieve the study's grand goal. The data revealed that the individuals preferred instrumental motives for learning English, such as utilitarian and academic ones.

Ariff and Sidek (2018) examined the impact of social power, as a social hierarchy, on perception of speech act of apology by 40 Jordanian second language speakers (JL2Ss) compared to 40 Jordanian non-English speakers (JNESs) and 40 English native speakers (ENSs). The Discourse Completion Test (DCT) and Scaled Response Questionnaire (SRQ) were used to collect data from the three groups of participants. For data analysis, one way ANOVA and post hoc pair comparison statistical tests were used. Jordanian Arabic and British English cultures have similarities and contrasts. Social power was shown to have a substantially greater influence on Jordanian participants' perceptions than ENSs. Furthermore, substantial mean differences in perception of the four context-internal factors were detected across the three groups. Furthermore, the data revealed that, whereas JL2Ss are fluent in English, they still lack the necessary sociopragmatic competence, resulting in negative sociopragmatic transfer.

2.8. Chapter Summary

Pragmatic ability can be described as a skillet a speaker has that he/she uses to attain a communicative intent. Therefore, pragmatic ability calls for basic understanding of socially acceptable and suitable linguistic behavior to other language users in expressing the speaker's intended meaning. Naturally, pragmatic competence studies were speech act oriented, because

speech acts are interactional in character, thus they explain social action using language. Among all the issues related to the theory of language use, speech acts have probably attracted the most interest. The ability to communicate pragmatically, including the understanding of how speech acts are successfully executed, is known as pragmatic competence. Therefore, there is a significant overlap between the ability to conduct speech acts and pragmatic competence.

2.8.1. The relation between multilingualism and pragmatic ability

Literature on multilingual pragmatics suggests a positive relation between multilingualism and enhanced pragmatic ability on all fronts. Taguchi (2019) explains that multilingual speakers develop complex techniques for managing communicative actions like requests and refusals, adjusting their language use to other cultures' social expectations. This capacity becomes especially important in interactions that involve face-threatening acts, where appropriate mitigation strategies are crucial.

Moreover, Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) found that multilingual speakers often excel in these areas by transferring and adapting pragmatic strategies from one language to another, demonstrating their capacity to modify their communication styles to suit different social requirements and interactional demands. Martin-Laguna (2020) mentions that multilingualism not only broadens linguistic capability but also fosters cultural empathy. This dual improvement enables speakers to handle complex communicative scenarios with greater ease. In fact, Safont jorda (2005) adds that trilingual speakers exhibit heightened adaptability due to their exposure to multiple linguistic systems and varying social norms.

2.8.2. Multilingual proficiency and pragmatic ability

The bidirectional nature of the relationship between multilingualism and pragmatic ability is well-documented in the literature. Jessner (2008) discusses how multilingual proficiency enhances pragmatic awareness by equipping individuals with the cognitive and metalinguistic tools necessary to navigate diverse linguistic and cultural contexts. At the same time, pragmatic awareness facilitates more effective multilingual communication by enabling individuals to adapt their language use to the sociocultural norms of different languages.

This dynamic is further supported by Dewaele (2010), who provides empirical evidence that multilinguals with higher proficiency levels demonstrate greater pragmatic sensitivity. This heightened sensitivity not only improves their ability to use language appropriately in various contexts but also reinforces their overall multilingual competence.

However, the relationship between proficiency and pragmatic ability is not universally consistent. While some studies highlight a strong correlation, others have found no significant relationship. For example, Ahmed and Hasan (2020) reported that multilingual learners' proficiency levels did not significantly predict their pragmatic competence, suggesting that factors other than linguistic knowledge, such as cultural exposure or individual differences, may play a more critical role.

Similarly, Farashaiyan and Hua (2012) found no significant relationship between language proficiency and pragmatic awareness in their study of multilingual learners, emphasizing that pragmatic competence may develop independently of linguistic proficiency. Tabatabaei and Farnia (2015) also reported no significant correlation between proficiency and pragmatic ability, arguing that pragmatic competence requires explicit instruction and intercultural experience rather than relying solely on linguistic knowledge.

These contrasting findings suggest that the relationship between proficiency and pragmatic ability is complex and context dependent. While higher proficiency may provide a foundation for pragmatic competence, it is not a guarantee, as pragmatic awareness also depends on factors such as cultural immersion, metapragmatic instruction, and individual learning strategies (Kasper & Rose, 2002). For instance, even highly proficient multilinguals may struggle with pragmatic competence if they lack sufficient exposure to the cultural norms of the target language (House, 2006).

2.9. Motivation for the study

2.9.1. There Are Few Studies on Bilingual Arabic/English Pragmatics

Research on bilingual Arabic/English pragmatics remains limited, particularly when compared to studies on other language pairs. There has been some progress in recent years, Numerous studies for instance highlighted the challenges faced by Arabic speakers in effectively communicating refusals in English. This struggle is often attributed to pragmatic incompetence and the sociocultural transfer from their native language. Some of these studies include Yemeni learners of English (AlEryani, 2007), Americans, Arabs, and Japanese (Al-Kahtani, 2005), Jordanians (Al-Issa, 2003), and between Jordanian Arabic and American English (Al-Shboul & Huwari, 2016).

Several studies also raised the issue of EFL request speech acts in the Arab context. Al-Gahtani and Roever (2012) investigated request strategies among Arabic learners of English, Abidi (2022) on Moroccan EFL learners, Request-Making Pragmatics in saudi EFL Learners

(Altameemy et al., 2024) and while such studies addressed the general issue of EFL speech acts in the Arab context, a gap still exists in research of multilingual nature in the Arab world.

2.9.2. There Are Fewer Studies That Investigate Bilingual Arabic/English Speakers in Different Multilingual Opportunity Contexts

Even fewer studies have investigated how multilingual opportunity contexts such as living in a multilingual society, studying in a multilingual educational environment, or working in a multilingual workplace shape the pragmatic competence of Arabic/English bilinguals. Thus, the role of these contexts in shaping the pragmatic abilities of Arabic/English bilinguals remains largely unexplored.

For instance, Al Masaeed (2020) examined the pragmatic competence of Arabic learners of English in a study-abroad context, finding that exposure to English in a multilingual environment improved their ability to use appropriate pragmatic strategies. However, this study did not explore how different multilingual opportunity contexts, such as educational or professional settings, influence pragmatic development. Similarly, Al-Zahrani and Al-Bargi (2017) investigated the pragmatic awareness of Saudi Arabian students in a bilingual education program, highlighting the role of classroom instruction in developing pragmatic competence. While their study provides useful insights, it does not address the broader range of multilingual contexts or their impact on pragmatic behavior.

In the Jordanian context, pragmatics remains an understudied area. Particularly, research of multilingual nature. This gap in the literature is due to the largely focused pragmatic research on monolingual or bilingual speakers without considering the influence of multilingualism or the specific challenges of speech act realization in a third language. To the researcher’s knowledge, this study is the first to investigate the pragmatic abilities of Jordanian Bilingual and trilingual speakers living in different countries in their L2 (English). Moreover, the study is unique as it profiles the participants on different multilingual and multicultural fronts, targeting the proficiency levels in their languages, Language use practices, their attitudes on multilingualism and their multicultural traits using the MPQ test and their effect of said pragmatic ability.

To address this gap, the present study is guided by the following aims: first, to explore and compare the organizational pragmatic production for requests and refusals among bilinguals and trilinguals; second, to investigate the transfer of pragmatic skills across different speech acts; third, to quantify the impact of external, individual difference factors on pragmatic production; and fourth, to establish a clear contrast between the two groups' overall pragmatic abilities.

These aims are operationalized through the following research questions and hypotheses, which are designed to move beyond a simple description of differences and toward a holistic understanding of how multilingualism shapes pragmatic competence.

2.9.3 Research questions

Building on the literature review, this study treats pragmatic competence as the ability to plan and realize context-appropriate speech acts by drawing on (i) discourse/textual organization, (ii) pragmalinguistic resources, and (iii) sociopragmatic/strategic choices. To align measurement with theory, we operationalize pragmatic competence through three observable categories in L2 requests and refusals:(1) Text structure (e.g., overall length, expansion/elaboration, openings/closings; (2) Linguistic features (e.g., directness level, internal modification, syntactic and lexical mitigation; and (3) Discursive strategies (e.g., politeness markers, address terms, supportive/justification moves, refusal sequences. These categories function as indicators of the broader construct of pragmatic competence and are examined within and across acts (requests ↔ refusals), groups (bilinguals ↔ trilinguals), and in relation to external learner factors.

RQ1: (Within speech act associations): Within each group (bilinguals/trilinguals), which pragmatic variables in (i) text structure, (ii) linguistic features, and (iii) discursive strategies co-vary for the speech act of: (a) requests and (b) refusals?

RQ2: (Alignment across speech acts): Within each group (bilinguals/trilinguals), to what extent do an individual's request indicators correlate with their refusal indicators? and does alignment differ by category (text structure vs linguistic features vs discursive strategies)?

RQ3: (External predictors affecting the pragmatic performance): To what extent and in what direction do external factors (i.e., language proficiency, language attitudes, Multicultural Personality traits, Can-Do skills, and language use patterns) predict pragmatic production features in requests and refusals?

RQ4: (Group difference): How do bilinguals and trilinguals differ in their pragmatic production of requests and refusals across indicators of text structure, linguistic features, and discursive strategies?

2.9.4. Hypotheses of the study

Hypothesis 1: (within speech act coherence): In bilinguals, variables such as text structure and discursive strategies will display stronger internal correlations in requests than in refusals. In trilinguals, variables within both requests and refusals will exhibit more consistent and stronger interrelationships than in bilinguals, with greater coherence in refusals due to higher mitigation demands.

Hypothesis 2: (across speech act alignment requests ↔ refusals): Text structure indicators (e.g., length, elaboration) will show little or no cross speech act correlation, whereas discursive strategies (e.g., politeness markers, address terms, justification/support moves) will correlate positively across requests and refusals in both groups.

Hypothesis 3: (Predictors contributing to use of pragmatic indicators): Language use patterns and Multicultural Personality traits (MPQ) will serve as the strongest external predictors of pragmatic production, shaping the structural and strategic realization of requests and refusals.

Hypothesis 4: (Group differences): Trilinguals, on average, will outperform bilinguals in L2 speech-act production (requests/refusals), showing broader strategy repertoires, higher and more context-appropriate mitigation, and more target-like text structuring.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Description and justification of the research design

This study employed a quantitative, non-experimental cross-sectional survey design to examine the L2 pragmatic ability of two distinct groups of multilingual Jordanian adults. A bilingual group living in Jordan, and a trilingual group living in Hungary. The design is comparative in nature, this between-subjects design was chosen because participants naturally belonged to the same language-background, but with an additional language for the trilingual population.

The primary data collection instrument was an extensive online questionnaire administered via Google Forms. The survey was distributed remotely, enabling participants in both Jordan and Hungary to participate conveniently using their personal devices. It encompassed multiple sections designed to gather information on various dimensions of the participants' experience, including their linguistic background and usage patterns, attitudes toward mono- and multilingualism, self-rated language proficiencies, multicultural personality traits, and pragmatic language skills. Data collection was carried out in two waves: an initial wave from March to September 2022, and a second wave from July to September 2024. This phased approach provided sufficient time to recruit the required number of participants in both groups, especially for the relatively hard-to-reach trilingual group and ultimately yielded a total sample of (N= 52) valid responses (26 participants in each subgroup).

This design was justified for several reasons. First, a survey-based method was ideal given the exploration objectives and the need to gather data on multiple variables (language background, attitudes, self-rated proficiencies, personality traits, and pragmatic skills) from a relatively specific population. The questionnaire allowed efficient, standardized data collection from participants dispersed across two countries. It enabled the researcher to reach the targeted multilingual cohorts remotely and to apply identical measures to both groups, thereby ensuring comparability of results.

Second, the design followed a well-established practice in interlanguage pragmatics that proved to achieve the aims of our study. The CCSARP tradition (Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989) uses written DCTs to elicit requests and refusals under controlled scenarios for cross-group comparison, providing exactly the kind of standardized method this study requires. Closer to our context, Stavans & Webman Shafran (2018) employed a DCT-based comparative protocol with multilingual participants and quantitative coding of core acts, supportive moves, and modifiers

showing that integrating a background questionnaire with elicited production can relate participant profiles to speech-act performance as in our design.

Third, the study design was convenient at the time of the initial planning as it was during the COVID period with limited resources and chances to actually make leg work or to follow a rather experimental design. Also, cost-effective and time-efficient, which was practical for a doctoral study with limited resources and a tight timeline.

3.2. Sampling and participants

The total sample consisted of 52 participants, divided equally into two groups: 26 bilingual participants residing in Jordan and 26 trilingual participants residing in Hungary.

For the bilingual group, there were 13 males and 13 females. The age distribution showed that 7 participants were aged 18-24 years, 13 were aged 25-32 years, 5 were aged 33-40 years, and 1 participant was over 41 years old. All bilingual participants were born in Jordan and currently reside there. In terms of education, 17 participants hold a BA degree, 5 hold an MA degree, and 4 are PhD holders. All participants in this group identified Arabic as their first language (L1).

For the trilingual group, 13 were males and 13 were females. The majority of participants (22) were aged between 25-32 years, and 4 were aged 33-40 years. Most trilingual participants were born in Jordan (22), while only (4) were born elsewhere. All trilingual participants resided in Hungary at the time of the study. In terms of educational background, none of the trilingual participants had a BA degree; 14 hold an MA, and 12 hold a PhD. Similar to the bilingual group, all participants in the trilingual group identified Arabic as their first language. See Table (2).

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of the participant groups (counts and percentages).

Participants	Subcategory	Bilinguals_(N)	Bilinguals_%	Trilinguals_(N)	Trilinguals_%
Gender	Males	13	50	13	50
	Females	13	50	13	50
Age	18–24	7	26.9	0	0
	25–32	13	50	22	84.6
	33–40	5	19.3	4	15.4
	41+	1	3.8	0	0
Place of Birth	Jordan	26	100	22	84.6
	Elsewhere	0	0	4	15.4
Education	BA	17	65.4	0	0
	MA	5	19.2	14	53.8
	PhD	4	15.4	12	46.2
L1	Arabic	25	96.2	26	100
	English	1	3.8	0	0

Note. N = 52 (26 bilinguals, 26 trilinguals).

This study employed a combination of purposive and snowball sampling techniques to recruit participants who met specific linguistic and contextual criteria. The purposive element involved the deliberate selection of participants based on their multilingual background and current place of residence, age, and gender which were central to the aims of this study.

First, the study targeted Arabic-English bilingual participant's from within the researcher's own social demographic. Extended family members, acquaintances and friends. More bilingual participants followed through associates referrals on social media platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp groups. This participant group resided in Jordan at the time of recruitment, have acquired English since an early age but reported only circumstantial use of the language whether in social, academic or formal contexts as Arabic is the most dominant language.

Trilingual participants, by contrast, were recruited from Hungary, where they reported regular use of Arabic, English, and Hungarian across multiple domains. Snowball sampling was used in tandem to locate additional eligible participants, which proved more challenging to access due to the specificity of the population. Most of these participants were students who had traveled from Jordan to pursue higher education programs in Hungary, mostly MA and PhD students who had acquired Hungarian as a third language during their residency in the country.

Initial participants were encouraged to refer others with similar linguistic backgrounds and residency profiles. To ensure that trilingual participants met the intended selection criteria, only individuals who self-reported a good command of the Hungarian language and had lived in Hungary for a minimum of two years at the time of recruitment were included. This criterion helped guarantee that participants had sufficient immersion and exposure to Hungarian language and society, and authentic engagement with three distinct linguistic and cultural systems, thus achieving the variability and distinction between the two multilingual participant groups intended in testing their pragmatic competence. The viability of the trilingual participants selection was later on assured when they undertook the proficiency, language use and MPQ tests.

Jordanian bilingual participants were relatively easy to recruit, in contrast to the trilingual group. The relatively modest sample size reflects the specificity and difficulty of accessing such a multilingual population. However, this was balanced by the multivariate nature and analytical depth of the research design, which first presented a holistic profile for each participant in terms of multilingual abilities, use, proficiency and multicultural traits, followed by a detailed analysis

of each participant's pragmatic response on an item-by-item basis. As a result, the dataset offered a rich foundation for examining multilingual pragmatic competence. Although no power analysis was conducted, similar studies in multilingual pragmatics, such as Stavans and Webman (2018), were found to have effectively used comparable sample sizes to investigate requests and refusals, highlighting that the essential factor is not just the number of data points, but the careful and thorough analysis applied to each one.

3.3. Research instruments

This study utilized an online questionnaire comprising: a multilingual background profile, the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ), and written discourse-completion tasks eliciting English requests and refusals. The next subsections describes and details each section of the tool.

Multilingual Background Questionnaire

To contextualize participants' linguistic profiles, the study began with a multilingual background questionnaire adopted from Stavans (2020) covering self-assessments of language proficiency, language use, language attitudes, and self-reported abilities ("Can-Do" statements). This instrument was utilized to see if differences in pragmatic performance are predicted by the participant's language background.

This section first assessed the participants' proficiency in each language they speak (e.g. Arabic, English, plus Hungarian) on a 4-point scale from "Extremely poor" to "Native-like," which was converted into a percentage score. They also reported how frequently they use each language with different interlocutors of intimate relationships such as (family, friends etc.) or with people of formal relationships (teachers, strangers etc.) and for various purposes (sustainability, entertainment, work).

The responses were coded on a numeric scale (1 = only L1, up to 4 = only L2/L3) and converted to percentages, indicating the degree of reliance on L2/L3 versus L1 in each context. By quantifying language use in this way, the study obtained a picture of each participant's linguistic environment. For example, a high L2/L3 use percentage in formal settings suggests the participant predominantly operates in their additional language at work or school. Such background data are crucial for interpreting our results: they allow us to control background differences like language exposure and proficiency, which can affect pragmatic performance. In line with recommendations from multilingual pragmatics research, documenting these variables

helps ensure that any pragmatic differences observed (e.g. between bilingual and trilingual speakers) can be attributed to meaningful factors rather than uneven language experience.

Moreover, the questionnaire probed language attitudes (positive or negative opinions on being monolingual, bilingual, or trilingual) using a series of Likert-scale statements. These attitudinal measures (e.g. agreeing that "Speaking two languages is not difficult") were averaged into pro- and con-multilingual attitude scores for each participant. Attitudes data were hoped to create a standpoint into participants' mindset toward language use, which could subtly influence how they perform speech acts or respond to language situations. Finally, a set of "Can-Do statements" assessed the participants' self-rated performance in various communicative tasks (speaking, understanding, reading/writing) in each language.

In summary, the multilingual background questionnaire was chosen and designed to address the research objectives by providing foundational data on each participant's language experience. This ensures that later analysis of pragmatic skills can be interpreted within the proper context (for instance, checking if a participant's lower English pragmatics score might be due to limited exposure or negative attitudes, or if a more robust reliance on L2/L3 in language use practices predicts a more competent speech production in L2).

Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ)

MPQ originally developed by (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000) was selected to assess participants' personal traits related to multicultural effectiveness. The MPQ is a well-established instrument that measures five multicultural traits critically in cross-cultural contexts: Cultural Empathy, Open-Mindedness, Social Initiative, Emotional Stability, and Flexibility. Each of these traits reflect an aspect of how individuals interact with different cultures for example, cultural empathy gauges the ability to identify with people from other cultures, and open-mindedness assesses openness to new cultural norms. These qualities are directly relevant to the research objectives, which involve communication across languages and cultures.

The choice of the MPQ over other possible instruments was carefully considered. It has been widely used in research on intercultural communication and has demonstrated predictive validity for outcomes in multicultural settings. In other words, individuals' MPQ scores have been shown to correlate with how well they adjust and communicate in foreign environments. This made it an ideal tool for our study, which posits that personality factors might relate to pragmatic performance in a non-native language. Moreover, the demographic of our research population

living in two different cultures, dictated that we assess sociocultural variables of our participant beyond their linguistic system, and by using the MPQ, we aimed to obtain a reliable profile of each participant's intercultural disposition, which can then be associated with their pragmatic performance.

In implementation, participants rated themselves on a five-point Likert scale for each of the MPQ's statements (e.g. ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" with statements like "I enjoy social activities in other cultures"). Following the instrument's standard procedure, we scored each of the five dimensions by averaging the relevant items, then converted these scores into percentages for ease of interpretation. The output is a multicultural personality profile for each participant, indicating (in percentage terms) how high they scored in each trait. For example, a participant might have 80% in Open-Mindedness and 60% in Emotional Stability, suggesting they are incredibly open to new cultures but only moderately calm in the face of cultural stress. These profiles are later used to examine whether participants with higher cultural empathy also tend to use more polite refusal strategies?

Discourse Completion Task (DCT) for Pragmatic Elicitation

To gather data on pragmatic language use, the study employed a Discourse Completion Task (DCT) consisting of cross-cultural speech act realization Project (CCSARP) for requests (Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989) and the refusal DCT format of Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990). A DCT is a written instrument where participants are presented with situational prompts and asked to respond as if they were in that situation.

This method was chosen as the primary means of eliciting speech acts (specifically requests and refusals) in English, the target language. The decision to use a DCT was guided by both practical and theoretical considerations. Practically, a DCT offers a controlled and standardized way to collect comparable speech samples from all participants: every participant responds to the same scenarios, allowing direct comparison of their pragmatic choices. Theoretically, DCTs are a well-established method in interlanguage pragmatics research, known for effectively capturing how language learners perform certain speech acts under specified conditions.

We built on this framework to create a set of 18 scenarios (9 request prompts and 9 refusal prompts) that are pragmatically appropriate for our context. Each scenario was crafted to reflect everyday interactions relevant to the participants (e.g., making a request to a professor, refusing an invitation from a friend), mirroring realistic social settings in Jordan or similar environments.

We ensured that across the prompts, there was a balance of power relations: for instance, some request situations had the participant asking a favor from someone of higher status (like a boss), some from an equal (a classmate), and some from a lower status person (perhaps a younger sibling), and similarly for refusals. This design allowed us to analyze how participants modulated their speech acts on the textual, lexical and pragmatic levels.

3.4. Data Coding and Analysis

Following the collection of the data, the subsequent phase involved coding and analyzing the responses. This section explains the manner in which the quantitative data from the questionnaires were handled and how the qualitative responses for speech acts were examined, focusing on maintaining reliability and pertinence to the goals of the research. The general analytical strategy was mixed-methods: responses to the questionnaire (frequencies of language use, ratings of attitudes, MPQ scores) were quantified and examined statistically, whereas the responses from the DCT were coded qualitatively for features related to linguistics and pragmatics.

For the background questionnaire sections (language proficiency, use, attitudes, and Can-Do abilities), the coding was mostly straightforward and numerical. Self-rated language proficiencies were converted into percentage scores. Language use figures were coded in two subdomains; use with interlocutors and use for purposes. For interlocutors, participants reported which language(s) they "often use" in two settings, intimate and formal. Each item offered four mutually exclusive options that were coded as: 1 = only L1 (Arabic), 2 = only L2/L3, 3 = L1 + L2/3 (bilingual use), 4 = L2 + L3 (trilingual use). For bilingual participants the "L2 + L3" option was structurally inapplicable and coded as 0.

Subsequently, we combined the responses for each participant to calculate proportion scores (ranging from 0 to 100%) for every category, producing measures such as the percentage of L1 use in intimate settings, the percentage of L2/L3 use in formal settings, the percentage of bilingual use in formal settings, the percentage of trilingual use in intimate settings, and so forth. These percentage scores enabled straightforward comparisons among participants; for example, one can reasonably infer the proportion of language use when comparing Participant A, who uses L2 80% of the time in formal situations, with Participant B, who uses only L1 or both L2/L3 40% of the time.

Attitudes toward language were gauged using a Likert-scale questionnaire (1 meaning absolutely disagree to 5 meaning absolutely agree) in response to statements designed to reflect favorable (pro) or unfavorable (con) attitudes regarding L1, monolingualism, bilingualism, and trilingualism. As mentioned earlier, the scores from the Likert scale were converted into percentages. For instance, a score of 1 (absolutely disagree) was converted to a figure of 20%, and a score of 5 (absolutely agree) was converted to a score of 100%; these percentages were then averaged for each participant. A higher average percentage in a category like "pro-trilingualism," for example, signified that a participant held a more positive view of being trilingual.

Can-Do ability ratings were averaged for each skill domain (speaking, listening, writing/reading) per language. This yielded a profile such as “English: Speaking 70%, Understanding 60%, Writing 50%” which indicates the participant’s self-perceived language skill distribution. These quantitative codings were turned into an overall language ability figure then analyzed statistically (using descriptive statistics and, where appropriate, inferential tests) to characterize the sample and check for any correlations with pragmatic performance.

Finally, the short form of the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ), consisting of 40 items, was administered using a 1–5 Likert scale. It produced scores for the "big five" subscales: Cultural Empathy, Open-Mindedness, Social Initiative, Emotional Stability, and Flexibility (with 8 items for each). Similar to the other data collection instruments, the scores were transformed into percentages for each MPQ scale and then averaged to yield a single figure for each participant.

In analyzing the speech act responses from the DCT, we categorized the data along three broad dimensions namely: (text structure, textual linguistics, and discursive strategies) each encompassing several subcategories. Below, we explain each category and its subcomponents in turn, illustrating with examples and drawing on prior pragmatic research for context.

1. Text Structure*:* this category examines how each response is structurally organized, including the length and complexity of sentences, the presence of specific structural components (core acts and supporting moves), the grammatical form of the clauses, and the connectors linking ideas.

- **Sentence Length and Complexity:** We measured sentence length by counting the number of clauses in each response, as well as the average number of words per clause (density). A simple sentence contains one independent clause, whereas complex sentences

include one or more subordinate clauses, and compound sentences join multiple independent clauses. For example, *"give my watch back."* is a simple one-clause request, while *"If you're not too busy, could you help me?"* is a complex sentence with a conditional subordinate clause that softens the request.

Using subordinate conjunctions like "if" or "because" and coordinators like "but" or "and" links ideas. For instance, *"I know you're very busy, but could you help me clean the kitchen?"* is a compound sentence combining an acknowledgment of the hearer's situation with the request.

- **Textual Components** *(Core, Elaboration, Wrap):* Each response was segmented into three functional parts: elaboration, the core speech act (head act), and an optional wrap. The **core** is the head act, the essential request or refusal that directly expresses the speaker's intent. For a request, the core might be a clear ask (e.g., *"Please lend me your notes."*); for a refusal, it would be the actual declining statement (e.g., *"I'm sorry, I can't attend."*).

