



## Politeness Strategies in English Business Correspondence: Pragmatic Functions and Cross-Cultural Adaptation

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**SUMMARY:** *This research investigates the utilization manner of politeness methods in English business letter communications, and the manner of their adjustment under different cultural backgrounds. This language material set contains 1,200 pieces of text, 301,440 individual words, and 8,436 functional sentence clusters, and it includes five task categories: question seeking, requirement putting forward, discussion carrying out, complaint answering, and relation keeping. Among three writer groups—EN-L1, EA-BELF, and EU-BELF—the analysis carries out organization around a three-layer framework that connects strategy category, pragmatic function, and adaptability evaluation. The outcomes display that stable task-caused differences exist in the employment of politeness resources. Request information content more depends on traditional indirect expression and negative polite method. The texts of negotiation and complaint response have an obvious increase in direct expressions which serve the task. The texts which maintain relationships have a stronger connection with positive politeness and expressions of gratitude. Different connections between strategies and functions also come forth, with traditional indirectness-face-risk buffering, task-focused directness-commitment proof, and gratitude/apology-conflict settlement forming the most common paths. Cross-culture score further shows that the EN-L1 group has the best overall performance on directness control, task clearness, and reader acceptability, hence the EA-BELF group displays bigger change in request and complaint-response situations. Two repeatedly appearing mismatch modes are discovered: too much buffer that reduces task definition clearness, and too quick advance that increases relation stress. On the whole, politeness methods in business letter works serve as working pragmatic tools that influence task moving forward, relationship handling, and responsibility labeling. These results give a experience-based foundation for business English writing teaching, the improvement of company letter templates, and cross-culture communication training.*

**KEYWORDS:** *English business correspondence; politeness strategies; pragmatic functions; cross-cultural adaptation; business discourse*

## 1 Introduction

The international commercial intercourse nowadays more and more depends on written ways to begin trade deals, talk about conditions, make risks known, keep connections with customers, and deal with problems after selling goods. Although English business letters have a fixed form that they must follow, the effect of their communication relies not only on whether the information they contain is complete. The salutation in an inquiry, the use of softening expressions in a request, the arrangement of reasons in a refusal, and the apologies and

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commitments in a complaint response all influence the recipient's assessment of professionalism, credibility, and willingness to cooperate. For multinational corporations, foreign trade professionals, and learners of Business English, English business correspondence serves both the functions of conveying tasks and maintaining relationships; when the writer and recipient come from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, the choice of polite expressions directly affects whether business intentions are accurately received.

This problem is especially prominent in BELF. In the international business domain, the English language is utilized by professional personnel coming from diverse mother language backgrounds in order to finish work tasks and keep cooperative relationships that can operate normally. Foregoing studies have that business English carries out its work through meetings, negotiations, emails, and advertisements, and thus acts as a common communication resource in multinational organizations. [1]. Evidence from Nordic corporate mergers further shows that BELF is an operational medium tied to concrete organizational work rather than native-speaker norms [2]. Kankaanranta likewise argues that its value lies in enabling task completion under cross-cultural conditions [3]. Politeness in business correspondence therefore needs to be examined against task demands and reception conditions.

The theory that has relation to politeness provides the main foundational foundation for analysis. Brown and Levinson link courteous behavior to the menace of face, social distance, and authority power [4]. Leech treats it as a discourse-regulating principle shaped by others' interests and expectations [5]. Spencer-Oatey emphasizes identity, relationships, and interactional norms in cross-cultural evaluation [6]. Kecskes shows that when common ground is weak, interlocutors must build provisional shared understanding through language [7]. These viewpoints make clear that politeness inside business letter communications cannot be judged only from fixed phrase expressions alone; its function is dependent on task category, relation environment, and culture anticipation.

Experience-based researches have already started to discuss this problem. Park and other persons have reported that cross-cultural distinctions exist in the frequency of turns, the order of turns, and the complexity of language in Korean and American work unit request emails [8]. Al-Khatib has demonstrated that judgments concerning politeness within Jordanian-American email interaction are formed by cultural background and interactional expectation [9]. Van Herck et al. find that effective B2C complaint responses combine interpersonal reassurance with task-oriented action [10]. The authors Xia and other people demonstrate that repeated phrase structures in asking emails are utilized to make requests softer, indicate cooperation, and keep working relationships [11]. Through the utilization of a one-million-word business letter language bank, Zhang and Tong have discovered the repeated appearance of meaning rules in asking sentences [12].

Three issues remain. First, many studies stay with one speech act, such as requests or complaint responses, and give limited attention to variation across business tasks. Yet inquiry, negotiation, complaint handling, and relationship maintenance differ in face risk, responsibility boundary, and task pressure. Second, existing studies often classify politeness strategies without showing how they map onto pragmatic functions in actual tasks. The same thanking expression, for example, may build rapport in one context and ease request pressure in another. Third, cross-cultural adaptation is still often described through broad labels that lack operational criteria. Qian and Pan show regional differences in modal use among Chinese learners writing business letters [13], while Pilegaard shows that the placement of politeness strategies in British business writing reflects established communication norms [14]. Cross-cultural adaptation should therefore be assessed through directness, face risk, relationship orientation, task clarity, and reader acceptability rather than by counting polite words.

Under this background, the present research investigates English business letters by utilizing a task-based corpus frame. This research puts emphasis on three questions: whether the distribution of politeness strategies has differences among different business tasks; how each strategy corresponds one by one to the functions that include friendship relation keeping, face softening, responsibility dealing, conflict mending, and commitment checking; and how the writers that come from different cultural backgrounds reach or depart from cross-cultural adaptation. This research has three points of contribution. It constructs a corpus that covers five categories of business tasks, carries out co-coding on strategy types and pragmatic functions, and assesses cross-cultural adaptation from five dimensions: direct degree, face danger, relation orientation, task clearness, and reader acceptability.

