Offering and hospitality in Arabic and English

GRAINGER, Karen <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-9379-4361>, KERKAM, Z., MANSOR, F. and MILLS, Sara

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Karen Grainger, Zainab Kerkam, Fathia Mansor and Sara Mills

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Abstract: This paper examines the conventional linguistic practices involved in everyday hospitality situations. We compare offers in Arabic and English and, rather than focusing on the differences between the ways interactants in these two cultures make offers, we challenge the notion that offering is in essence differently handled in the two languages. We argue instead that we should focus just as much on the similarities between the ways offers are made, since no two cultural/linguistic groups are diametrically opposed. Furthermore, no cultural or linguistic group can be argued to be homogeneous. Through a detailed analysis of four naturally occurring hospitality encounters, we explore the nature and sequencing of offering and receiving hospitality in each cultural community and discuss the extent to which offers and refusals are conventionalized in each language. In this way we hope to develop a more contextual discursive approach to cross-cultural politeness research. Drawing on Spencer-Oatey's notion of sociality face, we examine the conventions for being hospitable in order to appear sincere. A qualitative analysis of the data reveals that, while there are similarities in offering behaviour in both English and Arabic, in Arabic, the interactional moves of insisting and refusing are slightly more conventionalized. This however does not constitute a radical difference between the offering norms of these two cultural groups.

Keywords: Arabic, English, offers, refusals, hospitality

Karen Grainger, Dept. of Humanities, Sheffield Hallam University, Owen Building, Sheffield S1 1WB, UK, E-mail: K.P.Grainger@shu.ac.uk
Zainab Kerkam, kerkamzainab@yahoo.com
Fathia Mansor, Fatheh.Mansor@student.shu.ac.uk
Sara Mills, S.L.Mills@shu.ac.uk

1 Introduction

This article analyzes the conventionalized linguistic practices involved in everyday hospitality situations in Arabic and English.[1] Most cultures hold hospitality and associated rituals to be quite central to their social fabric. These situations often seem to invite conventionalized and routine politeness formulae. However, the nature of these routines, and the extent of conventionalization, will vary from culture to culture. In this article, drawing on a discursive approach to the analysis of politeness, we compare the act of offering hospitality in Arabic-speaking and English-speaking communities (Kadar and Mills 2011; LPRG 2011). It seems to us that, whilst there are similarities between the routines associated with hospitality, there are different cultural norms and ideologies which have an impact on the way that offers are made in the different cultural groups. Or we might suggest that these linguistic ideologies around hospitality and offering are foregrounded in Arabic, whereas in English, concerns with imposing on individual needs are prioritized over providing hospitality (Agha 2007). We are not arguing that these cultures are in simple opposition, as has often been the case in studies of cross-cultural politeness norms, whereby the English are characterized as rather inhospitable and reserved and Arabs are portrayed as very hospitable (Al-Adaileh 2011). Rather, there are different conventions for offering hospitality which are more or less considered part of the *habitus* of each culture, and these are based on different assumptions about the rights, needs and obligations of hosts and guests (Bourdieu 1991). This notion of politeness behaviours being embedded in a cultural ideology fits well with Spencer-Oatey's (2000, 2008) work on sociality and equity rights in interaction. Drawing on her work, we argue that the Arabic emphasis on the generosity of the host, as an important part of sociality rights, tends to mean that the hospitality conventions in Arab cultures require more elaborate rituals of offering and responding to offers, than is the case in English where these sociality rights are mitigated by concerns with pressures of time and an individual's need for self-determination. Using several illustrative examples of offers of hospitality, we describe the interactional behaviours that appear to be appropriate in each

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1 We should make clear that the focus of this article is largely on British English and Libyan Arabic. It is clearly the case that in different English-speaking and Arabic-speaking contexts, the norms and ideologies which we describe will not hold to the same extent. We would argue that it would be very difficult and indeed inadvisable to make any generalisations about all English-speaking or Arabic-speaking communities, but perhaps from the work presented here we might be able to track down some of the ideologies associated with particular language activities, which may be shared amongst speakers within particular communities.

of the settings. We compare (Libyan) Arabic-speaking incidents with (British) English ones and discuss the extent to which these interactions may be considered conventionalized, and the ways in which these conventions may be influenced by cultural values. However, again unlike earlier research on cross-cultural behaviour, we will not simply be contrasting these cultural practices, but showing how in each culture, there exist similar patterns of behaviour and expectations of behaviour, similar ideologies about what is appropriate, but that within each culture, these may be mitigated by other concerns and expectations. These mitigating factors seem to us to be very similar in both cultures, and it is this which makes our article distinct from other cross-cultural studies in this area. We focus in our work as much on the similarities between different cultures' sense of what is appropriate behaviour as much as we do on the differences between them.

The impetus for this article was an incident in our research group when we all went to a café.[2] Sara (who is English-speaking) went to the counter to order drinks and asked everyone if they would like a coffee; Karen (also English) said that she would like a coffee, but everyone else (who are Arabic-speaking) refused. Only later when discussing this with the group, did Sara and Karen understand that the convention within Arab societies is for refreshment to be offered once, for it to be politely declined, and then for it to be offered a second time. Only at this point would the offer be accepted. When we discussed this incident as a group, we recognized that the convention also exists in English as a possible behaviour (perhaps not when being offered coffee in a café, but in a context in someone's home when being offered more food). Thus, it is not the case that in Arabic a certain convention exists which does not exist in English, but rather that the same convention of only accepting an offer when it has been insisted upon, occurs in different contexts, and is perhaps more widespread, foregrounded and normalized in Arabic than it is in English.

In this article, we aim to try to develop some forms of analysis for data from Arabic and English, which do not resort to simply representing these cultures and languages as polar opposites. Thus, we start by examining some of the models of politeness developed within the research; we then go on to consider the linguistic ideologies of hospitality and the role they play in Arab and English cultures. We then compare contextually similar data so that we can examine the similarities and the differences between offering and hospitality in Arab and English cultures.

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2 The Arabic Politeness Research group is a small staff and postgraduate research group at Sheffield Hallam University, established in 2012.

2 Models of cross-cultural politeness

2.1 Traditional models of politeness

Traditional models of politeness have tended to focus on the English language and not to focus in detail on the question of cultural variation (e.g., Brown and Levinson 1987; Leech 1983, 2014). Intercultural pragmatics, on the other hand, is very much concerned with cultural comparisons but often approaches the issue of cultural influence on politeness norms in ways which we have not found helpful. Some of these theorists have tended to characterize the politeness norms of a particular language as fairly homogeneous, for example characterizing Arabic politeness norms as collectivist and British politeness norms as individualist (Feghali 1997). Other theorists such as Ide (1989) have considered certain cultures and languages to be governed by a concern with discernment or social norms, whereas other cultures are governed by a focus on individual needs and rights. In this model, "Eastern" and "Western" patterns of linguistic behaviour are sometimes presented as a dichotomy (see Leech 2007): Arabic would be considered to be part of the Eastern tradition, which is governed by conventions and formulaic utterances, and a concern for one's position within the social group, whereas British politeness would be seen, within this framework, as concerned with individualistic fulfilment and autonomy.

