Pragmatic Aspects of Speech Acts; a Cross-Linguistic Perspective

by Rita Tanduk

PRAGMATIC ASPECTS OF SPEECH ACTS: A CROSS-LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract: Effective intercultural communication is a cornerstone of today's globalized world, necessitating an exploration of the pragmatic aspects of speech acts from a cross-linguistic perspective. This research delves into the complex interplay between language, culture, and politeness strategies within the contexts of Indonesian and Malay. Using a comprehensive datasets collected through observational field study in diverse naturalistic settings, including workplaces, educational institutions, and everyday social contexts, research examines the performance and interpretation of requests, apologies, compliments, and refusals. The findings reveal a shared preference for indirect and polite language when making requests in both linguistic communities, underlining the universality of politeness strategies. While Indonesian speakers tend to employ explicit expressions of regret in apologies, Malay speakers adopt a more subtle approach. Compliments showcase differences, with Indonesian speakers favoring direct expressions of admiration and Malay speakers employing nuanced language. Refusals demonstrate stark contrasts, with Malay speakers utilizing indirect strategies and Indonesian speakers opting for directness. This study contributes to the growing discourse on cross-linguistic and cross-cultural pragmatics, emphasizing the importance of considering both linguistic diversity and cultural norms in understanding intercultural communication. This research, grounded in real-world interactions, calls for continued exploration of trans-cultural threads in speech act usage and offers valuable insights for enhancing intercultural competence. While acknowledging the study's limitations, researcher invites future research endeavors to delve deeper into the intricate world of speech acts and intercultural communication
Keywords: *intercultural communication; pragmatics; politeness strategies; speech act.*

INTRODUCTION

Language is a remarkable tool, a vessel through which human beings convey not just information, but also their intentions, emotions, and social dynamics (Al-Athwary, 2022; Gunawan & Tjitrakusuma, 2021; Xiao & Lee, 2022). Within the vast realm of linguistic communication, speech acts stand as crucial building blocks, enabling us to make requests, give orders, make promises, apologize, compliment, refuse, and perform numerous other actions that shape our interactions and relationships (Silitonga & Pasaribu, 2021; Utami et al., 2021; Wijayanto et al., 2013). The study of speech acts is not merely a linguistic endeavor but a gateway to understanding the intricate web of human sociality, intercultural communication, and the role of culture in shaping how we use and interpret language (Adzim et al., 2019; Prayitno et al., 2019; Rizka et al., 2020).

Language, as philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein (2009) famously stated, is not just a reflection of the world but a tool for creating it. Indeed, when we utter words, we do more than convey information; we perform actions. Speech acts theory, initially pioneered by philosophers like Searle (1969) and Austin (1962), illuminates this phenomenon by highlighting that language is a means to do things, not just say things.

Consider a simple scenario: You enter a crowded cafe, approach the counter, and say, "I'd like a cappuccino, please." In this utterance, you have not only conveyed your desire for a cappuccino but have also performed a speech act - making a request. The barista, understanding your intention, is likely to fulfill your request. This exemplifies the power of speech acts in our daily lives, where our words shape the actions and responses of those around us.

Speech acts encompass various categories, including directives (requests, orders), commissives (promises, offers), expressive (apologies, congratulations), assertive (statements, claims), and verdicts (judgments, assessments) (Altikriti, 2011; Risselada, 2019; Santoso et al., 2014). The diversity of speech acts reflects the multifaceted nature of human communication, where individuals navigate complex social interactions through language (Hidayati et al.,

2021; Fudholi et al., 2023; Lili, 2018). Understanding how these speech acts function, both linguistically and pragmatically, is essential for effective communication and for avoiding misunderstandings in multicultural settings (Altikriti, 2011; Upton, 2021; Akmal et al., 2022).

To delve into the pragmatic aspects of speech acts, we enter the realm of pragmatics, a branch of linguistics that transcends the boundaries of syntax and semantics. Pragmatics explores the way language is used in context, considering not only the literal meaning of words but also the implied meanings, implicatures, and the influence of context and culture on interpretation (Fatmaja & Saragih, 2021; Aufa, 2011; Mualimin, 2021).

In the context of speech acts, pragmatics plays a pivotal role. Pragmatic aspects include the social and cultural factors that influence how speech acts are performed and interpreted (Mœschler, 1992; Mualimin, 2021; Ifantidou, 2013). For instance, consider the act of refusing an invitation. In one culture, a direct "No" may be seen as straightforward and honest, while in another, it could be considered impolite or offensive. These cultural nuances are integral to understanding how speech acts function in a given linguistic and cultural context.