## 2 Methods

### 2.1 Corpus Construction and Communicative Task Classification

The English business correspondence discussed in this paper includes both traditional letter formats and business emails with complete communicative functions. The definition of the research subjects is based not on external media but on communicative purpose, textual organization, and the means of politeness realization. This approach is based on two considerations: First, current cross-border business communication relies primarily on email; if letters and emails are rigidly separated, it is easy to fragment the same category of pragmatic issues; Second, this study focuses on the practical role of politeness strategies in business tasks; differences in medium do not alter the pragmatic structure of core tasks such as requests, negotiations, complaint responses, and relationship maintenance.

Therefore, this research has built the English Business Correspondence Corpus (EBCC-1200). Source texts are obtained from three ways: public business communication cases and textbook attachment parts, customer service and reply texts that are published on company official websites, and name-hidden English letter materials from actual work environments. Four inclusion principles are utilized: a definite sender-receiver relation, a recognizable communication aim, a text length of 120-420 words, and a comparatively integrated framework that has beginning, main part, and ending. Appendices, complete contract articles, automatic mails, and only information-based notifications are all not included. The first step of screening gives out 1,286 texts. After duplicate checking and manual examine, 86 high templated or overlapping samples are taken away, hence giving a final corpus of 1,200 texts and 301,440 words. Table 1 has reported to us its composition and distribution situation.

*Table 1: Corpus Composition and Task Distribution*

Panel A. Distribution by communicative task

Task type	Texts (n)	Share / %	Total words	Mean words per text	Functional units (n)	Mean units per text
Inquiry	240	20.0	58,320	243	1,630	6.79
Request	240	20.0	60,480	252	1,738	7.24
Negotiation	240	20.0	63,360	264	1,724	7.18
Complaint response	240	20.0	64,080	267	1,752	7.30
Relationship maintenance	240	20.0	55,200	230	1,592	6.63
Total	1,200	100.0	301,440	251	8,436	7.03

Panel B. Distribution by cultural group

Cultural group	Texts (n)	Share / %	Total words	Mean words per text	Functional units (n)	Mean units per text
EN-L1 business writers	400	33.3	101,600	254	2,842	7.11
EA-BELF writers	400	33.3	99,200	248	2,796	6.99
EU-BELF writers	400	33.3	100,640	252	2,798	7.00
Total	1,200	100.0	301,440	251	8,436	7.03

For the guarantee of consistent comparability among different tasks, this paper, on the basis of the communicative focus of samples, divides the samples into five kinds: questions asked, requests put forward, negotiations carried out, responses to complaints, and maintenance of interpersonal relationships. The inquiry type centers on information about goods, price quotations, working procedures, or business services; the request kind mainly includes requests for materials, time, resources, or actions; The negotiation type includes modifications to price, delivery, duty, and clauses; the category of complaint reply concentrates on dealing with problems, making clear duty, and arranging solutions; while the relationship maintenance type fulfills the objectives of expressing gratefulness, sending regards, enhancing collaboration, and keeping follow-up connection. Classification does not depend on single courteous expressions but utilizes the standard of "which task most directly decides the receiver's following behavior." When one single text holds two or more than two tasks, only one primary task label is got kept, and the leftover information is written down in metadata for later explanation. The process of corpus organization is shown in Figure 1.

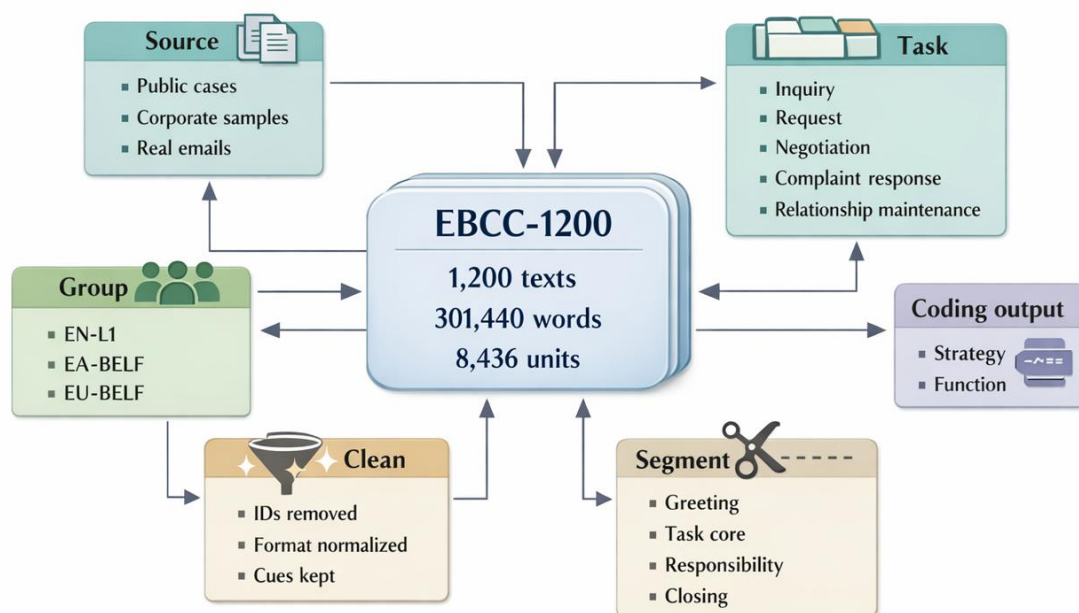


Figure 1: Corpus Construction and Task Mapping Mechanism

Figure 1 shows the corpus-processing path before formal analysis. Raw texts pass through source filtering, task identification, cultural grouping, anonymization, and functional-clause segmentation before coding. This pipeline is designed to keep observed differences as closely

tied as possible to task attributes and pragmatic choice, while reducing distortion from source heterogeneity, fragmentation, and format variation.

Except task labels, this research divides three culture groups according to where the writers come from: English native-speaking business writers, East Asian BELF writers, and European BELF writers, each group has 400 texts. The grouping work is carried out on the basis of public source descriptions, author background information, and case annotations. Texts which have unclear origin or serious style mixing are got rid of from comparison among different groups. In order to decrease the deviation which comes from the change of length, the three groupings are matched according to the composition of tasks, average length, and structure completeness.