2.2 Discursive models of politeness

A discursive approach to politeness is one which takes issue with these earlier 'first wave' approaches to the analysis of politeness (Grainger 2011a; Culpeper 2011; Kadar and Mills 2011, 2013). Rather than simply accepting Brown and Levinson's conceptions of the relation between language, culture and politeness, a discursive approach tries to develop an analysis of politeness which does not assume that there is a simple relationship between linguistic forms and their functions, or between cultural norms and notions of appropriate linguistic behaviour. Crucially, a discursive approach focuses on the context-specific nature of the utterances, and thus considers it important to analyze sequences of naturally-occurring discourse rather than single, decontextualized utterances. Furthermore, rather than assuming that certain linguistic forms are necessarily inherently polite, a discursive approach assumes that politeness is interactionally constructed and that this includes a focus on the judgement of the interactants; what they categorize as polite or impolite. These judgements themselves are not ones that the individual is necessarily responsible for, but

are ones which are the product of negotiations within communities of practice and wider groups. Our approach to discursive theorizing also aims to challenge stereotypes of politeness and linguistic ideologies and investigate the way that these inform the judgements individuals make about what is acceptable linguistic behaviour (Agha 2007). However, a discursive approach is also aware that there are a range of different behaviours which can be categorized as polite or impolite in any culture, and there may well be conflict over what counts as polite, for example, between different classes, or between different gender groups. Thus, this type of theorizing is concerned to develop forms of interpretive analysis which can capture the complexity of the way linguistic ideologies of appropriate behaviour and politeness are drawn on and evaluated in interaction.

Linguistic ideologies are based on the values, attitudes and beliefs that a particular community stereotypically holds about the use of language (Hill 2008). Politeness conventions are a prime example of the way ideologies of 'correct behaviour' make their presence felt in interactional behaviour. Often, beliefs about appropriate behaviour are reflected in peoples' evaluations of politeness; they have opinions about the way they or others *should* speak, compared with the way they *do* speak. It is that elision between *should* and *are* which is important, because linguistic ideologies present this hypothesized state as the way the world self-evidently is. Hill (2008: 34) argues that ideology "suggests a way of thinking or a perspective saturated with political or economic interest", but this politicized nature of linguistic ideologies is often not foregrounded; rather, individuals are encouraged to think of ideological knowledge as common-sense. For Hill (2008: 34) "'common sense' has … status because it defines a group of people whose interests are advanced by believing in it". Thus, ideological beliefs are those which depict certain beliefs as if everyone knows them to be true; statements for example about women, as if women were fundamentally different to men and that women were necessarily more polite than men (see Mills and Mullany 2012), or beliefs about British politeness being focused on negative politeness and apologizing above other forms of politeness (Brown and Levinson 1987).

These linguistic ideologies have material effects; they are not simply ideas, but they form the resources amongst which speakers may frame or choose their own contributions (Agha 2007; Mills 2015 forthcoming). Speakers of languages develop habits and conventions which tend to be constructed and evaluated as "correct" by dominant groups and each language and/or cultural group develops over time a different evaluation of these conventions, and even of the use of convention itself. Thus, British English is considered relatively low on obligatory conventions and formulaic utterances in everyday contexts, and politeness

is therefore not primarily constituted through conventional linguistic routines (Emery 2000). Indeed, in British English, it is quite common for overuse of conventionalized utterances to be negatively evaluated, as this suggests a lack of sincerity. In Arabic, by contrast, conventions and formulaic utterances are generally positively evaluated, considered to be necessary even in fairly informal situations, and their omission would cause offence. Thus, whereas many, possibly all, languages use conventions and formulaic utterances, speakers' awareness of these formulae may vary according to the cultural context; there is a difference in the extent to which these conventions are expected and evaluated as appropriate (Kadar 2013).

2.3 Spencer-Oatey's model of rapport management

Notions of face, face-enhancement and face-threat go some way to explaining the polite behaviours that we find in British and Arab contexts. However, it seems to us that Spencer-Oatey's (2000, 2008) concept of sociality rights and obligations, within her model of rapport-management, is also usefully applied to a cross-cultural analysis of politeness strategies in hospitality situations. She proposes a three dimensional model of rapport management:
1. The management of face.
2. The management of sociality rights and obligations.
3. The management of interactional goals. (Spencer-Oatey 2008: 14)

She draws a distinction between "face" and "sociality rights", saying that whereas face is largely concerned with self-esteem and social value, 'sociality' is about the management of social expectancies (2000: 14), which entails notions of the entitlements that an individual may expect in a social situation. Spencer-Oatey (2008) argues that these entitlements, and their associated obligations, are fundamentally connected to an expectation of "equity" (what is fair) and "association" (social involvement) (2008: 16). The behavioural characteristics of people and their expectations (i.e., what she calls sociopragmatic interactional principles [SIPs]) are based on two principles: equity (i.e., being treated fairly) and association (i.e., the degree of closeness-distance in relations). The equity principle, in this model, is based on two components: the notion of "cost-benefit" and that of "autonomy-imposition". The association principle is also explained in relation to two components: the interactional involvement-detachment and affective involvement-detachment. Spencer-Oatey (2008) maintains that the context, the goal of the interaction and the personal values of the interlocutors determine the priority and the extent of equity and

association principles. She argues that social judgements are made in interaction based on these expectations and that a rich combination of both social and contextual factors should be taken into consideration when defining the rules of appropriate language use. The purpose of an offer may involve displaying a sense that you are abiding by social norms and conventions and thus establishing a position for yourself within a culture or community of practice, as well as establishing or maintaining good relations with your addressees. Therefore, this model has the potential to analyze the way that language is used to manage complicated and multifaceted relations and politeness use.

2.4 Discernment, ritual and convention

The pragmatic conventions discussed by Spencer-Oatey have clear links with the notion of discernment (Ide 1989) in which it is argued that in some cultures in some situations, particular linguistic strategies have become so conventionalized and ritualized that the speaker has little or no choice about whether to use them if the interaction is to be regarded as polite or, in Locher and Watts' (2008) terms 'politic'.

It could be argued that for Arabic speakers, the practice of making offers (of food and drink), of them being refused by the guest, and of the offer being repeated at least once, has become a ritual that is rarely dispensed with in hospitality situations; it is so conventionalized that the offer and its subsequent refusal is a matter of discernment, not volition. Ironically, however, it is this conventionalization that can make an offer seem insincere (since the recipient may interpret it as simply a ritual act and not really *intended* to connote generosity) and that leads to the practice of insisting in order to appear *sincerely* generous.

In the British situation however, because the rights and obligations of the host and guest are different: the host is expected to offer drinks, and possibly food, in situations only where the guest was expected, but the guest is entitled to refuse because of the value placed upon individual freedom of action, provided they can offer a valid excuse for so doing. In this situation, the interactants do not know whether the offer is sincere, but it could be said that it does not matter so much in terms of sociality rights. Because there is less importance placed on generosity in the host, the host does not need to insist and the guest is under little obligation to accept. The absence of insistence or the refusal of an offer need not therefore affect the rapport between interactants.