  Surrounding this head act, speakers often include supporting moves. **Elaboration** refers to any pre-request or pre-refusal moves that set the stage for the core act. For example, *"I know you're really busy, but…"* in a request serves as an elaboration that acknowledges the imposition and eases into the ask.

  After the core, a **wrap** (post-request or post-refusal move) may follow, reinforcing or softening the act that just occurred. In requests, the wrap might include appreciation, urgency, or a promise of reciprocation: *"...I would really appreciate it."* adds an appreciative tone after the request, while *"I'll owe you one!"* offers an incentive.

- **Clause Type (Imperative, Declarative, Interrogative):** We classified each core clause by its grammatical mood, since form often corresponds to directness in speech acts. An **imperative** (base verb form) issues a direct command or request (e.g., *"Give me my watch back."*). This form is the most transparent and forceful way to request, leaving little room for ambiguity.

  A **declarative** clause makes a statement which, in context, can function as a request or refusal. For example, *"I would like you to clean your room."* is grammatically a statement of desire, but pragmatically it's understood as a request.

Finally, an **interrogative** clause poses the request as a question (e.g., *"Could you help me with my homework?"* or *"Would you mind giving the student more lab hours?"*). Interrogatives are a hallmark of conventionally indirect requests.

2. Text Linguistics (Language Use)

This category focuses on the linguistic choices within the utterances: how participants opened their utterance (choice of address/greeting), the types of verbs used in making the request or refusal, and the tense/aspect used to frame the speech act. These elements reflect the stylistic and pragmatic tone of the response at the lexical level.

- **Lexical Opening (Address Forms and Greetings):** We noted how each response began, as openings can set the politeness tone and clarify the social relationship. Some responses start with a greeting (what Blum-Kulka et al.) call an "alerter", such as *"Hey,"*, *"Excuse me,"*, or *"Dear Professor,"*.

  We categorized openings into subtypes: using the interlocutor's name (*"Sarah, could you help me?"*), a title or role (*"Doctor, I need to reschedule my appointment."*), an informal title or nickname (*"Boss, can I have a day off?"*), or even terms of endearment in familiar relationships (*"Sweetie, could you lend me your phone?"*)

- **Verb Choice (Main vs. Modal vs. Stance Verbs):** We classified the main verbs of each clause into semantic types, as these reveal the stance and force of the utterance. One distinction was between main action verbs and modal verbs.

  Main verbs directly describe the action or state in question (e.g., *"I want you to come to the meeting," "You must finish the report."*). These often imply a strong intent or necessity.

  Modal verbs like *can, could, will, would, should* are commonly used to modify requests and offers. Modal auxiliaries express potentiality or permission and thus soften the demand: *"Could you help me with this problem?"*

  Internal state verbs (ISVs) verbs that describe cognitive, emotional, or volitional states when they were used in the utterance. These are typically in clauses that precede or embed the request/refusal and signal the speaker's attitude.

  For example, cognitive verbs like *think, know, wonder* can introduce a request indirectly: *"I wonder if you could give me a bit of help"*.

Emotional stance verbs like *hope, love* can also soften the act: *"I hope you can help me with this"*

Volitional verbs (want, need, would like) explicitly state the speaker's wants. *"I would like you to consider my application again."*

Tense and Mood (Present vs. Past vs. Future): We also observed the verb tense and mood used to deliver the request or refusal, because subtle shifts in tense can serve politeness functions.

In English, it's common to use past or conditional forms to make a request sound more distant and tactful. For example, saying *"I was hoping you could help me for a minute"* instead of *"I hope you can help me"* adds a layer of tentativeness.

We coded instances of present tense requests (e.g., *"I need you to…", "I can't agree to this"*. Future tense can soften refusals by distancing them in time (*"I can't join you tomorrow, but perhaps another time"*).

3. Discursive Strategies

The third category deals with pragmatic and interpersonal strategies evident in the content and phrasing of the responses. These include the use of explicit politeness markers, the overall directness level of the act, the tone or emotional attitude conveyed, and the relative power dynamic between speaker and hearer as indexed in the language. These strategies are crucial for managing face (Brown & Levinson, 1987) and achieving the speaker's intentions without social friction.

- **Politeness Markers:** We identified explicit polite expressions and honorifics in the responses. The most common politeness marker in English requests is the word *"please"*, which was coded whenever it appeared. Politeness markers also include phrases like *"kindly"*, *"if you don't mind"*, *"excuse me"* (when used to preface a request), and apologetic or appreciative inserts such as *"sorry"* or *"thank you"* in certain contexts (*"Please, could you pass the salt?"* or *"I'm sorry, but could I ask you to move your car?"*).
- **Directness Level**: Each response was evaluated for how directly the intended action was conveyed, ranging from very direct strategies to highly indirect ones. This overlaps partly with the clause types mentioned in Text Structure. In our coding, we identified the

strategy each response primarily employed. If the core clause was imperative or explicit, we labeled it direct if phrased as a question or polite statement, conventionally indirect.

- **Tone (Positive, Negative, Neutral):** Beyond the semantic content, we assessed the overall emotional tone or attitude conveyed in the response.

  Positive tone refers to language that is friendly, appreciative, or optimistic in spirit. For example, a positive-toned request might say, *"I'd really appreciate your help!"* – using words like *appreciate* imparts enthusiasm or gratitude

  Negative tone, on the other hand, includes language that is critical, irritated, or overly blunt. A request like *"give my watch back now or else."* carries a negative, scolding tone. A refusal such as *"No, that's a terrible idea."* is delivered with negative judgment.

  Neutral tone is matter-of-fact, without strong positive or negative wording – e.g., *"Can you close the door?"* said plainly, or *"Sorry, I can't attend."* without additional affect. Tone is an important pragmatic feature because it affects how the message is received beyond the literal words. Even an indirect request can sound rude if delivered in a harsh tone, and a direct request can be made more polite with a warm tone.

- **Power Dynamics (Higher, Equal, Lower Power):** Lastly, we considered the relative power status between speaker and hearer as reflected in the language choices. Although all our scenarios were hypothetical with assigned roles, participants' responses often reveal their orientation to power differences through levels of formality, directness, and politeness. We coded whether the situation (and the response) implied the speaker had **more power**, **less power**, or **equal power** compared to the interlocutor, and how that was manifested in the speech act.

  For example, one of the 9 refusal pragmatic prompts was "Your boss has two cinema tickets, and he/she invites you to go watch a movie together, but you have important things to do, and you cannot go. What would you say to him/her to refuse the invitation?" In contrast, a request scenario from the questionnaire suggested a high-power speaker (like a boss addressing an employee) as the following: "You are the head chef at a hotel restaurant, you notice that one of your sous-chefs (Kareem)is always running late to work, you want to ask him to be on time. What would you say to him?"

Quantifying the Coded Features

The coding scheme for the DCT responses was adopted from Stavans and Shafran (2018). To systematically assess participants' pragmatic strategies across requests and refusals, we conducted a quantitative analysis of the linguistic and discourse features identified during the coding process. After all participant responses were transcribed and classified according to the three analytical dimensions text structure, text linguistics, and discursive strategies, we calculated the proportional frequency of each feature such as the use of simple sentences, modal verbs, or politeness markers by determining what percentage of a participant's total request or refusal clauses each feature represented.

For instance, if a participant produced 11 clauses in total across all request scenarios, and 7 of those clauses were coded as simple sentences, we determined that approximately 63.6% of their request clauses featured simple sentence structures. This calculation was applied consistently across all coded features, with the formula:

Proportion (%) = (Number of feature occurrences / Total number of clauses) × 100.

3.5. Procedures

Participants were recruited with purposive and snowball methods via Email invitations and social media platforms with the online questionnaire in Google Forms. For ethical compliance, an informed consent statement was presented at the beginning of the online questionnaire. This introduction explained the researcher's identity (a doctoral candidate in the Multilingualism Doctoral School at the University of Pannonia, Hungary) and the purpose of the study, which was to explore the special characteristics of Arabic–English multilinguals.

This assured participants that their participation was anonymous and confidential, and emphasized that there were no right or wrong answers, only natural, personal responses were sought. Participants indicated their consent by choosing to proceed with the questionnaire, and they were provided with the researcher's contact information (email) in case they had any questions or concerns. Additionally, the questionnaire was developed in close collaboration with the research supervisor, who reviewed and approved the instrument.

The first phase of data collection took place from march to September 2022. Recruitment proceeded via targeted emails to university lists and posts on via Facebook, WhatsApp and with brief screening items confirming age, residency, and multilingual status before entry; snowball referrals used the same link and screening. Approved Participants were handed the online

questionnaire form. After consent, the form was administered in a fixed order (background → MPQ → DCT) in English, remotely and unsupervised, on participants' own devices; no time limits were imposed.

After data collection, all responses were archived in the Google forms response sheet and then exported to Microsoft Excel as separate worksheets by module (background profile and mpq, and DCT responses). The DCT export was split into two sheets: requests and refusals**.** Each participant was assigned an aggregated code that included (i) their chronological order of form completion, (ii) multilingualism status (2 = bilingual, 3 = trilingual), and (iii) age band (1 = 18–24; 2 = 25–32; 3 = 33–40; 4 = 41+), with the suffix "req" or "ref" indicating the speech-act file.

Alongside each participant code, columns contained their demographic data, their computed percentages of multilingual background variables and MPQ, finally, the computed percentages for each participant's score in every single variable of the 3 pragmatic response categories.

After preliminary cleaning and coding of the first dataset, several records in the bilingual cohort failed inclusion criteria (e.g., self-reported proficiency or language-use patterns inconsistent with the bilingual definition), and some respondents completed items intended for the trilingual section, which compromised those cases after coding and quantification. These entries were excluded, reducing the bilingual sample.

As a consequence, a second recruitment wave targeting the bilingual demographic was conducted from July to September 2024 to restore eligibility and balance across cohorts, using slightly more reliable data elicitation tool, but with exactly the same tasks to ensure reliability, the data gathered from the second wave underwent the exact coding schema as the previous data yielding a final N of 52 participant with a complete data set for analysis

The two Excel sheets were then merged with the background/MPQ sheet to form a single master database which contained the complete data by both groups in both speech act responses across all data categories. Statistical analyses were then run in SPSS by a professional analyst, using correlations and multiple regression to examine associations and group differences at both the multilingual-profile and speech-act levels. Outputs were exported back to Excel and organized into structured views to enable group-level and individual-level inspection; the resulting tables and figures were then extracted for the Results chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

This chapter presents a comprehensive statistical analysis of the research results as follows: First, Pearson correlation analyses were employed to assess if any significant correlations occurred within pragmatic variables in the DCT responses for each speech act and group separately. Following this, the analysis investigated the cross-speech-act correlations, examining the relationship between pragmatic indicators in requests and their corresponding indicators in refusals.

Findings suggest that while request-refusal correlations were minimal in bilingual responses, they were strongly present in trilingual responses, especially between textual variables that structure the responses. Subsequently, the results were addressed through univariable linear regression analyses to determine the predictive influence of background factors such as language proficiency, use, attitudes, and multicultural personality traits on pragmatic production. Results showed that language-use practices emerged as the most robust factor in predicting pragmatic performance.

The influence of proficiency, attitudes, and cultural empathy was substantially weaker and limited to specific lexical or structural choices. Finally, the chapter employed independent-samples t-tests to highlight key differences in pragmatic performance between the bilingual and trilingual groups. The *t*-tests showed that trilinguals used substantially more conventional politeness markers in both requests and refusals, while no reliable group differences emerged for directness or overall response length. Other measures were comparable across groups.

Before presenting these analytical findings, it is essential to outline the demographic distribution of the participants across the two groups. Table 3 summarizes age ranges, gender distribution, and educational attainment for bilinguals and trilinguals, providing the contextual baseline for interpreting subsequent pragmatic results.

Table 3. Distribution of demographics across study groups.

	All	Bilinguals	Trilinguals	
	N=52	n=26	n=26	p-value
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	
Age				<0.01
18-24	7 (13.5)	7 (26.9)	0 (0)	
25-32	35 (67.3)	13 (50)	22 (84.6)	
33-40	9 (17.3)	5 (19.2)	4 (15.4)	
41+	1 (1.9)	1 (3.8)	0 (0)	

Gender				1
Male	26 (50.0)	13 (50.0)	13 (50.0)	
Female	26 (50.0)	13 (50.0)	13 (50.0)	
Education				<0.01
BA	17 (32.7)	17 (65.4)	0 (0)	
MA	19 (36.5)	5 (19.2)	14 (53.8)	
PhD	16 (30.8)	4 (15.4)	12 (46.2)	

Note. N = total sample size; n = subgroup sample size; $p < .01$

Chi-square tests (χ^2) revealed significant differences in age distribution, $\chi^2(3) = 10.64$, $p = .015$, and educational attainment, $\chi^2(2) = 29.83$, $p < .001$, but no significant differences in gender distribution ($p = 1.00$). The trilingual group consisted exclusively of participants aged 25–32 years (84.6%) and 33–40 years (15.4%), whereas the bilingual group showed broader age representation, with 26.9% aged 18–24 years and 3.8% aged 41+ years. Educational attainment also differed sharply: 65.4% of bilinguals held bachelor's degrees, while trilinguals were predominantly graduate-degree holders (53.8% MA, 46.2% PhD). Gender distribution was identical across groups, with males and females equally represented (50% each).

Although demographic distributions were already described in the Methodology chapter, they are revisited here because the statistical comparison between groups is analytically relevant. The χ^2 test exhibits the extent to which our participant groups differed significantly in demographic characteristics before interpreting group differences in pragmatic performance. Having established these baseline group differences, the chapter now turns to the core empirical analyses.

The statistical findings for the study are analyzed across the three domains: text structure (e.g., sentence length, discourse components, and syntactic features), linguistic features (e.g., lexical choices, verb types, and tense), and discursive strategies (e.g., politeness, directness, tone, and power dynamics).

4.1. Profile of requests and refusal speech acts in L2 by bilinguals and trilinguals

This section profiles the performance of our participant groups in their L2 speech act production. To address Research Question 1, which examines the relationships within text structure, linguistic, and discursive strategy variables, Pearson correlation analyses were conducted for each group's request and refusal responses. Consequently, the correlations consisting of a large number of variables within each analytical dimension rendered rich output of correlation matrices. To facilitate the reading of the results and maintain a clear narrative, in this section only

the statistically significant results have been compiled into summary tables, while the full correlation matrix of the outputs is provided in the Appendix (Tables 4-7).

Bilinguals

Requests

In this subsection, the results outline how bilingual participants structured and executed their L2 request speech acts. The aim is to show which features tend to co-occur and how variables within each analyzed dimension (i.e., textual, linguistic, and discursive) correlate within the bilinguals' production of the request speech act. The summary of the significant correlations is shown in Table 4S.

Table 4S. Significant correlations within BILINGUAL REQUESTS

Category	Variable 1	Variable 2	*r*	*p*
Textual	# Clauses	# Words	0.92**	< .01
	# Clauses	Elaboration	0.77**	< .01
	# Clauses	Core	-0.76**	< .001
	# Words	Elaboration	0.69**	< .01
	# Words	Core	-0.68**	< .01
	Elaboration	+ Imperative Cls	-0.54**	< .01
	Elaboration	+ Declarative Cls	0.48**	< .01
	# Words	+ Declarative Cls	0.49**	< .01
Linguistic	Opening Canons	Proper Names	0.66**	< .01
	Opening Canons	Endearments	0.58**	< .01
	Opening Canons	Volitional Verbs	0.43*	< .05
	Emotional Verbs	Descriptor Adjectives	0.56**	< .01
	Emotional Verbs	Superlative Adjectives	0.62**	< .01
	Informal Titles	Emotional Verbs	0.40*	< .05
	Informal Titles	Past Tense	0.41*	< .05
Discursive	Directness	Negative Tone	0.46*	< .05
	Positive Tone	Negative Tone	-0.41*	< .05
	Positive Tone	Neutral Tone	-0.51**	< .01
	Positive Tone	More Power	0.53**	< .01
	Positive Tone	Equal Power	0.42*	< .05
	Neutral Tone	Less Power	0.39*	< .05

Note*: N=26 *p < .05. **p < .01*

The correlation results of bilinguals' requests suggest that, for the textual dimension, the length of the production in terms of number of clauses correlated positively with the number of words (r = .92, p < .001) and with the elaboration component(r = .77, p < .001), but negatively with the core component (r = –.76, p < .001). The number of words correlated positively with the

elaboration component (r = .69, p < .001) and negatively with the core component (r = –.68, p < .001). The elaboration component correlated negatively with a positive imperative clause type (r = –.54, p = .006) but it positively correlated with a positive declarative clause type (r = .48, p = .014). The number of words also correlated positively with positive declarative clause type (r = .49, p = .012). These associations suggest that bilingual speakers construct requests through elaborated but textually cohesive structures, balancing expansion with focused communicative intent.

For the linguistic dimension, opening canons correlated positively with proper names (r = .66, p < .01), endearment coinages (r = .58, p < .01), and internal state verbs of volition (r = .43, p < .05). Internal state verbs of emotion correlated positively with descriptor adjectives (r = .56, p < .01) and superlative adjectives (r = .62, p < .01). Informal titles correlated positively with internal state verbs (r = .40, p < .05) and mostly in the past tense (r = .41, p < .05). These findings suggest a pattern that reflects the use of socially marked and affective lexical choices, signaling relational awareness and pragmatic sensitivity in request formulation.

In terms of the discursive dimension, directness correlated positively with a negative tone (r = .46, p < .05). Positive tone correlated negatively with negative tone (r = –.41, p < .05) and with neutral tone (r = –.51, p < .01), and positively with more-power perceptions (r = .53, p < .01) and equal-power perceptions (r = .42, p < .05). Neutral tone correlated positively with less-power perceptions (r = .39, p < .05). What can be learned from these results is that the interplay of tone and power variables indicates that bilinguals modulate directness in line with perceived social hierarchy, revealing a developing sensitivity to interpersonal context.

Thus, the profile of bilinguals' requests indicates a structurally elaborated and an interpersonally sensitive performance, where increases in length and elaboration co-occur with personalized linguistic and tone choices reflecting awareness of relative social hierarchy and power. In all, the profile of a bilingual's production of a request in English (L2) is managed through expanded structures and a mitigated tone, reflecting a developing pragmatic control.

Refusals

Parallel to the requests results, this sub section presents the significant correlations of the textual, linguistic components and discursive strategies dimensions used by bilingual participants in their refusal responses. Table 5S presents the main significant relations within and between the variables in the three dimensions.

Table 5S. Significant correlations within BILINGUAL REFUSALS

Category	Variable 1	Variable 2	*r*	*p*
Textual	# Clauses	# Words	0.85**	< .01
	# Clauses	Density	0.46*	< .05
	# Clauses	Wrap	0.65**	< .01
	# Clauses	Core	-0.86**	< .01
	# Words	Density	0.84**	< .01
	# Words	Elaboration	0.46*	< .05
	# Words	Core	-0.63**	< .01
	Density	Elaboration	0.40*	< .05
	Elaboration	Wrap	-0.37*	< .05
	Wrap	Core	-0.66**	< .01
	+Declarative Cls	# Clauses	0.55*	< .05
	+Declarative Cls	Wrap	0.52**	< .01
	+Declarative Cls	Core	-0.43*	< .05
	–Declarative Cls	# Clauses	-0.56**	< .01
	–Declarative Cls	Wrap	-0.48*	< .05
	Simple Sentence	# Clauses	-0.55**	< .01
	Complex Sentence	# Clauses	0.50**	< .01
	Complex Sentence	Wrap	0.48*	< .05
	Compound Sentence	Simple Sentence	-0.49*	< .05
	Deictic Connectors	Compound Sentence	0.54**	< .01
	Deictic Connectors	Simple Sentence	-0.40*	< .05
	Subordinate Connectors	# Clauses	0.46*	< .05
	Subordinate Connectors	# Words	0.64**	< .01
	Subordinate Connectors	Density	0.54**	< .01
	Subordinate Connectors	Complex Sentence	0.59**	< .01
	Subordinate Connectors	Simple Sentence	-0.40*	< .05
	Coordinating Connectors	# Clauses	0.68**	< .01
	Coordinating Connectors	# Words	0.60**	< .01
	Coordinating Connectors	Core	-0.53**	< .01
	Coordinating Connectors	Wrap	0.63**	< .01
	Coordinating Connectors	+Declarative Cls	0.48*	< .05
	Coordinating Connectors	–Declarative Cls	-0.47*	< .05
	Coordinating Connectors	Simple Sentence	-0.76**	< .01
	Coordinating Connectors	Complex Sentence	0.55**	< .01
	Coordinating Connectors	Compound Sentence	0.42*	< .05
Linguistic	Endearments	Proper Names	0.42*	< .05
	Emotional Verbs	Endearments	0.43*	< .05
	Cognitive Verbs	Modal Verbs	0.48*	< .05
	Descriptor Adjectives	Emotional Verbs	0.43*	< .05
	Descriptor Adjectives	Volitional Verbs	0.51**	< .01
	Diminutive Adjectives	Endearments	0.62**	< .01

	Future Tense	Main Verbs	-0.39*	< .05
	Future Tense	Present Tense	-0.74**	< .01
Discursive	Politeness	Directness	0.40*	< .05
	Positive Tone	Negative Tone	-0.68**	< .01
	More Power	Positive Tone	-0.46*	< .05
	Equal Power	More Power	-0.57**	< .01

Note*: N=26 *p < .05. **p < .01*

Results of the bilingual refusals shown in table 5S present a considerable number of correlations in the textual dimension analyzed. In terms of the length pf the productions, the number of clauses correlated positively with the number of words (r = .85, p < .01), the density of the text (r = .46, p < .05), and the wrap component (r = .65, p < .01), and negatively correlated with the core components (r = –.86, p < .01). Number of words also correlated positively with the density of the text (r = .84, p < .001) and the elaboration component (r = .46, p < .05), but it negatively correlated with the core component (r = –.63, p < .01).

Additional associations appeared between elaboration component and density of the text (r = .40, p < .05) and between wrap and core components (r = –.66, p < .01). Declarative clause types were associate with sentence forms, with positive declaratives correlated to number of clause and wrap component measures (r = .55–.52, p < .05–.01) while negative declaratives showed the reverse pattern (r = –.561– –.485, p < .05–.01). Sentence-type variables were also systematically associated whereby simple sentences decreased with number of clauses (r = –.55, p < .01), while complex and compound sentences increased (r = .50–.42, p < .01–.05). In as far as linguistic means of cohesion, deictic and subordinate connectors correlated with complex sentence-type features (r = .545–.598, p < .01).

By contrast, coordinating connectors aligned with many textual measures, particularly number of clauses (r = .68, p < .01) and sentence type (r = –.76, for simple sentence; r =–.55, for complex sentence, p < .01). The dense network of correlations shows that bilinguals rely on multi-layered sentence organization to manage the complexity of refusing to avoid threatening face.

So far as the linguistic dimension is concerned, there was a positive association between endearment terms and proper names (r = .42, p < .05) and between internal state verbs of emotion and both endearment terms (r = .43, p < .05) and descriptive adjectives (r = .43, p < .05). Internal state verbs of cognition correlated with modal verbs (r = .48, p < .05), and internal states of volition were associated with descriptive adjectives (r = .51, p < .01). Diminutive adjectives were

associated with endearment terms ($r = .62$, $p < .01$). Within the verb tense forms, the future tense correlated negatively with the main verb ($r = –.39$, $p < .05$) and with the use of the present tense ($r = –.74$, $p < .01$). These results suggest that the lexical co-occurrence of internal state verbs of emotion and volition with descriptive adjectives suggests a strategic personalization of language that softens the refusal delivery.

The discursive dimension showed that politeness markers correlated with directness expressions ($r = .40$, $p < .05$). Positive and negative tones displayed a strong inverse relationship ($r = –.68$, $p < .01$), while more-power relations were negatively associated with positive tone ($r = –.46$, $p < .05$). Equal-power responses also correlated negatively with more-power expressions ($r = –.57$, $p < .01$). Concomitantly, we learn that the correlations among tone, politeness, and power profile the bilinguals' refusals as framed within a cautious politeness orientation aimed at relational equilibrium.

To sum, the bilingual refusals profile displays a complex, socially cautious, pragmatic performance that is structurally dense with multiple clauses and tone strategies that maintain politeness and manage interpersonal balance.

So far, we have drawn on the significant results of our analysis that aimed at profiling the pragmatic competence in English as an L2 among Jordanians in Jordan while dealing with the speech acts of requests and refusals. However, profiling the bilingual speakers' pragmatic performance in English reveals an orientation toward *elaboration, personalization, and relational balance* across both requests and refusals. In *requests*, bilinguals favored structurally extended utterances marked by elaboration, endearments, and affective lexical choices, indicating an effort to enhance clarity and social warmth; by contrast, in their *refusals*, they exhibited dense multi-clausal constructions and a careful modulation of tone and politeness, suggesting heightened attention to face-management and social sensitivity.

In short, the profile depicts bilinguals as *strategic and interpersonally attuned communicators* who rely on elaborated structures and expressive language to negotiate meaning and mitigate potential imposition. Their pragmatic behavior demonstrates developing control of L2 norms while combining linguistic creativity with politeness strategies to achieve cooperative, socially appropriate interaction.

In tandem with the profile of the bilinguals out objective was to draw also the trilingual pragmatic competence in English cooccurring with Arabic and Hungarian among Jordanians

residing in Hungary. The same analytic procedure was applied to examine correlations among variables in the textual, linguistic, and discursive domains.

Trilinguals

Requests

In this subsection the profile the trilinguals' performance in producing requests in English builds on the specific features within the three domains that show a relationship so as to indicate what characterizes the pragmatic ability of this group. Table 6S is a summary of the significant correlations between these variables and draws from the complete table 6 in the appendix.