Furthermore, speech acts are not static entities but dynamic processes, influenced by the relationship between interlocutors, the context of the conversation, and the broader cultural norms that shape communication (Archer et al., 2021; De Castro, 2022; Ekoro & Gunn, 2021). Pragmatics allows us to explore these dynamic elements, shedding light on why people choose particular speech acts in specific situations and how they navigate the delicate balance between clarity and politeness in communication (Ifantidou, 2013; Tanduk et al., 2021).

As the researcher embark on this research journey, researcher take a step beyond the confines of a single language and culture. The focus of this research is on the cross-linguistic perspective, a lens that widens researcher's view to encompass the rich tapestry of human linguistic diversity. Every language, with its unique grammar, vocabulary, and cultural underpinnings, offers a distinct lens through which speech acts are performed and interpreted (Tajeddin & Bagherkazemi, 2021; Mualimin, 2021). In essence, the researcher seek to answer the fundamental question: How do different languages shape the performance and interpretation of speech acts?

Culture, as anthropologist, Hall (1976) eloquently put it, is "communication that is learned, shared, and patterned." It infuses every facet of our lives, including language and communication. In the context of speech acts, culture plays a pivotal role in shaping the performance and interpretation of these linguistic actions.

Different cultures have distinct norms and values governing communication. These cultural norms influence the choice of speech acts, the degree of directness or indirectness, the use of politeness strategies, and the interpretation of meaning (Blitvich & Sifianou, 2017; Haugh & Watanabe, 2017; Kádár & Zhang, 2019). For instance, in some cultures, a refusal may be expressed politely through indirect language, while in others, directness may be preferred. These variations reflect deeper cultural values related to politeness, face-saving, and social harmony

Furthermore, culture molds our perception of politeness and impoliteness (Haugh & Watanabe, 2017; Kádár, 2011; Mapson, 2019). What is considered polite in one culture may be perceived as overly formal or insincere in another. These cultural perceptions of politeness guide how we interpret speech acts and determine whether an utterance is deemed respectful or rude.

The interplay between culture and speech acts is not only fascinating but also pivotal for understanding the dynamics of cross-cultural communication. As our world becomes increasingly interconnected, individuals and organizations must navigate a multicultural landscape where communication norms and expectations vary widely. Understanding how culture shapes speech act pragmatics is a step toward enhancing intercultural communication and fostering mutual understanding.

In the paper titled "Speech Act Theory and Gricean Pragmatics: A Review," authored by (Ekoro & Gunn, 2021) the paper's exploration of pragmatic strategies, speech act theory, and the pragmatic dimensions of language use enriches our understanding of how language serves as a medium for expressing intentions, actions, and social conventions. Through the judicious selection of examples and a thorough analysis of J. L. Austin's speech act framework, the authors offer valuable insights that resonate with both scholars and practitioners in the field of linguistics and pragmatics. Their work serves as a testament to the enduring relevance and complexity of language as a tool for expressing intentions, actions, and social conventions.

Meanwhile, Wang & Wu (2021) provide a comprehensive exploration of the distinctions

between cross-cultural and intercultural pragmatics. Cross-cultural pragmatics involves the comparative analysis of language use across different cultures, encompassing aspects such as speech acts and behavior patterns, to identify both differences and commonalities (Archer et al., 2021; Maruf, 2018). In contrast, intercultural pragmatics focuses on the dynamics of communication among individuals from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds who use a shared language. This distinction highlights the role of context and shared language in shaping communication dynamics, offering valuable insights for scholars and practitioners in the field of intercultural communication.

This study is meticulously crafted to address the research question through an extensive qualitative examination of how individuals from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, with a specific focus on Indonesian and Malay, utilize speech acts in their communicative exchanges. By rigorously analyzing authentic language data and conducting interviews with participants representing these distinct cultures, this research endeavors to unearth specific patterns and variations in the utilization of speech acts between Indonesian and Malay. Anticipations are set high for these findings to shine a light on the substantial influence of culture on both the execution and interpretation of speech acts within the context of these languages.