However, we agree with Kadar and Mills (2013) that the notion of discernment wrongly dichotomizes politeness practices within and across cultures. In

Ide's (1989) original conception, cultures can be characterized as "volitional cultures" (mostly Western) and discernment cultures (mostly Eastern). However, in a discursive approach to politeness, this distinction is unhelpful and we agree with Kadar and Mills that it is better to think in terms of conventionality and ritual. Discernment and volition are not associated solely with particular cultures; they are in play to a greater or lesser extent in all languages. Discernment should instead be seen as related to convention and ritual; all languages normalize certain conventionalized elements and forms of behaviour and individuals have the choice as to whether they go along with this linguistic ideology and establish and maintain their social position through conformity to the norm, or whether they establish and maintain their social position through the use of individualistic utterances, or volition.

It seems to us, therefore, that Spencer-Oatey's model of rapport management, which encompasses the notion of face-enhancement, offers a fuller explanation of what is at issue here than one that simply labels Arabic hospitality rituals as 'discernment' and British English hospitality norms as "volition". Thus, in the interactions that we discuss in this article, we can say that there are certain conventions attached to receiving guests into one's home and that these expectations will be similar in some respects and will differ from culture to culture according to the underlying assumptions and values of that culture. In Arabic culture, importance is attached to the generosity shown towards guests.[3] According to Spencer-Oatey's model, such beliefs and attitudes are then translated into politeness strategies according to (i) the rapport orientation of the participants, (ii) contextual variables, such as the participants involved and the rights, obligations and expectations associated with that context and (iii) the pragmatic principles that have been developed by that society for that particular situation. These may be sociopragmatic conventions such as tact, generosity, agreement, modesty etc. (Leech 1983: 132), or they may be pragmalinguistic conventions, in the form of politeness formulae.

3 Modelling cultural expectations of hospitality routines

In this section we use Spencer-Oatey's framework to set out more clearly the different linguistic and social elements which are in play in the polite manage-

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3 This may have its roots partly in religious beliefs and partly in the historical necessity for interdependency in order to survive as a community. Such beliefs and needs have arguably

ment by interactants in Arabic and English of offers and refusals. The relation-ship between the underlying cultural assumptions and the evident linguistic behaviour in the Arabic and British hospitality situations is modelled below using Spencer-Oatey's diagram (see Figures 1 and 2 in sections 3.1 and 3.2) of 'Manifestations of culture at differing layers of depth' (2000: 5). We recognize that these are broad brush generalizations about dominant cultural values. These diagrams purposely do not take account of the heterogeneity that can always be found in national or ethnic cultural groups. However, in this way we can represent and compare the two ideologies of ways of behaving that seem most pertinent to the analysis of our data.

3.1 Hospitality in Arabic culture

In most cultures there is a close connection between hospitality and politeness. However, it seems that, for Arabs, the behaviours involved in offering hospitali-ty are considered indicative of a person's general politeness demeanour and status. We can see evidence for this in a number of areas. First of all, the etymology of the word for politeness, *adab* ' أدب ', in Arabic suggests that hospi-tality is (or was) at the core of Arabic politeness. In pre-Islamic times, *adab* was used to mean 'invitation' rather than politeness in its broader meaning (Al-Oqaily and Tawalbeh 2012). Al-Oqaily and Tawalbeh (2012) refer to Idress' (1985) explanation of the meaning of *adab* in ancient Arabic which meant gen-erosity and hospitality. This may explain, at least partly, why generosity and hospitality are usually regarded as the most fundamental elements of Arabic politeness. Since then, the use of the word *adab* (أدب) has expanded in the Islamic era to refer to morality, generosity, tolerance and virtue. All these mean-ings feature in the many sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)(Al-Oqaily and Tawalbeh 2012: 86).

Emery (2000) posits that the importance of hospitality in the Arab World is proverbial and commemorated in Arab history in the deeds of those such as Hātim Aṭṭāi, whose name became an icon of generosity when he gave away the camels that he was herding for his father to a passing caravan. These linguistic ideologies of hospitality, generosity and moral standing run through evalu-ations of politeness in Arabic. Hospitality is also enshrined in the religious beliefs and practices of Arabic speaking people. It predates the *zakat*, the Mus-lim requirement to give a proportion of one's wealth to the poor, which serves

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been overridden in Western post-industrial societies by a more pressing need for individual freedom of action.

to counterbalance the disparity between rich and poor. Certain occasions require elaborate displays of hospitality, for example, during the holy month of Ramadan (Patai 1983: 86).

There is also a connection between hospitality and the importance of family. Social life in the Arab world in general has always centred on the family and the attitude of the individual towards the family. Even though the traditional extended family has become something of the past, the great majority of Arab people still identify themselves with their individual families, as the role and influence of the family in supporting an individual morally, is still the tradition. Therefore, it can be said that family loyalty remains an influential force in Arab society. This background cultural knowledge and accompanying surface behaviours are represented in figure 1 below, which is an adaptation of that used by Spencer-Oatey (2000).

What this diagram represents is that the underlying ideological cultural assumptions in Arab societies focus on interdependence and loyalty to one's extended family and the larger "in-group". These assumptions, rooted in Arabic traditions and shaped by Islamic teachings, are the foundation of beliefs about the importance of generosity. These beliefs and attitudes tend to be constructed

RITUALS AND BEHAVIOR: offer, refusal, insistence, acceptance or polite refusal

SYSTEMS AND INSTITUTIONS: family, religion and social life

BELIEFS, ATTITUDES AND CONVENTIONS: generosity to others is very important and reflects on the moral character of individuals as well as the wider group.

BASIC ASSUMPTIONS: collectivism; importance of association; interdependence

Figure 1: Hospitality in Arabic-speaking cultures.

and evaluated as "correct" by the dominant Arab culture and are played out and perpetuated through various social and religious institutions.[4] In hospitality situations, it is particularly important that the family demonstrates hospitality to guests and for the guest to show a sense of personal self-esteem by not appearing greedy. The Arab host tends to believe it is an obligation to offer hospitality and also a right to have that hospitality accepted. The guest has a right to expect generosity from the host but also an obligation to allow the host to appear generous without herself appearing greedy. In terms of linguistic behaviour, this tends to translate into sequences of offering, refusing and insisting. These rituals are fairly predictable and only moderately negotiable.