Preprocessing carries out the removal of identification risk and formatting noise only. All the discourse elements which have direct connection with the expression of politeness are all kept, among them are salutations, buffer movements, expressions of thanks, expressions of apology, expressions of promise, and closing greetings; hence this is because these positions frequently undertake the key pragmatic functions. Cleaning only removes names, addresses, telephone numbers, order numbers, and company emblems, while dates, word spellings, and paragraph forms are made uniform. In complaint-response and negotiation texts, when the meaning of the present reply relies on an earlier exchange, that previous interaction is only recorded as metadata summary, and is not incorporated as a component of the sample.

For segmentation, the study uses functional sentence clusters as the basic unit. A cluster may consist of one sentence or two to three adjacent sentences that together realize one local communicative function. Boundaries are identified mainly by discourse role, including opening greeting, rapport building, task presentation, justification, responsibility allocation, remedial commitment, and closing. This unit is closer to pragmatic operation in business correspondence than isolated sentences and preserves positional functional differences better than whole-text annotation.

## 2.2 Politeness Strategy Coding and Pragmatic Function Mapping

This article uses a two-layer coding framework to carry out an analysis on politeness occurrences. The first grade is for dividing kinds of polite methods, while the second grade is for dividing pragmatic uses. The coding handbook was confirmed after two rounds of preliminary coding and modification, finally keeping five kinds of first-level strategies: positive politeness, negative politeness, traditional indirect expressions, expressions of gratitude and apologies, and task-focused direct expressions.

Positive politeness primarily manifests as the construction of a cooperative stance, the emphasis on shared interests, and positive evaluations; negative politeness primarily manifests as reducing the sense of imposition, preserving the other party's room for choice, and the use of buffering qualifiers; conventional indirect expressions primarily convey requests or suggestions through modality, conditional clauses, preparatory inquiries, and vagueness structures; Thanks and apologies are primarily used to stabilize the interactive atmosphere, compensate for unfavorable information, and repair relational tension; task-oriented direct expressions, meanwhile, are concentrated in the clear articulation of action requests, timelines, and boundaries of responsibility [15-17].

For the guarantee that following analysis will not degrade into a simple list of terms, this paper carries out coding on strategy categories and pragmatic functions at the same time, and their mapping connection is displayed in Figure 2.

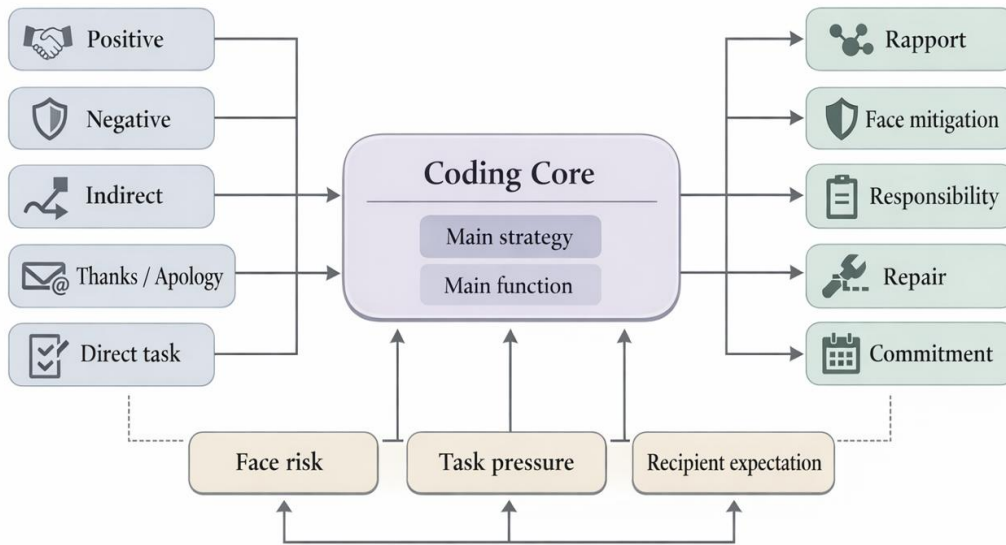


Figure 2: Mapping Mechanism between Politeness Strategies and Pragmatic Functions

In Figure 2, the five strategy categories correspond to functions such as relationship building, face-saving risk mitigation, handling of responsibility boundaries, conflict resolution, and commitment confirmation. The same linguistic forms assume different communicative roles when applied to different task contexts. For example, expressions of gratitude are often used to reinforce a cooperative atmosphere in relationship-maintenance texts, whereas in complaint responses, they frequently co-occur with conflict mitigation and accountability responses; direct task expressions help clarify execution requirements in follow-up and remediation scenarios, but tend to increase interaction pressure in initial requests.

The pragmatic function coding system includes five kinds: relationship building, face danger reduction, duty limit control, dispute settlement, and promise affirmation. The building of relationships mainly occurs in opening greetings, cooperative bases, and final words; face-saving danger reduction focuses on petitions, rejections, follow-through actions, and accounts of duty; management of responsibility boundaries is focused in negotiation and complaint reply, utilized to make clear the responsible side, handling scope, and proceeding conditions; The solution of conflict is mainly reached by saying sorry, giving explanations, making up money, and giving promises; and the confirmation of commitment can lower uncertainty by means of arranging time, action steps and follow-up contact ways. Every functional sentence group is given one main strategy mark and one main function mark; We just add a secondary strategy label when it is strictly necessary for controlling tag density.