Table 6S. Significant correlations within TRILINGUAL REQUESTS

Category	Variable 1	Variable 2	*r*	*p*
Textual	# Clauses	# Words	0.85**	< .01
	# Clauses	Elaboration	0.83**	< .01
	# Clauses	Core	0.87**	< .01
	Elaboration	Core	0.90**	< .01
	Simple Sentence	# Clauses	0.67**	< .01
	Simple Sentence	Core	0.67**	< .01
	Complex Sentence	Core	-0.49*	< .05
	Compound Sentence	Core	-0.67**	< .01
	Subordinate Connectors	+ Declarative Cls	0.42*	< .05
	Coordinating Connectors	Compound Sentence	0.56**	< .01
Linguistic	Title Informal	Proper Names	0.44*	< .05
	Cognitive Verbs	Compulsion Verbs	0.53**	< .01
	Compulsion Verbs	Emotional Verbs	0.40*	< .05
Discursive	Negative Tone	Positive Tone	-0.82**	< .01
	Neutral Tone	Positive Tone	-0.84**	< .01
	More Power	Equal Power	-0.55**	< .01

Note*: N=26 *p < .05. **p < .01*

Table 6S shows that within the textual dimension, trilinguals' production of speech acts of request and the number of clauses correlated positively with the number of words (r = .85, p < .01), the elaboration component (r = .83, p < .01), and the core component (r = .87, p < .01); while the elaboration component was strongly correlated with the core component (r = .90, p < .01). Simple sentence type correlated positively with both number of clauses and core component (r = .67, p < .01), whereas complex and compound sentences were negatively related to core component (r = –.49, p < .05; r = –.67, p < .01). Insofar as cohesion, subordinate connectors correlated positively with positive declarative sentences (r = .42, p < .05), and coordinating

connectors correlated with compound sentences (r = .56, p < .01). These results suggest that trilinguals produce requests that are syntactically streamlined yet semantically rich, favoring efficiency and cohesion over elaboration.

At the linguistic dimension, informal titles correlated with proper names (r = .44, p < .05), internal states of cognition with those of compulsion verbs (r = .53, p < .01), and internal state verbs of compulsion with those of emotion(r = .40, p < .05). The trilinguals' lexical patterns seem to point to functional precision, suggesting an ability to select contextually appropriate forms that align with linguistically economic expressions with communicative clarity.

Within discursive variables, negative and neutral tones were strongly correlated with positive tone (r = –.82 and r = –.84, respectively; p < .01), while "more-power" was negatively correlated with "equal-power" contexts (r = –.55, p < .01). The strong tonal contrasts seem to suggest a pragmatic control, as trilinguals adjust affective stance and power orientation to maintain social appropriateness across interactions.

In all, the profile of trilingual requests displays coordination and conciseness at the textual level, with a high number of clauses, elaboration, and core components, suggesting cohesive and compact requests. At the same time, they avoid complex and compound sentences, preferring a simple, streamlined request. Pragmatically, this reflects economy in linguistic form while maintaining clarity and politeness.

Refusals

Trilingual refusals are profiled by investigating the correlations within and across the three dimension variables. Table 7S summarized the statistically significant finding while table 7 in the appendix contain the entire outcome of the analysis.

Table 7S. Significant correlations within TRILINGUAL REFUSALS

Category	Variable 1	Variable 2	*r*	*p*
Textual	# Clauses	# Words	0.86**	< .01
	# Clauses	Wrap	0.76**	< .01
	# Clauses	+Declarative Cls	0.78**	< .01
	# Clauses	–Declarative Cls	-0.57**	< .01
	# Words	Density	0.77**	< .01
	# Words	Core	-0.79**	< .01
	# Words	Wrap	0.75**	< .01
	# Words	+Declarative Cls	0.77**	< .01
	# Words	–Declarative Cls	-0.59**	< .01
	Density	+Declarative Cls	0.51**	< .01
	Density	–Declarative Cls	-0.44*	< .05

	Elaboration	Core	-0.54**	< .01
	Core	+Declarative Cls	-0.85**	< .01
	Core	–Declarative Cls	0.61**	< .01
	Wrap	Core	-0.83**	< .01
	Simple Sentence	# Clauses	-0.41*	< .05
	Simple Sentence	# Words	-0.51**	< .01
	Simple Sentence	Density	-0.44*	< .05
	Simple Sentence	–Declarative Cls	0.57**	< .01
	Complex Sentence	# Clauses	0.57**	< .01
	Complex Sentence	# Words	0.68**	< .01
	Complex Sentence	Density	0.55**	< .01
	Complex Sentence	Core	-0.53**	< .01
	Complex Sentence	–Declarative Cls	-0.48*	< .05
	Complex Sentence	Simple Sentence	-0.70**	< .01
	Compound Sentence	Simple Sentence	-0.63**	< .01
	Coordinating Connectors	# Clauses	0.59**	< .01
	Coordinating Connectors	# Words	0.61**	< .01
	Coordinating Connectors	Density	0.49*	< .05
	Coordinating Connectors	Elaboration	0.52**	< .01
	Coordinating Connectors	Core	-0.77**	< .01
	Coordinating Connectors	Wrap	0.62**	< .01
	Coordinating Connectors	+Declarative Cls	0.76**	< .01
	Coordinating Connectors	–Declarative Cls	-0.49*	< .05
	Coordinating Connectors	Complex Sentence	0.46*	< .05
Linguistic	Cognitive Verbs	Proper Names	0.53**	< .01
	Compulsion Verbs	Main Verbs	0.44*	< .05
	Present Tense	Volitional Verbs	0.42*	< .05
	Future Tense	Present Tense	-0.43*	< .05
	Descriptive Adjectives	Volitional Verbs	0.42*	< .05
	Diminutive Adjectives	Volitional Verbs	0.55**	< .01
	Diminutive Adjectives	Future Tense	-0.39*	< .05
	Intensifier Adjectives	Main Verbs	0.61**	< .01
Discursive	Politeness	Negative Tone	-0.52**	< .01
	Positive Tone	Negative Tone	-0.61**	< .01
	Neutral Tone	Positive Tone	1.00**	< .01
	Equal Power	Less Power	-0.85**	< .01
	Equal Power	More Power	-0.74**	< .01
	Less Power	Positive Tone	0.39*	< .05
	Less Power	Neutral Tone	0.39*	< .05

Note*: N=26 *p < .05. **p < .01*

Table 7S presents the results of the association between the variables within and across the three dimensions in the productions of trilingual refusals. The results indicate strong positive

correlations across several textual indicators. The number of clauses correlated with the number of words (r = .86, p < .01), with the wrap component (r = .76, p < .01), and with positive declarative clauses (r = .78, p < .01), but negatively correlated with negative declaratives (r = –.57, p < .01). Core components correlated negatively with elaboration components (r = –.54, p < .01) and with wrap components (r = –.83, p < .01).

Positive declaratives correlated negatively with core components (r = –.85, p < .01), while negative declaratives correlated positively with core components (r = .61, p < .01). Simple sentences correlated negatively with the number of clauses (r = –.41, p < .05), with the number of words (r = –.51, p < .01), and with density of text (r = –.44, p < .05), but positively with negative declaratives (r = .57, p < .01). Complex sentences correlated positively with the number of clauses (r = .57, p < .01) and number of words (r = .68, p < .01), and negatively with the core component (r = –.53, p < .01) and with the use of simple sentences (r = –.70, p < .01).

In as far as cohesion, coordinating markers correlated positively with number of clauses (r = .59, p < .01), number of words (r = .61, p < .01), density of text (r = .49, p < .05), elaboration component (r = .52, p < .01), and positive declaratives sentences (r = .76, p < .01), but it also correlated negatively with core component (r = –.77, p < .01) and negative declarative sentences (r = –.49, p < .05).

These results seem to suggest that trilinguals employ structural complexity as a politeness strategy, layering clauses and connectors to convey refusal indirectly and mitigate imposition. At the linguistic dimension, internal state verbs of cognition correlated positively with proper names (r = .53, p < .01), and internal state verbs of compulsion correlated positively with main verbs (r = .44, p < .05). Moreover, internal state verbs of volition correlated positively with verbs in the present tense (r = .42, p < .05), while verbs in the future tense correlated negatively with those in the present tense (r = –.43, p < .05).

Internal state verbs of volition also correlated positively with descriptive (r = .42, p < .05) and diminutive adjectives (r = .55, p < .01); though diminutive adjectives were negatively associated with the future tense (r = –.39, p < .05). Intensifiers correlated positively with the main verbs (r = .61, p < .01). Hence, it may be worth noting that the integration of internal state verbs and modal verbs with descriptive adjectives reflects a nuanced pragmatic competence, blending assertion with empathy.

The discursive dimension revealed that politeness indicators correlated negatively with a negative tone ($r = –.52$, $p < .01$), and a positive tone was negatively associated with a negative tone ($r = –.61$, $p < .01$). Power relations showed strong negative links between "equal power" and both "less-power" ($r = –.85$, $p < .01$) as well as "more-power" contexts ($r = –.74$, $p < .01$). Positive and neutral tones each correlated positively with less-power contexts ($r = .39$, $p < .05$). Perhaps these results are indicative of the tone–power interactions used by these trilinguals to achieve an interpersonal balance through calibrated politeness, demonstrating advanced command of L2 socio-pragmatic norms.

Taken together, the trilingual refusal profile reveals a systematic preference for structural complexity and pragmatic mitigation over directness. Speakers employ multi-clausal sentences and lexical and discursive softeners to manage the face-threatening nature of refusals.

What have we learned about the trilingual profile from these results? The trilingual speakers' pragmatic behavior in English is characterized by *structural control, linguistic economy, and advanced sociopragmatic sensitivity* across both requests and refusals. In *requests*, trilinguals tended toward compact, syntactically coordinated structures that conveyed clarity and efficiency, minimizing redundancy while maintaining politeness.

Their *refusals*, in contrast, displayed sophisticated structural layering and tonal modulation, indicating the use of complex syntactic and lexical resources to mitigate the face-threatening potential of disagreement. Additionally, the trilinguals' performance reflects a *mature, pragmatically balanced approach*, one that integrates grammatical precision with subtle management of tone and power relations. Their patterns suggest greater automatization of L2 pragmatic competence, allowing them to adapt their communicative strategies fluidly to context, audience, and speech act demands.

Overall, we can say that H1 is partially supported. The predicted internal coherence within pragmatic domains was clearly evident among trilinguals, whose textual, linguistic, and discursive variables formed tightly aligned patterns within each speech act. However, the hypothesis was contradicted in the bilingual group: although their requests showed the expected variability, their refusals displayed stronger structural and tonal coherence than anticipated.

4.2. Cross-act correlations between Requests and Refusals in L2 by participants

This section investigates the relationships between the indicators of requests and refusals within each participant group. It addresses Research Question 2, which examines to what extent an individual's request indicators correlate with their refusal indicators within each group (bilinguals and trilinguals), and whether this alignment differs across the three analytical domains of text structure, linguistic features, and discursive strategies. The aim is to complete the overall profile of bilingual and trilingual performance by determining whether the observed production patterns are speech-act specific or extend across acts. The analysis report begins with the bilingual data output, then presents the data of trilinguals.

Bilinguals cross act correlations.

This subsection examines the bilingual group's cross-act correlations, identifying which indicators of requests align with those of refusals the three analysis dimensions. Table 8S summarized the significant across act correlations in bilinguals responses.

Table 8S. Bilinguals significant cross act correlations

Category	Variable 1	Variable 2	*r*	*p*
Textual	Request # Clauses	Refusal # Words	0.86**	< .01
	Request Core	Refusal Core	-0.38*	< .05
	Request Wrap	Refusal Wrap	-0.66**	< .01
	Request Complex Sentences	Refusal Complex Sentences	-0.75**	< .01
Linguistic	Request Proper Names	Refusal Title/Informal	0.60**	< .01
	Request Endearments	Refusal Endearments	0.43*	< .05
	Request Modal Verbs	Refusal Modal Verbs	0.45*	< .05
	Request Cognitive Verbs	Refusal Cognitive Verbs	0.48*	< .05
	Request Compulsion Verbs	Refusal Compulsion Verbs	0.51**	< .01
Discursive	Request Negative Tone	Refusal Negative Tone	-0.68**	< .01
	Request Neutral Tone	Refusal Neutral Tone	1.00**	< .01
	Request Politeness	Refusal Politeness	0.43*	< .05
	Request Directness	Refusal Directness	0.52**	< .01

Note*: N=26 *p < .05. **p < .01*

Table 8S shows that across the textual dimension, some significant correlations emerged across the speech act responses. In terms of production length, the number of clauses in requests correlated strongly with the number of words in refusals (r = .86, p < .01), indicating that participants who produced syntactically dense requests tended also to produce longer refusals.

Core components showed a modest negative association across acts ($r = –.38$, $p < .05$), whereas wrap components were more strongly and negatively aligned ($r = –.66$, $p < .01$). Additionally, complex sentence use in requests correlated negatively with complex sentence use in refusals ($r = –.75$, $p < .01$).

At the linguistic level, clear lexical associations emerged across acts. Request proper names correlated with refusal informal titles ($r = .60$, $p < .01$), and request endearment terms with refusal informal titles ($r = .43$, $p < .05$), pointing to a personalized address style carried from one act to the other. Parallel associations were also observed for modal verbs ($r = .45$, $p < .05$), internal state verbs of emotion ($r = .60$, $p < .01$), and compound verbs ($r = .51$, $p < .01$), revealing stable verb-type preferences across both act productions. These findings indicate that bilinguals use consistent lexical and verb choices to preserve interpersonal tone and communicative clarity across speech acts.

At the discursive level, clear cross-act alignment emerged. Negative tone in requests correlated negatively with negative tone in refusals ($r = –.68$, $p < .01$), while neutral tone correlated perfectly across acts ($r = 1.00$, $p < .01$). Politeness markers showed a positive association ($r = .43$, $p < .05$), and directness levels were similarly aligned ($r = .52$, $p < .01$). These findings indicate that tone, politeness, and directness function as stable interpersonal orientations that speakers maintain across communicative contexts.

In sum, the bilingual findings show that requests and refusals form a coordinated system rather than two isolated behaviors. Bilinguals adjust structural complexity to fit the situation as elaboration shifts between requests and refusals, but lexical and tone preferences remain steady across both acts.

Building on the bilingual Jordanians' performance and the shared similarities observed across their speech act production, a question arises as to whether trilingual participants exert comparable pragmatic coordination in their L2 English use, or whether the presence of a third language introduces further differentiation across acts. To address this, the next section examines the trilingual group's request and refusal correlations, focusing on how structural, lexical, and discursive dimensions interact within and across the two acts.

Trilinguals cross act correlations

In this subsection, the results outline how trilingual participants coordinated their L2 speech acts production across requests and refusals. The analysis identifies which textual, linguistic, and

discursive variables co-occurred across acts. Table 9S summarized the significant across act correlations in trilinguals responses.

Table 9S. Trilinguals significant cross act correlations

Category	Variable 1	Variable 2	*r*	*p*
Textual	Request Elaboration	Refusal Elaboration	0.97**	< .01
	Request Core Acts	Refusal Elaboration	0.97**	< .01
	Request Elaboration	Refusal Core	0.94**	< .01
	Request Elaboration	Refusal Wrap	0.95**	< .01
	Request Core	Refusal Core	0.94**	< .01
	Request Wrap	Refusal Elaboration	0.95**	< .01
	Request Wrap	Refusal Core	0.95**	< .01
	Request Wrap	Refusal Wrap	0.97**	< .01
Linguistic	Request Past Tense	Refusal Present Tense	-0.82**	< .01
Discursive	Request Positive Tone	Refusal Positive Tone	-0.49*	< .05
	Request Neutral Tone	Refusal Positive Tone	0.49*	< .05
	Request Positive Tone	Refusal Neutral Tone	-0.49*	< .05
	Request Neutral Tone	Refusal Neutral Tone	0.49*	< .05

Note*: N=26 *p < .05. **p < .01*

Table 9S present the cross speech act correlation results by the trilingual participant group. Data shows that within the textual dimension, request elaboration component correlated positively with refusal elaboration component ($r = .97$, $p < .01$), core component ($r = .94$, $p < .01$), and wrap ($r = .95$, $p < .01$). Similarly, request core elements were positively associated with refusal elaboration ($r = .97$, $p < .01$) and core components ($r = .94$, $p < .01$), while request wrap correlated with refusal elaboration ($r = .95$, $p < .01$), core ($r = .95$, $p < .01$), and wrap ($r = .97$, $p < .01$). These results indicate a high level of textual coordination across acts, showing that participants who expanded or elaborated their requests similarly structured their refusals with equivalent complexity and layering.

At the linguistic level, a significant negative correlation appeared between request past-tense and refusal present-tense forms ($r = –.82$, $p < .01$). Within the discursive domain, tone relations revealed consistent interpersonal alignment. Request positive tone correlated negatively with refusal positive tone ($r = –.49$, $p < .05$), while request neutral tone correlated positively with refusal positive tone ($r = .49$, $p < .05$). Similarly, request positive tone correlated negatively with refusal neutral tone ($r = –.49$, $p < .05$), and request neutral tone correlated positively with refusal neutral tone ($r = .49$, $p < .05$). These associations indicate that trilinguals maintained an internally

balanced tone repertoire, adjusting between positivity and neutrality in ways that preserved overall social appropriateness across acts.

In sum, we learn that the trilinguals' cross-act profile reveals extensive *textual coordination* and selective *discursive adjustment* across requests and refusals. Structural measures were tightly aligned, with elaboration, core, and wrap components rising and falling together across acts, indicating that participants relied on parallel clause packaging and cohesive layering in both request and refusal constructions. In contrast, tone correlations showed a blend of positive and negative associations, where increased positivity in requests coincided with reduced positivity in refusals, while neutral tones remained consistent across acts.

4.2.1 A Comparative Synthesis of Bilinguals versus Trilinguals in Cross-Act Pragmatic Performance

In comparing the raw pragmatic performance of the two participant groups, our results revealed distinct orientations while producing the two speech acts in quest. We have learned that Bilinguals tended to produce longer and more elaborated messages, often using multiple clauses, explanations, and affectively marked lexis to secure clarity and interpersonal connection. Their discourse frequently included supportive moves and expressive resources that shaped the overall tone of the interaction.

Trilinguals, by contrast, produced structurally tighter and more syntactically cohesive responses, with clearer associations between core acts, subordinate elements, and connective devices. Their productions favored explicit phrasing, cohesive clause linking, and calibrated tone choices rather than extended elaboration. This orientation produced messages that were compact yet organized, relying more on structure.

But were these profiles systematic and transferable across the two speech act productions? Our second hypothesis (H2) proposed that the structural features of requests and refusals would not correspond across acts, while linguistic features and discursive strategies would show consistent cross-act alignment. The bilingual results fit this expectation: when their requests became structurally dense, their refusals were pared down, and vice versa, yet their lexical choices and tonal stance remained steady across acts, indicating stable interpersonal intent. The trilingual data, however, challenged this prediction. Their responses showed exceptionally strong structural systematicity, with elaboration, core, and wrap elements correlating across both acts. Instead of alternating complexity, trilinguals maintained a unified structural design, a pattern that points to a more integrated and globally coordinated pragmatic system.

Having now established the profiles of participants' L2 speech act production, an important question arises: what drives this pragmatic behavior? Is proficiency the main stimulator for such tendencies? Or is it language use habits and attitudes? Or a mixture of a more complex network of factors ? The next section addresses these questions by examining the background variables that may predict pragmatic performance in L2 speech acts production.

4.3. External predictors of Pragmatic Performance

This section addresses Research Question 3, which explores how individual background variables predict bilingual and trilingual participants' pragmatic performance in English. To examine this, univariable linear regression analyses were conducted separately for each speech act requests and refusals across the three analytical dimensions of Text Structure, Text Linguistics, and Discursive Strategies. External variables, including language proficiency, language use, language attitudes, Can-Do skills, and Multicultural Personality traits (MPQ), were tested as predictors to determine their statistical associations and directional influence on pragmatic indicators.

Requests

Textual structure

This subsection presents the significant predictors of request production within the textual dimension. Table 10S displays the univariable regression results identifying which background variables significantly influenced participants' structural realization of English requests.

Table 10. Predictors of textual variables in requests

Category	Dependent Variable	Predictor	*β*	*p*	95% CI [LL, UL]
Sentence Length	# Words	L1 Positive Attitude	–0.75	0.049	[–1.49, –0.00]
		L Other Attitude	–0.66	0.049	[–1.33, –0.00]
		Tri Positive Attitude	–0.63	0.038	[–1.22, –0.04]
		Business L2/L3 Use	–0.04	0.018	[–0.07, –0.01]
		Business Trilingual Use	0.09	0.041	[0.00, 0.18]
Component		Emotional Stability	–2.52	0.033	[–4.83, –0.21]
		Formal Bilingual Use	0.06	0.039	[0.00, 0.12]
		L1 Negative Attitude	1.46	0.046	[0.03, 2.89]
	Core	L3 Writing	2.81	0.019	[0.50, 5.11]
		L3 Speaking	2.56	0.019	[0.46, 4.66]
	Wrap	Emotional Stability	–0.13	0.033	[–0.24, –0.01]
		L1 Negative Attitude	0.07	0.046	[0.00, 0.15]
		Sustainability Bilingual Use	0.14	0.004	[0.05, 0.24]
		L1 Reading/Writing	–2.57	0.021	[–4.74, –0.41]
		L2 Speaking	–4.11	0.002	[–6.64, –1.58]

Clause Type	Negative Declarative	L2 Understanding	–4.38	0.002	[–7.10, –1.67]
	Negative Imperative	Formal Bilingual Use	0.02	0.02	[0.00, 0.03]
		Emotional Stability	–7.46	0.025	[–13.96, –0.97]
	Positive Declarative	Emotional Stability	4.85	0.049	[0.02, 9.68]
		L3 Hungarian Proficiency	7.09	0.034	[0.58, 13.61]
	Positive Imperative	Business Trilingual Use	0.75	0.041	[0.03, 1.47]
	Positive Interrogative	Formal L1 Use	–0.31	0.021	[–0.58, –0.05]
		Formal Trilingual Use	1.45	< .001	[0.75, 2.16]
Sentence Type	Compound Sentence	Business Trilingual Use	0.29	0.021	[0.05, 0.54]
		Open-Mindedness	–4.12	0.015	[–7.40, –0.85]
		L1 Positive Attitude	–0.29	0.018	[–0.53, –0.05]
		Social Initiative	–0.21	0.035	[–0.40, –0.02]
		Entertainment Bilingual Use	0.19	0.032	[0.02, 0.36]
	Simple Sentence	Intimate Trilingual Use	1.32	0.003	[0.47, 2.18]
Connectors	Coordinate Connectors	Sustainability Trilingual Use	0.87	0.029	[0.09, 1.65]
		Bilingual Negative Attitude	–0.13	0.011	[–0.22, –0.03]
		L1 Proficiency	–0.01	0.011	[–0.02, –0.00]
		Business L2/L3 Use	0.36	0.023	[0.05, 0.67]
		Intimate L2/L3 Use	0.91	0.001	[0.41, 1.42]
	Deictic Connectors	Sustainability L1 Use	–0.38	0.023	[–0.71, –0.05]
		Sustainability L2/L3 Use	0.39	0.035	[0.03, 0.75]

Note. N=52. CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit; β = standardized regression coefficient. p values are two-tailed

Results of the univariable linear regression showed that several background variables significantly predicted the textual realization of requests. Positive attitudes toward L1 and trilingual proficiency were associated with shorter request length (β = –0.75, p = .049; β = –0.63, p = .038), whereas greater L2/L3 (bilingual use) and l1, L2 & L3 (trilingual use) for business purposes predicted longer requests (β = –0.04, p = .018; β = 0.09, p = .041). At the component level, emotional stability and L1 negative attitudes significantly influenced elaboration and wrap structures. Higher emotional stability predicted shorter elaborations (β = –2.52, p = .033), while stronger negative attitudes toward L1 predicted more elaborated responses (β = 1.46, p = .046). L3 writing and speaking proficiency positively predicted the presence of core components (β = 2.81, p = .019; β = 2.56, p = .019).

Regarding clause and sentence types, formal bilingual use and emotional stability jointly contributed to the formation of imperatives. Bilingual use for formal purposes predicted more negative imperative clauses (β = 0.02, p = .020), whereas higher emotional stability reduced both

negative imperatives (β = –7.46, p = .025) and positive declaratives (β = 4.85, p = .049). L3 proficiency increased positive declaratives (β = 7.09, p = .034).

Finally, language-use patterns across social domains influenced the deployment of connectors. Frequent use of L2/L3 and trilingual languages in sustainability or intimate settings predicted greater use of coordinating connectors (β = 0.36–0.91, p < .05), whereas stronger negative attitudes toward bilingualism predicted reduced connector density (β = –0.13, p = .011).

Overall, the textual findings show that pragmatic organization in L2 requests was not random but systematically predicted by affective attitudes, emotional regulation, and patterns of multilingual engagement. Positive and negative orientations toward L1, along with emotional stability, were predictive of how participants structured their discourse—those with higher self-control and more complex emotional profiles tended to produce more balanced and economically structured messages. Trilingual proficiency, particularly in writing and speaking, further enhanced structural coherence, indicating that extended experience with multiple linguistic systems promoted greater discourse planning and flexibility.

Similarly, consistent use of L2/L3 across professional, formal, and sustainability contexts predicted the use of cohesive devices and syntactic density, suggesting that habitual exposure to diverse communicative environments strengthened participants' ability to manage information flow and maintain structural cohesion. In essence, we learn that affective attitudes, emotional stability, and cross-linguistic engagement were predictive of pragmatic behavior in a way that fostered greater structural precision, integrative organization, and discourse control in English request production.

But what about the linguistic aspect of participants' productions were there any background factors that shaped their lexical and grammatical behavior? The next section explores this dimension, examining whether variables such as proficiency, attitudes, and language use predicted the choice of verbs, adjectives, and tense forms in L2 English requests.

Text Linguistics

Table 11S presents the significant predictors of pragmatic performance within the linguistic domain, focusing on lexical openings, verb usage, tense selection, and adjective types in requests.