3.2 Hospitality in British English culture

In British English culture, at the level of linguistic ideology, the notion of morality and politeness is not as strongly connected with hospitality as it is in Arab-speaking cultures. The word "politeness" in English has a different history, deriving from the word "polished" and signalling a respect for the norms of the elite, the court and the educated, rather than hospitality. This different history may well have impacts on the way behaviour is categorized as polite or impolite in Arabic and English speaking cultures. Qu (2013) demonstrates, through the use of historical documents, that the notion of hospitality began to change in England in the 17th century. Bryson (1998) further argues that courtesy transformed into civility at this time due to urbanization and the rise of the middle-class. Prior to this, argues Qu (2013), the "impositional" hospitality that we see in other cultures such as Chinese, was also common in England. However, as the division between public spaces (e.g., coffee houses) and private spaces (e.g., homes) became more pronounced it gradually became more difficult for guests to gain access to peoples' homes without specific invitations. Culpeper and Demmen (2011) argue that the focus on the notion of the autonomous individual self did not develop fully in England until the 19th century, when Protestantism and secularization became the dominant ideologies. Although ethnographic accounts of contemporary hospitality practices in England are difficult to find, it is our impression that this negative politeness

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4 We are not suggesting here that all Arabic speaking cultures are homogeneous. There are for example, great differences between Western and Eastern Arab society norms and traditions. Even within particular Arab cultures there is great diversity. However, these ideological values around generosity seem to be a mainstay within ideologies of what is appropriate behaviour.
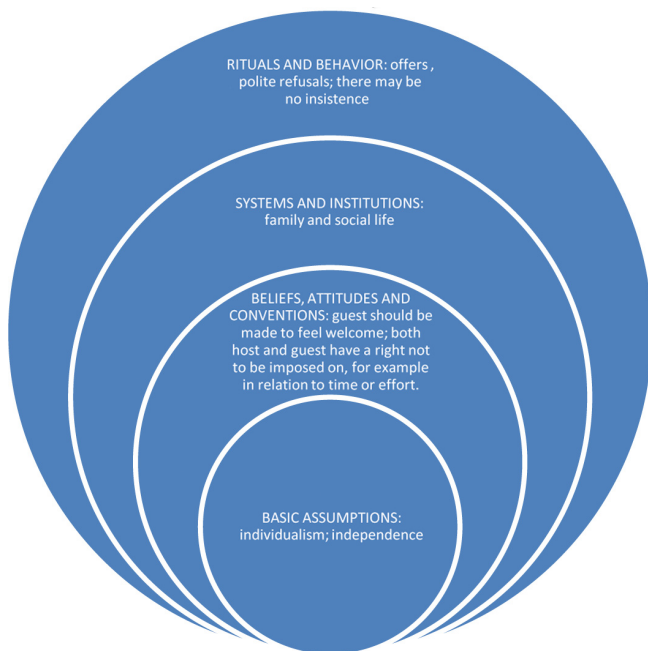
RITUALS AND BEHAVIOR: offers ,
polite refusals; there may be
no insistence

SYSTEMS AND INSTITUTIONS:
family and social life

BELIEFS, ATTITUDES AND
CONVENTIONS: guest should be
made to feel welcome; both
host and guest have a right not
to be imposed on, for example
in relation to time or effort.

BASIC ASSUMPTIONS:
individualism; independence

Figure 2: Hospitality in British English-speaking cultures.

norm (Culpeper and Demmen 2011; Qu 2013) persists, in middle-class circles at least. So, for example, it is generally assumed that you will only call at someone's house if you have telephoned them before or have arranged the visit. In this case, you may be offered tea and coffee, but it is not considered compulsory to offer a meal unless a specific invitation for lunch or dinner has been issued previously. Hospitality routines do exist in English (Blue and Hanan 2003) but the notion of hospitality as an imposition, rather than as an opportunity to enhance one's reputation, is more foregrounded than in Arabic practices. Thus, the British host is relatively free from obligation to provide hospitality (in the case where it might inconvenience the host) and the British guest is not under any obligation to allow the host to show generosity. Part of this may be a consideration for any time constraints the host and guest may have. It is perhaps for this reason that ritualistic, non-serious or "ostensible" invitations (Isaacs and Clark 1990) are thought to be rarer in English-speaking cultures than in cultures that engage in insistence or "food-plying" (Qu 2013). For example, Eslami finds that ostensible invitations are more common in Persian "as a manifestation of ritual politeness" (Eslami 2005: 453) than they are in English. Rather than regarding ostensible invitations and insistence as part of a ritual

of face-enhancement, there is some evidence to suggest that native English speakers may regard such behaviour as imposing and therefore rude (Félix-Brasdefer 2008). Such attitudes and their underlying bases are represented in figure 2.

In the British context, within the middle class dominant cultural values, behaviour could be said to be underpinned by a basic assumption that freedom of action and the independence of the individual are paramount. In hospitality situations, then, this translates into a belief that the host is both obliged to be generous and simultaneously obliged to respect the independence of the guest by not imposing too much. The guest, for their part, might feel obliged to accept a certain amount of generosity from the host (as is the case in Arabic-speaking communities) but would have to weigh this up against the desire of both guest and host to not be imposed upon. Such beliefs and attitudes can be seen in most social institutions but perhaps with less influence from religion than in Arab culture. Thus, we find that hospitality encounters between British English speakers, rituals of offering and refusing exist, but they tend to be less elaborate and more negotiable than for Arabic-speakers.

4 Offering and politeness

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), offers are positive politeness strategies because they "demonstrate S's good intentions in satisfying H's positive-face wants" (1987: 125). This would seem to us to be accurate in both Arabic and British contexts, however, as Eelen (2001) and Watts (2003) have pointed out, their model over-emphasizes the importance of the wants and needs of the individual and fails to take group face into account. Thus, in their model, the occurrence of bald-on-record forms such as "Do come in" or "Have some more cake" is explained as a pre-emptive move to allay any concerns that the speaker may have of imposing on the hearer. For this reason they can be uttered without redress (Brown and Levinson 1987: 99). Koutlaki (2002), on the other hand, reports that conventional, socially conditioned expressions of offers in Persian are best explained as enhancing the group face that is on display in meetings with family and friends.

Also from a Western perspective, Levinson (1983) suggests that offers and refusals are dispreferred and avoided acts. They are both face-threatening acts: one risks one's own positive face and the addressee's negative face by making the offer, and one risks the other's positive face by refusing the offer. However, it can be argued that this may not be the case in Arab societies, because the

initial refusal can be seen as an essential part of a ritual that orients to the participants' sociality rights and obligations. Arab societies are traditionally classified as collectivist due to their emphasis on mutual interdependence (Hofstede 2010). In terms of Brown and Levinson's politeness theory, Arabic-speaking people are characterized as belonging to positive politeness societies (Al-Khatib 2001), that is to say, they tend to address the participant's positive face-wants and to be less concerned about negative face-wants. However, these two ways of explaining the conventions of different cultures is grossly over-simplified and does not take account of the fact that collectivist tendencies occur in all societies, but to different extents in different situations, as we mentioned above (Kadar and Mills 2011). Spencer-Oatey's model, on the other hand, has the advantage that it allows us to see similar linguistic behaviour in terms of which values are foregrounded at particular junctures in the interaction.