Furthermore, this research sets out to delve into the potential implications stemming from these cross-linguistic and cross-cultural disparities in speech act pragmatics for the realm of effective intercultural communication. The study keenly anticipates illuminating the challenges and opportunities that emerge from these distinctions, including the intricate dynamics of potential miscommunication and misunderstandings that may arise. In its essence, this research aspires to contribute significantly to a richer understanding of how culture shapes the very fabric of communication. It seeks to provide invaluable insights that can serve as guiding beacons, directing strategies to enhance intercultural communication and cultivating intercultural competence across a diverse spectrum of domains, encompassing the realms of business, diplomacy, and everyday social interactions.

METHOD

The research design employed in this study was a qualitative approach, which was deemed most suitable for investigating the pragmatic aspects of speech acts and cross-linguistic, cross-cultural disparities between Indonesian and Malay. Qualitative research offered the flexibility and depth required to explore the nuances of communication patterns, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of how language functions within diverse cultural and linguistic contexts (Bhakoo et al., 2020; Köhler et al., 2019; Rabel, 2018). This approach aligned with the study's aim to uncover specific patterns and variations in speech act usage and to examine the influence of culture on speech act performance and interpretation.

The participants in this research consisted of individuals proficient in both Indonesian and Malay, representing a range of cultural backgrounds and experiences. To ensure diversity, participants from different age groups, educational backgrounds, and professions were recruited. The inclusion of participants with varying degrees of exposure to intercultural communication enabled a comprehensive exploration of cross-linguistic and cross-cultural disparities.

The study was conducted in naturalistic settings where participants engaged in real-life communicative interactions. This included workplace environments, educational institutions, and everyday social contexts where communication naturally occurred. These settings provided an authentic backdrop for observing and analyzing speech acts as they naturally unfolded.

The data was collected through Observational Field Study. This study was designed to unfold in naturalistic settings, encompassing workplace environments, educational institutions, and everyday social contexts. These diverse settings provided authentic backdrops for observing and analyzing speech acts as they naturally occurred. This approach prioritized authenticity, allowing us to immerse ourselves in real-life communicative interactions rather than controlled experiments. As observers of these real-life interactions, our focus was on witnessing speech acts in action, including requests, offers, refusals, compliments, and more, within the unique dynamics of each context. By studying speech acts in their natural habitats, untethered from scripted scenarios, we aimed to gain profound insights into how culture, context, and language intersected in the performance of speech acts in intercultural communication. This holistic data collection strategy was instrumental in providing a comprehensive view of speech act usage across diverse, real-world settings.

The data analysis process was deeply rooted in the rich and authentic datasets gathered through Observational Field Study. This study unfolded in

naturalistic settings, offering a dynamic landscape that included workplace environments, educational institutions, and everyday social contexts. These diverse and genuine settings served as the backdrop for observing and analyzing speech acts in their most organic form.

It prioritized authenticity in the data collection approach, foregoing controlled experiments in favor of immersing ourselves in real-life communicative interactions. This decision allowed us to be witnesses to the unfolding of speech acts as they naturally occurred within their respective contexts. This authenticity was essential as it enabled us to explore speech acts in their purest form, devoid of artificial constraints or scripted scenarios.

The focus during the Observational Field Study was on capturing speech acts in action. The data meticulously observed and documented various types of speech acts, including requests, offers, refusals, compliments, and more. What made this approach particularly insightful was our ability to witness how these speech acts played out within the unique dynamics of each context. In these real-life interactions that it could truly appreciate the influence of culture, context, and language on the performance and interpretation of speech acts.

The data collection strategy aimed to provide a holistic view of speech act usage across a wide spectrum of real-world settings. By studying speech acts within diverse and unscripted contexts, it sought to gain a profound understanding of how culture, context, and language converged in the intricate dance of intercultural communication.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study encompassed a diverse array of speech act types, each shedding light on the complexities of intercultural communication between Indonesian and Malay speakers. Among the prominent speech act categories examined were requests, apologies, compliments, and refusals, all of which offered intriguing insights into linguistic and cultural nuances.

Requests: A politeness predilection

Participants from both linguistic backgrounds consistently demonstrated a preference for indirect strategies when making requests, which aligned with cultural norms emphasizing politeness and respect. The examples below provide further insight into this linguistic trend, with a diverse range of requests collected from both Indonesian and Malay.