Coding decisions are based on three factors: linguistic cues, textual context, and the current task. Researchers record both explicit polite words and phrases—such as please, would, could, appreciate, sorry, thank you, and look forward to—as well as higher-level strategies, such as presenting a reason before making a request, attributing responsibility to processes or policies, offering alternatives after a refusal, and using cooperative expectations to mitigate the sense of command [18-21]. The coding thus extends beyond individual words to encompass organizational patterns and pragmatic acts at the sentence cluster level. The coding scheme, core linguistic cues, and consistency results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Coding Scheme and Reliability Results

Panel A. Politeness strategy coding scheme			
Strategy category	Core linguistic cues and textual realization	Primary pragmatic functions	Typical textual position
Positive politeness	solidarity claims, shared-goal framing, positive evaluation, cooperative stance	rapport building, relational alignment	opening, closing, transition to request
Negative politeness	hedging, deference, downgraders, option-preserving wording	face-risk mitigation, pressure reduction	before request, before reminder, before rejection
Conventional indirectness	modalized request, preparatory question, conditional framing, softened proposition	face-risk mitigation, action initiation	request core, negotiation turn, follow-up
Gratitude and apology	thanks, appreciation, apology, regret, acknowledgment of inconvenience	conflict repair, rapport maintenance, tension reduction	opening response, post-problem explanation, closing
Task-oriented directness	explicit action demand, deadline statement, responsibility clarification, step-by-step instruction	commitment clarification, responsibility management	negotiation core, complaint response core, deadline reminder
Panel B. Inter-coder reliability			
Coding layer	Agreement / %	Cohen's kappa	
Task classification	95.4	0.91	
Strategy coding	91.2	0.86	
Pragmatic function coding	88.7	0.82	

Table 2 summarizes the implementation patterns, typical discourse positions, and main pragmatic functions of the five strategy categories, and reports reliability at three levels: task classification, strategy annotation, and function annotation. These definitions set the label boundaries for the subsequent comparison of strategy frequency, functional distribution, and co-occurrence across tasks.

The annotation system also logs four environment-related variables: relation type, power relation, task pressure, and discourse position. The classification of relationships includes first-time contact, continuous collaboration and solution of disagreements. Power connection makes difference between peer mutual action and level-based information transmission. Task pressure is divided by coding into three grades: low, medium, high. The position of discourse is given codes as opening, body, or closing. These variant factors can assist people to explain why the identical expression can perform different functions in different situations. An indirect requirement in a first-time query can maintain courteous spacing, while in pressing problem fixing it may hence decelerate work processing. In the follow-up work of contract violation behavior, a direct requirement can make responsibility become clear, while in daily information interaction it can increase the resistance of mutual communication.

The formal annotation work was carried out by two researchers who have received training in pragmatics and business English, and a senior reviewer is the one who deals with disputed cases. Before the full annotation work, the research group did a pilot test on 120 texts from the corpus and modified three repeatedly appearing problem parts: the dividing line between

positive politeness and relationship-maintenance function, the overlapping part between conventional indirectness and negative politeness, and the appropriateness of direct task expressions under the condition of high time pressure. Full annotation work was then carried out. When initial judgments about a functional sentence group still did not reach agreement, a third reviewer therefore made the final determination on the basis of the overall context function.

### 2.3 Cross-Cultural Adaptation Assessment and Reliability Protocol

The core of this evaluation lies in judging whether these courteous wordings are used in a proper way within cross-culture business intercourse. Instead of depending on an all-inclusive formula, judgments are made on the basis of separated marks in five aspects: directness handling, face-keeping danger management, relation direction, task definition, and reader acceptableness. The first two dimensions mainly investigate whether the strength and buffer of expressions connected to requests, rejections, responsibility, and solutions conform to the present task; relationship direction concentrates on whether cooperative self-identities are kept; the clarity of task mainly looks at whether action demands, time arrangements and responsibility bearing are clear; and reader acceptability on the whole reflects the total probability that the text can get acceptance in the goal business environment. Figure 3 give the illustration of this evaluation framework.

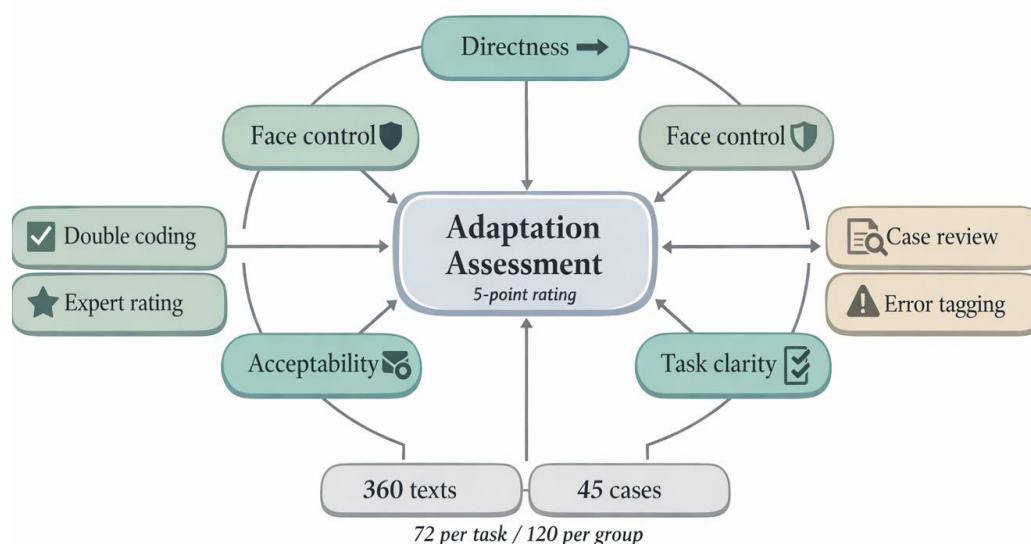


Figure 3: Cross-Cultural Adaptation Assessment Protocol

In Figure 3, the five dimensions compose the core evaluation layer, and dual coding, expert marking, case checking, and error marking form the verification layer. This kind of structure is able to support quantitative assessment, and at the same time it can keep the traceability which points to specific passages.

The scoring group was obtained through layered sampling from the 1,200-text language bank and includes 360 articles: 72 come from each task type and 120 come from each cultural crowd. Three experts joined in, they possess background jobs in business English writing instruction, cross-culture business interaction, and foreign trade letter composition. All five dimensions have obtained scores on a 5-point scale, in which 1 represents clear wrong matching, 3 represents basic acceptability which has partial risk, and 5 represents strong matching [22].