By virtue of their nature as politeness phenomena, offers can be seen as one means through which people attempt to win the social approval of each other, i.e., they intend to represent to the offeree that their acceptance of the offer/invitation is desirable. How well one treats one's guest, what type of food and how much is offered to guests is an important part of Arab traditions, and is seen as a direct measurement of a person (Hasan 1999). Arabs, therefore, tend to place a high value on generosity and hospitality which are considered to be the main elements contributing to social cohesion, group maintenance and politeness towards others. Emery (2012: 205) states "Not surprisingly, therefore, the offering and receiving of hospitality has generated its own rituals and accompanying formulas in Arab society to a high degree of elaboration". Furthermore, not only do Arabs consider hospitality as an essential prerequisite for indicating politeness and enhancing social relationships, but they also "expect hospitality from others, and one's personal status and reputation may be affected by the absence of such behaviour" (Feghali 1997: 353). It would appear from these studies, then, that in Arab society the offering and accepting of hospitality has significance for social cohesion that goes far beyond the immediate situation. Offers are seen as a way of showing cordiality towards others and refusing the offer initially is a requirement. Thus, "it would not be an overgeneralization to say that generosity shown in offering food to guests is one of the most prominent forms of cordiality" (Bayraktaroglu and Sifianou 2001: 52–53). It could be said, then, that that the risk to speaker's quality face[5] of making an offer is reduced for Arabic speakers. Furthermore, refusal of offers

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5 Quality face (Brown and Levinson's positive face) means that in this context the speaker has a fundamental desire for people to evaluate them positively in terms of their personal qualities; such as being generous when they are offering hospitality.

in Arabic is not always seen as a dispreferred act. It is perceived as part of a polite sequence of turns which precedes the ultimate acceptance of the offer. Initial refusal of the offer is expected, not only to ensure that the speaker is sincere about their offer but also to provide the offerer with the opportunity to display their sincerity and generosity by insisting. As a consequence, "the ritual of offering food to guests involves a lengthy interaction most of the time" (Saville-Troike 1990: 34, cited in Deniz 2001: 52). Alaoui (2011: 13), for example, points out that "[t]raditionally in Morocco the offer has to be repeated and declined a number of times before it is accepted. Accepting the first offer is regarded as bad form, so S/H goes through this ritualized behaviour where each one has a defined role". What is noteworthy is that the strategy of refusing offers several times before accepting is not restricted to Moroccan Arabic; since this phenomenon can also be found in most other Arab societies. In such cases, the host may employ different expressions that are stronger than the one used in the first offer to increase the pressure on the guest to accept the offer and, in so doing, be seen as polite (Bayraktaroglu and Sifianou 2001). In Jordanian society, the offeree is expected to reject an offer several times, before accepting it with a show of reluctance (Al-Khatib 2006). Al-Khatib (2001: 190) has reported that "to invite without insistence means that the concerned person is not serious about the invitation, and offers it as a mere remark of courtesy; and to accept the offer without reluctance means that the recipient is gluttonous, and may be described as an ill-behaved person". Thus, refusal of an offer of hospitality in Arabic societies can, in fact, be seen as a face-enhancing act: it enhances the face of the speaker by demonstrating that they are not greedy, and it enhances the face of the addressee (the offerer) by providing them with the opportunity to insist.

In British culture, however, whilst this model of hospitality and offering does operate, it is not foregrounded to the same extent, and does not appear to have, at the ideological level, the same associations with morality. It is clear that there is an obligation for British people to display to others that they are hospitable, but offering may, as we noted above, appear as a burden, rather than as a blessing. For British people someone who offers too much and too often may appear to be imposing, rather than generous. Instead, reciprocity and independence are the key elements to be maintained in British middle class social relations. Thus, if someone offers you something, it both imposes on you because it will take up your time and mean that you have to remain with that person until the food and drink have been consumed, and it also imposes on you because it means that you are then in that person's debt and have to find a way to repay them. Thus, at one and the same time, British

people have to ensure that they are hospitable to others, but also ensure that they do not impose on them or burden them unnecessarily.

5 Methodology: Data from Arabic and English

In keeping with the discursive approach, we wanted to gather naturally-occurring instances of hospitality encounters in roughly comparable social situations. As such, ethnographic methods taken from interactional sociolinguistics were deemed appropriate (see Gumperz 1999). Specifically, data gathering methods involved participant observation, audio-recordings of observed conversations, as well as "oral reports" (Gumperz 1982) of conversations that the researchers were involved in. This latter method (used also in Grainger 2011b) has the benefit of providing illustrations of spontaneous speech acts which might otherwise be difficult to predict or elicit. It involves listening carefully to everyday interaction and noting down relevant conversations (in this case, those involving hospitality) soon after they occur. Our data consists of 4 interactions, all of which involved a different member of our research team. Thus, we had participant as well as researcher status and could provide additional background information. There are two interactions in each language which we considered to be good examples of offers within each language. We tried to find examples which were roughly equivalent, where participants had similar relationships to one another and where offers were accepted and also refused, so that both the similarities in the way these situations are handled can be examined as well as the ways in which they are different. The Arabic conversations were audio-recorded and later transcribed, whereas the English conversations, which are shorter, were reproduced from memory shortly after their occurrence. In analyzing the conversations, we were looking for the way that the hospitality encounter was managed, both in terms of pragmatic strategies and sequencing of moves. Thus, the aim is to uncover the nature and quality of these interactions, rather than to make any general claims about Arabic and English. Clearly, a quantitative comparison between the occurrence of offers and refusals in Arabic and English would be a useful complement to our work, but it is outside the scope of the current study.

6 Data Analysis

6.1 Arabic data

Example (1): *Offering cake and nuts*

Najwa has invited some of her friends for lunch. The following dialogue took place between Najwa (the hostess) and Amal (one of the guests) while she was offering some cake to her guests. Both interactants are from Al-Baidah (a city in the east of Libya).[6]

1.   نجوى: خودي واحدة.
   waħda   χu:dj
       one   take

1.   Najwa: Have a piece (of cake).

2.   أمل: لا لا والله ما نبي صحيتي.
   sˤaħi:tj   nibbj ma wallahi la la
   be healthy want I not God by no no

2.   Amal: No, no. I really do not want any more. May God give you good health (equivalent to thanks).

3.   نجوى: غر خودي واحدة بالله عليك.
   ʕlaik billahi waħda   χu:dj ɣir
      for   God   one   take just

3.   Najwa: Just have one. For God's sake (equivalent to please).

4.   أمل: والله ما نبي, تعرفي مدايرة ريجيم.
   rjʒi:m mdajra   taʕerfj   nibbj ma wallahi
      diet doing I know you want I not God by

4.   Amal: I really don't want any. You know, I am on a diet.

5.   نجوي: خودي اليوم استراحة و خودي واحدة.
   waħda   χu:dj wa ʔistira:ħa ʔalju:m   χu:dj
      one   take and   break today take

5.   Najwa: Take a day off (the diet) and have some.

---

6 The transcription system that we have used involved first transcribing the interaction in Arabic script, then translating on a word by word basis, and finally representing the gist of the utterance in a rough translation in bold, followed in some cases by an equivalent expression in English in brackets.