Table 11. Predictors of linguistic variables in requests

Category	Dependent Variable	Predictor	β	p	95% CI [LL, UL]
Lexical Openings	Proper names	Formal L2/L3 use	0.11	0.012	[0.03, 0.19]

		Intimate L2/L3 use	0.2	0.021	[0.03, 0.37]
	Informal title	Intimate L2/L3 use	0.19	0.017	[0.04, 0.34]
	Endearment terms	L1 Negative attitude	1.21	0.012	[0.28, 2.14]
		Bilingual Negative attitude	–0.09	0.048	[–0.18, –0.00]
		Open-mindedness	0.1	0.003	[0.04, 0.17]
		Social initiative	0.1	0.012	[0.02, 0.18]
Lexical Verb Types	Cognitive verbs	Formal L1 use	–0.06	0.019	[–0.11, –0.01]
		Intimate L1 use	–0.08	0.018	[–0.14, –0.01]
		Open-mindedness	–0.10	0.037	[–0.19, –0.01]
	Compulsion verbs	English L2 proficiency	4.62	0.039	[0.24, 9.00]
	Emotional verbs	Business L3 use	0.18	0.043	[0.01, 0.35]
		Entertainment L3 use	0.19	0.014	[0.04, 0.33]
		Intimate L3 use	0.24	0.03	[0.02, 0.46]
		Sustainability L2/L3 use	–0.09	0.022	[–0.16, –0.01]
		Sustainability L3 use	0.28	0.003	[0.10, 0.46]
	Main verbs	L1 proficiency	–2.17	0.027	[–4.09, –0.25]
	Modal verbs	L1 proficiency	–13.31	0.041	[–26.06, –0.56]
		English L2 proficiency	–0.44	0.005	[–0.75, –0.14]
		Trilingual Negative attitude	0.34	0.017	[0.06, 0.61]
Tense Features	Future tense	Formal L1 use	0.05	0.007	[0.01, 0.08]
	Past tense	L1 Positive attitude	–0.08	0.037	[–0.15, –0.01]
		L1 speaking proficiency	–1.40	0.036	[–2.71, –0.09]
		Trilingual Positive attitude	–0.06	0.044	[–0.12, –0.00]
Lexical Adjectives	Descriptor adjectives	Social initiative	–0.41	0.037	[–0.79, –0.03]
	Intensifying qualifiers	Emotional stability	0.12	0.041	[0.01, 0.23]

Note. N=52. CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit; β = standardized regression coefficient. p values are two-tailed

Results show that language use and language attitudes played a central role in shaping lexical choice and verb selection. For lexical openings, both formal and intimate bilingual L2/L3 use significantly predicted the inclusion of proper names (β = 0.11–0.20, p < .05), while negative attitudes toward L1 (β = 1.21, p = .012) and bilingualism (β = –0.09, p = .048) were linked to the use of endearment terms. Moreover, higher open-mindedness (β = 0.10, p = .003) and social initiative (β = 0.10, p = .012) scores were positively associated with the use of endearment terms, indicating that participants with greater interpersonal openness tended to employ more affectively expressive lexical choices in their requests.

At the verb level, L1 and L2 proficiency influenced multiple verb types. L1 proficiency corresponded to fewer main (β = –2.17, p = .027) and modal verbs (β = –13.31, p = .041), whereas higher English L2 proficiency predicted greater use of compulsion verbs (β = 4.62, p = .039). The trilinguals' negative attitude toward multilingualism, however, increased modal verb use (β = 0.34, p = .017). Moreover, frequent use of L3 for business (β = 0.18, p = .043), entertainment (β = 0.19, p = .014), intimate interaction (β = 0.24, p = .030), and sustainability contexts (β = 0.28, p = .003) significantly enhanced emotional verb expression, suggesting that diverse multilingual use environments support greater pragmatic expressiveness in L2 request production.

For tense and adjective patterns, using L1 for business purposes predicted more frequent future-tense constructions (β = 0.05, p = .007), while positive attitudes toward L1 and trilingualism led to fewer past-tense instances (β = –0.06 to –0.08, p < .05). Finally, lexical adjectives reflected personality traits: social initiative negatively predicted descriptor adjectives (β = –0.41, p = .037), whereas emotional stability positively predicted intensifying qualifiers (β = 0.12, p = .041).

In summary, these findings show that lexical and grammatical choices in L2 requests were primarily shaped by participants' multilingual engagement patterns and affective orientations toward their languages. Frequent use of L2 and L3 across diverse social domains fostered richer expressive range, while emotional stability and social initiative modulated stylistic precision and intensity. Together, these results suggest that pragmatic lexicalization in requests is both socially grounded and personality-sensitive. Yet beyond lexical and structural composition, do these individual differences also shape the strategic and interpersonal layer of speech act realization? The following section examines how external variables predict discursive L2 requests.

Discursive strategies

This subsection reports the significant predictors associated with the discursive Strategies dimension, which captures how participants managed interpersonal aspects of their L2 requests, including politeness, directness, tone, and power dynamics. Table 12S presents the significant predictors of pragmatic behavior within the discursive Strategy variables of request production.

Table 12. Predictors of discursive strategy variables in requests

Category	Dependent Variable	Predictor	β	p	95% CI [LL, UL]
Directness & Politeness	Politeness markers	Business Trilingual Use	0.32	0.042	[0.01, 0.62]

		English L2 Proficiency	9.25	0.001	[3.89, 14.61]
		Entertainment L1 Use	–0.16	0.021	[–0.30, –0.03]
		Entertainment L2/L3 Use	0.11	0.045	[0.00, 0.21]
		Formal L1 Use	–0.17	0.003	[–0.28, –0.06]
		Formal L2/L3 Use	0.18	< .001	[0.09, 0.27]
		Intimate L1 Use	–0.22	0.002	[–0.35, –0.08]
		Intimate L2/L3 Use	0.21	0.039	[0.01, 0.41]
		Cultural Empathy	0.31	0.023	[0.04, 0.57]
	Directness	Emotional Stability	0.15	0.036	[0.01, 0.30]
		Trilingual Positive Attitude	0.16	0.033	[0.01, 0.31]
Tone	Negative Tone	Formal Bilingual Use	0.15	0.027	[0.02, 0.27]
Power	Equal Power	Business Bilingual Use	0.11	0.028	[0.01, 0.20]

Note. N=52. CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit; β = standardized regression coefficient. p values are two-tailed

Results in Table 12S show that both social and linguistic background variables significantly shaped the discursive realization of L2 requests. For politeness markers, higher English L2 proficiency (β = 9.25, p = .001) and greater cultural empathy (β = 0.31, p = .023) predicted increased use of politeness features, reflecting that linguistic competence and interpersonal sensitivity enhanced mitigation strategies. Similarly, frequent use of L2/L3 in formal and intimate contexts (β = 0.18–0.21, p < .05) and all three languages for business (β = 0.32, p = .042) contributed to more requests polite markers. In contrast, formal and intimate L1 use (β = –0.17 to –0.22, p < .01) and using L1 for entertainment purposes (β = –0.16, p = .021) were associated with reduced politeness markers, indicating that reliance on L1 contexts might limit L2 mitigation strategies.

Regarding directness, higher emotional stability (β = 0.15, p = .036) and positive attitudes toward trilingualism (β = 0.16, p = .033) predicted greater directness. In the tone domain, formal use of L1 and L2 predicted increased negative tone (β = 0.15, p = .027), implying that formal bilingual environments may trigger stricter or less affective tone control. Finally, within the power category, bilingual use of L1 and L2 was positively associated with equal-power strategies (β = 0.11, p = .028), showing that exposure to professional bilingual contexts encouraged balanced interactional framing rather than hierarchical expression.

So far, the findings revealed that participants' pragmatic competence in English as an L2 was shaped by multiple linguistic and social forces that intertwined across structural, lexical, and

discursive dimensions. The overall profile of L2 requests depicts speakers who relied on controlled elaboration, measured lexical choice, and socially responsive tone management to achieve clarity and interpersonal appropriateness. Elaboration and cohesion were linked to patterns of multilingual engagement; participants who frequently used their additional languages in formal, business, or intimate contexts tended to produce longer, more complex, and better-connected requests. Their clause packaging and use of connectors reflected a deliberate organization of ideas rather than syntactic excess, signaling growing command of L2 discourse structuring.

On the lexical level, variation was driven by both linguistic competence and affective disposition. Higher proficiency in English and balanced use of L1–L3 predicted richer verb use and more nuanced emotional expression, while open-mindedness and social initiative enhanced the use of personal and endearing forms, giving their speech a warmer interpersonal tone. By contrast, heavy reliance on L1 or negative attitudes toward bilingualism reduced this lexical flexibility, leading to more restrained or less mitigated request patterns.

Finally, participants displayed sensitivity to interpersonal dynamics through their control of politeness, tone, and power. Those with stronger cultural empathy and positive multilingual attitudes integrated more mitigation and balanced tone control, while individuals with higher emotional stability and confidence in trilingual identity communicated more directly yet remained tactful.

Having established how background factors influence the formulation of requests, it becomes essential to examine whether these same predictors operate similarly when the communicative stance is reversed. Refusals, as inherently face-threatening acts, place different demands on linguistic precision and social tact. The following section therefore investigates whether the variables that fostered clarity and empathy in requests also contribute to maintaining politeness, mitigation, and relational balance in refusals.

Refusals

Textual structure

This subsection reports the univariable regression data on the external predictors of the textual variables in L2 refusal production. Table S13 summarizes the significant relationships between background variables and textual indicators of refusal structures.

Table 13. Predictors of textual variables in refusals

Category	Dependent Variable	Predictor	*β*	*p*	95% CI [LL, UL]
Sentence Length	# Words	Intimate Trilingual Use	0.12	0.034	[0.01, 0.23]
		L1 Writing	0.97	0.05	[0.00, 1.93]
Components	Elaboration	L Other Attitude	0.24	0.014	[0.05, 0.42]
	Core	Intimate L2/L3 Use	0.26	0.032	[0.02, 0.50]
		Intimate Trilingual Use	–0.49	0.039	[–0.95, –.03]
	Wrap	Entertainment Bilingual Use	0.12	0.043	[0.00, 0.24]
		Entertainment L2/L3 Use	–0.12	0.038	[–0.23, –.01]
		Intimate Trilingual Use	0.41	0.046	[0.01, 0.82]
		Trilingual Negative Attitude	–0.22	0.048	[–0.43, –.0]
		L1 Writing	–4.32	0.048	[–8.61, –.03]
Type of Clause	Positive Declarative Cl.	L2 Writing	11	0.026	[1.39, 20.62]
	Negative Imperative Cl.	Social Initiative	–0.30	0.034	[–0.58, –0.2]
	Positive Interrogative Cl.	Formal Bilingual Use	0.03	0.005	[0.01, 0.05]
		Formal L2/L3 Use	–0.02	0.042	[–0.03, –0.0]
		Bilingual Negative Attitude	0.04	0.015	[0.01, 0.08]
Sentence Type	Complex Sentence	L2 Writing	10.12	0.024	[1.40, 18.83]
		Entertainment Bilingual Use	0.12	0.034	[0.01, 0.23]
		Entertainment L2/L3 Use	–0.13	0.018	[–0.23, –0.2]
		Formal Trilingual Use	0.44	0.009	[0.11, 0.76]
		Sustainability L2/L3 Use	–0.15	0.03	[–0.28, –.02]
Connectors	Coordinate Connectors	Business L2/L3 Use	0.47	0.037	[0.03, 0.91]
		Cultural Empathy	24.4	0.018	[4.30, 4.50]
		English L2 Proficiency	29.09	0.009	[7.69, 0.48]
		Entertainment L1 Use	–0.84	0.001	[–1.33, –0.4]
		Formal L1 Use	–0.65	0.003	[–1.07, –0.3]
		Intimate L1 Use	–0.74	0.006	[–1.27, –0.2]
		Intimate Trilingual Use	1.82	0.015	[0.38, 3.26]
		L1 Negative Attitude	14.96	0.006	[4.42, 25.50]
		Cultural Empathy	1.22	0.018	[0.22, 2.23]
		Sustainability L1 Use	–0.74	0.003	[–1.21, –0.7]
Deictic Connectors	Deictic Connectors	L1 Negative Attitude	–0.03	0.033	[–0.07, –0.0]
		L1 Proficiency	–0.13	0.018	[–0.23, –0.2]

Subordinate Connectors	Subordinate Connectors	English L2 Proficiency	11.87	0.022	[1.80, 21.94]
		Hungarian L3 Proficiency	20.65	0.022	[3.18, 38.13]

Note. N=52. CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit; β = standardized regression coefficient. p values are two-tailed

Results in Table S13 indicate that external variables exerted significant influence on the textual construction of L2 refusals. In terms of sentence length, number of words were predicted by use of the three languages for intimate relationships (β = 0.12, p = .034) and L1 writing proficiency (β = 0.97, p = .050). At the component level, elaboration increased with positive attitudes toward other languages (β = 0.24, p = .014), while core component was strengthened by the use L2/L3 for intimate reasons (β = 0.26, p = .032) but weakened by intimate trilingual use (β = –0.49, p = .039). Wrap components were positively predicted by using L1&L2 (bilingual) for entertainment (β = 0.12, p = .043) and intimate trilingual use (β = 0.41, p = .046), while entertainment L2/L3 use (β = –0.12, p = .038) and trilingual negative attitudes (β = –0.22, p = .048) predicted reduced wrap components.

In clause type, L2 writing predicted more positive declarative clauses (β = 11.00, p = .026), whereas social initiative predicted fewer negative imperatives (β = –0.30, p = .034). Positive interrogatives increased with formal bilingual use (β = 0.03, p = .005) but decreased with formal L2/L3 use (β = –0.02, p = .042).

Complex sentence production was predicted by L2 writing (β = 10.12, p = .024) and formal trilingual use (β = 0.44, p = .009), while entertainment and sustainability L2/L3 use were negatively associated (β = –0.13 to –0.15, p < .05). Among connectors, English L2 proficiency (β = 29.09, p = .009), cultural empathy (β = 24.40, p = .018), and business L2/L3 use (β = 0.47, p = .037) predicted greater use of coordinating connectors. In contrast, formal and intimate L1 use (β = –0.65 to –0.74, p < .01) and sustainability L1 use (β = –0.74, p = .003) reduced their use. Deictic connectors decreased with L1 negative attitude (β = –0.03, p = .033) and L1 proficiency (β = –0.13, p = .018), whereas subordinate connectors were positively influenced by English L2 proficiency (β = 11.87, p = .022) and Hungarian L3 proficiency (β = 20.65, p = .022).

Results suggest that the textual component of L2 refusals is predicted by a network of linguistic proficiency and situational language use. Writing skill and L2 proficiency contributed to greater textual density and connective precision, indicating that advanced linguistic control supports organized argumentation. Conversely, negative attitudes toward L1 and trilingualism

negatively predicted elaboration and cohesion, suggesting that affective disinvestment in one's linguistic repertoire constrains pragmatic flexibility. Moreover, language use in varied communicative domains, particularly intimate, formal, and business contexts, fostered adaptive structural choices.

Text linguistic

This subsection reports the univariable regression data on the external predictors of the linguistic variables in L2 refusal production. Table S14 summarizes the significant relationships between background variables and linguistic indicators of refusals.

Table 14. Predictors of linguistic variables in refusals

Category	Dependent Variable	Predictor	*β*	*p*	95% CI [LL, UL]
Lexical Openings	Opening Cannons	Business L1 Use	0.01	0.002	[0.00, 0.02]
		Cultural Empathy	–0.33	0.037	[–0.63, –0.02]
		Entertainment L1 Use	0.01	0.01	[0.00, 0.02]
		Formal L1 Use	0.01	0.024	[0.00, 0.01]
		Open-Mindedness	–0.01	0.023	[–0.03, –0.00]
Lexical Openings	Proper Names	Entertainment Trilingual Use	0.05	.001	[0.05, 0.06]
		Formal Bilingual Use	0.01	0.004	[0.00, 0.02]
		Intimate Trilingual Use	0.02	0.048	[0.00, 0.05]
		Sustainability Trilingual Use	0.06	.001	[0.05, 0.07]
		L1 Proficiency	7.94	0.018	[1.43, 14.46]
	Informal Title	L1 Writing	2.98	0.013	[0.65, 5.32]
		L1 Speaking	4.26	0.024	[0.58, 7.95]
		Sustainability Bilingual Use	0.03	0.012	[0.01, 0.06]
Lexical Verbs	Main Verbs	Entertainment Bilingual Use	0.04	0.021	[0.01, 0.07]
		Entertainment L1 Use	–0.06	0.003	[–0.10, –0.02]
	Emotional Verbs	Formal L2/L3 Use	0.02	0.043	[0.00, 0.04]
		Bilingual Negative Attitude	0.06	0.025	[0.01, 0.12]
	Volition Verbs	Cultural Empathy	6.42	0.016	[1.24, 11.60]
		Entertainment Bilingual Use	0.13	0.018	[0.02, 0.24]
		Entertainment L2/L3 Use	–0.14	0.01	[–0.24, –0.03]
		Intimate L2/L3 Use	–0.25	0.012	[–0.45, –0.06]
		L1 Speaking	5.74	0.031	[0.56, 10.92]
		L1 Understanding	4.29	0.034	[0.33, 8.24]
		Cultural Empathy	0.32	0.016	[0.06, 0.58]

		Trilingual Negative Attitude	–0.26	0.01	[–0.46, –0.06]
		Sustainability Bilingual Use	0.14	0.036	[0.01, 0.27]
		Sustainability L2/L3 Use	–0.19	0.005	[–0.31, –0.06]
	Compulsion Verbs	Bilingual Negative Attitude	0.04	0.02	[0.01, 0.07]
		Trilingual Negative Attitude	0.03	0.034	[0.00, 0.05]
Lexical Adjectives	Descriptor Adjectives	English L2 Proficiency	0.53	0.001	[0.23, 0.83]
		Sustainability Bilingual Use	0.19	0.039	[0.01, 0.37]
	Intensifying Qualifier	English L2 Proficiency	4.72	0.021	[0.74, 8.69]
		Social Initiative	4.04	0.017	[0.75, 7.32]

Note. N=52. CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit; β = standardized regression coefficient. p values are two-tailed

Table S14 indicates that external variables significantly influenced the lexical and verbal composition of L2 refusals. Within lexical openings, the use of proper names was most strongly predicted by entertainment and sustainability trilingual use (β = 0.05–0.06, $p < .001$). Conversely, greater cultural empathy (β = –0.33, p = .037) and open-mindedness (β = –0.01, p = .023) predicted fewer conventional opening cannons. Writing and speaking proficiency in L1 also promoted the inclusion of informal titles (β = 2.98–4.26, $p < .05$), while sustainability-related bilingual use further contributed to this pattern (β = 0.03, p = .012).

At the verb level, bilingual use for entertainment purposes was positively associated with main verb frequency (β = 0.04, p = .021), whereas entertainment L1 use was inversely related (β = –0.06, p = .003). Emotional verbs increased with formal L2/L3 use (β = 0.02, p = .043) and bilingual negative attitudes (β = 0.06, p = .025). Volition verbs were predicted by cultural empathy (β = 6.42, p = .016), L1 speaking and understanding (β = 4.29–5.74, $p < .05$), and entertainment or sustainability bilingual use (β = 0.13–0.14, $p < .05$), while negative attitudes toward trilingualism reduced their use (β = –0.26, p = .010). Compulsion verbs were predicted by both bilingual (β = 0.04, p = .020) and trilingual (β = 0.03, p = .034) negative attitudes.

For lexical adjectives, English L2 proficiency predicted higher use of both descriptive (β = 0.53, p = .001) and intensifying adjectives (β = 4.72, p = .021), showing that lexical elaboration in refusals depends on advanced linguistic range. Social initiative (β = 4.04, p = .017) also

predicted intensifiers, indicating that socially active individuals modulated emotional intensity more dynamically in mitigation contexts.

The results reveal that linguistic composition in L2 refusals is governed by how participants deploy language across functional domains. Frequent use of L1 and bilingual forms in business, formal, and entertainment settings cultivated more complex lexical openings and verb choices, while negative attitudes toward trilingualism and L1 curtailed elaboration. Proficiency in English and active multilingual use supported more dynamic integration of emotional and volitional verbs. Additionally, Cultural empathy and open-mindedness tempered overt formulaicity, pushing speakers toward less scripted openings and more affectively tuned expressions.

While the preceding section revealed how lexical and verbal choices underpin the linguistic realization of refusals, discursive strategies capture how these choices operate interactively. The following analysis therefore shifts focus from *what* participants said to *how* they framed their refusals.

Discursive strategies

Finally, the discursive strategy predictors in refusals are reported in Table S15, which outlines how background information shaped participants' interpersonal stance in refusal productions.

Table 15. Predictors of discursive strategy variables in refusals

Category	Dependent Variable	Predictor	*β*	*p*	95% CI [LL, UL]
Directness & Politeness	Politeness markers	Business L2/L3 Use	0.11	0.05	[0.00, 0.22]
		Cultural Empathy	5.54	0.03	[0.55, 10.5]
		Entertainment L1 Use	–0.14	0.04	[–0.27, –0.01]
		L1 Negative Attitude	4.06	0	[1.52, 6.61]
		Bilingual Negative Attitude	–0.37	0	[–0.61, –0.13]
		Cultural Empathy	0.28	0.03	[0.03, 0.53]
		Sustainability L1 Use	–0.19	0	[–0.31, –0.08]
Directness	Directness	L2 Speaking	–6.08	0.01	[–10.3, –1.79]
		L2 Understanding	–6.73	0.01	[–11.3, –2.16]
		Open-Mindedness	0.23	0.04	[0.01, 0.45]
		Social Initiative	6.81	0.01	[1.80, 11.8]
Tone	Positive Tone	Trilingual Negative Attitude	–0.30	0.02	[–0.56, –0.04]
Power	Equal Power	Formal L2/L3 Use	–0.10	0.04	[–0.19, –0.00]

	Intimate L2/L3 Use	–0.21	0.03	[–0.39, –0.02]
Less Power	Intimate L2/L3 Use	0.23	0	[0.10, 0.36]
	Sustainability L1 Use	–0.11	0.01	[–0.20, –0.03]
	Sustainability L2/L3 Use	0.14	0	[0.05, 0.22]

Note. N=52. CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit; β = standardized regression coefficient. p values are two-tailed

Results in Table S15 reveal clear patterns in how background factors shaped the discursive strategies used in L2 refusals. For politeness markers, participants with higher cultural empathy used more polite expressions (β = 5.54, p = .03), and this was also predicted by stronger L1 proficiency (β = 3.82, p = .03). In contrast, entertainment-related and sustainability-related L1 use predicted fewer politeness markers (β = –0.14 to –0.19, p < .05), while negative attitudes toward bilingualism further reduced the use of polite forms (β = –0.37, p = .003). At the same time, cultural empathy (β = 0.28, p = .03) and multilingual business use (β = 0.11, p = .05) supported more refined mitigation strategies.

Regarding directness, participants with higher open-mindedness (β = 0.23, p = .04) and greater social initiative (β = 6.81, p = .01) produced more explicit refusals, indicating that socially confident and open individuals expressed disagreement more directly. In contrast, higher L2 speaking and comprehension proficiency predicted reduced directness (β = –6.08 to –6.73, p = .01), reflecting a preference for softer and more mitigated formulations. Negative attitudes toward trilingualism also weakened positive tone (β = –0.30, p = .02).

Taken together, the discursive factor in refusals shows a social orientation of multilingual speakers. Participants with strong intercultural empathy and routine engagement in diverse language contexts modulated power and politeness treated refusals as relational rather than confrontational acts. Conversely, negative linguistic attitudes constrained their discursive repertoire causing over-politeness.

4.3.1. Summary of the external predictors of pragmatic performance

Across both speech acts, the regression analyses demonstrated that background variables systematically shaped participants' textual, linguistic, and discursive performance in L2 English request and refusal production. To begin with, the organization of both acts depended on the combined influence of language proficiency, emotional regulation, and multilingual language use.

In requests, higher L3 proficiency and consistent L2/L3 use in formal, or business settings predicted more elaborated and syntactically cohesive structures. In refusals, L2 writing proficiency and trilingual engagement, particularly in intimate contexts, enhanced textual density and coherence. Conversely, negative or limiting attitudes toward bilingualism and trilingualism reduced elaboration and connector density, indicating that affective stance toward multilingualism constrained structural range across both acts.

lexical and verbal composition reflected how participants mobilized their multilingual and affective repertoires. In requests, open-mindedness and social initiative predicted the use of personal and emotive openings, while proficiency supported more balanced verb and tense selection. Similarly, refusals displayed a comparable sensitivity to proficiency and empathy: higher English proficiency and frequent multilingual use predicted broader emotional and volitional verb use, whereas negative attitudes toward bilingualism or trilingualism constrained lexical variety. L1 proficiency and writing skill further reinforced formulaic accuracy in both acts, yet overreliance on L1 or negative attitudes toward the language weakened the depth and contextual sensitivity of pragmatic performance.

Additionally, the predictors revealed how participants modulated interactional stance. When participants made requests, they generally adopted a cooperative stance they used polite and inclusive language ("Could you please…?", "Would you mind…?") to invite agreement, reduce imposition, and strengthen social bonds. Essentially, they used language not only to get something done but also to foster rapport and maintain positive relations.

These results bring the third hypothesis (H3) into clear focus. We anticipated that learners' patterns of language use, supported by their multicultural personality traits would serve as the most influential predictors of pragmatic performance. The findings confirm this expectation.

Regular use of English and Hungarian across the different domains predicted not only how participants structured their requests and refusals, but also how they managed politeness and adapted their responses to differences in power and social distance. In other words, pragmatic behavior reflected learned interactional routines developed through sustained multilingual use rather than proficiency alone. At the same time, L1 use played a distinct and systematic role. Frequent reliance on Arabic, especially in intimate contexts, was associated with more relationally grounded pragmatic choices, including affective lexicalization and flexible mitigation strategies.

Moreover, the participants' multicultural traits operated in a parallel but complementary manner. Cultural Empathy was consistently associated with increased use of politeness markers and with tone choices that avoided negative affect, particularly in refusals. Participants with higher Cultural Empathy scores were also more likely to differentiate their refusals according to power relations, favoring formulations that maintained interpersonal balance when responding to lower- or equal-power interlocutors.

Social Initiative showed a different but equally specific pattern. Higher Social Initiative scores predicted greater directness in refusals and clearer stance marking, reflecting a readiness to state intentions or limitations explicitly. Importantly, this increase in directness did not coincide with reduced politeness, but rather with more decisive pragmatic choices within otherwise appropriate formulations. Social Initiative therefore shaped the degree of explicitness with which speakers enacted requests and refusals, without altering their overall pragmatic repertoire.

Taken together, the preceding analyses progressively built a multidimensional picture of participants' pragmatic competence in English. The profiling of the participants' performance established how bilinguals and trilinguals organized, worded, and strategically managed their requests and refusals internally.

Moreover, the analysis clarified whether the pragmatic tendencies observed in each group were **speech-act specific** or **systematically transferable across acts**. A consistent pattern emerged: trilinguals displayed higher textual cohesion, tighter structural integration, and greater stylistic refinement across both requests and refusals, whereas bilinguals favored expressive elaboration and a relational tone that remained stable regardless of speech-act type.

Building on these contrasts, the chapter then examined the external predictors that shaped these behaviors, showing how multilingual language use, proficiency, attitudes, and personality traits collectively reinforced the pragmatic orientations observed in each group.

4.4. Comparative analysis of bilingual and trilingual pragmatic production in requests and refusals

This section pertains to RQ4 which examines differences in the groups pragmatic production of requests and refusals across indicators of text structure, linguistic features, and discursive strategies. The analysis focuses on identifying significant group contrasts in pragmatic performance, and whether multilingualism contributes to broader coordination or variation across speech acts.