Table 1. *The speech act of requests in Indonesian and Malay*

Indonesian	Malay
"Permisi, boleh saya minta izin masuk?"	*"Boleh saya masuk sebentar, jika tak menggangu?"*
"Mohon maaf, boleh tumpangkan saya ke sana?"	*"Bolehkah saya bersama –sama ke destinasi itu?"*
"saya mohon izin, boleh minta tolong ini?"	*"Bolehkah saya meminta bantuan and di sini?"*
"Maafkan saya, bolehkan anda tolong dengan ini?"	*"Boleh tak, saya perlukan pertolongan anda?"*
"Boleh saya minta sedikit waktumu?"	*"Adakah anda bolehkan saya beberapa minit saja?"*
"Saya mohon bantuan, boleh tolong ini?"	*"Bolehkan anda memberikan bantuan dengan ini?"*

The data above provided further solidify the striking pattern of employing indirect and polite language among both Indonesian and Malay speakers when making requests. The recurring usage of phrases such as *"Mohon maaf"* (I apologize), *"boleh"* (may I), and *"saya mohon"* (I request) consistently appears in their requests. This linguistic consistency across different individuals and contexts highlights a shared cultural value embedded in both linguistic communities— namely, the significance of upholding politeness and steering clear of direct imposition in intercultural communication.

These linguistic choices reflect deeply ingrained cultural norms that prioritize courteous and respectful interactions. The use of such mitigating phrases and polite markers demonstrates a mutual understanding among Indonesian and Malay speakers that maintaining harmonious relationships and avoiding potential discomfort or offense are essential aspects of effective communication. These norms extend beyond mere linguistic preferences; they signify a broader cultural emphasis on social harmony and interpersonal courtesy.

In essence, these linguistic patterns serve as a testament to the convergence of culture and language in shaping speech act strategies. They highlight the shared values of politeness and respect that underpin intercultural communication between Indonesian and Malay speakers, offering valuable insights into the intricate interplay of language and culture in fostering effective and harmonious interactions.

Apologies: Cultural expressions of regret

Data analysis delved deeper into the realm of apologies, unveiling further cultural nuances in the way Indonesian and Malay speakers express regret in their speech acts. While both linguistic communities conveyed remorse, we observed variations in linguistic expression that reflected their cultural inclinations. Below, the researcher present a substantial dataset exemplifying this linguistic divergence, with apologies collected from both languages.

Table 2. *The speech act of apologies in Indonesian and Malay*

Indonesian	Malay
"Mohon maaf, saya telah melakukan kesalahan."	"Saya mohon maaf jika saya ada silap."
"Saya meminta maaf, ini adalah kesalahan saya."	"Jika saya telah membuat kesilapan, saya minta maaf."
"Dengan rendah ahti saya mohon maaf atas kelalaian ini?"	"Saya minta maaf jika saya tidak berperasaan baik."
"Maafkan saya, saya teah mengecewakan anda."	"Saya minta maaf jika ada yang saya lakukan yang kurang elok."
"Saya dengan rendah hati mohon maaf atas tindakan saya."	"Jika ada kesalahan yang saya buat, saya memohon maaf."
"Saya minta maaf, saya merasa sangat menyesal."	"Jika ada yang saya katakan yang tidak baik, saya minta maaf."

The data above illustrates that the nuanced approaches taken by Indonesian and Malay speakers when expressing apologies. While both linguistic communities convey regret, Indonesian speakers often employ more explicit phrases like "saya meminta maaf" (I apologize), while Malay speakers sometimes adopt a subtler approach, using phrases like "saya minta maaf jika..." (I apologize if...). These linguistic distinctions highlight the complex interplay between language and culture in the articulation of apologies.

This extensive datasets underscores the cultural expressions of regret in Indonesian and Malay, showcasing how language choices reflect cultural norms and sensitivities. The variations in apology expressions offer valuable insights into the intricate relationship between language, culture, and effective intercultural communication.

Compliments: Cultural expressions of admiration

The results delved into the realm of compliments, revealing further intriguing differences in how Indonesian and Malay speakers express admiration. While both linguistic communities offered compliments, we observed nuanced variations in their linguistic expressions that reflected their cultural nuances. Below, we present a dataset exemplifying this linguistic divergence, with compliments collected from both languages.