The subsequent analysis addressed four issues: strategy frequency and mean occurrence per text across the five tasks; strategy-function co-occurrence patterns in high-risk tasks; cross-

group differences in the five adaptation dimensions; and identification of typical mismatch cases. A case was retained when reader acceptability averaged below 2.8, or when expert disagreement remained substantial under patterns such as clear task but high relational pressure, or adequate relational marking but weak task clarity. This procedure retained 45 cases for the risk and error analysis in Chapter 3.

Expert opinions and modification proposals were kept for examination. For texts which have big scoring differences, this research checked whether disagreements gather around greetings, main request sentences, duty statements, or ending formulas, instead of directly using the average score. The intra-group correlation coefficient among the five dimensions was 0.88, therefore it shows high scoring consistency. The work of text cutting apart, code giving, and note marking was all finished in NVivo, hence the calculation-related analysis was carried out in SPSS and R.

### 3 Results and Discussion

#### 3.1 Distribution of Politeness Strategies across Business Tasks

Table 3 has reported that the condition of main polite methods among the five business-task kinds is shown. Texts of inquiry and request display the highest frequency of the conventional indirect approach, with 26.8% and 29.4% respectively, and negative politeness in requests therefore rises to 19.7%. This mode shows that looking for information and asking for actions depend greatly on modal structures, buffering actions, and wording keeping options open to lower the degree of imposition. Inquiry written works also hold a preference for indirect expression, yet their relatively lower degree of negative politeness therefore indicates weaker interaction pressure when compared with request tasks.

*Table 3: Standardized Frequencies of Major Politeness Strategies across Business Tasks*

Task type	Positive politeness	Negative politeness	Conventional indirectness	Gratitude and apology	Task-oriented directness
Inquiry	18.6	14.2	26.8	9.1	11.4
Request	14.3	19.7	29.4	7.8	16.9
Negotiation	11.8	15.2	18.6	6.5	27.4
Complaint response	9.4	13.1	11.6	24.8	22.9
Relationship maintenance	28.7	8.9	12.4	20.3	5.8

Negotiation texts show a different profile. Task-oriented directness reaches 27.4%, the highest among the five categories, while conventional indirectness drops to 18.6%. Once price, delivery, and liability enter the text, greater weight falls on conditional explanation and boundary clarification. In complaint responses, gratitude and apology rise to 24.8%, while task-oriented directness remains high at 22.9, indicating that these texts must handle relationship repair and problem resolution at the same time. Relationship-maintenance texts are instead dominated by positive politeness and gratitude, at 28.7% and 20.3%, which shows that their main pragmatic focus lies in sustaining a cooperative atmosphere. The distributional intensity across tasks is presented in Figure 4.

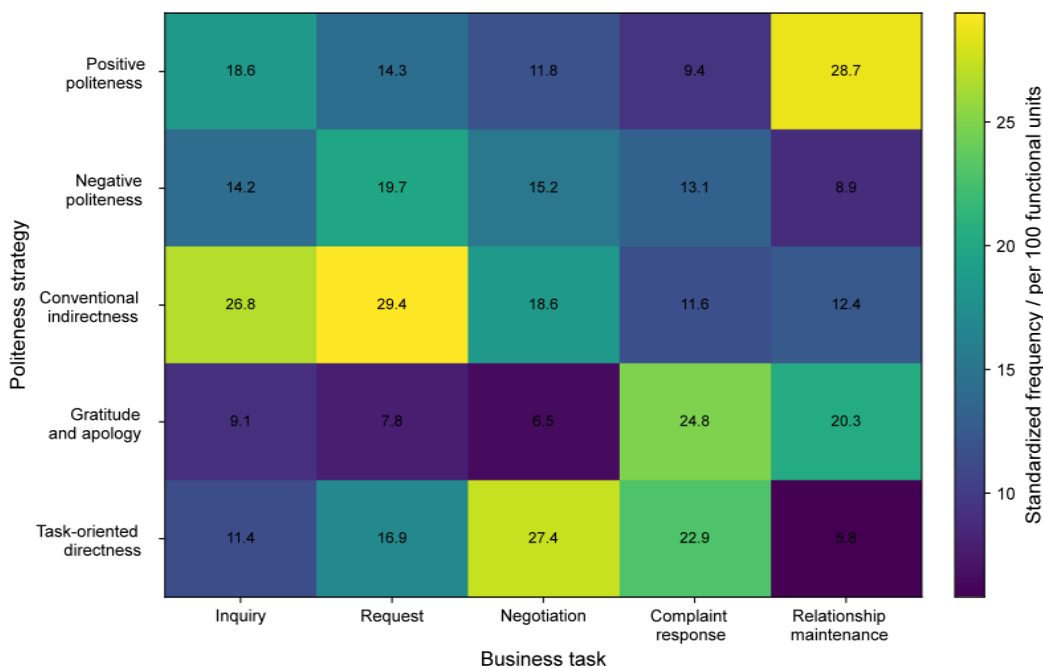


Figure 4: Heatmap of Politeness Strategy Distribution Across Business Tasks

It is Figure 4 that this same structural contrast is displayed by. Requests and seeking information make up a high-value area under traditional indirect expression, while discussion processes and handling of complaints gather under task-centered direct expression. Texts that maintain relationships keep continuously high in positive politeness behavior and expressions of gratitude or apology. These high-activity points accord with the number rule in Table 3 and thus show that polite resources are distributed through task structure but not through random change. The change under different grades of face risk is displayed by Figure 5.