6. أمل: لا لا, توا ناخذ كاشيك مكسرات
mukassara:t ka:ʃi:k na:χıð tawa la la
nuts spoon take I will now no no

6. Amal: No no. I will take a spoonful of nuts ((takes some nuts)).

7. نجوى: زيدي كاشيك تاني, بالله تزيدي.
tzi:dj billahi ta:nj ka:ʃi:k zi:ldj
take more you God for again spoon take more

7. Najwa: Have another spoonful. For God's sake (equivalent to please),
have another one.

8. أمل: باهي.
Ba:hj
OK

8. Amal: OK ((takes another spoonful)).

9. نجوى: زيدي تاني, بالله تزيدي.
tzi:dj billahi ta:nj zi:ldj
take more you God for again take more

9. Najwa: Have some more, for God's sake (equivalent to please), have
some more.

10. أمل: لا لا, والله ماعاد نبي, صحيتي.
sˤaħi:tj nibbj maʕa:d wallahi la la
be healthy want I not God by no no

10. Amal: No, no. I really don't want any more. May God give you good
health (equivalent to thank you).

11. نجوى: غر زيدي و ريحيني.
rajħi:nj wa zi:dj ɣir
me relax and take more just

11. Najwa: Just have one more and make me feel good.

12. أمل: صحيتي والله ما نبي
nibbj ma wallhi sˤaħi:tj
want I not God by be healthy

12. Amal: May God give you good health, I swear to God (equivalent to
really) I do not want any more.

13. نجوى: على راحتك
ra:ħtik ʕala
your rest at

13. Najwa: Just as you like.

In this example, Najwa's offer of a piece of cake is refused three times by Amal. The first time she simply says she does not want any cake but shows her appreciation by using the formulaic phrase "May God give you health", the second time she provides the excuse that she is on a diet and the third time she partially concedes to the offer by eating some nuts. Najwa, for her part, uses a variety of strategies in making, and insisting on, her offer. The initial offer is made quite baldly, with an imperative structure: "Have some cake". When it is refused, she tries to persuade her, by trivializing the imposition on Amal ("just have one", "take a day off") and by invoking God (lines 3 and 9), this having the function of a plea. This supports the contention made above that the offer is made at least as much for the benefit of the host as it is for the guest. Thus, Amal's agreement to take some nuts instead of cake can be seen as a move that is oriented to her own obligations as a guest and to Najwa's rights as a host. However, taking only one spoonful of nuts is not enough to satisfy Najwa's desire to be seen as a good host, so she offers Amal another spoonful of nuts. This is accepted immediately, presumably because her obligation to provide Najwa with the opportunity to insist has already been fulfilled in previous turns. However, when Najwa offers more nuts (line 9) Amal repeats her original refusal strategy of thanking Najwa with the stock phrase "May God give you good health". Najwa then insists by making explicit the benefits to her own face-needs, "make me feel good", drawing attention to the ideological nature of hospitality here (line 11). This time Amal's response is to assert her sincerity by invoking God ("I swear to God I don't want any more"). Since this refusal comes after several turns of offering, refusing and insisting, Amal's refusal can be taken as a real refusal rather than a ritual one. When she is sure that her guest's refusal is sincere, Najwa brings the interaction to an end by using an expression "as you like", which shows that serving her guest is her main interest. It is worth noting that such a routine of offering and refusal is expected by both the host and the guest. In Arab culture, as in British culture, it is the host's obligation to offer hospitality to the guest but we would suggest that the difference is that, at an ideological level, the host also has a *right* to show their generosity, which the guest must respect. Thus the guest has a right to expect hospitality and ultimately to refuse it, but they also have a strong obligation to allow the host to demonstrate their generosity.

Example (2): *Arriving at meal-time*

 A family is about to sit down to dinner; someone knocks at the door; the guest is the husband's relative Abdulaziz (A). As soon as the husband (B) knows who it is at the door, he welcomes him in and invites him to join the family for the meal.

1. أ: السلام   عليكم.
   ʕalajkum ʔassala:m
   you upon the Peace

1. A: Hello.

2. ب: عبد العزيز؟ اهلا, مرحبا, تفضل.
   tafadˤal marħaban ʔahlan ʕabd ʔalʕazi:z
   come in welcome hello Abdulaziz

2. B: Abdulaziz? Welcome, come in.

3. أ: صحيت, بارك الله   فيك.
   fi:k ʔallah barak   sˤaħajt
   you God bless be healthy

3. A: No, thanks.

4. ب: هيا   تفضل عبد العزيز ... حصانك جراي.
   ʒarraj ħisˤa:nik ʕabd ʔalʕazi:z tafadˤal   haja
   fast your horse   Abdul-Aziz, come in come on

4. B: Please come in Abdulaziz. You are just in time (you are very
   welcome to join us for dinner).

5. أ: (.اشاره غير لغويه).

5. A: ((Puts hand on heart in a conventional gesture of refusal and
   busies himself greeting and talking to the host's children)).

6. أ: بارك الله   فيك.
   fi:k ʔallah barak
   you God bless

6. A: No, thanks.

7. ب: غير هيا .. لا سلام علي طعام.
   ˤaʕa:m ʕala sala:m la haja ɣir
   food on greeting no come on just

7. B: Please, come on (you will have enough time for the children later).

8. أ: لا لا لا بارك الله   فيك كيف متغدي.
   mitɣaddj ki:f fi:k ʔallah barak la la
   dinner had I just you God bless no no

8. A: No, thanks, I have just had my dinner.

9. ب: هيا   يا راجل.. بسم   الله.
   ʔallah   bism ra:ʒil ja haja
   God name with   man oh come on

9. B: Come on man (...) In the name of Allah (equivalent to please).

10. ب: شن   اخبارك , عاش من شافك.
ʃaːfik min ʕaːʃ ʔaχbaːrik ʃin
you saw who lived your news What

10.   B: How are things? I am happy to see you.

In Spencer-Oatey's (2008) terms, generally speaking, Arabic hospitality situations place more importance on association than on equity. Even if a guest arrives unexpectedly at dinner-time, an Arab host will deem it an obligation to offer hospitality. In this example, the host invites the guest to come in using the phrase: "tafadal" (line 2), which is a word used by Arabs as a sign of respect and welcome: it is the most straight-forward invitation one can make. It is interesting that, whereas subsequent offers are responded to with refusals, the offer to come into the house is accepted, with an expression of appreciation, 'God bless you'. The initial offer of food (line 4) is twofold; one is quite direct "tafadal", orienting the guest towards the table, and the second is an implicit and indirect offer, employing the formulaic utterance "Hisanak Jarray", which literally means 'your horse is fast', but signifying 'you have arrived just in time for a meal, and you are very welcome to join us for the meal'. The host is aware that if he explicitly invites his guest to join the meal, he may be viewed by the guest as suggesting that he is in need of it. So the host has to "phrase the offer in such a way that guest feels easy and comfortable in accepting it" (Zhu Hua and Qian 2000: 100). The guest refuses the offer using a combination of refusal strategies, a conventional gesture (line 5) (putting his hand on his heart) accompanied with the religious expression 'God bless you' (line 6) which is treated by the host as a refusal. At this point the guest busies himself, greeting and talking to the host's children. This could also be seen as a way of demonstrating lack of interest in the invitation to eat, and thus is a type of refusal. The host then employs the imperative, formulaic expression "la salam ala taham" (line 7), to try and orient the guest toward a positive reply: this is aimed at mitigating the guest's potential face-loss and one possible interpretation is that the guest was saving the host's face by refusing. The guest refuses the offer and gives an excuse: 'no, no, I've already had my lunch' (line 8) and is followed by another imperative-type strategy 'in the name of God' (line 9), which ends this interaction and makes it difficult for the guest to reject the offer since it is a conventionalized phrase used when people start eating, but which invokes religious sentiment. The host is ten years older than his guest and this age difference here gives the host the social power to insist quite strongly. The age difference may also make the guest feel more obliged to ultimately accept the offer and may account for the relatively short offer-refusal ritual.