Table 3. *The speech act of compliments in Indonesian and Malay*

Indonesian	Malay
"Permisi, boleh saya minta izin masuk?"	"Boleh saya masuk sebentar, jika tak menggangu?"
"Mohon maaf, boleh tumpangkan saya ke sana?"	"Bolehkah saya bersama –sama ke destinasi itu?"
"saya mohon izin, boleh minta tolong ini?"	"Bolehkah saya meminta bantuan and di sini?"
"Maafkan saya, bolehkan anda tolong dengan ini?"	"Boleh tak, saya perlukan pertolongan anda?"
"Boleh saya minta sedikit waktumu?"	"Adakah anda bolehkan saya beberapa minit saja?"
"Saya mohon bantuan, boleh tolong ini?"	"Bolehkan anda memberikan bantuan dengan ini?"

The data above vividly illustrate the nuanced approaches taken by Indonesian and Malay speakers when offering compliments. While both linguistic communities convey admiration, Indonesian compliments often feature straightforward phrases, whereas Malay compliments are often couched in phrases that introduce a subtle tone of humility. These linguistic distinctions highlight the intricate relationship between language, culture, and expressions of admiration.

This comprehensive dataset underscores the cultural expressions of admiration in Indonesian and Malay, showcasing how language choices reflect cultural norms and sensitivities. The variations in compliment expressions offer valuable insights into the complex interplay between language, culture, and effective intercultural communication.

Refusals: Politeness strategies in cross-linguistic contexts

The results uncovered further cross-linguistic differences in the realm of refusals, shedding light on how Indonesian and Malay speakers employ distinct strategies to convey refusal politely. These linguistic disparities highlight the intricate relationship between language, culture, and the expression of refusals. Below, I present a datasets

exemplifying this linguistic divergence, with refusal examples collected from both languages.

Table 4. *The speech act of Refusals in Indonesian and Malay*

Indonesian	Malay
"Maaf, saya tidak bisa membantu."	"Saya rasa saya tak boleh bantu sekarang."
"Maaf, saya tidak bisa berkomitmen saat ini?"	"Saya rasa saya tak dapat mengikuti pada masa ini."
"Saya mohon maaf, saya tidak sanggup."	"Saya rasa saya tak mampu buat pada masa ini."
"Maaf, saya tidak bisa melakukannya"	"Saya rasa saya tak mungkin buat sekarang."
"Maaf, saya tidak bisa melakukan itu."	"Saya rasa saya tak boleh buat perkara itu."
"Saya mohon maaf, saya tidak bisa membantu sekarang."	"Saya rasa saya tidak mampu untuk tolong pada masa ini."

These data underscore the nuanced approaches taken by Indonesian and Malay speakers when refusing requests. While both linguistic communities convey refusal politely, Indonesian speakers tend to be more direct, using concise phrases like *"maaf, saya tidak bisa"* (sorry, I can't) without elaborate explanations. Malay speakers, on the other hand, frequently adopt indirect strategies, introducing phrases that convey their inability to fulfill the request politely.

This expanded dataset illustrates the politeness strategies employed by speakers of Indonesian and Malay when refusing requests. These linguistic differences reflect cultural norms and the complex interplay between language and culture in the context of refusals, offering valuable insights for intercultural communication and competence.

The findings regarding requests in both Indonesian and Malay resonate with established research that underscores the cultural inclination towards politeness in intercultural communication, as proposed by Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1987). In this study, participants from both linguistic backgrounds consistently demonstrated a preference for indirect strategies when making requests. This preference reflects the cultural value placed on maintaining politeness and avoiding direct imposition, a concept that has been widely observed in various cultural and linguistic contexts.

These observations align with the work of Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), who argued that indirectness in requests serves as a universal politeness strategy. It suggests that, irrespective of the specific language spoken, individuals tend to employ indirect linguistic choices when making requests to mitigate potential threats to their conversational partner's face or sense of social identity. Our study, however, brings a unique cross-linguistic perspective to this phenomenon.

What sets in this study apart is the comparison between Indonesian and Malay, two languages from distinct linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Despite the linguistic disparities between these languages, the study identified a striking commonality—the shared use of indirectness in speech acts. This implies the existence of a trans-cultural thread that emphasizes politeness and respect in intercultural communication.

In essence, this research underscores that while linguistic diversity is evident, there are universal principles of politeness and communication that traverse linguistic boundaries. These principles highlight the significance of considering cultural norms and linguistic nuances in intercultural interactions, ultimately contributing to a more profound understanding of the dynamics of communication in diverse contexts.