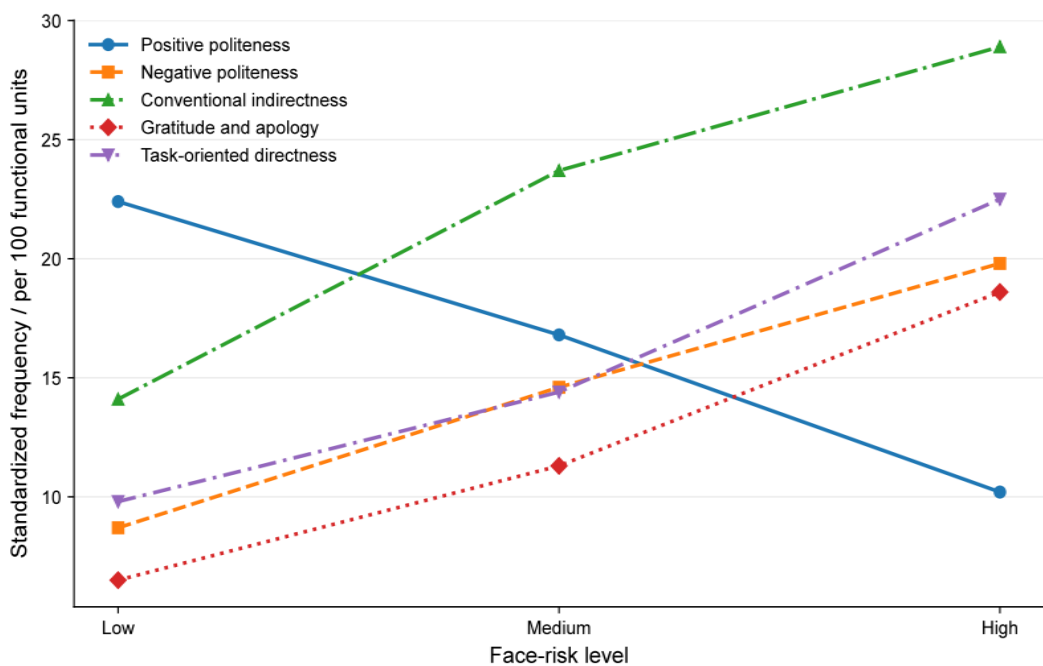


Figure 5: Strategy Shift across Face-Risk Levels

When risk goes up from Low level to High level, traditional indirect manner rises from 14.1 to 28.9, negative courteousness goes from 8.7 to 19.8, and thankful words/sorry words change from 6.5 to 18.6. The directness that takes task as its goal also increases, from 9.8 to 22.5. Therefore, high-risk texts can not have their clarity lowered when buffering gets bigger. They simultaneously bear two requirements: reducing the pressure of mutual interaction and making clear the needed action path. The "first buffering then confirming" mode which is often seen in complaint answering and negotiation talks reflects this change. These research results show that, in business letters, the strategies which are used for expressing politeness possess a distribution that is not even. Texts of inquiry and request more depend on the mitigation of pressure, texts of negotiation and complaint response put greater weight on responsibility and the confirmation of action, and texts of relationship maintenance more rely on cooperative stance and positive evaluation.

### 3.2 Pragmatic Functions and Strategy Co-Occurrence

When politeness strategies are embedded in specific business discourse, they often function in combination. The co-occurrence relationship between strategies and pragmatic functions is illustrated in Figure 6.

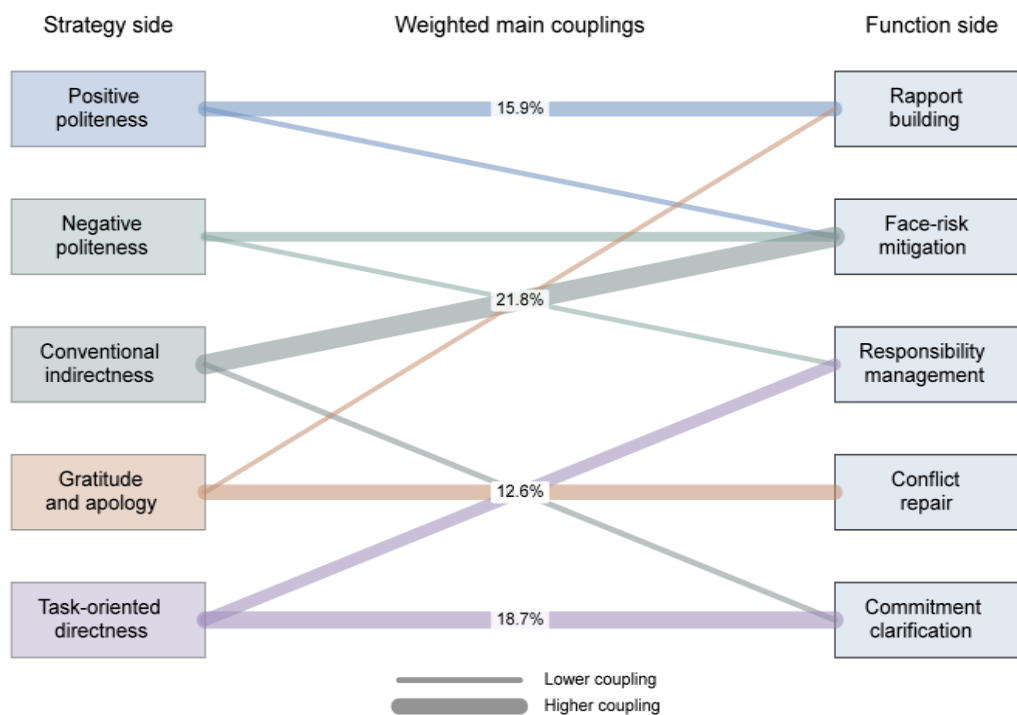


Figure 6: Strategy Shift across Face-Risk Levels

In Figure 6, four main connections are most prominent: Conventional indirectness-Face-risk mitigation, Task-oriented directness-Commitment clarification, Gratitude and apology-Conflict repair, and Positive politeness-Rapport building. These four main pairs account for 67.4% of all primary strategy-function relationships. Specifically, Conventional indirectness-Face-risk mitigation accounts for 21.8%, Task-oriented directness-Commitment clarification for 18.7%, Gratitude and apology-Conflict repair for 16.4%, and Positive politeness-Rapport building for 15.9%. High-frequency pairings are primarily concentrated in a few stable channels, indicating that the realization of politeness in business correspondence exhibits distinct functional

convergence.