To contextualize the comparative patterns observed in requests and refusals, the section begins with a consolidated profile of the two groups based on their linguistic background and multicultural personality traits. The profile provides an empirical basis for interpreting and discussing the significant group differences that follow. Table 16 compares the participants' scores in terms of their background variable scores.

Table 16. Summary of Bilingual and Trilingual Participants' Background Variable Scores

	Background variable	Bilinguals M (SD)	Trilinguals M (SD)	*p*
Proficiency	Ar L1 proficiency	3.77 (0.52)	3.85 (0.46)	0.42
	En L2 proficiency	2.73 (0.53)	3.23 (0.51)	< .001
	Hu L3 proficiency	0.00 (0.00)	2.31 (0.75)	< .001
Language use	Intimate l1 use	90.7 (10.2)	60.7 (20.2)	< .001
	Intimate L2/l3 use	9.23 (10.2)	18.4 (16.0)	0.01
	Intimate Bi use	0.00 (0.00)	2.31 (9.24)	0.15
	Intimate Tri use	0.00 (0.00)	5.38 (13.2)	0.04
	Formal l1 use	63.8 (21.9)	14.6 (16.8)	< .001
	Formal L2/l3 use	31.92 (21.9)	67.3 (22.4)	< .001
	Formal Bi use	4.23 (10.3)	18.8 (20.8)	0.01
	Formal Tri use	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	–
	Entertainment l1 use	40.8 (26.1)	8.17 (13.5)	< .001
	Entertainment l2/L3 use	26.5 (23.2)	48.2 (21.1)	0.002
	Entertainment Bi use	32.3 (22.2)	39.6 (18.1)	0.23
	Entertainment Tri use	1.06 (4.16)	4.52 (7.53)	0.04
	Sustainability l1 use	77.6 (18.5)	29.6 (21.7)	< .001
	Sustainability l2/L3 use	19.2 (17.2)	53.8 (23.6)	< .001
	Sustainability Bi use	3.15 (9.12)	16.5 (20.1)	0.01
	Sustainability Tri use	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	–
	Business l1 use	27.5 (24.9)	4.71 (10.5)	< .001
	Business l2/L3 use	34.3 (26.1)	48.2 (25.5)	0.05
	Business Bi use	19.8 (25.9)	12.9 (22.6)	0.28
	Business Tri use	0.00 (0.00)	22.6 (19.3)	< .001
Language attitude	L1+ Attitude	3.54 (0.58)	3.69 (0.75)	0.33
	L1- Attitude	2.73 (0.99)	3.31 (0.97)	0.03
	Bi+ Attitude	3.85 (0.43)	3.92 (0.27)	0.34
	Bi- Attitude	2.50 (0.65)	2.77 (0.81)	0.13
	Tri+ Attitude	2.73 (0.65)	3.31 (0.84)	0.01
	Tri- Attitude	2.31 (0.47)	2.69 (0.80)	0.04
MPQ	Cultural empathy	4.01 (0.72)	4.23 (0.60)	0.22
	Flexibility	3.34 (0.66)	3.04 (0.96)	0.11
	Social initiative	3.35 (0.46)	3.31 (0.50)	0.67
	Emotional stability	3.18 (0.59)	3.24 (0.57)	0.68
	Open mindedness	3.52 (0.74)	3.82 (0.67)	0.09
Can-Do	L1 Understanding	3.79 (0.90)	4.39 (0.61)	< .001

L1 Speaking	4.24 (0.82)	4.66 (0.55)	0.01
L1 Reading/Writing	3.83 (0.88)	4.43 (0.70)	< .001
L2 Understanding	4.88 (0.19)	4.82 (0.40)	0.52
L2 Speaking	4.78 (0.33)	4.70 (0.49)	0.41
L2 Reading/Writing	4.66 (0.52)	4.66 (0.55)	0.98
L3 Understanding	0.00 (0.00)	2.47 (0.88)	< .001
L3 Speaking	0.00 (0.00)	1.65 (0.87)	< .001
L3 Reading/Writing	0.00 (0.00)	1.77 (0.96)	< .001

Note: *N*=52, *M*= Mean, *SD*= Standard deviation, $p < .001$.

The background profiles of the two groups differed in several key areas. Trilingual participants reported significantly higher English L2 proficiency ($M = 3.23$, $SD = 0.51$) than bilinguals ($M = 2.73$, $SD = 0.53$), $p < .001$, confirming a stronger command of the target language. Their language-use patterns also diverged markedly: bilinguals relied far more on Arabic across intimate, formal, entertainment, sustainability, and business domains ($p < .001$), whereas trilinguals showed consistently higher use of English/Hungarian in these same contexts, including intimate ($M = 18.4$, $SD = 16.0$), formal ($M = 67.3$, $SD = 22.4$), entertainment ($M = 48.2$, $SD = 21.1$), sustainability ($M = 53.8$, $SD = 23.6$), and business domains ($M = 48.2$, $SD = 25.5$), all $p \leq .05$.

Attitude differences paralleled these patterns. Trilinguals held significantly more positive views of multilingualism ($M = 3.31$, $SD = 0.84$), $p = .01$, and stronger negative views of monolingualism ($M = 2.69$, $SD = 0.80$), $p = .04$, as well as more negative attitudes toward L1 (L1− Attitude: $M = 3.31$, $SD = 0.97$), $p = .03$.

Across multicultural personality traits (cultural empathy, flexibility, social initiative, emotional stability, open-mindedness) and the remaining language-attitude scales, the two groups were broadly comparable, with no statistically significant differences.

We learn from these profiles that, because the two groups view their languages rather differently, inhabit different linguistic environments, and they operate with distinctly different language repertoires, their pragmatic output diverges in some areas. To integrate these patterns more directly into the results, Table 17S presents a single consolidated comparative table summarizing all significant group differences in pragmatic production across textual, linguistic, and discursive dimensions, while the full correlation are provided in the Appendix (17 A, B, C).

Table 17S. Summary of Significant Group Differences in Pragmatic Production

Textual structure	Variable	Bilinguals M (SD)	Trilinguals M (SD)	*p*-value	Direction / Interpretation

Components (Requests)	Core	63.5 (14.9)	72.7 (17.2)	0.044	Trilinguals used more core acts in requests
Connectors (Requests)	Subordinate connectors	0.6 (1.0)	36.3 (41.0)	<.001	Trilinguals employed far more subordinate connectors
	Coordinate connectors	0.5 (0.7)	27.8 (36.9)	<.001	Trilinguals favored coordinate connectors
Connectors (Refusals)	Subordinate connectors	0.3 (1.0)	13.5 (30.2)	0.031	Trilinguals used more subordinate connectors
	Coordinate connectors	2.5 (2.3)	78.8 (40.4)	<.001	Trilinguals used more coordinate connectors
Text linguistic					
Lexicon – Refusals	Informal titles	5.5 (6.4)	11.2 (10.0)	0.017	Trilinguals used more informal titles
	Endearment terms	1.4 (3.2)	0.0 (0.0)	0.032	Bilinguals used more endearment terms
Verb Type – Refusals	Main verbs	14.1 (3.5)	17.1 (3.2)	0.002	Trilinguals used more main verbs
	Cognitive verbs	2.6 (3.4)	0.8 (2.0)	0.027	Bilinguals used more cognitive verbs
Discursive strategies					
Politeness Markers	Requests	3.5 (2.7)	19.9 (13.0)	< .001	Trilinguals used significantly more politeness markers
	Refusals	4.3 (2.4)	18.8 (13.0)	< .001	Trilinguals used significantly more politeness markers
Power Relations	Refusals (Less Power)	20.9 (5.5)	26.0 (10.3)	0.03	Trilinguals used more refusals toward lower-power interlocutors

***Note**: N=52, M= Mean, SD= Standard deviation, p < .001.*

The comparative results indicate that the structural features of requests and refusals produced by bilingual and trilingual participants exhibited similar structural patterns, but several significant contrasts emerged in the use of connectors and in the distribution of core components.

In terms of clause and sentence organization, the two groups produced comparable text lengths and numbers of clauses, indicating equivalent overall elaboration across acts. However, a significant difference appeared in the Requests core component, where trilinguals scored higher (M = 72.7, SD = 17.2) than bilinguals (M = 63.5, SD = 14.9), p = .044. This suggests that trilingual participants favored structurally concentrated messages focused on the central communicative intent, while bilinguals distributed effort more evenly between elaboration and supportive material.

The most notable differences were found in connector use. Trilinguals employed significantly more subordinate connectors in requests (M = 36.3, SD = 41.0) than bilinguals (M = 0.6, SD = 1.0), $t(50) = 6.15$, $p < .001$, and more coordinate connectors (M = 27.8, SD = 36.9 vs. M = 0.5, SD = 0.7) $p < .001$. In refusals, trilinguals also exceeded bilinguals in subordinate connector use (M = 13.5, SD = 30.2 vs. M = 0.3, SD = 1.0), $p = .031$, and coordinate connectors (M = 78.8, SD = 40.4 vs. M = 2.5, SD = 2.3), $p < .001$.

Overall, the structural comparison reveals that while both groups managed comparable text length, trilinguals demonstrated higher syntactic density and greater use of cohesive devices, reflecting advanced clause integration and relational control in English production. Bilinguals, meanwhile, displayed structurally balanced but more linearly segmented production, prioritizing clarity over subordination.

Results in the linguistic dimension show major differences between bilinguals and trilinguals in primarily in refusal productions rather than in requests. Trilinguals used significantly more informal titles in refusals (M = 11.2, SD = 10.0) than bilinguals (M = 5.5, SD = *6.4*), $p = .017$. In contrast, bilinguals employed more endearment expressions (M = *1.4*, SD = 3.2) than trilinguals (M = 0.0, SD = 0.0), $p = .032$.

At the verb level, trilinguals produced significantly more main verbs in refusals (M = 17.1, SD = 3.2) than bilinguals (M = 14.1, SD = 3.5), $p = .002$, indicating denser syntactic structure. Conversely, bilinguals used more cognitive internal-state verbs (M = 2.6, SD = 3.4) than trilinguals (M = 0.8, SD = *2.0*), $p = .027$. No other differences reached statistical significance.

The linguistic comparison implies that group differences emerged solely in refusals, where trilinguals relied more on formal lexical precision and syntactic density through main verb use, while bilinguals favored affective and cognitive expression via internal-state and endearment terms. These patterns suggest that trilinguals' refusals exhibit a more structurally grounded and socially moderated lexical style, whereas bilinguals' language choices emphasize emotional resonance and justification.

Finally, the results show that trilingual participants demonstrated a significantly more refined discursive profile than bilinguals. They used more politeness markers in both requests (M = 19.9, SD = 13.0) than bilinguals (M = 3.5, SD = 2.7), $p < .001$, and in refusals (M = 18.8, SD = 13.0) compared to bilinguals (M = 4.3, SD = 2.4), $p < .001$.

These differences suggest that trilinguals relied more on conventional politeness routines to mitigate both initiating and rejecting speech acts. Regarding power relations, trilinguals produced more refusals addressed to interlocutors of lower power (M = 26.0, SD = 10.3) than bilinguals (M = 20.9, SD = 5.5), p = .030, indicating heightened awareness of social hierarchy and the pragmatic demands of downward communication. In sum, the results indicate that trilinguals exhibit broader pragmatic control, using politeness and power-sensitive strategies to maintain interpersonal harmony, whereas bilinguals rely on a more direct yet equally stable tone system in managing speech acts across contexts.

4.5. Chapter four summary

As a final synthesis of the results presented in Chapter Four, this section highlights the major empirical outcomes beyond statistical detail, focusing instead on the pragmatic profiles revealed in the data.

First, the comparison of the two groups showed clear differences in how bilinguals and trilinguals realize English requests and refusals. Bilinguals tended to produce elaborated, affectively inflected messages, often relying on multi-clausal structures and expressive lexical choices that strengthened clarity, rapport, and interpersonal alignment. Their performances reflected a consciously managed politeness style grounded in mitigation and relational attentiveness.

Trilinguals, in contrast, displayed structurally efficient and pragmatically well-regulated productions. Their speech acts were syntactically cohesive yet concise, with politeness achieved through calibrated tone and contextual alignment rather than through expansion. This profile reflects a more automatized integration of linguistic and pragmatic knowledge, pointing to a style that is both efficient and contextually adaptive.

Second, the cross-act patterns (linking requests and refusals) revealed a developmental contrast in pragmatic coordination. Bilinguals showed a compensatory profile: increased elaboration or complexity in one act (e.g., requests) was offset by more compressed structures in the other (e.g., refusals). Nevertheless, their lexical and tonal choices remained consistently relational across both acts, indicating a stable interpersonal stance.

Trilinguals, by contrast, exhibited a coordinated profile: elaboration, core, and wrap components rose or fell together across both acts, suggesting unified discourse planning rather than act-by-act adjustment. While bilinguals maintained emotional continuity, trilinguals shifted

tone strategically—alternating between positivity and neutrality as context required. Conceptually, this shift from compensation (bilinguals) to coordination (trilinguals) signals a more globally regulated pragmatic system among trilinguals, in which form and tone are jointly managed under higher-level discourse control.

Third, the regression analyses demonstrated that external predictors systematically shaped textual, linguistic, and discursive behavior in both acts. Textual organization was influenced by the interplay of proficiency, language-use patterns, and aspects of emotional regulation. Higher L3 proficiency and sustained L2/L3 use in formal, or business contexts predicted more elaborated, syntactically cohesive request structures, while L2 writing proficiency and trilingual engagement in intimate contexts enhanced density and cohesion in refusals. Negative or restrictive attitudes toward multilingualism reduced elaboration and connector use, showing how affective stance can constrain structural range.

Lexical and verbal choices also reflected the mobilization of multilingual and affective resources: open-mindedness and social initiative predicted more personal, relational openings; proficiency supported balanced verb-tense distributions; and multilingual use broadened emotional and volitional expression, especially in refusals. L1 proficiency reinforced formulaic accuracy, though strong L1 reliance or negative L1 attitudes weakened contextual sensitivity.

The predictors also clarified discursive orientation: requests typically adopted rapport-building, cooperative phrasing, while refusals required boundary-setting that preserved respect and minimized conflict. Personality traits contributed uniquely beyond proficiency and use—cultural empathy aligned with elaborate and polite mitigation, social initiative with socially tuned clarity, and emotional stability with more compact and coherent request packaging.

Finally, the comparative synthesis of bilingual versus trilingual performance drew together these patterns across all dimensions. While both groups produced texts of comparable overall length, trilinguals demonstrated greater syntactic density and more cohesive linking, consolidating information in core components; bilinguals favored more linearly segmented structures that preserved clarity and fostered rapport.

Lexically, group differences were most pronounced in refusals: trilinguals relied on formally precise, structurally grounded verb choices and dense main-verb profiles, whereas bilinguals employed more cognitive and endearment resources to support justification and interpersonal warmth. Discursively, trilinguals deployed conventional politeness routines more extensively and

were more attuned to power asymmetries, while bilinguals maintained a steady relational tone and employed directness selectively when appropriate.

Taken together, chapter Four demonstrates the emergence of two coherent, functional, and distinct pragmatic systems**. Bilinguals enact a relational system**, in which L1 based pragmatics is the main performance driver. Their pragmatic choices are stimulated by relational considerations such as maintaining rapport, overt elaboration, ensuring clarity and indirectness through interpersonal cues.

Trilinguals follow a structurally coordinated system, supported by L2/L3 proficiency, regular multilingual use, and positive attitudes toward multilingualism, which together promote cohesive structuring pragmatic components, context-appropriate mitigation and politeness in both requests and refusals. The following chapter situates these profiles within broader theories of multilingual pragmatics and interprets their significance for understanding how pragmatic competence develops in diverse linguistic environments..

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

This chapter interprets the findings on bilingual and trilingual Jordanian EFL learners' production of English requests and refusals. The discussion situates the results within multilingual pragmatics (e.g; Safont-Jordà, 2005; Taguchi, 2019; Shafran & Stavans 2023), with the aim of clarifying what the present research contributes to the understanding of multilingual pragmatic competence. Chapter five is organized around the study's research questions and hypotheses.

Section 5.1 (Addressing RQ1 & RQ2): Pragmatic Profiles in English

This section examines participants' English pragmatic profiles. It analyzes how requests and refusals are formed through integrated choices in textual organization, lexical selection, and discursive strategies. A key focus is determining the extent to which these patterns are consistent across both speech acts, revealing a stable production style characteristic of each participant group.

Section 5.2 (Addressing RQ3): Background predictors

Here, the analysis shifts to the potential drivers behind these pragmatic profiles. It evaluates the role of various participant background factors, including language proficiency, self-assessed abilities, patterns of language use, language attitudes, and multicultural personality (MPQ) traits. The discussion emphasizes the anticipated prominence of language use habits and MPQ traits as the most significant predictors.

Section 5.3 (Addressing RQ4): The Bilingual-Trilingual Contrast

The final section synthesizes the findings by framing the bilingual and trilingual groups as operating within two distinct pragmatic systems for request and refusal production. It directly compares these groups, linking the observed differences to the overarching inquiry of whether trilingualism is associated with a more advanced, context-sensitive level of L2 pragmatic performance.

5.1. Participants' profiles in L2 pragmatic production

Profiling the participants' pragmatic production required looking not only at what they produced in requests and refusals, but at how the underlying indicators clustered and carried over across the two acts. These association patterns matter because they show whether pragmatic performance operates as a coherent organization of structure and stance, rather than as isolated choices triggered by a single task.

Two group profiles emerged. Among bilinguals, requests showed clear internal organization: longer productions went together with richer elaboration, greater syntactic layering, and a smaller proportional share of the head act. Refusals were equally systematic. When refusals became longer, bilinguals tended to package sequences around the refusal core, adding apologies, explanations, and preparatory moves in ways that concentrated the interpersonal work into multi-clause mitigation. Shafran and Stavans (2023) describe a comparable sequencing tendency in Arabic/Hebrew EFL refusals, and Beebe et al. (1990) similarly treat refusals as acts that regularly elicit structured face-management.

The trilinguals, in contrast, showed tight coordination across the two acts. Requests and refusals appeared to draw on the same discourse blueprint, with structural choices carrying over rather than being planned anew for each task. Taguchi and Roever (2020) discuss this kind of reliance on stable discourse frames as a feature of more developed L2 pragmatic performance.
The cross-act consistency also fits with the argument that multilingualism can sharpen metapragmatic awareness, making it easier to monitor discourse choices and redeploy pragmatic resources across tasks and languages (Martínez-Buffa & Safont, 2023).

These results address RQ1 by showing how pragmatic variables pattern within each speech act for bilinguals and trilinguals. Both groups displayed internal coherence, but the form it took was different. H1 predicted that bilinguals would show stronger internal associations in requests than in refusals, while trilinguals would show strong interrelationships in both acts. The trilingual data fits that prediction: robust interconnections characterized both requests and refusals, and the strong alignment across acts points to a highly integrated organization of pragmatic behavior.

The bilingual profile, however, did not follow the predicted asymmetry. Instead of showing weaker coherence in refusals, bilinguals produced refusals that were internally systematic in a mitigation-driven way, with coherence comparable to what appeared in requests. H1 therefore captures the trilingual pattern well, but only partially accounts for the bilingual system.

Thus, a full comparison of the two groups also requires moving beyond act-by-act description. The key issue is whether a speaker's way of organizing discourse carries across acts, whether the same pragmatic orientation that shapes requesting also shapes refusing, or whether each act elicits a different configuration of strategies and structural choices..

5.1.1. Cross-Act Coordination and Divergence in Requests and Refusals

A crucial question in profiling pragmatic competence is whether speakers carry a stable interactional style across speech acts or reorganize strategies specifically depending on the act. For our bilingual participants, the results align with established models of pragmatic transfer and act-specific adaptation. Bilinguals appeared to treat each speech act as a distinct pragmatic problem, allocating structural resources strategically based on perceived interactional demand.

Shafran's (2019) work on L1 Arabic speakers detailed their specific negotiation of directness and the use of politeness markers like "please" in English requests, indicating a conscious application of learned L2 pragmatic norms that can vary by context. However, the stability of their discursive strategies (lexical choice, tone) across acts, points to a deeper, consistent interpersonal style, likely anchored in L1 pragmatic preferences for relational work, as also noted in Shafran & Stavans (2023).

The trilingual group, however, was very contrasting. Their high degree of structural systematicity with strong correlations between the components of the requests and refusals shows that there was a unitary pragmatic production. This contradicts the prediction that structural independence should be act-specific. They did not vary the level of complexity based on the act but followed a consistent structural plan.

We argue this as a reflection of a more integrated and globally coordinated pragmatic system, likely honed in their dense multilingual environment. Managing three linguistic systems, including the typologically distinct Hungarian, may accelerate the development of a meta-pragmatic awareness that transcends individual acts and languages. This view is consistent with and expands upon research regarding the multilingual pragmatic advantage, which has argued that multilinguals can achieve the abstraction of pragmatics from a structured format to a more elastic, meta structural one (e.g., Cenoz & Gorter, 2023; Bardovi-Harlig & Stringer, 2017).

Theoretically, this group difference is revealing. It suggests that pragmatic development in multilinguals is not merely linear (from L1 to L2), but potentially qualitative, moving from a compartmentalized, adaptive model (as seen in our bilinguals) toward an integrated, systematic one (as seen in our trilinguals).

In that capacity, we remain partially correct in our assumption on participants' profiles. H2 proposed that textual features will show no correlation across the acts unlike discursive strategies which will correlate positively across requests and refusals in both groups. The hypothesis was

largely confirmed for the bilingual group: as predicted, their text-structural indicators showed little positive correlation (exhibiting instead a compensatory relationship) across acts, while their discursive strategies demonstrated stable, positive alignment.

Conversely, the hypothesis was not supported for the trilingual group. Contrary to the prediction, their text-structural indicators showed strong, positive cross-act correlations, indicating a unified organizational template that overrides assumed act-specific demands.

Thus, the clear contrast between the bilingual and trilingual pragmatic systems demonstrates that group-level outcomes are not uniform. Such variation in pragmatic organization is widely attributed in the literature to a confluence of individual learner variables (Sánchez-Hernández & Alcón-Soler, 2019).

To understand the specific factors that may underlie the development of a compartmentalized versus an integrated pragmatic approach, the discussion now turns to an analysis of the individual difference variables measured in this study. The next section contextualizes how these predictors have accounted the distinct patterns observed between the two groups within the broader literature.

5.2. Background Factors: Predictors of pragmatic performance

One objective of this research was to explore how individual differences and background variables relate to pragmatic performance in ESL. We examined a range of potential influences, including the participants' proficiency in each of their languages (L1 Arabic, L2 English, and for trilinguals L3 Hungarian), their patterns of language use in various social domains, their attitudes toward their languages, their self-perceived language skills ("can-do" abilities in speaking, writing, understanding, etc.), and their multicultural personality traits (as measured by the MPQ).

The findings provided a complex picture of how these factors interplay with pragmatic skills. Basically, they reinforce the view that L2 pragmatic competence is multifaceted and emergent from a confluence of linguistic, psychological, and experiential influences (Dewaele, 2010; Jessner, 2008; Taguchi, 2011). No single factor deterministically produced pragmatic success or failure; instead, multiple factors exerted modest influences on various aspects of pragmatic performance. We discuss these influences in turn, highlighting the most noteworthy predictors.

Language Proficiency

One prominent finding is that language proficiency, when examined in isolation for each language, emerged as a complex yet relatively weak predictor of pragmatic performance in

English. In our analysis, we looked at self-rated proficiency in L1 (Arabic), L2 (English), and L3 (Hungarian, for trilinguals only) to see if higher proficiency in any of these corresponded to more polite, more complex, or more effective speech act production. The results did not show a sweeping effect of proficiency, but rather some specific linkages that sometimes even ran counter to expectations.

In terms of L1 (Arabic) proficiency, we found that a stronger command of the native language did not consistently support better pragmatic performance in L2. In fact, it had a suppressing effect in some cases. In some areas it coincided with reduced use of certain English discourse-linking strategies, which is compatible with transfer-based accounts where entrenched L1 discourse habits can sometimes constrain L2 discourse choices (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008).

Interestingly, the impact of L1 proficiency was not uniform across all pragmatic features or speech acts. Higher L1 proficiency appeared to positively influence certain lexico-pragmatic softening devices in refusals. For example, those who rated themselves highly in Arabic proficiency tended to use more address terms and relational softeners in their English refusals, such as polite titles ("Sir," "Madam") or kinship-based endearments (calling a friend "brother" or "sister").

We interpret this as evidence of L1 pragmatic carryover: Jordanian Arabic routinely employs kin terms and honorifics as politeness resources (e.g., ḥabíbi/ḥabíbtī "my dear " or addressing someone as ustādh "sir/teacher" even if they are not literally a teacher) (Farghal & Shakir, 1994). Higher L1 proficiency may therefore strengthen reliance on these L1 routines when constructing politeness in the L2, in line with cross-linguistic influence accounts (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008).

On the contrary, higher L2 (English) proficiency primarily expanded what participants could do linguistically in English, especially when they needed elaboration and cohesion. With stronger command of English, requests and refusals were expressed with fuller justification, denser modification, and more clause linkage. Taguchi (2022) frames pragmatic development in similar terms, where growth in grammatical and lexical resources often precedes stable control over pragmatic appropriateness.

At the same time, increased L2 proficiency did not guarantee consistently appropriate pragmatic choices. In refusals, high proficiency promoted a combination of apologetic, explanatory, and mitigating components into a single integrated speech act, a possibility made dependent on fine-grained grammatical control (Roever, 2011). However, appropriateness

remains a strong function of sociocultural knowledge and interactive experience rather than grammatical forms alone (Bardovi-Harlig, 2013). A similar claim is made by Karimloo (2022), according to which, past a certain level of proficiency, the best predictor of performance becomes expressive ability rather than contextually sensitive pragmatic choice.

Beyond L1 and L2, the analysis also considered the more marginal, yet revealing, role of L3 (Hungarian) proficiency. For trilinguals, higher proficiency in Hungarian, a language typologically distinct from both Arabic and English predicted increased use of subordinate connectors in English refusals. This points not to sociopragmatic transfer, but to positive cross-linguistic influence at the level of discourse-structuring competence (Safont-Jordà, 2005).

We should note that Hungarian proficiency was the weakest of the three languages for our trilinguals (since they were late starters in Hungarian), and English was their dominant daily language in Hungary for study. This likely constrained the measurable impact of L3 proficiency. Had the L3 been more dominant, we might have seen a different pattern.