After the offer-refusal sequence is brought to a close, the host employs another politeness strategy in the last part of this speech event which is not part of the offer of hospitality (since that has already been accepted) but reinforces the degree of closeness between himself and his guest by establishing common ground between them: "Sheen akhbarak (...) aash meen shafak" ('How it is going (...) I am happy to see you') (line 10), which enables the offering sequence to be brought to a close, and for the interactants to move to other topics of conversation.

6.2 English data

Example (3): *Dropping in*

J and S live on the same street. J has just countersigned S's son's passport; he knocks at the door to deliver the passport to S. J had previously countersigned the passport once already, and when S's son came to sign the application form himself, he made a mistake and signed slightly outside the box, which meant that a new form had to be filled in and countersigned. Thus, J, who is not a close friend of S, had done quite a big favour for S.

J: ((knocks on the door and S answers and opens the door))
S: Hi there, come on in, it's cold
J: Hi there. No, it's OK. I've gotta dash. Just dropping off the passport form.
S: Thanks a lot for that. Got time for a cuppa? Go on. Just for a minute.
J: No, it's OK. I've gotta pick up the kids from school. See you tomorrow.
S: OK; thanks, ta. Bye.

In this example, there are some similarities with the Arabic example 2. When the initial offer of hospitality ("come on in") is refused, there is a further offer, ("Got time for a cuppa?"), which could be regarded as an insistence since "a cuppa" entails coming in the house. [7] Before J can respond, this renewed offer is coupled with an insistence ("Go on, just for a minute") and the refusal is then in terms of a reassurance that "it's OK" and then time and duty constraints are invoked by J as a reason for the refusal ("I've gotta dash"; "I've gotta pick the kids up from school"). Unlike the Arabic data, we would argue that J's refusals are not ritual, since equity rights are what are paramount here and S

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7 It could be considered that S's offer for J to come in because it is cold might in fact be interpreted by J that he should be quick in whatever he is asking, as opening the door is letting in the cold.

has fulfilled her obligation as the (indebted) host by offering refreshment. In a sense, S has offered more than perhaps the situation justified, since neighbours on this street often converse on the doorstep for simple transactions, and only come into the house for tea/coffee by arrangement. Furthermore, S's offer can be regarded as a symbolic recognition of indebtedness to J, rather than an expression of sociality rights because she is usually more friendly with J's wife than with J himself. We would guess that for English people, practice varies as to whether it is considered 'proper' to ask uninvited guests into the house and offer them refreshment, but in this case, there was probably more obligation on S to offer, given that J was doing her a favour which had inconvenienced him.

Notice, too, that whereas the invitation to come in is phrased as an imperative, the offer of refreshment is couched in terms of the time commitment involved for J. Similarly J's refusal is couched in terms of his own time-constraints and obligations. In other words, rather than orient to her own rights as a host, S orients to J's rights to not be imposed on. The second refusal is accepted by the host, the excuse given presumably being 'water-tight' since it references an obligation (to meet children from school) which is superior to any requirement to be sociable. They are having a meeting the next day, where they will have coffee in a neighbourhood meeting and the "See you tomorrow", a reference to future association, signifies that the encounter is at a close and that friendly relations are intact and that neither party has taken offence.

Example (4): *Coming round for drinks*

H had invited K round to her house to drink cocktails in the garden at 4.30 on a Sunday afternoon. K and H had been chatting for about an hour when the following interaction takes place:

H: Do you want another Pimms?
K: No thanks, I think I'll be getting off soon.
H: I can offer you some pitta bread and hummus?
K: No it's alright. I've got a half-made lasagne at home.
H: (laughing) Oh, right, O.K. then.

Unlike example 3, in this situation there is no question of the host being indebted to the guest; it is purely a sociable encounter between friends. Nevertheless, one of the obvious points of comparison between this interaction and the Arabic ones is that the offers are made in the form of questions, not directives. Thus, the rights of the guest to freedom of action take precedence over the obligation of the host to provide more drinks or food. As with example 3 in the

English data, there are two offers contained in this sequence, the second of which could be seen as an insistence, but notice that, unlike the Arabic data, the second offer is different to the first (arguably more generous: "... pitta bread and hummus?"). In British English culture, particularly in middle class circles, the offer of another drink to guests can sometimes be a hint that the guests should leave. It may be this that K orients to when she refuses and asserts that she will leave soon. H's offer of food may, then, be an attempt to show that her offer of further hospitality was genuine. This is, then, not unlike the Arabic encounters, wherein the insistence is a display of genuine generosity. However, there is no repeated sequence of offer and refusal in this case. When first the drink, then the food, is refused with a reassurance and a reason, the sequence is brought to a close. What we would say about both these British English incidents is that although they differ in terms of the reason for the visit, and the closeness of the relationship between the interactants, they are similar in terms of the way they pay attention to the guests' rights to autonomy to a much greater extent than the Arabic encounters. Yet, they still use fundamentally the same means of expressing hospitable wishes towards a guest by the host; the only difference is the degree to which it is possible to refuse and at which stage in the interaction that refusal is agreed as appropriate. Refusals, it would seem, are much more readily accepted in the British examples than in the Arabic ones. Indeed, in the Arabic situations the offers are ultimately either partially or fully accepted after a longer sequence of turns.

7 Findings

We can represent the differences between Arabic and English in relation to offers in the following flow chart, where the same elements occur in all of the data but they are positioned at different stages in the interaction.

We can see from these representations of the structure of these encounters that in both English and Arabic hospitality situations (where the guest has not previously been invited for the food or drink that is being offered), the first offer may be refused. In both cases this first refusal is "dispreferred" in the sense that it is accompanied by face-saving strategies, but is preferred in the sense that it is the culturally accepted norm to do so (so as not to appear greedy). However, differences lie in the point at which the refusal is accepted in the English and Arabic examples. In the English situations, the refusal to come in, and the offer of another drink are ostensibly accepted but then are redirected in the form of a slightly different and more generous offer. This can
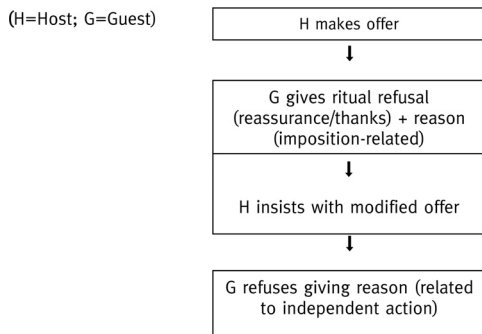
(H=Host; G=Guest)

```
H makes offer
    ↓
G gives ritual refusal
(reassurance/thanks) + reason
(imposition-related)
    ↓
H insists with modified offer
    ↓
G refuses giving reason (related
to independent action)
```

Figure 3: English Offers.

