

OFFICIAL REVIEW OF THE DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

Candidate: *Ibrahim Rawashdeh*

Title: *Cultural Effects on the Pragmatic Abilities of EFL Production of Request and Refusal Speech Acts by Multilingual Jordanians in Jordan and Hungary*

Supervisor: *Professor Anat Stavans*

1. Significance and uniqueness of the study

Ibrahim Rawashdeh's dissertation offers an original and methodologically strong contribution to the study of multilingual pragmatics. The main strength of this work is its focus on a novel, previously under-explored language triad: Arabic, English, and Hungarian.

By examining the impact of a third language (L3) within its specific sociolinguistic context, the candidate addresses a substantial research gap. The study provides a sophisticated analysis of how an L3 environment—specifically the Hungarian setting—shapes the English pragmatic skills of native Arabic speakers, thereby expanding our understanding of the context-dependent nature of multilingual development. The study effectively demonstrates that the acquisition of pragmatic skills is not a uniform developmental pathway. Instead, it examines how a complex interplay of cultural, individual, and multilingual factors shapes the production of requests and refusals in a foreign language. Furthermore, this dissertation belongs to that valuable category of academic work where personal experience and intrinsic motivation are successfully elevated to the level of rigorous scientific inquiry.

2. Detailed methodology and findings

To provide a comprehensive understanding of communicative adaptation, the candidate designed a robust and theoretically aligned methodology. The study involved 52 Jordanian participants: 26 bilinguals residing in Jordan and 26 trilinguals living in Hungary.

Rather than relying solely on grammatical assessments, the researcher employed an 18-scenario written Discourse Completion Task in conjunction with a Multicultural Personality Questionnaire. This holistic framework represents a significant strength, as it correlates pragmalinguistic choices directly with individual personality traits, such as cultural empathy.

The statistical analysis identifies two distinct communicative profiles resulting from exposure to different cultural landscapes: Bilingual students in Jordan relied heavily on first-language cultural norms, prioritizing social harmony through affective mitigation and culturally specific formulas. In contrast, trilingual students in Hungary adopted a more globally oriented strategy, characterized by greater clause complexity, structural cohesion, and the systematic use of conventional politeness markers.

3. Theoretical innovations and the paradigm shift

A significant academic achievement of this work is the candidate's call for a fundamental shift in the conceptualization of language learning. The research argues for moving beyond the outdated notion of a single "appropriate" second-language behavior that aims to mimic native speakers. Instead, pragmatic competence is presented as a flexible, context-responsive network of linguistic, social, and cognitive resources.

The candidate demonstrates that pragmatic ability is multidimensional and constantly adapts to the speaker's sociolinguistic environment. It is not merely an inventory of polite expressions but a structured practice deeply influenced by the speaker's surroundings. Furthermore, the introduction of the "Scalpel Model" illustrates that trilingual speakers selectively utilize specific metapragmatic resources from their third language, rather than exhibiting random linguistic interference.

4. Final assessment and recommendation

The finalized manuscript successfully incorporates the requested revisions, accurately clarifying core concepts and their causal relationships.

The dissertation exhibits excellent internal consistency, maintaining a rigorous conceptual thread from the literature review to the final conclusions. The structure is logically organized, the methodology aligns with the theoretical framework, and the findings provide convincing answers to the core research questions.

Ibrahim Rawashdeh has delivered an outstanding scholarly work that offers a nuanced understanding of the complexities of multilingual pragmatics. He has clearly demonstrated his maturity as an independent academic researcher. Based on the exceptionally high quality of this work and the successful fulfillment of all academic requirements, I recommend that the title of "Doctor of Philosophy" (PhD) be conferred upon him with the highest academic qualification of *summa cum laude*.

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