In request texts, the most frequent local structure is "reason deduction + modal expression request", therefore it takes up 41.3% of all request category texts. This kind of structure normally at first explains the necessity of using the side that receives request's resources, after that it uses modal verbs like "could", "would", or "would appreciate if" to lower the pressure that people feel from the request. Its core function is to decrease the threshold of entrance, thus causing the receiving party to more easily accept the follow-up work tasks. In negotiation written materials, the most often seen structure is "relation buffering + condition adjustment + duty confirmation," which occupies 38.6%. This text at first uses a cooperative attitude and a low-conflict wording to fix the relation, hence quickly pulls the talk together to core items such as price, delivery, responsibility. This structure remains space for discussion meanwhile eliminating unclearness on the aspect of terms.

Co-occurrence patterns in complaint response texts are more consistent. "Gratitude/ Apology + Problem Acknowledgment + Remedial Commitment" accounts for 46.7% of complaint response texts. Gratitude and apologies serve to defuse hostility, problem acknowledgment defines the incident, and remedial commitments restore actionable solutions. The absence of any one of these elements can easily destabilize the text: if there is only reassurance without a remedy, the recipient may feel the response is empty; if there is only a remedy without any buffer, it is easily perceived as a technical formality. The composition of relationship-maintenance texts is significantly simpler; positive politeness and expressions of gratitude together account for 49.0% of all primary strategy markers in this category, indicating that the focus of these texts lies in repeatedly signaling cooperation, without the need for complex chains of responsibility or task-driven structures.

### 3.3 Cross-Cultural Adaptability, Error Patterns, and Application Implications

The scores of writers from three cultural backgrounds across the five adaptation dimensions are shown in Figure 7.

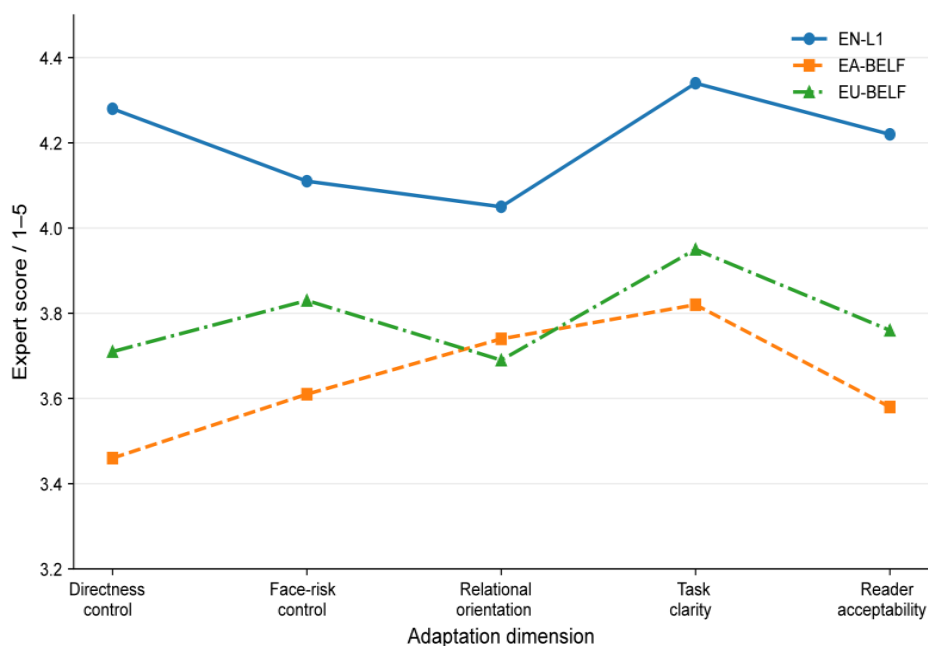


Figure 7: Cross-Cultural Adaptation Scores across Five Dimensions

In Figure 7, the EN-L1 group maintained the highest scores across all five dimensions: Directness control at 4.28, Face-risk control at 4.11, Relational orientation at 4.05, Task clarity at 4.34, and Reader acceptability at 4.22. The EU-BELF group ranked in the middle, with scores of 3.71, 3.83, 3.69, 3.95, and 3.76, respectively. The EA-BELF group scored lowest on Directness control and Reader acceptability, with scores of 3.46 and 3.58, respectively. The largest gap among the three groups was observed in Directness control, with a difference of 0.82 between EN-L1 and EA-BELF; the gap in Relational orientation was relatively smaller, with a difference of 0.36 between EN-L1 and EU-BELF. The score structure indicates that the primary divergence in cross-cultural adaptation lies not in the expression of cooperation itself, but in the control of task-driving intensity. This difference becomes more pronounced when examined in specific tasks. In request texts, the Reader Acceptability scores for EN-L1, EU-BELF, and EA-BELF were 4.18, 3.66, and 3.42, respectively. In complaint response texts, these values were 4.11, 3.49, and 3.31. In requesting behaviors, the inconsistency mainly focuses on the aspect of assertion. Some pieces of writing make the task become weaker and make action targets become not clear; other groups proceed overly speedily, possessing insufficient buffering and too much pressure that is put on the receiving party; s visage. In handling complaint replies, the mismatch mainly focuses on responsibility bearing and the promise of fixing problems. Some rely heavily on apology without a clear resolution path; others specify corrective action in detail yet offer limited emotional reassurance. Figure 8 maps the spatial distribution of these typical mismatches.