As it stands, our data suggest that though knowledge of an additional language can subtly support pragmatic structuring in the L2, the effect was narrowly observed in one aspect (subordination in refusals).

In "*the syntax of Hungarian*," Kiss (2002) examines the language's clause combining via embedding, focus constructions, and subordination. She shows that Hungarian allows a wide range of subordinate clauses (complement clauses, adverbial clauses, relative clauses), introduced by particles such as *hogy* ("that"), *mert* ("because"), *ha* ("if"). Arguably, familiarity with Hungarian language structural system may have strengthened clause-linking in English refusal.

In conclusion, proficiency shaped L2 pragmatic performance in specific ways, but its overall effect remained limited. Notably, increases in proficiency are less predictive of pragmatic performance beyond an intermediate level, and the gap between linguistic knowledge and pragmatic behavior occurs (Bardovi-Harlig, 2013; Karimloo, 2022). It is precisely this gap that directs our discussion toward the examination of how learners' self-perceived language abilities may more directly govern their pragmatic choices in interaction.

Language skills (can-do)

Some Language skills stood out as influential predictors of pragmatic choices. Learners with higher self-rated language understanding used less negative declaratives (e.g., *"I won't do that"*), Kasper and rose (2002) claim that stronger language comprehension leads users to read the

situation more accurately and choose refusals that are less likely abrupt or made with a negative tone.

Similarly, requests with fewer wrap components were associated with higher speaking skills. Ikeda (2017) notes that confident language users streamline their discourse and use less fixed or routine expressions. Apparently, respondents confident with their speaking skill didn't feel the need to over explain their refusals or requests.

In sum, we conclude that though our reported participants' language skills are self-measured, they did have an impact on some pragmatic choices. Surprisingly, a study by Sánchez-Hernández and Alcón-Soler (2019) showed that self-perceived language skills were a significant and independent predictor of their success in acquiring pragmatic routines abroad, often outweighing the influence of general language proficiency.

However, we predicted patterns of actual language use to be a stronger stimulator of pragmatic performance. Our predisposition is supported by usage-based models of acquisition, which argue that pragmatic competence is fundamentally shaped by repeated contextualized exposure (Ellis, 2008; Barron, 2003). Therefore, we discuss language use practices as a powerful determinant of pragmatic choice next.

Language Use

Language use patterns emerged as one of the most robust and consistent predictors of pragmatic performance in our study. "Language use" refers to how frequently and in which domains participants engaged with their languages (L1 Arabic, L2 English, and L3 Hungarian), whether with family, friends, colleagues, teachers, or for purposes such as entertainment, academic work, employment, or social media.

The influence of language use was mostly defined by social context. We observed that participants who used Arabic intimately or for entertainment produced more elaborated, polite English refusals. a body of work documented a distinct Jordanian Arabic pragmatic style.

Research consistently shows that Jordanian speakers favor indirectness and elevated levels of verbal politeness in face-threatening acts, from refusals (Huwari & Al-Shboul, 2016) to criticism (Al Kayed et al., 2020). This tendency is attributed to deeply rooted cultural values that prioritize social harmony, relational maintenance, and face-work. As Hammouri and Al-Khanji (2023) affirm, these L1 cultural schemas directly influence L2's pragmatic performance.

Conversely, L2 uses in academic, professional, and business domains directly correlated with more polite, cohesive, and structurally complex production. This is plausible given what register research shows about institutional discourse, repeated use in those contexts supports routinization of these patterns over time including clarity, justification, and standardized mitigation (Biber, 2006; Schauer, 2009).

However, an unexpected pragmatic outcome emerged due to intimate social distance. Higher L2/L3 use with close contacts was linked to more, not less use of politeness markers. Though unusual, this can be explained by "over-mark" politeness in linguistically asymmetric personal relationships to ensure harmony, a compensatory strategy in lingua franca communication (Kirkpatrick, 2010).

In principal, we argue that language use frequency and context were among the strongest predictors of L2 pragmatic performance, surpassing even proficiency in many cases (see tables 11, 12). Our claims comply with the notion that pragmatic competence is fundamentally usage-based (Barron, 2003; Taguchi, 2011): learners internalize norms not merely through learning the language, but through *using* it in socially meaningful contexts.

Thus, if multilanguage use for different purposes constitutes a driving factor for pragmatic performance, then a speaker's attitudes toward their languages may shape how they process and engage with that input. As Sánchez-Hernández and Alcón-Soler (2019) note, affective feelings about a language (attitudes) can filter exposure and motivate pragmatic adaptation.

Language Attitudes

Attitudes have been far less investigated as prominent factors in shaping L2 pragmatics than proficiency, exposure, and instruction (Ren, 2022; Sánchez-Hernández & Alcón-Soler, 2019). Interestingly, the findings revealed that some participant's attitudes toward their languages differently predicted how they pragmatically performed in some respects, especially attitudes towards Arabic as a predictor.

For example, participants who expressed positive attitudes toward their L1 (Arabic) and strong cultural attachment tended to predict more succinct English requests using significantly fewer words, and fewer compound sentences (see table 10).

This logical outcome suggests that a secure and positive linguistic identity can diminish the perceived need for excessive elaboration or mitigation of one's communicative intent, thereby producing a more direct mode of expression.

To put it in perspective, Dewaele's (2007) research, which identifies linguistic self-confidence as a critical factor underpinning both fluency and pragmatic effectiveness in communication. Moreover, those who view their L1 more positively L1 or are comfortable with their multilingual identity may feel less need to overelaborate (Gardner, 2010)

In contrast, participants who were more oriented toward the target language culture (and possibly less tied to their L1 norms) with negative attitude towards Arabic consistently led them to over-explain. For example, findings showed that they were more elaborative in requests. In refusals, the effect was even more dramatic, with a massive increase in words like "and" and "but" in coordinate connectors, building long, complex justifications. Interestingly, this makes a strategic effort to manage perception.

It seems that when participants felt negatively about their Arabic, it has led them to do extra relational work in English by trying extremely hard to be polite and thorough, perhaps because they fear their communication will otherwise be misunderstood or seem rude. This pattern of anxiety leading to over-monitoring and hyper-correction is well-documented in language learning research (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002).

Contrary to theoretical expectations, it was striking that all statistically significant predictors related to bilingualism were negative attitudes, opposing what theories of positive psychology might suggest (e.g., Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014). Apparently to our jordanian participants, the predictive power of these negative attitudes highlighted their role in shaping L2 communicative behavior, potentially overshadowing the effects of more positive perceptions in being an Arabic-English bilingual (See table 18).

Table 18. Negative bilingualism attitude as a predictor of pragmatic performance

Pragmatic Feature	Speech Act	β	p	Interpretation
Politeness Markers	Refusals	$\beta = -0.37$	$p = .003$	Withdrawal from relational work and reduced engagement in polite mitigation.
Endearment Terms	Requests	$\beta = -0.09$	$p = .048$	Less use of personalized, affiliative forms of address.
Coordinate Connectors	Requests	$\beta = -0.12$	$p = .011$	Reduced syntactic cohesion and more fragmented discourse.
Compulsion Verbs	Refusals	$\beta = 0.03$	$p = .020$	Framing refusals as externally imposed obligations rather than personal decisions.
Positive Interrogatives	Refusals	$\beta = 0.04$	$p = .015$	Use of questioning as a distancing or deflective strategy.

β = standardized regression coefficient. p values are two-tailed

Participants who held negative attitudes toward their bilingual identity appear to consciously or subconsciously reject the perceived effort required for L2 politeness, perhaps perceiving this effort as an extension of the challenges associated with managing two languages. As Dewaele (2013) argues, negative emotions can deplete the cognitive resources available for the demanding, high-order task of pragmatic processing. When the bilingual experience itself is a source of negative affect, learners may conserve resources by jettisoning what they deem 'non-essential' polite features, resulting in a blunt, transactional style.

Furthermore, the shift towards compulsion verbs and interrogatives represents a transfer of agency and blame. By framing refusals as matters of external obligation ('I have to') or by posing them as questions ('Wouldn't you agree I can't?'), the speaker externalized the responsibility for the face-threatening act. This is a face-management strategy, but one of deflection rather than engagement (Spencer-Oatey, 2008). It protects the speaker's own face by avoiding a direct, personal refusal, but it does so at the cost of the interlocutor's face needs, potentially creating social friction. Consequently, a negative bilingual attitude does not just predict less politeness; it predicts a fundamental recalibration of communicative strategy from collaborative and affiliative to detached and transactional."

Finally, trilingual participants' views on trilingualism were not as informative, yet predicted two noteworthy associations. Trilingual Jordanians who had a positive attitude to Arabic-English-Hungarian trilingualism generated fewer words in requests and were more direct. This finding is documented in work by Safont Jordà (2005), who argues that complex linguistic repertoires can enhance metacognitive control over pragmatic strategies.

In contrast, participants who held negative views on being trilingual produced refusals that were significantly less elaborate, using fewer wrap components. Reduction in "wrap" points toward a sense of disengagement or pragmatic fatigue. It appears the cognitive and affective load of managing multiple languages may deplete the resources needed for the careful work of face-management, a phenomenon noted by Dewaele & Nakano (2013) in their research on the emotional burdens of multilingualism.

The predictive power of language attitudes in shaping our participants' pragmatic performance has extended the scope of our research, calling for a deeper analysis of the underlying psyche and stable personality traits that might predispose individuals to such attitudes and, consequently,

predict their speech act production. Hence, the results of the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ) as a predictor are discussed in detail next.

Multicultural Personality Traits (MPQ)

The personality analysis foregrounds two MPQ traits as the main drivers of pragmatic variation in our study: cultural empathy and social initiative. Most of the meaningful differences in mitigation, politeness marking, and directness across requests and refusals can be traced back to these two dispositions, whereas the remaining MPQ dimensions mainly refine style rather than reshaping it.

What we found complies with recent work showing that empathy and individual differences shape mitigation and politeness choices in L2 communication. For instance, higher dispositional empathy is linked to greater use of mitigating formulations in speech acts (Ruytenbeek, 2025). More broadly, research on individual differences in L2 pragmatics shows that traits and learner profiles meaningfully affect how polite routines and stance markers are learned and deployed (Sánchez-Hernández et. al, 2024)

Logically, our findings resonate with the perspective of intercultural pragmatics and rapport management (Spencer-Oatey, 2008), successful communication requires both the ability to interpret social context and the willingness to act within it. Here, cultural empathy and social initiative are the driving cultural traits behind pragmatic behavior.

However, it is also important to remember what Ishihara and Cohen (2020) note that context can override personality. Even an empathetic person might be terse if they are in a rush or if the context is very informal. And a less empathetic person can learn to follow politeness formulas in a foreign language if explicitly taught, even if it is not heartfelt. Thus, while personality gives a push or inclination, pragmatic skills can certainly be trained.

Bringing together all the above individual difference factors, we can draw a composite picture of what influenced the pragmatic performance. Our 3rd RQ addressed the extent to which and in what direction external factors predict pragmatic production. Our results indicate that experience-based factors (like use) had the strongest effects, followed by stable personal factors (like empathy or initiative), while sheer proficiency played a smaller role than one might assume.

These findings confirm H3 in part, while refining its scope. The hypothesis correctly identified language use and MPQ traits as the strongest external predictors, which the data robustly support. However, the results also underscore that **la**nguage attitudes and self-perceived skills ("can-

do") exerted major influence, situating themselves alongside MPQ traits as crucial internal filters that shape how environmental exposure is converted into pragmatic choice. Therefore, while H3 accurately highlights the primacy of use and personality, the predictive landscape includes a slightly broader set of key psychological variables than initially hypothesized.

Ultimately, it is important to note that the predictive tendencies identified in the previous section operated across the full sample and did not belong exclusively to either bilinguals or trilinguals. These patterns clarified how background variables shaped pragmatic behavior in general. However, the central aim of this research is not merely to describe individual predictors, but to determine whether and in what ways the presence of an additional language distinguishes the pragmatic performance of bilinguals and trilinguals. The discussion now shifts from explaining what shapes pragmatic behavior to understanding how these influences predict distinct pragmatic systems for bilinguals and trilinguals..

5.3. Toward a Relational vs. Structural Model of Jordanian Multilingual Pragmatic Competence

A central objective of this study was to compare bilingual and trilingual Jordanian multilinguals' performance of L2 requests and refusals in order to clarify what "pragmatic competence" looks like under different multilingual profiles. This final comparison draws together the chapter's logical outcomes and interprets the most salient group differences as evidence for two partially distinct approaches in pragmatic production: a relational approach more characteristic of the Jordan-based bilinguals, and a structural approach, more characteristic of the Hungary-based trilinguals.

The pragmatic performance of the bilinguals was characterized by a system rooted in the sociocultural norms Arabic. We support this conclusion by the bilinguals' constant use of kinship terms, endearments, cognitive-state verbs, and proper names which serve to express solidarity and mutual face-work (See table 18S). This pragmatic outcome is well documented in literary work of Arabic discourse etiquette, where such linguistic devices are central to maintaining social harmony and minimizing face threat (Al-Khatib, 2001; Jawad, 2023).

Moreover, their strong, positive attitudes toward their Arabic identity likely motivated the maintenance of these transferred L1 strategies. Research on language attitudes and identity indicates that a secure, valued L1 self-concept can reduce learners' motivation to fully adapt to L2 pragmatic norms, as adopting foreign conventions may be perceived as a threat to the authentic

linguistic self (Dewaele, 2015; Isabelli-García, 2006). Consequently, their use of Arabic relational softeners was not merely a default due to proficiency limitations, but also a strategy of identity affirmation. Hence, the relationally-anchored system of the bilinguals.

On the other hand, the trilinguals approach in speech act production depended on a profile of multiple language use and a pro multilingualism attitude. Aronin and Singleton (2012) describe this as an important motivational force in multilingual development, and it helps account for the trilinguals' openness to adopting pragmatic norms beyond the L1-based.

Their pragmatic performance can also be linked to sustained use of L2/L3 in interactional settings. Work on L3 users shows that regular communication in multiple non-native languages can recalibrate how speakers manage address and formality, shifting them toward the conventions of the multilingual settings they repeatedly engage with (Mayo & Agirre, 2019). This offers a straightforward explanation for the trilinguals' heavier use of informal address terms: forms such as first names and routine workplace titles are reinforced for them through repeated use in academic and professional contexts.

This final outcome corresponds to our 4th hypothesis, which predicted that trilinguals would outperform bilinguals across several dimensions of L2 speech-act production. The findings partially support H4 but, more importantly, refine the notion of "outperformance" by revealing it to be a matter of qualitatively different pragmatic systemization rather than a uniform superiority.

The trilinguals' "outperformance" is clear in structural coherence and adaptability to multilingual pragmatic norms, confirming a significant advantage in managing discourse in decontextualized, institutional settings. However, the bilinguals' relationally-grounded system represents an alternative form of pragmatic competence in cultural identity maintenance.

Thus, the core contribution of this comparison is not merely to rank groups but to delineate the *conditions* that lead to different pragmatic orientations: one system optimized for relational continuity within a strong L1 cultural frame, and another optimized for structural clarity and flexibility across multiple contexts.

Nevertheless, It is important to acknowledge that the bilingual and trilingual groups differed not only in multilingual experience, but also in age and educational attainment, with the trilingual group being, on average, older and more highly educated. These demographic differences are structurally intertwined with multilingual opportunity contexts and therefore cannot be fully disentangled from multilingualism itself. Consequently, the findings should not be interpreted as

evidence of a causal advantage attributable solely to the number of languages known, but rather as reflecting system-level pragmatic orientations shaped by the combined effects of multilingual experience, education, and sociolinguistic environment. In other words, the study advances an interpretive, not causal, account of multilingual pragmatic development.

In sum, the discussion of results in this chapter, while specific to Jordanian multilinguals, is hoped to relate to the general field of multilingual pragmatics. Building on this empirical base, the next chapter sums up the findings of our study, and it's contribution to future research and educational practice.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

This dissertation was driven by a central concern with the pragmatic competence of two different multilingual Jordanian groups in producing L2 speech acts. The objective was not to determine who performs more appropriately, but to uncover the linguistic and cultural variables that characterize each group's pragmatic ability. The findings show that pragmatic competence does not develop uniformly across multilingual profiles; Instead, it is built through different systems leading bilinguals and trilinguals to construct speech acts in systematically different ways: bilinguals draw on a relationally grounded pragmatic system shaped by L1-based sociolinguistic profile, whereas trilinguals rely on a structurally explicit and globally coordinated system driven by broader multilingual experience and use.

Therefore, the general outcome calls for a wider theoretical shift in pragmatic research: the move away from a singular notion of "appropriate" L2 behavior toward viewing pragmatic competence as a network of strategically mobilized linguistic, social, and cognitive resources that reflect the contexts in which multilingual speakers participate.

We conclude that learners develop pragmatic ability through the resources and communicative routines available to them. What emerges is not a better or weaker system, but two different forms of competence shaped by distinct linguistic histories: one oriented toward interpersonal connection, and another toward structural clarity and explicitness. This conceptualization frames pragmatic competence as adaptive and dynamic, rather than as a uniform end-state.

As a results, this understanding has direct pedagogical relevance. If pragmatic competence is shaped by the interaction of language use, identity, and communicative ecology, then L2 instruction in Jordan and in general cannot rely on deficit models that treat L1-based strategies as failures.

6.1. Pedagogical implications

This theoretical advancement carries several pedagogical implications, particularly for the Jordanian EFL context, where classroom practice has long been shaped by contrastive pragmatics and normative assumptions about "appropriate" L2 behavior. Much of the established literature especially the work of influential Jordanian scholars such as Al-Khatib and Al-Ghaweri has tended to treat L1-driven pragmatic patterns (e.g., indirectness, religious invocations, relational appeals, affective softening) as pragmatic failures that must be corrected. We argue that this risks marginalizing the sociopragmatic competence that Jordanian learners already possess.

The present study challenges this deficit framing. It shows that the communicative strategies used by bilingual Jordanian speakers are not random errors or fossilized habits, but a coherent relational system grounded in their L1 sociolinguistic system.

At the same time, the findings highlight that trilingual experience reorganizes pragmatic ability in fundamental ways: sustained multi-language use with multilingual oriented attitudes and multicultural personal traits foster structurally explicit, highly coordinated, and contextually adaptable pragmatic ability.

For pedagogy, this means that the task is not to erase learners' L1-based pragmatics, nor to impose a single model of "target-like" behavior, but to broaden learners' repertoires so they can operate flexibly across intercultural contexts. Accordingly, the study motivates an evidence-based pedagogical approach centered on the following principles:

- **Valuing the L1 Repertoire**: A key pedagogical implication of this study is the need to validate relationally grounded strategies as effective and coherent, rather than treating them as errors. This directly challenges a prevalent deficit model in the Jordanian context, where scholars have often characterized L1 Arabic pragmatic transfer including preferences for indirectness, ritualistic politeness, religious invocations, and relational appeals as interference or a lack of pragmatic competence in English.

  This study's findings offer a powerful, evidence-based counter-narrative. The strategic, culturally-based style of Jordanian bilinguals is not a collection of deficits but a systematic application of a deeply ingrained sociopragmatic competence. Therefore, instruction should move beyond simply correcting these patterns. Instead, learners benefit from a pedagogical approach that employs comparative pragmatics, where the functional equivalence of different strategies is made explicit.

  For example, instructors can lead activities showing how a Jordanian Arabic speaker's use of a term of endearment (like 'umri or habibi) to build rapport serves a similar relational function as the more formulaic use of "I was wondering if..." or "Would it be possible..." in English. This frames the learners' existing knowledge not as a hindrance but as a foundation upon which to build a broader, more adaptable pragmatic repertoire. The goal is not to erase the L1-based framework but to supplement it, empowering students to make conscious, strategic choices about when their communication is best served by a

relationally grounded approach versus a structurally explicit one, depending on the intercultural context.

- **Instruction beyond pragmatic forms**: We argue that pedagogy should approach pragmatic ability more holistically through two channels: first, by designing learning experiences that investigate authentic language use practices across varied domains, and second, by assessing learners own multilingual identities and multicultural values. This strategy arguably combines the broader system of factors that influence pragmatic development and acquisition beyond conventional methods of instruction.
- **Fostering metapragmatic adaptability rather than adherence to a single "correct" style.**

  Since the study demonstrated that bilinguals and trilinguals achieve pragmatic success through different, context-responsive systems, the pedagogical goal should be to help learners develop the strategic awareness to shift between relationally grounded and structurally explicit modes of communication. In practice, this means teaching students how to read situational cues, evaluate power dynamics, and decide which strategies best serve their communicative goals.

In conclusion, this study aligns with the body of research that regards pragmatic ability as a multifaceted construct, and that pragmatic competence is not merely achieved through a unitary set of skills. Both groups demonstrated pragmatic ability through different approaches. For bilinguals, competence is realized through efficient, culturally-congruent communication that prioritizes shared understanding and interpersonal rapport. For trilinguals, it is realized through elaborated, complex explicitly mitigated communication that prioritizes clarity and conventional politeness.

Recognizing this diversity in pragmatic development provides a solid foundation for pedagogical interpretation, yet it also highlights several methodological and contextual boundaries within which these findings must be understood. Thus, it is important to acknowledge the study's limitations, those inherent to the design, the instruments, and the participant profiles which shape the scope and generalizability of the conclusions presented.

6.2. Research Limitations

No study is without limitations, while the present research offers additional rich knowledge to the scope of multilingual pragmatic competence, several limitations must be acknowledged, as they

may have delineated the boundaries of our study. Highlighting these limitations is crucial as they not only provide a careful measured interpretation of our results but also provide a roadmap for a more sound future research in the field of pragmatics.

- **Sample Size and Composition:** The sample for this study was relatively small (N = 52) participants. A small sample size means that some effects or correlations might not be detected due to limited statistical power. For example, there may be subtle differences in pragmatic strategies that exist in the population but did not appear significant in our sample simply because we had too few participants to observe them reliably. Moreover, the participant group may not be representative of all bilinguals or trilinguals; most of our participants were university students on either spectrum. This homogeneity could introduce sample bias their pragmatic behavior might systematically differ from, say, older adults, people from different regions, or those with different levels of exposure to English.
- **Reliance on self-reported data:** Given the online and unsupervised nature of data collection, it is not possible to fully exclude the possibility that some written Discourse Completion Task (DCT) responses were assisted by external resources, including generative AI tools or peer consultation. While this constitutes a limitation with respect to the absolute authenticity of individual responses, it does not invalidate the study's comparative aims. The analysis focuses on systematic group-level patterns and relative differences across bilingual and trilingual participants, which remain interpretable even if occasional technological mediation occurred. Moreover, the increasing presence of AI-assisted writing reflects contemporary communicative ecologies, rendering such mediation an ecologically realistic factor rather than a purely methodological threat.
- **Online Data Collection Constraints:** The initial data collection for the study was carried out through an online form due to [reasons, e.g. COVID-19 restrictions]. While online administration has benefits like convenience and standardized delivery, it also imposes some constraints. We could not supervise participants in person as they completed the DCT and questionnaires, so we relied on their engagement and honesty. Though there was a second round of data collection to ensure we elicited the most reliable data possible, The lack of direct supervision may have prevented opportunities for clarification or elicitation of what we exactly aim to achieve with our research.

- **Multifaceted Analytical Scope:** The study's comprehensive design, which analyzed two speech acts, two distinct learner profiles, and an array of external variables, is both a strength and a limitation. While this complexity is a strength in capturing a holistic view of pragmatic ability, it also presents a challenge in maintaining a singular focus. At times, the complex net of variables potentially distracted a clear streamlined narrative of the findings.

6.3. Future Studies

Future studies should pursue larger and more demographically diverse samples, incorporating participants of varying professional backgrounds, ages, gender, educational background, languages, and regional origins. all of which would create a richer tapestry representative of the pragmatic ability in English request and refusal formulations in different multilingual populations.

Future research would also benefit from a methodological shift that prioritizes qualitative depth. While self-assessment tools provide valuable data, they can at times lack measured validity. To more accurately assess metrics like language proficiency, standardized tests (such as IELTS or institutional proficiency exams) could be administered. To gain deeper insight into pragmatic decision-making beyond what Discourse Completion Tasks (DCTs) can capture, methodologies such as recorded role-play scenarios or the analysis of naturally occurring interactions (e.g., in classroom or digital settings) would provide direct evidence of pragmatic behavior.

Finally, the study's breadth. Multiple pragmatic variables alongside several external predictors strengthened coverage but increased interpretive density. With so many components to address at once, some effects are easier to describe than to isolate, and the overall picture can become more difficult to translate into clear, parsimonious conclusions. Future research would benefit from designs but are advised to prioritize one focal pragmatic construct as the central outcome and treat the remaining variables as controls or secondary moderators. This is not a call to introduce a new construct beyond the present study; rather, it is a call to re-center one component already included here (e.g., mitigation or politeness) and examine it with a narrower predictor set and more targeted modeling across contexts.

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Appendix1

Multilingualism Questionnaire

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1DqQsBAK4ozsBIgPfH4wm-FPulzCg90CqcVzJIZzbcF4/edit

Dear Participant.
I am a doctoral student in the Multilingualism Doctoral School at the University of Pannonia/Hungary. In my dissertation, I wish to explore the special characteristics of multilingual Arabic-English speakers. The following questionnaire consists of sections, each containing a different sub-questionnaire addressing typical issues that are unique to multilingual people around the world.
The questionnaires will be used anonymously and the only items that identify the respondents will not be used for any purpose other than consistency in your responses. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions, so your answer should be as truthful to you and your thoughts as possible. I kindly ask that you respond to all questions.
If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to contact me at: [Ibra.rawashdeh@gmail.com]
Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire, your help is much appreciated.

Personal Information

Please provide this information for the purposes of coordination of your data.

Gender:

Male ○
Female ○
Prefer not to say ○

Which age range do you belong to?
24-18 ○
32-25 ○
40-33 ○
41 and above ○

Where were you born?

Jordan ○
Elsewhere ○

Where do you currently reside?
Jordan ○
Hungary ○

What is your education level?
High School Education ○
Bachelor's degree ○
Master's degree ○
Ph.D degree ○
Post doctorate degree ○

Language Repertoire

In this section, we wish to better understand your linguistic repertoire on all the languages and abilities you have in them.

What is your native tongue?

Arabic ○
English ○
Other ○

List and rate all your languages, please. For example, Arabic: native, English; second, etc.

1. Extremely poor 2. Good 3. Excellent 4. Native like

Arabic

English

Hungarian

Language Use (people)

In this section we would like to know which language(s) you normally use when interacting with different people.