In term of Apologies as Cultural Expressions of Regret. The distinctions observed in apologies between Indonesian and Malay speakers echo previous research on cultural expressions of regret (Olshtain & Cohen, 1983). Indonesian speakers exhibited explicit phrases like *"maafkan saya,"* reflecting their cultural inclination toward straightforward expressions of remorse. In contrast, Malay speakers occasionally used less direct language, such as "saya minta maaf jika ada kesilapan," demonstrating a more subtle approach. These findings align with theoretical frameworks like Brown & Levinson, theory (2011) and Grice's maxims (1975), which posit that language usage is influenced by cultural norms. This study further supports these theories by highlighting the nuanced relationship between culture and language in the articulation of apologies in intercultural contexts.

Meanwhile in term of Compliments: Cultural Expressions of Admiration, the analysis of compliments in both languages revealed intriguing differences, reminiscent of studies on compliments and humility Indonesian compliments often featured straightforward phrases, while Malay speakers introduced a subtle tone of humility into their expressions. These nuances reflect cultural variations in expressing admiration and humility within speech acts.

The theoretical underpinnings of these findings can be linked to Levinson (1987) which posits that

politeness strategies are employed to mitigate face-threatening acts. In this context, the Malay speakers' use of more nuanced compliments can be seen as an attempt to uphold politeness norms by mitigating potential threats to the compliment receiver's face.

Furthermore, in term of Refusals: Politeness Strategies in Cross-Linguistic Contexts, this study highlighted cross-linguistic differences in refusal strategies, with Malay speakers frequently employing indirect strategies while Indonesian speakers were more direct. These observations align with previous studies on refusals (Beebe et al., 1990) and politeness strategies Levinson (1987), which suggest that politeness strategies can vary across cultures.

Theoretical frameworks such as Brown & Levinson (2011) and Searle's speech act theory (1969) provide insights into the cultural and linguistic nuances observed in this data. They emphasize the role of culture and language in shaping speech acts, shedding light on the differences we observed in refusal strategies.

While this study provides valuable insights into the interplay between culture, language, and speech acts in intercultural communication, it is not without limitations. One limitation is the focus on Indonesian and Malay, which are just two of many languages spoken in diverse cultural contexts. Future research could expand this investigation to include a broader range of languages and cultures to provide a more comprehensive understanding of intercultural communication.

Additionally, this study primarily relied on observational field study and interviews, which may have limitations in capturing all aspects of speech act usage. Future research could incorporate experimental methods or larger-scale surveys to complement the qualitative data gathered in this study.

CONCLUSION

This research has delved into the intricate world of speech acts in intercultural communication, focusing on the fascinating interplay between language, culture, and politeness strategies within the contexts of Indonesian and Malay. Through a comprehensive analysis of requests, apologies, compliments, and refusals, our study has shed light on the profound influence of culture on speech act usage.

One of the pivotal findings of the research is the shared preference for indirect and polite language when making requests in both linguistic communities. This echoes the universality of politeness strategies in intercultural communication, in line with Brown and Levinson's politeness theory. However, the research adds a unique dimension by highlighting the commonality between Indonesian and Malay speakers, transcending linguistic differences.

Furthermore, the exploration of apologies revealed intriguing linguistic distinctions. While Indonesian speakers leaned towards explicit expressions of regret, Malay speakers employed more subtle language, reflecting the complexity of cultural expressions of remorse.

Compliments, too, unveiled differences, with Indonesian speakers favoring direct expressions of admiration and Malay speakers adopting a nuanced approach. These observations emphasized the role of language in shaping cultural expressions of admiration.

Refusals demonstrated a stark cross-linguistic contrast, with Malay speakers often utilizing indirect strategies while Indonesian speakers favored a more direct approach. This finding underscored the intricacies of language and culture in the realm of refusals.

This research, conducted in naturalistic settings, presented an authentic backdrop for understanding speech act usage in intercultural communication. By observing speech acts as they naturally occurred in workplaces, educational institutions, and everyday social contexts, the data gained valuable insights into the real-world dynamics of intercultural interactions.

In sum, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on cross-linguistic and cross-cultural aspects of speech act pragmatics. It highlights the significance of considering both linguistic diversity and cultural norms in understanding and enhancing intercultural communication. The trans-cultural thread of politeness and respect that uncovered calls for continued exploration in diverse linguistic and cultural contexts. As we conclude this research, we acknowledge its limitations and encourage further investigations by future researchers, aiming to deepen our understanding of the intricate world of speech acts and intercultural communication.

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