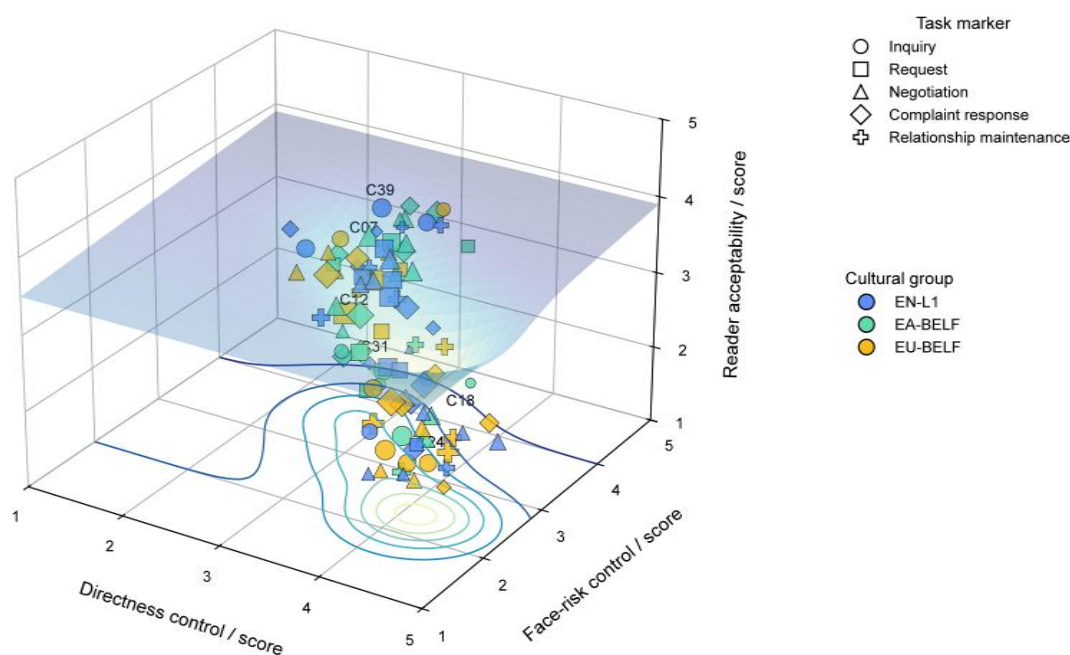


Figure 8: Three-Dimensional Pragmatic Risk Map of Typical Mismatch Cases

Figure 8 puts the 45 mismatch cases in two main areas instead of spreading through the complete three-dimensional space. The first area, which is characterized by low directness control, high face-risk control, and low reader acceptability, holds 16 cases, therefore they are mainly in complaint responses and some negotiation replies. These written materials keep a large amount of redundant space, while the marking of responsibility still stays weak, and the put-forward measures have no strength. The second district, which is delimited by high directness control, low face-risk control and low reader acceptability, includes 13 cases, it is mainly in requests, negotiations, and relationship-keeping texts. At this place the task intention

is clear, but reader pressure has a sharp increase. When taken together, these two zones take up 64.4% of all mismatch cases, hence this shows that the majority of adaptation failure is connected with unsteady coordination between clarity and buffering. The outline distribution further puts risk on the transition zones around these groupings, thus displaying that adaptation cannot be promoted through the separate adding of one alone politeness resource. This type of rule possesses direct usefulness in the aspect of business English training and the design of communication inside enterprises. The training for requests ought to put emphasis on the construction of sentence groups which lets objectives be clear, and meanwhile restrains the directive strength. The training of handling complaints ought to make the sequence between comfort words and correction measures more compact, therefore, apology and resolution can be kept connected in structure. The writing of negotiation needs the simultaneous control of relation buffering and condition confirmation, with cooperative attitude and responsibility limits clearly being expressed. Therefore, corporate communication standards need the calibration aiming at specific tasks: the opening strength in requests, the order of reassurance and solution in complaint replies, the stage target and responsibility definition in negotiations.

## 4 Conclusion

This study builds a task-oriented corpus framework for examining politeness strategies and cross-cultural adaptation in English business correspondence. The analysis covers three dimensions: strategy distribution, pragmatic function, and adaptive difference. The results show that politeness in business correspondence does not operate as fixed rhetorical packaging. Its form changes with task type, relational pressure, and the need to define responsibility.

(1) Different business tasks require different emphases on politeness. In request texts, conventional indirect expressions accounted for 29.4%, while negative politeness accounted for 19.7%, indicating that resource-requesting texts rely more on buffering to reduce the pressure of initiating contact; in negotiation texts, task-oriented direct expressions reached 27.4%, the highest value among the five task categories, suggesting that condition negotiation and responsibility confirmation place greater emphasis on clarity of expression; In complaint response texts, expressions of gratitude and apology reached 24.8, while task-oriented direct expressions stood at 22.9, showing that this category of text must simultaneously address relationship repair and issue resolution; positive politeness in relationship maintenance texts reached 28.7, indicating that the primary focus lies on maintaining a cooperative atmosphere.

(2) The function of politeness is mainly achieved through patterned combinations, hence it is not achieved through isolated polite words. The co-occurrence outcomes make manifest that "conventional indirectness plus face-risk mitigation" holds 21.8%, "task-oriented directness plus commitment confirmation" holds 18.7%, "thanks/apology plus conflict resolution" holds 16.4%, and "positive politeness plus relationship building" holds 15.9%. On the task stratification level, "reasoning + modal requirement" holds 41.3% proportion in request texts, "thanks/apology + problem acknowledgement + remedy commitment" holds 46.7% proportion in complaint responses, and "relationship buffer + condition adjustment + responsibility acknowledgement" holds 38.6% proportion in negotiation texts. These results give the indication that the effect of politeness in business correspondence is dependent on the way that buffering, explanation, and action planning carry out coordination with each other.

(3) The main discrepancies in cross-cultural adaptation center on the balance between directness control and task clarity. The EN-L1 group scored 4.28, 4.34, and 4.22 on Directness control, Task clarity, and Reader acceptability, respectively; the EU-BELF group scored 3.71, 3.95, and 3.76; and the EA-BELF group scored 3.46, 3.82, and 3.58. The dimension with the largest gap among the three groups was Directness control, with a difference of 0.82 between

the EN-L1 and EA-BELF groups. The 45 typical mismatch cases identified further were mainly concentrated in two categories: "excessive buffering leading to unclear tasks" and "too rapid progression leading to high relational pressure."

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