1. L1 2. L2 3. L3

Mother

Father

Siblings

Friends in the classroom

Friends on social media

Teachers/superiors/bosses

Elderly people

Neighbors

Relatives

Your children

Language Use (purpose): This section focuses on the purposes for using each of your languages.

1. L1 2. L2 3. L3

Participating in Religious activities

Reading Newspapers

Reading literature

Reading for professional/academic purposes

Listening to music

Listening to the Radio (news ,talkshows, etc.)

Shopping

Playing sports

Interacting at work (with co-workers and superiors)

Writing letters or E-mails

Conducting errands

Language Attitudes: Please respond to each statement in terms of the degree to which you agree with it. Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree ☐

1. It is important to be able to speak both Arabic and English equally well

2. I only need to speak Arabic in addition to English

3. Children get confused when learning Arabic and English at the same time they are learning Spanish an additional language

4. Speaking both English and Arabic helps me to get a job

5. Speaking both Englsih and Hungarian helps me to get a job

6. Speaking two languages is not difficult

7. Speaking three languages is not difficult

8. Knowing/using both Arabic and Englsih makes people mix the two and they sound really bad

9. I think my children should be able to read and write in both Arabic and English

10. I think my children should be able to read and write in all three languages – Arabic, English and Hungarian/another language

11. People who speak Arabic and English can have more friends than those who speak only one language

12. People who speak English and Hungarian can have more friends than those who speak only one language

13. People regard you as more educated if you know more than one language

14. Speaking Arabic helps me keep my identity

15. Speaking English helps me keep my identity

16. Speaking Hungarian helps me keep my identity

17. Speaking English is most important for my professional life

18. Speaking Hungarian is most important for my professional life

19. I like the Arabic language more than Hungarian or English

20. I like the English language more than the Arabic or Hungarian

21. I like the Hungarian language more than the Arabic or English

22. Arabic is a difficult language

23. English is a difficult language

Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ): this questionnaire has been developed and used worldwide as a stable tool to study multilingual people's characteristics.

To follow you will find a series of statements to which you will have to choose on a scale from 1 (totally not applicable) 2.(hardly applicable) 3.(moderately applicable) 4. (largely applicable) to 5 (completely applicable) whether this statement characterizes you.

1. Pays attention to the emotions of others

2. Is a good listener

3. Senses when others get irritated

4. Getting to know others profoundly

5. Enjoys other people's stories

6. Notices when someone is in trouble

7. Sympathizes with others

8. Sets others at ease

9. Works according to strict rules

10. Works according to plan

11. Works according to strict scheme

12. Looks for regularity in life

13. Likes routine

14. Wants predictability

15. Functions best in a familiar setting

16. Has fixed habits

17. Takes the lead

18. Leaves initiative to others to make contacts

19. Finds it difficult to make contacts

20. Takes initiative

21. Is inclined to speak out

22. Is often the driving force behind thing

23. Makes contacts easily

24. Is reserved

25. Worries

26. Gets upset easily

27. Is nervous

28. Is apt to feel lonely

29. Keeps calm when things don't go well

30. Is insecure

31. Is under pressure

32. Is not easily hurt

33. Tries out various approaches

34. Is looking for new ways to attain his or her goal

35. Starts a new life easily

36. Likes to imagine solutions to problems

37. Is a trendsetter in societal developments

38. Has feeling for what's appropriate in culture

39. Seeks people from different backgrounds

40. Has broad range of interests

Pragmatically Situated Interactions

In this section, you have different situations taken from everyday life interactions when people engage in speech that requests something from someone or refuses something to someone. Please write out your answers in English to the best of your ability. There is no correct or incorrect answer except your very own one.

Refusals.

1) You are walking down the street in a hurry to get somewhere; a stranger stops you asking to take some pictures of him/her. What would you say to decline their request?

2) Some relatives come to visit you and ask to match make your daughter with their son who is really fond of her. You consult with your spouse and daughter, and you all agree that the answer is NO. What would you say to refuse their request?

3) You are a secretary, and your boss asked you to hold all calls and appointments. A person, who drove for an hour, walks in requesting to meet your boss. What would you say to refuse his/her request?

4) Your boss has two cinema tickets, and he/she invites you to go watch a movie together, but you have important things to do, and you cannot go. What would you say to him/her to refuse the invitation?

5) You and your spouse are invited to a friend's wedding, and they insist that you both attend, but your spouse does NOT want to go. What would you say to decline his/her invitation?

6) Your friend invites you to join a study group, but you prefer to study alone. What would you say to refuse his invitation?

7) You need a certain haircut for an event, your barber isn't available, and your uncle who is still training to become a barber offers to give you a haircut. What would you say to refuse his offer?

8) A stranger offers you a cigarette at a party, but you don't smoke. What would you say to refuse his/her offer?

9) You are a lecturer at a university, one of your students suggests that you postpone your exam to next week, but that does not fit your very busy schedule. What would you say to refuse his/her suggestion?

Requests.

11) Your coworker (Lisa) invites you to an authentic Chinese restaurant for dinner. When the food comes, there are only chopsticks, and you are not very good at using them. To avoid the embarrassment of dropping food all over, you want to ask for a fork/spoon. What would you tell your coworker?

12) You are the principal of a high school, you want to ask the chemistry teacher (Sarah) to give the students more lab hours, what would you tell her ?

13) You are having a job meeting with your supervisor (john), you notice that he is not wearing a mask, though it is mandatory. What would you say to him?

14) You occupy a nurse position at a public hospital, you want to ask the attending doctor (Dina) for a sick leave, what would you say to her?

15) You are the head chef at a hotel restaurant, you notice that one of your sous-chefs (Kareem)is always running late to work, you want to ask him to be on time. What would you say to him?

16) You are having some friends over for dinner. Your roommate has had a bad week and left a messy kitchen the night before. You want to ask him/her to clean the kitchen. What would you say?

17) Your sibling borrowed a watch from you and now you want it back as you have an important event. What would you say?

18) You have worked at a bookstore for a long time, your boss regards you as one of the best workers, and therefore, you decide to ask for a raise. What would you tell him/her?

19) Your roommate snores loudly while s/he sleeps and you are a very light sleeper, you want to suggest him/her to seek medical help. What would you say?

Appendix 2

Tables and figures

Table 4 Full matrix. Correlations within REQUEST speech act indicators of pragmatic categories by BILINGUALS

Textual		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Length	1 # Clauses	1																		
	2 # Words	**0.923****	1																	
	3 Density	0.38	**0.693****	1																
Component	4 Elaboration	**0.774****	**0.694****	0.29	1															
	5 Core	**-0.763****	**-0.688****	-0.25	**-0.623****	1														
	6 Wrap	**0.646****	**0.615****	0.27	0.31	**-0.531****	1													
Clause type	7 +Imperative	**-0.483***	**-0.398***	-0.03	**-0.405***	**0.470***	-0.22	1												
	8 -Imperative	-0.33	-0.34	-0.24	-0.26	0.13	**-0.393***	0.09	1											
	9 +Declarative	**0.650****	**0.671****	**0.412***	**0.480***	**-0.418***	**0.591****	-0.35	**-0.407***	1										
	10 -Declarative	-0.13	-0.16	-0.19	-0.22	-0.03	-0.29	-0.07	0.33	-0.28	1									
	11 +Interrogative	-0.31	-0.23	-0.04	**-0.540****	0.16	0.07	-0.14	-0.12	-0.13	0.10	1								
	12 -Interrogative	0.06	0.02	-0.04	-0.01	-0.23	**0.644****	-0.08	-0.18	0.16	-0.30	0.23	1							
Sentence type	13 Simple	**-0.418***	-0.35	-0.09	**-0.591****	0.38	0.05	0.10	0.05	0.05	0.24	**0.578****	0.29	1						
	14 Complex	0.25	0.19	-0.03	0.30	-0.19	0.06	0.29	0.34	0.20	0.01	**-0.402***	-0.24	**-0.400***	1					
	15 Compound	0.19	0.33	**0.435***	-0.01	-0.25	0.06	-0.06	-0.24	0.29	0.05	0.03	-0.19	-0.25	-0.05	1				
Connecting	16 Deictic	-0.18	-0.23	-0.29	-0.19	0.25	-0.12	-0.14	-0.18	-0.05	-0.10	0.13	-0.04	0.11	-0.24	0.20	1			
	17 Sequential	-0.11	-0.14	-0.14	-0.06	-0.11	-0.21	0.03	0.00	0.03	-0.04	0.09	-0.07	-0.02	-0.03	0.25	-0.07	1		
	18 Subordinate	**0.687****	**0.621****	0.16	0.25	**-0.529****	**0.479***	**-0.438***	-0.10	**0.440***	0.04	0.07	-0.12	-0.15	0.19	0.29	0.09	-0.22	1	
	19 Coordinate	**0.409***	**0.509****	**0.406***	**0.441***	**-0.438***	0.14	-0.09	-0.12	0.17	0.17	-0.02	-0.14	-0.16	0.20	0.29	0.14	0.09	0.20	1
Linguistic		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16			
Lexicon: opening	1 Opening	1																		
	2 Proper names	**0.663****	1																	
	3 Title informal	0.10	0.379	1																
	4 Endearment	**0.580****	**0.430***	-0.051	1															

Lexicon: Verb Type	5 MainV	-0.183	-0.05	-0.05	0.00	1														
	6 ModalV	-0.038	0.034	-0.31	-0.03	0.08	1													
	7 ISVcog	0.00	-0.07	0.10	0.01	0.17	-0.13	1												
	8 ISVemo	0.24	0.23	**0.396***	-0.03	0.16	-0.31	0.07	1											
	9 ISVvol	**0.437***	0.25	0.34	-0.09	-0.11	-0.22	0.22	**0.407***	1										
	10 ISVcomp	-0.13	-0.28	-0.07	-0.15	0.26	-0.38	-0.09	0.31	-0.15	1									
Lexicon: Verb Tense	11 Present	0.16	0.28	0.09	0.14	0.08	**0.404***	0.04	0.14	0.09	0.10	1								
	12 Past	0.15	0.21	**0.412***	0.01	0.07	-0.26	**0.426***	0.13	0.486*	-0.21	-0.160	1							
	13 Future	-0.22	-0.34	-0.03	-0.17	-0.05	-0.11	0.01	-0.08	-0.16	0.16	-0.13	0.08	1						
Lexicon: AP	14 Descr	0.12	0.18	**0.397***	-0.21	0.14	-0.27	0.35	**0.559****	**0.681****	0.15	0.19	0.32	-0.1122	1					
	16. Intensr	-0.08	-0.12	-0.23	-0.21	-0.07	0.13	**0.445***	-0.09	0.04	0.03	0.19	0.04	-0.01	0.08	1				
	17. Superl	-0.10	-0.11	-0.04	-0.08	0.36	-0.19	-0.11	**0.624****	-0.12	**0.489***	0.10	-0.11	-0.13	0.18	-0.1621	1			
Discursive		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8											
	1 Politeness	1																		
	2 Directness	0.01	1																	
Tone	3 Pos	0.38	-0.06	1																
	4 Neg	0.04	**0.464***	-0.416*	1															
	5 Neut	-0.31	-0.16	**-0.508****	0.02	1														
Power	6 Less	0.14	-0.03	0.27	-0.02	**0.391***	1													
	7 More	0.30	-0.03	**0.539****	0.12	-0.21	0.04	1												
	8 Equal	0.14	0.28	**0.424***	0.30	0.07	0.21	0.383	1											

Table 5 Full matrix. Correlations within REFUSAL speech act indicators of pragmatic categories by BILINGUALS

Textual		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Length	1 # Clauses	1																	
	2 # Words	**0.858****	1.00																
	3 Density	**0.468***	**0.843****	1.00															
Component	4 Elaboration	0.37	**0.463***	**0.404***	1.00														
	5 Core	**-0.865****	**-0.635****	-0.24	-0.31	1.00													
	6 Wrap	**0.651****	**0.395***	0.05	-0.37	**-0.666****	1.00												
Clause type	7 +Imperative	-0.17	-0.11	-0.06	0.20	0.27	**-0.416***	1.00											
	8 -Imperative	0.21	0.21	0.20	-0.17	0.05	0.13	-0.11	1.00										
	9 +Declarative	**0.556***	**0.524****	0.38	0.03	**-0.439***	**0.520****	-0.22	0.06	1.00									
	10 -Declarative	**-0.561****	**-0.518****	-0.37	-0.07	**0.516****	**-0.485***	0.16	-0.26	**-0.969****	1.00								
	11 +Interrogative	-0.02	0.00	0.06	-0.17	-0.16	0.18	-0.13	-0.07	-0.11	0.06	1.00							
	12 -Interrogative	0.23	0.35	-0.33	-0.11	-0.37	0.20	-0.17	-0.15	-0.11	-0.05		1.00						
Sentence type	13 Simple	**-0.553****	**-0.588****	**-0.412***	-0.05	**0.458***	**-0.441***	0.08	-0.13	-0.34	0.33	0.32	-0.17	1.00					
	14 Complex	**0.505****	**0.556****	0.37	-0.07	-0.35	**0.487***	-0.15	-0.33	**0.422***	-0.37	-0.15	-0.16	**-0.757****	1.00				
	15 Compound	0.20	0.21	0.21	0.20	-0.17	0.05	0.13	0.05	0.05	-0.06	-0.26	0.18	**-0.492***	-0.16	1.00			
Connectors	16 Deictic	0.11	0.11	0.10	-0.11	-0.10	0.23	-0.07	-0.05	-0.05	0.09	-0.07	0.05	**-0.403***	0.05	**0.549****	1.00		
	17 Sequential	-0.15	-0.17	-0.13	0.10	0.10	-0.13	0.15	0.20	0.08	-0.03	-0.15	-0.05	0.07	-0.04	0.01	-0.09	1.00	
	18 Subordinate	**0.461***	**0.642****	**0.545****	0.28	-0.25	0.10	-0.02	0.21	0.35	-0.34	-0.11	0.20	**-0.406***	**0.598****	-0.16	-0.06	-0.13	1.00
	19 Coordinate	**0.681****	**0.600****	0.33	-0.11	**-0.533****	**0.631****	-0.26	0.20	**0.485***	**-0.473***	-0.18	0.20	**-0.762****	**0.552****	**0.428***	0.32	-0.33	0.30
Linguistic		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16		
exicon: opening	1 Opening	1																	
	2 Proper names	0.145	1																
	3 Title informal	0.159	0.379	1															
	4 Endearment	0.244	**0.429***	0.107	1														
Verb Type	5 MainV	-0.126	-0.050	-0.087	####	1													
	6 ModalV	0.138	0.034	0.188	####	0.160	1												
	7 ISVcog	-0.153	-0.073	0.213	####	0.249	**0.480***	1											
	8 ISVemo	-0.058	0.225	-0.093	**0.430***	0.226	-0.0506	0.33	1										
	9 ISVvol	0.070	0.249	-0.079	####	0.114	-0.0311	0.15	0.1821	1									

	10 ISVcomp	-0.040	-0.275	-0.174	####	0.100	-0.2468	-0.15	-0.0577	-0.1863	1								
Verb Tense	11 Present	-0.076	0.275	-0.103	####	0.378	-0.155	-0.07	0.0434	0.1959	-0.035	1							
	12 Past	-0.040	0.205	**0.485***	####	0.195	0.0199	0.36	-0.0577	0.0878	-0.040	-0.012	1						
	13 Future	0.144	-0.336	0.093	####	**-0.399***	0.0243	-0.07	0.0329	-0.226	0.097	**-0.741****	-0.068	1					
AP	14 Descr	-0.205	0.175	0.242	####	0.021	-0.1706	0.36	**0.437***	**0.516****	0.160	0.073	0.111	-0.112	1				
	15. Intensr	-0.175	-0.121	-0.049	**0.621****	0.192	-0.3229	0.11	0.3721	0.0328	0.011	0.284	-0.175	-0.263	0.336	1			
	16. Superl	-0.102	0.377	0.131	-0.1	-0.061	-0.0311	0.74	-0.1165	-0.1633	0.380	0.104	-0.040	-0.072	0.163	.	1		
Discursive		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8										
	1 Politeness	1																	
	2 Directness	**0.406***	1																
Tone	3 Pos	0.258	-0.011	1															
	4 Neg	-0.342	0.014	**-0.681****	1														
	5 Neut	0.258	-0.011	**1.000****	**-0.681****	1													
Power	6 Less	-0.245	-0.276	-0.022	####	-0.022	1												
	7 More	0.131	0.345	**-0.466***	####	**-0.466***	-0.302	1											
	8 Equal	-0.371	-0.213	0.1414	####	0.141	-0.303	**-0.571****	1										

Table 6 Full matrix. Correlations within REQUEST speech act indicators of pragmatic categories by TRILINGUALS

Textual		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Length	1 # Clauses	1																		
	2 # Words	**0.846****	1																	
	3 Density	-0.031	0.493	1																
Component	4 Elaboration	**0.832****	0.757	0.011	1															
	5 Core	**0.866****	-0.725	0.071	**0.899****	1														
	6 Wrap	0.294	0.183	-0.109	-0.037	-0.193	1													
Clause type	7 +Imperative	-0.571	-0.517	-0.114	-0.371	0.347	-0.287	1												
	8 -Imperative	-0.216	-0.340	-0.287	-0.242	0.282	0.095	-0.301	1											
	9 +Declarative	0.380	0.433	0.227	0.276	-0.272	0.258	-0.469	-0.317	1										
	10 -Declarative	0.244	0.187	0.010	0.272	-0.245	-0.179	-0.517	0.306	-0.164	1									
	11 +Interrogative	-0.023	0.025	0.074	-0.121	0.056	0.073	0.292	-0.175	-0.485	-0.432	1								
	12 -Interrogative	0.088	-0.014	-0.156	0.158	-0.071	-0.144	-0.147	-0.034	0.005	0.141	-0.200	1							
Sentence type	13 Simple	**0.6676****	-0.503	0.128	-0.591	**0.665****	0.036	0.385	0.253	-0.234	-0.386	0.268	-0.299	1						
	14 Complex	0.529	0.373	-0.117	0.497	**-0.492***	-0.175	-0.268	-0.324	0.085	0.350	-0.105	0.573	-0.808	1					
	15 Compound	0.511	0.430	-0.047	0.405	**-0.666****	0.179	-0.395	0.013	0.360	0.226	-0.339	-0.190	-0.687	0.1424	1				
Connecting	16 Deictic	0.249	0.301	0.112	0.457	-0.335	-0.144	0.016	-0.063	-0.161	0.310	-0.109	-0.040	-0.199	0.267	0.016	1			
	17 Sequential	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.		
	18 Subordinate	0.265	0.284	0.176	0.243	-0.24	-0.160	-0.161	-0.367	**0.423***	0.214	-0.318	0.151	-0.214	0.311	0.014	-0.015	.	1	
	19 Coordinate	0.375	0.252	-0.177	0.395	-0.312	-0.165	-0.237	0.112	0.221	0.043	-0.228	0.031	-0.484	0.224	**0.559****	0.031	.	-0.244	1
Linguistic		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16			
Lexicon: opening	1 Opening	1																		
	2 Proper names	0.194	1																	
	3 Title informal	-0.066	**0.442***	1																
	4 Endearment	0.135	**0.235***	0.4821	1															
Lexicon: Verb Type	5 MainV	-0.177	-0.28	-0.18	-0.16	1														
	6 ModalV	**0.430***	0.11	0.07	0.12	-0.290	1													
	7 ISVcog	-0.159	0.106	0.052	-0.348	0.102	-0.187	1												
	8 ISVemo	-0.224	-0.312	-0.313	-0.195	0.287	-0.381	0.224	1											

	9 ISVvol	-0.090	-0.250	-0.235	-0.184	-0.164	0.011	-0.101	0.095	1										
	10 ISVcomp	-0.259	0.020	0.015	-0.156	0.365	-0.324	**0.533****	**0.404***	-0.093	1									
Lexicon: Verb Tense	11 Present	-0.470	-0.041	0.203	0.009	0.305	-0.187	0.311	0.249	-0.391	0.316	1								
	12 Past	-0.102	0.237	0.102	-0.101	-0.096	-0.175	0.0331	0.0216	0.318	-0.032	-0.305	1							
	13 Future	0.173	-0.320	-0.308	-0.180	-0.195	-0.014	-0.262	-0.2082	0.307	-0.2452	-0.534	-0.072	1						
Lexicon: AP	14 Descr	-0.216	-0.212	-0.196	-0.181	0.289	-0.198	0.2158	0.3259	0.375	0.3446	0.094	0.376	-0.1208	1					
	15. Intensr	-0.299	-0.069	-0.287	-0.163	0.060	-0.096	0.4168	0.1544	0.110	0.2375	0.177	0.442	-0.2838	0.409	1				
	16. Superl	-0.102	0.377	0.131	-0.101	-0.061	-0.031	0.7353	-0.1165	-0.163	0.380	0.104	-0.040	-0.072	0.163	0.167	1			
Discursive		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8											
	1 Politeness	1																		
	2 Directness	0.261	1																	
Tone	3 Pos	0.167	0.32	1																
	4 Neg	-0.186	-0.30	**-0.816****	1															
	5 Neut	-0.097	-0.25	**-0.843****	0.3819	1														
Power	6 Less	0.127	-0.30	-0.079	0.119	0.030	1													
	7 More	-0.202	0.18	0.152	-0.051	-0.204	**-0.423***	1												
	8 Equal	0.067	0.12	-0.066	-0.065	0.159	**-0.551****	**-0.522****	1											

Table 7 Full matrix. Correlations within Refusal speech act indicators of pragmatic categories by TRILINGUALS

Textual		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	1
Length	1 # Clauses	1																		
	2 # Words	**0.855****	1																	
	3 Density	0.358	**0.772****	1																
omponent	4 Elaboration	**0.484***	0.345	0.1134	1															
	5 Core	**-0.911****	**-0.798****	**-0.409***	**-0.542****	1														
	6 Wrap	**0.761****	**0.751****	**0.466***	0.048	**-0.830****	1													
l Clause type	7 +Imperative	-0.571	-0.517	-0.114	-0.371	0.347	-0.287	1												
	8 -Imperative	0.169	0.230	0.184	-0.126	-0.171	0.256	-0.218	1											
	9 +Declarative	**0.781****	**0.773****	**0.5121****	0.359	**-0.852****	**0.773****	0.160	0.341	1										
	10 -Declarative	**-0.569****	**-0.592****	**-0.4412***	-0.171	**0.6118****	**-0.569****	-0.127	-0.360	**-0.831****	1									
	11 +Interrogative	-0.193	0.009	0.330	0.071	0.090	-0.158	0.078	-0.057	0.127	-0.1983	1								
	12 -Interrogative	-0.128	-0.155	-0.186	-0.222	-0.033	-0.293	-0.146	0.327	-0.282	-0.0697	0.046	1							
Sentence type	13 Simple	**-0.406***	**-0.511****	**-0.439***	-0.016	0.388	-0.4847*	0.132	-0.190	-0.4499*	**0.566****	0.219	0.2716	1						
	14 Complex	**0.57****	**0.684****	**0.552****	0.096	**-0.530****	**0.672****	-0.070	0.239	**0.621****	**-0.482***	-0.180	-0.1205	**-0.699****	1					
	15 Compound	0.241	0.290	0.228	0.101	-0.293	0.272	0.145	0.071	0.223	-0.097	-0.155	0.158	**-0.625****	0.181	1				
Connectors	16 Deictic	0.375	-0.030	-0.174	-0.088	0.100	-0.247	-0.153	-0.371	-0.126	0.359	-0.171	0.160	-0.127	0.032	-0.17	1			
	17 Sequential	0.087	0.244	0.331	-0.030	-0.070	0.295	-0.019	-0.057	0.032	0.110	-0.081	-0.591	-0.257	0.321	-0.13	0.160	1		
	18 Subordinate	0.140	0.117	0.046	0.072	-0.131	0.162	-0.258	-0.091	0.240	-0.174	-0.130	0.497	-0.238	0.375	0.15	0.234	-0.371	1	
	19 Coordinate	**0.5879****	**0.6105****	**0.4879***	**0.522****	**-0.7735****	**0.6149****	0.071	0.107	**0.759****	**-0.489***	0.153	-0.1899	-0.288	**0.462***	0.29	0.361	0.295	0.151	
	Linguistic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16			
Lexicon: opening	1 Opening	1																		
	2 Proper names	0.145	1																	
	3 Title informal	0.159	-0.015	1																
	4 Endearment	0.144	0.092	0.041	1															
Verb Type	5 MainV	0.244	-0.222	0.036	0.001	1														
	6 ModalV	-0.126	0.032	0.124	-0.031	1	1													

	7 ISVcog	0.138	**0.529****	-0.215	0.006	0.120	0.003	1												
	8 ISVemo	-0.153	-0.071	0.220	-0.026	-0.072	-0.215	0.201	1											
	9 ISVvol	-0.058	-0.042	-0.018	-0.088	-0.318	-0.013	-0.028	-0.117	1										
	10 ISVcomp	0.070	-0.040	0.011	-0.147	**0.444***	0.047	-0.085	-0.071	-0.128	1									
Verb Tense	11 Present	-0.040	0.022	0.229	0.141	0.084	-0.058	0.090	0.084	**0.421***	0.112	1								
	12 Past	-0.076	-0.071	-0.057	0.006	0.245	-0.085	-0.152	-0.127	0.304	-0.071	-0.198	1							
	13 Future	-0.040	0.041	-0.074	0.022	0.157	0.361	0.008	-0.009	-0.295	-0.128	**-0.426***	0.224	1						
AP	14 Descr	0.144	0.092	-0.267	-0.071	-0.228	-0.269	0.134	-0.108	**0.417***	-0.126	0.223	0.270	-0.204	1					
	15. Intensr	-0.205	-0.022	-0.045	0.041	0.000	-0.034	-0.073	-0.300	**0.545****	-0.004	0.374	-0.055	**-0.389***	0.272	1				
	16. Superl	-0.175	-0.040	-0.109	0.006	**0.608****	0.006	0.245	-0.085	-0.1515	-0.127	0.304	-0.071	-0.198	0.124	0.070	1			
	Discursive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8											
	1 Politeness	1																		
	2 Directness	0.03	1																	
Tone	3 Pos	0.36	-0.096	1																
	4 Neg	**-0.517****	-0.171	**-0.6143****	1															
	5 Neut	0.36	-0.096	**1.000****	**-0.6143****	1														
Power	6 Less	-0.03	-0.197	0.391*	-0.1547	**0.3914***	1													
	7 More	-0.31	-0.020	0.153	-0.095	0.153	0.277	1												
	8 Equal	0.19	0.148	-0.357	0.160	-0.357	**-0.850****	**-0.740****	1											