(H= Host G= Guest)

```
H makes offer
    ↓
G gives ritual refusal with
thanks (preferred)
    ↓
H insists with same offer
    ↓
G refuses with reason
    ↓
H insists
```

```
Either G refuses and accepts something        Or H makes modified
              smaller                                offer
    ↓                                                 ↓
H insists                               G gives refusal with thanks
    ↓                                                 ↓
G gives refusal with thanks             H insists and G accepts
    ↓
H insists (invoking religion)
    ↓
G accepts offer or H accepts the
refusal
```
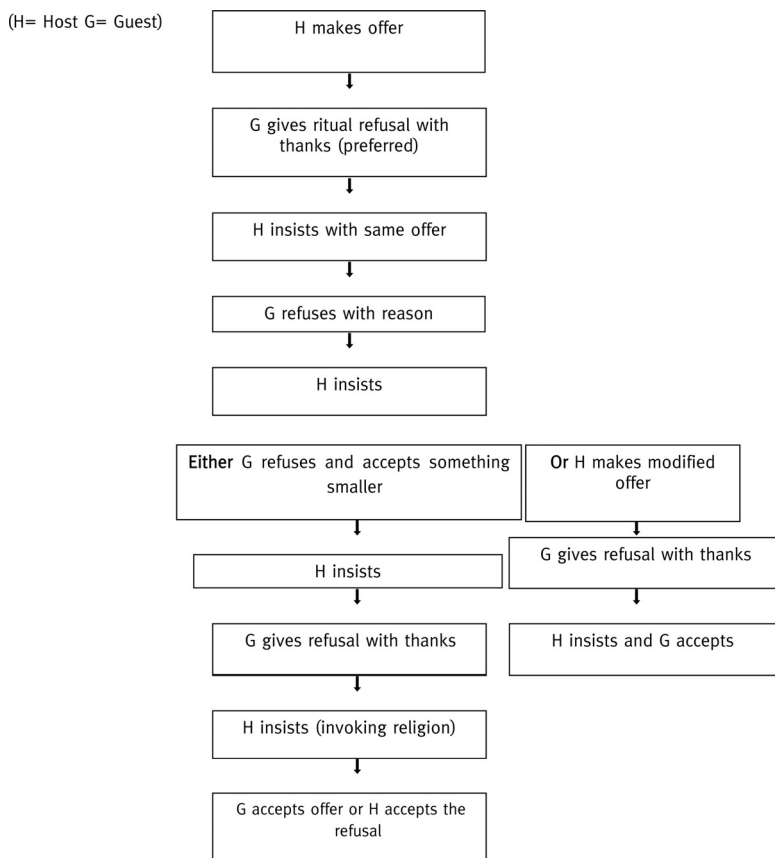
Figure 4: Arabic Offers.

be regarded as insistence but is perhaps less imposing than repeating the initial offer. In both cases, when the renewed offer is also refused, this is accepted and the encounter brought to a close.

In the Arabic situations, there is a convention that it is appropriate to refuse the first offer and we would go so far as to say that, because of religious imperatives and ideologies surrounding hospitality, the obligation to do so is stronger in Arabic-speaking cultures than in British-English ones. In contrast to the British-English context, it is then also common for the initial offer to be repeated at least once and often more than once, as in our examples. Second and third 'ritual' refusals are also common. Genuine refusals will come much later in the sequence than in English encounters and, like the English encounters, will be accompanied by an excuse (such as meeting children from school), by a promise of future acceptance or by the acceptance of something small. The Arabic extracts illustrate the repeated offering-refusal pattern where the host's behaviour typically conveys generosity and warmth, whilst the guest's refusal displays humility and self-restraint.

Because of the prioritization of association, the guest has both a right to expect the offer of hospitality as well as an obligation to accept any hospitality offered. The British host, on the other hand will consider that both their own and the guest's right to autonomy takes precedence over the obligation of association. However, equity and association are both in play in both British and Arabic situations, but to different extents. What we have found then, is that the politeness strategies of offering and refusing become ritualized according to these expectations of sociality rights and obligations.

8 Conclusions

Thus what we have shown in this discussion of the differences and similarities in offers and refusals in English and Arabic offers is that there are conventions on what is expected in both languages which differ slightly because of the different emphases on sociality expectancies. In both situations, the host has a certain obligation to offer hospitality. However, in the British situation that hospitality may more easily be refused than in the Arabic situation due to the emphasis on rights to autonomy that are at least as important as rights to association. Thus, to insist more than once would infringe on these rights. However, in the Arabic situation, it appears that the equity rights are played down in favour of the rights and obligations relating to association. Because of the host's need to conform to the social convention of appearing generous, and

the guest's need to not appear greedy, the offering of hospitality heralds the beginning of a small routine of insistence and refusal which is fairly predictable and only moderately negotiable. In other words, it is generally expected that offers will be refused at least once regardless of the true motives and intentions of the speakers.

This offer-refusal pattern is so common and expected in the Arabic speech community that it has come to be regarded as socially obligatory, although this may not apply in all Arabic-speaking countries, or at least not to the same extent. It reflects the interactional principles that are considered important in Arab societies. For example, the host's insistence on the guest to accept the offer illustrates the interactional principle of association (involvement), and contrasts with common Western concerns about imposition (an aspect of the interactional principle of equity) when making an offer.

Whereas for British English speakers insistence can be seen as face-threatening since it imposes on the guest, for Arabic speakers it may perceived by the guest as being within the scope of their obligations, and they are less likely to regard it as an infringement of their rights. They "may feel pleased or even honoured" (Spencer-Oatey 2008:19) because of the offerer's insistence, feeling that it shows cordiality and sincerity towards them. Final refusal is dispreferred, unless the guest succeeds in providing a good enough reason to refuse.

Whilst we are not stating that Arabic and English cultures are diametrically different when it comes to hospitality, there does seem to be a sense in which ritualized and conventionalized offers and refusals are more elaborate in Arabic than they are in English. This may be because at an ideological level, there is less stress on hospitality as a central tenet of daily life in the UK than there is in Arabic speaking cultures. Instead there is a stress on the importance of not impeding the freedom of the other person by offering them something. Offering is seen as a potential imposition, as well as part of one's social duty. Hence, while Arabic speakers will tend to privilege association rights and obligations over equity rights, for English speakers, equity rights are given greater prominence and this means that the genuine refusal of an offer can come much earlier in the hospitality exchange. The same basic elements appear in hospitality sequences in both languages, but the degree to which certain sequences are conventionalized, and the way those sequences are interpreted and considered appropriate differs.

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Bionotes

Karen Grainger

Is a Principal Lecturer in English Language and Linguistics at Sheffield Hallam University, UK. She researches language use and interaction in institutional, intercultural and electronic contexts. She has published in the area of health care, the negotiation of meaning in intercultural settings and the debate around 'deprived' children's language skills. She is Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Politeness Research. She is currently writing a book on indirectness with Sara Mills.

Fathia Mansor

Is a PhD student at Sheffield Hallam University, UK. Her field of work is linguistics, specifically linguistic politeness in Arab culture.

Zainab Kerkham

Is a PhD student at Sheffield Hallam University, UK. Her field of work is linguistics, specifically linguistic politeness in Arab culture.

Sara Mills

Is a research professor in linguistics. She publishes in the fields of feminist linguistics and politeness research. She has written books such as *Gender and politeness* (2003), *East Asian politeness* with Kadar (2010), *Language, gender and feminism* with Mullany (2012). She is currently working on a book on indirectness with Grainger, on a book questioning the notion of English politeness with Abolaji, and she is editing a book on gender and representation.