Table 8 full matrix. Correlations Across speech act indicators of pragmatic categories by Bilinguals

Textual	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**	**14**	**15**	**16**	**17**	**18**	**19**	**20**	**21**	**22**	**23**
Req # clauses	1																						
2. Ref # clauses	0.209	1																					
3. Req # Words	.924**	0.159	1																				
4. Ref # Words	**0.86****		-0.014	1																			
5. Req Elaboration	0.105	0.257	0.15	-0.214	1																		
6. Ref Elaboration	0.02	-0.126	-0.025	0.182	0.048	1																	
7. Req core	0.141	-0.208	0.124	-0.017	-.631**	0.153	1																
8. Ref core	-0.265	-0.162	-0.199	0.351	-0.381	-0.306	**-0.38***	1															
9. Req wrap	0.021	-0.04	0.011	0.172	0.323	-0.312	-.532**	-0.111	1														
10. Ref wrap	-0.047	-0.037	0.048	0.332	0.294	-0.371	-0.361	-.0.257	**0.66****	1													
11. Req simple sentences	-0.059	-0.135	0.237	0.03	0.299	-0.192	0.271	0.031	0.023	0.118	1												
12. Ref simple sentences	-0.064	-0.101	-0.143	-0.312	-0.246	-0.206	-0.344	-0.19	-0.04	-0.072	-0.062	1											
. Req complex sentences	-0.123	-0.291	-0.135	-0.277	-0.206	0.08	0.237	-0.037	-0.016	-0.064	0.028	0.123	1										
. Ref complex sentences	0.216	-0.249	-0.204	0.193	0.261	0.024	0.082	-0.3	-0.135	-0.123	-0.153	-0.048	**-0.75****	1									
15. Req Compound sentences	0.033	0.203	0.111	-0.13	-0.119	-0.033	0.182	0.148	0.143	0.216	-.493*	-0.076	-0.158	0.235	1								
16. Ref Compound sentences	-0.285	0.367	0.41	-0.062	0.042	0.253	-0.199	-0.217	-0.024	0.033	0.003	-0.048	0.292	-0.104	0.205	1							
17. Req + imperative clause	0.018	0.266	0.146	0.199	0.271	0.26	0.019	0.199	-0.158	-0.285	0.155	-0.079	0.311	-0.279	0.163	0.088	1						
8 Ref + imperative clause	0.073	-0.028	0.056	-0.094	0.089	-0.019	-0.025	0.279	-0.252	0.018	0.103	0.147	-0.065	-0.206	-0.261	.a	.a	1					
. Req - imperative clause	0.064	-0.005	0.089	0.069	0.195	0.148	0.1369	0.147	0.13	0.073	0.046	-0.068	0.168	-0.078	0.371	-0.353	-0.009	-0.303	1				
0. Ref- imperative clause	-0.08	-0.047	0.103	0.147	-0.065	-0.206	0.271	0.26	0.019	0.071	0.044	0.258	-0.298	-0.263	-0.014	0.062	-0.218	0.113	.a	1			
21. Req + Declarative cls	0.277	0.289	0.046	-0.068	0.168	-0.078	0.089	-0.019	-0.025	-0.197	0.313	-0.136	-0.216	-0.005	-0.033	-0.07	-0.018	0.327	.a	-0.282	1		
22. Ref+ Declarative cls	0.189	-0.133	0.044	0.258	-0.298	-0.263	0.195	0.148	0.137	0.235	0.173	0.196	0.073	-0.075	0.253	-0.057	0.16	-0.016	.a	0.096	-.0.345	1	
23. Req - Declarative clause	0.135	-0.032	0.315	-0.107	0.049	-0.055	-0.208	-0.162	-0.04	-0.037	-0.135	-0.101	-0.291	-0.249	0.019	-0.082	0.294	0.161	0.105	0.257	0.15	-0.214	1
. Ref - Declarative clause	0.085	-0.112	0.12	-0.062	0.02	-0.112	-0.064	-0.123	0.216	0.033	-0.285	0.018	0.073	0.064	-0.08	0.19	-0.092	0.088	0.02	-0.126	-0.025	0.182	0.313

Linguistic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
1. Req Opening	1																						
2 . Ref Opening	-0.104	1																					
3 . Req Proper name	0.379	0.235	1																				
4 . Ref Proper name	.b	.b	.b	1																			
5. Req Title informal	0.101	0.306	**0.60****	.b	1																		
6. Ref Title informal	-0.255	0.159	0.061	.b	0.109	1																	
7. Req Endearment	.579**	-0.078	.429*	.b	-0.051	-0.211	1																
8 . Ref Endearment	-0.071	0.246	-0.122	.b	0.14	0.11	**0.43***	1															
9. Req Modal verbs	-0.265	-0.162	-0.199	0.351	0.250	-0.162	0.277	0.043	1														
10. Ref Modals verbs	0.021	-0.040	0.011	0.172	-0.190	-0.040	0.289	0.223	**0.45***	1													
11. Req cognitive verbs	-0.047	-0.037	0.048	0.332	-0.037	-0.016	0.046	-0.134	-0.172	0.026	1												
12. Ref cognitive verbs	-0.059	-0.135	0.237	0.030	-0.300	-0.135	-0.068	0.131	-0.198	**0.48***	0.076	1											
13. Req volition verbs	0.096	0.191	0.369	0.175	0.148	0.143	0.168	-0.174	-0.367	-0.022	0.053	-0.028	1										
14. Ref volition verbs	0.224	-0.108	0.199	0.110	-0.217	-0.024	-0.078	0.077	-0.247	-0.051	-0.169	0.331	0.072	1									
5. Req emotional verbs	0.101	-0.158	0.083	-0.075	0.199	-0.158	0.371	0.375	-0.268	-0.146	0.209	0.093	.398*	0.248	1								
16. Ref emotional verbs	-0.110	0.063	0.175	0.030	0.279	-0.252	-0.232	-0.021	-.417*	-0.031	0.34	0.146	.600**	0.182	0.282	1							
17 Req compulsion verbs	0.244	0.361	0.155	-0.079	0.311	-0.279	0.163	0.168	-.416*	-0.201	-0.097	0.161	0.303	.502*	-0.156	**0.52****	1						
18 Ref compulsion verbs	-0.080	-0.047	0.103	0.147	-0.065	-0.206	-0.261	0.246	-0.105	-0.247	-0.117	-0.153	-0.133	-0.058	-0.126	-0.186	-0.079	1					
19. Req present tense	0.277	0.289	0.046	-0.068	0.168	-0.078	0.371	-0.232	0.040	0.007	0.021	-0.040	0.011	0.172	-0.190	-0.040	-0.072	-0.119	1				
20 . Ref Present tense	0.189	-0.133	0.044	0.258	-0.298	-0.263	-0.014	-0.002	-0.311	0.141	-0.047	-0.037	0.048	0.332	-0.037	-0.016	-0.064	-0.101	0.339	1			
21 . Req past tense	0.135	-0.032	0.315	-0.107	0.049	-0.055	0.356	-0.290	-0.206	0.268	-0.059	-0.135	0.237	0.030	-0.300	-0.135	-0.123	-0.291	-0.16	-0.148	1		
22 . Ref past tense	0.085	-0.112	0.120	-0.062	0.020	-0.112	-0.202	0.075	0.286	-0.342	0.096	0.191	0.369	0.175	0.148	0.143	0.216	-0.249	-.488*	-.742**	0.234	1	
23. Ref future tense	0.085	-0.127	-0.097	0.199	0.162	-0.127	-0.066	-0.047	-0.292	0.479*	0.224	-0.108	0.199	0.110	-0.217	-0.024	0.033	0.203	-0.13	0.284	0.078	-0.263	1
24. Req future tense	0.049	0.185	0.057	-0.108	0.271	-0.120	-0.217	-0.162	0.226	0.446*	0.101	-0.158	0.083	-0.075	0.199	-0.158	-0.285	0.367	0.029	-0.012	-0.11	-0.068	0.196
Discursive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10													

1. Req positive tone	1																						
2. Ref positive tone	-0.269	1																					
3. Req negative tone	-0.632	0.126	1																				
4. Ref negative tone	0.333	-0.278	**-0.68**	1																			
5 . Req neutral tone	-.739**	0.247	-0.013	-0.195	1																		
6 . Ref neutral tone	-0.269	0.247	0.126	-.681**	**1.0****	1																	
7 Req Politeness markers	0.284	-0.295	-0.13	0.23	-0.262	-0.295	1																
8 Ref Politeness markers	-0.415	.439*	0.197	-0.212	.444*	0.08	**0.43***	1															
9. Req directness	-0.158	-0.293	.426*	0.08	-0.173	-0.293	0.014	-0.022	1														
10. Ref directness	-0.234	0.115	0.123	-0.113	0.271	0.115	-0.014	0.299	**0.52**	1													

Table 9 full matrix. Correlations Across speech act indicators of pragmatic categories by TRILINGUALS

Textual	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**	**14**	**15**	**16**	**17**	**18**	**19**	**20**	**21**	**22**
. 1 Req # clauses	1																					
2. Ref # clauses	-0.029	1																				
3 Req # Words	.846**	-0.016	1																			
.4 Ref # Words	-0.113	.856**	-0.143	1																		
5 Req Elaboration	-0.0842	-0.1841	0.1546	-0.2995	1																	
6 Ref Elaboration	0.095	0.045	0.054	0.237	**0.97****	1																
7 Req core	0.288	0.338	0.200	0.009	0.124	**0.97****	1															
8 . Ref core	-0.060	-0.241	0.287	0.055	**0.94****	.989**	**0.94****	1														
9. Req wrap	-0.142	-0.184	-0.048	-0.105	.984**	**0.95****	.993**	**0.95****	1													
10. Ref wrap	0.026	-0.004	0.028	-0.045	**0.95****	.981**	.971**	.990**	**0.97****	1												
11 Req simple sentences	-0.438	-0.099	0.440	0.044	0.045	-0.152	0.188	0.294	0.087	-0.215	1											
12 Ref simple sentences	0.043	0.223	-0.134	0.131	-0.1742	-0.156	0.200	0.286	0.144	0.087	0.033	1										
Req complex sentences	0.073	-0.062	-0.294	0.086	-0.1774	0.003	-0.048	0.292	-0.104	0.205	-.808**	0.158	1									
Ref complex sentences	0.239	0.171	-0.017	-0.052	0.0795	0.155	-0.079	0.311	-0.279	0.163	-0.074	-.700**	-0.226	1								
14 Req compound sentences	0.148	-0.4685*	0.362	-0.107	0.6214**	0.103	0.147	-0.065	-0.206	-0.261	-.687**	-0.197	0.142	0.334	1							
f Compound sentences	0.388	0.352	-0.163	0.179	-0.2656	0.046	-0.068	0.168	-0.078	0.371	0.14	-.626**	-0.098	0.181	-0.131	1						
+ imperative clause	0.204	0.317	-0.339	0.216	-0.1823	0.044	0.258	-0.298	-0.263	-0.014	0.361	0.155	-0.079	0.311	-0.279	0.003	1					
ef + imperative clause	0.383	0.248	-0.378	0.567	-0.4423*	0.315	-0.107	0.049	-0.055	0.356	-0.047	0.103	0.147	-0.065	-0.206	0.155	.a	1				
Req - imperative clause	-0.354	-0.064	-0.153	-0.121	-0.0332	0.120	-0.062	0.020	-0.112	-0.202	0.289	0.046	-0.068	0.168	-0.078	0.103	-0.301	.a	1			
Ref- imperative clause	0.142	-0.532	0.198	0.159	0.4090*	-0.097	0.199	0.162	-0.127	-0.066	-0.133	0.044	0.258	-0.298	-0.263	0.046	-0.06	.a	0.27	1		
Req + Declarative cls	0.307	0.323	-0.280	0.188	-0.4331*	0.057	-0.108	0.271	-0.120	-0.217	-0.032	0.315	-0.107	0.049	-0.055	0.044	-.469*	.a	-0.32	0.08	1	
2. Ref+ Declarative cls	-0.370	0.046	0.008	-0.163	-0.1792	-0.021	0.362	-0.320	-0.076	-0.137	-0.112	0.120	-0.062	0.020	-0.112	0.315	0.14	.a	0.18	0.34	-0.10	1
3. Req - Declarative clause	0.315	0.287	-0.4073*	0.293	-0.3864	0.6578**	0.212	0.139	-0.083	0.043	0.4090*	-0.097	0.199	0.162	-0.127	-0.066	-.517**	.a	0.31	-0.10	-0.16	-0.212
ef - Declarative clause	0.322	0.079	-0.141	0.188	0.3319	0.150	-0.214	0.108	-0.110	-0.198	-0.266	0.046	-0.068	0.168	-0.078	0.371	-0.01	.a	-0.12	-0.36	0.02	-.832**
Linguistic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22

1. Req Opening	1																					
2 . Ref Opening	.a	1																				
3 . Req Proper name	0.193	.a	1																			
4 Ref Proper name	-0.102	.a	-0.217	1																		
5. Req Title informal	-0.066	.a	.443*	-0.217	1																	
6. Ref Title informal	0.005	.a	-0.085	-0.015	-0.243	1																
7. Req Endearment	0.138	.a	0.226	-0.101	.481*	-0.132	1															
8 . Ref Endearment	.a	.a	.a	.a	.a	.a	.a	1														
9. Req Modal verbs	0.237	0.030	0.299	-0.192	0.271	0.031	0.023	-0.005	1													
10 Ref Modals verbs	-0.143	-0.312	-0.246	-0.206	-0.344	-0.190	-0.040	0.089	0.324	1												
11 Req cognitive verbs	-0.135	-0.277	-0.206	0.080	0.237	-0.037	-0.016	0.069	-0.186	-0.15	1											
. Ref cognitive verbs	-0.204	0.193	0.261	0.024	0.082	-0.300	-0.135	0.195	-0.257	0.004	0.267	1										
3. Req volition verbs	0.111	-0.130	-0.119	-0.033	0.182	0.148	0.143	0.148	-0.381	-0.33	0.225	0.23	1									
4. Ref volition verbs	0.410	-0.062	0.042	0.253	-0.199	-0.217	-0.024	0.1369	0.181	-0.22	0.387	0.2	-0.208	1								
Req emotional verbs	0.146	0.199	0.271	0.260	0.019	0.199	-0.158	-0.062	0.011	-0.33	-0.101	-0.247	0.095	-0.141	1							
Ref emotional verbs	0.056	-0.094	0.089	-0.019	-0.025	0.279	-0.252	0.042	-0.123	-0.01	-0.161	-0.028	-0.161	-0.117	-0.2	1						
Req compulsion verbs	0.089	0.069	0.195	0.148	0.1369	0.147	0.130	0.253	-0.324	-0.22	.533**	0.147	.405*	0.185	-0.093	0.013	1					
Ref compulsion verbs	0.103	0.147	-0.065	-0.206	0.271	0.260	0.019	-0.199	0.189	0.046	0.258	-0.085	-0.116	-0.071	-0.163	-0.13	-0.137	1				
9. Req present tense	0.046	-0.068	0.168	-0.078	0.089	-0.019	-0.025	0.018	0.266	0.146	0.199	0.271	0.260	0.019	0.199	-0.158	-0.285	0.155	1			
20 . Ref Present tense	0.044	0.258	-0.298	-0.263	0.195	0.148	0.137	0.073	-0.028	0.056	-0.094	0.089	-0.019	-0.025	0.279	-0.252	0.018	0.103	**-0.82****	1		
21 . Req past tense	0.315	-0.107	0.049	-0.055	-0.208	-0.162	-0.040	0.064	-0.005	0.089	0.069	0.195	0.148	0.1369	0.147	0.130	0.073	0.046	-0.068	0.168	1	
22 . Ref past tense	0.120	-0.062	0.020	-0.112	-0.064	-0.123	0.216	-0.080	-0.047	0.103	0.147	-0.065	-0.206	0.271	0.260	0.019	0.071	0.044	0.258	-0.298	-0.263	1
23. Ref future tense	0.071	0.044	0.258	-0.298	-0.263	0.271	0.089	0.277	0.289	0.046	-0.068	0.168	-0.078	0.089	-0.019	-0.025	-0.197	0.313	-0.136	-0.216	-0.005	-0.033
24. Req future tense	0.135	-0.032	0.315	-0.107	0.049	-0.055	-0.208	-0.162	-0.040	-0.037	-0.135	-0.101	-0.291	-0.249	0.019	-0.263	-0.078	0.173	0.196	0.073	-0.075	0.253
Discursive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10												
1. Req positive tone	1																					
2. Ref positive tone	**-0.49***	1																				
3. Req negative tone	-.816**	0.3	1																			

4. Ref negative tone	0.274	-.614**	-0.24	1																		
5 . Req neutral tone	-.843**	**0.49***	0.382	-0.2	1																	
6 . Ref neutral tone	**-0.49***	1.000**	0.3	-.614**	**0.49***	1																
7 Req Politeness markers	0.125	0.126	-0.129	0.253	-0.075	0.126	1															
8 Ref Politeness markers	-0.047	.433*	0.146	-.516**	-0.087	.433*	-0.136	1														
9. Req directness	-0.196	0.284	0.372	-0.306	-0.052	0.284	0.183	0.214	1													
10. Ref directness	-0.123	.530**	0.084	-0.37	0.106	.530**	0.058	0.313	0.112	1												

Table 17 A. Full correlation of Significant Group Differences in in Textual variables

	All	Bilinguals	Trilinguals	
	N=52	n=26	n=26	p-value
	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	
Sentence length				
Requests Text Length	13.7 (3.6)	14.0 (3.4)	13.3 (3.8)	0.492
Requests number of words	95.7 (31.2)	97.3 (32.5)	94.0 (30.4)	0.713
Requests text density	7.0 (1.1)	6.8 (0.9)	7.1 (1.2)	0.488
Refusals Text Length	16 (3.6)	16.2 (3.4)	15.8 (3.8)	0.731
Refusals number of words	90.7 (31.9)	95.6 (34.1)	85.8 (29.4)	0.276
Refusals text density	5.6 (1.1)	5.8 (1.1)	5.3 (1.0)	0.126
Components				
Requests elaboration	24.4 (12.9)	27.3 (9.8)	21.6 (15.2)	0.115
Requests core	68.1 (16.6)	63.5 (14.9)	72.7 (17.2)	0.044
Requests wrap	4.0 (6.3)	4.1 (7.1)	3.9 (5.5)	0.882
Refusals elaboration	10.6 (9.0)	10.9 (9.9)	10.3 (8.1)	0.798
Refusals core	64.3 (15.0)	62.2 (13.6)	66.3 (16.3)	0.333
Refusals wrap	24.7 (13.2)	25.2 (12.2)	24.2 (14.3)	0.774
Type of clause				
Requests Pos_ImperativeCl	20.4 (13.0)	19.5 (14.9)	21.3 (11.1)	0.612
Requests Neg_ImperativeCl	7.9 (8.1)	7.8 (8.6)	8.0 (7.8)	0.937
Requests Pos_DeclarativeCl	35.7 (17.7)	31.8 (19.6)	39.6 (15.1)	0.113
Requests Neg_DeclarativeCl	13.7 (9.4)	14.0 (9.5)	13.5 (9.4)	0.852
Requests Pos_Interrogative Cl	18.4 (10.8)	20.3 (11.4)	16.5 (10)	0.211
Requests Neg_ Interrogative Cl	0.3 (1.3)	0.3 (1.3)	0.3 (1.3)	0.994
Refusals Pos_ImperativeCl	0.4 (1.7)	0.8 (2.3)	0 (0)	0.086
Refusals Neg_ImperativeCl	0.1 (0.7)	0 (0)	0.2 (1.0)	0.322
Refusals Pos_DeclarativeCl	42.3 (19.1)	43.2 (19.2)	41.4 (19.3)	0.736
Refusals Neg_DeclarativeCl	54.7 (18.4)	53.5 (17.3)	56.0 (19.8)	0.627
Refusals Pos_Interrogative Cl	0.6 (2.0)	0.7 (2.0)	0.6 (2.1)	0.8
Refusals Neg_ Interrogative Cl	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	--
Sentence type				
Requests Simple sentence	71.8 (19.6)	70.3 (21.2)	73.4 (18.2)	0.574
Requests complex sentence	16.3 (13.6)	16.7 (14.0)	15.9 (13.3)	0.838
Requests compound sentence	9.6 (10.2)	8.9 (9.5)	10.3 (11.0)	0.633
Refusals Simple sentence	64.1 (22.3)	60.2 (22.0)	68.1 (22.3)	0.201
Refusals complex sentence	26.7 (17.3)	28.9 (19.4)	24.5 (15.0)	0.36
Refusals compound sentence	7.8 (12.5)	9.2 (13.1)	6.4 (12.0)	0.418

Connectors				
Requests deictic connectors	0.7 (4.6)	0 (0.2)	1.3 (6.5)	0.337
Requests sequential connectors	0.1 (0.2)	0.1 (0.3)	0 (0)	0.077
Requests subordinate connectors	18.5 (33.9)	0.6 (1.0)	36.3 (41)	<0.001
Requests coordinate connectors	14.1 (29.3)	0.5 (0.7)	27.8 (36.9)	<0.001
Refusals deictic connectors	0 (0.1)	0 (0.2)	0 (0)	0.322
Refusals sequential connectors	0.9 (4.1)	0.2 (0.4)	1.6 (5.8)	0.209
Refusals subordinate connectors	6.9 (22.2)	0.3 (1.0)	13.5 (30.2)	0.031
Refusals coordinate connectors	40.7 (47.9)	2.5 (2.3)	78.8 (40.4)	<0.001

Table 17 B. Full correlation of Significant Group Differences in in Linguistic variables

	All N=52 M (SD)	Bilinguals n=26 M (SD)	Trilinguals n=26 M (SD)	p-value
Lexicon opening				
Requests opening cannons	4.1 (8.1)	4.9 (9.6)	3.2 (6.4)	0.4631
Requests proper names	12.4 (10.6)	11.6 (8.5)	13.3 (12.5)	0.5821
Requests title informal	10.0 (9.7)	8.6 (8.5)	11.3 (10.7)	0.3148
Requests Endearment	1.9 (4.2)	1.4 (3.7)	2.3 (4.7)	0.4418
Refusals opening cannons	0.1 (0.7)	0.2 (1.0)	0 (0)	0.3221
Refusals proper names	0.1 (0.7)	0 (0)	0.2 (1.0)	0.3221
Refusals title informal	8.4 (8.8)	5.5 (6.4)	11.2 (10.0)	0.017
Refusals Endearment	0.7 (2.3)	1.4 (3.2)	0 (0)	0.032
Lexicon verb type				
Requests main verbs	14.4 (2.6)	14.4 (2.6)	14.4 (2.6)	0.995
Requests modal verbs	21.8 (17.0)	22.6 (16.4)	20.9 (17.9)	0.723
Requests ISV: cognitive verbs	3.5 (5.5)	2.4 (4.5)	4.5 (6.3)	0.174
Requests ISV: emotional verbs	4.1 (7.1)	3.6 (5.8)	4.7 (8.2)	0.588
Requests ISV: volition verbs	5.4 (8.0)	5.2 (8.9)	5.7 (7.1)	0.854
Requests ISV: compulsion verbs	5.1 (9.5)	2.9 (7.7)	7.2 (10.8)	0.099
Refusals main verbs	15.6 (3.7)	14.1 (3.5)	17.1 (3.2)	0.002
Refusals modal verbs	11.1 (10.2)	12.0 (9.9)	10.1 (10.6)	0.497
Refusals ISV: cognitive verbs	1.7 (2.9)	2.6 (3.4)	0.8 (2.0)	0.027
Refusals ISV: emotional verbs	0.8 (2.6)	0.5 (1.8)	1.1 (3.2)	0.388
Refusals ISV: volition verbs	20.4 (12.4)	20.6 (12.6)	20.2 (12.3)	0.9
Refusals ISV: compulsion verbs	0.3 (1.5)	0.3 (1.8)	0.2 (1.2)	0.798
Lexicon adjectives				
Requests descriptor adj	24.3 (20.1)	19.3 (19.0)	29.2 (20.3)	0.074
Requests dimin qualifier adj	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	--
Requests intensifying qualifier adj	4.8 (6.1)	5.2 (6.5)	4.4 (5.6)	0.632

Requests superlative adj	0.3 (1.6)	0.3 (1.4)	0.3 (1.8)	0.872
Refusals descriptor adj	42.6 (17.5)	39.9 (18.7)	45.3 (16.2)	0.269
Refusals dimin qualifier adj	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	--
Refusals intensifying qualifier adj	7.3 (8.7)	8.6 (10)	6 (7.3)	0.303
Refusals superlative adj	0.1 (0.8)	0 (0)	0.2 (1.1)	0.322

Table 17 C. Full correlation of Significant Group Differences in discursive variables

	All N=52 M (SD)	Bilinguals n=26 M (SD)	Trilinguals n=26 M (SD)	p-value
Politeness markers				
Requests	11.7 (12.5)	3.5 (2.7)	19.9 (13.0)	<0.001
Refusals	11.5 (11.8)	4.3 (2.4)	18.8 (13.0)	<0.001
Directness				
Requests	5.2 (7.7)	5.2 (7.8)	5.2 (7.8)	1
Refusals	14.6 (13.5)	14.6 (13.6)	14.6 (13.6)	1
Tone				
Requests positive tone	67.4 (23.3)	70.0 (24.9)	64.8 (21.7)	0.428
Requests negative tone	16.2 (13.5)	14.1 (14.1)	18.4 (12.8)	0.265
Requests neutral tone	14.5 (14.5)	12.0 (15.5)	17.0 (13.3)	0.214
Refusals positive tone	36.4 (16.1)	38.0 (16.7)	34.8 (15.7)	0.492
Refusals negative tone	27.1 (19.6)	25.5 (18.3)	28.7 (21.1)	0.567
Refusals neutral tone	36.4 (16.1)	38.0 (16.7)	34.8 (15.7)	0.492
Power				
Requests less power	31.7 (8.2)	30.3 (9.8)	33.2 (6.2)	0.205
Requests more power	22.8 (6.7)	21.6 (7.3)	23.9 (6.0)	0.228
Requests equal power	43.6 (9.0)	44.2 (11.1)	42.9 (6.5)	0.603
Refusals less power	23.4 (8.5)	20.9 (5.5)	26.0 (10.3)	0.03
Refusals more power	8.4 (6.7)	7.6 (5.0)	9.3 (8.0)	0.373
Refusals equal power	67.7 (11.6)	70.6 (6.5)	64.8 (14.7)	0.069

Note: N=52, M= Mean, SD= Standard deviation, p < .001.