

Speech Acts and Politeness Strategies in ChatGPT-Generated
Responses: A Pragmatic Analysis

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Speech Acts and Politeness Strategies in ChatGPT-Generated Responses: A Pragmatic Analysis

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Abstract

This study explores the pragmatic features of ChatGPT-generated responses, focusing on speech acts and politeness strategies. With the increasing use of AI language models in both communication and educational contexts, concerns have clearly appeared about their ability to produce language that is appropriate across different real-life situations. The study employs a qualitative descriptive design and examines 30 responses generated by ChatGPT across six communicative situations: requests, apologies, refusals, suggestions, expressions of gratitude, and complaints. The analysis was based on qualitative pragmatic analysis guided by Speech Act Theory and Politeness Theory as the main analytical frameworks. The findings show that ChatGPT produces familiar speech acts that are closely related to their communicative functions. Requests and suggestions are mainly expressed through directive acts, while apologies, gratitude, and complaints are primarily understood through expressive acts. Additionally, refusals are generally conveyed through commissive acts, often supported by expressions of regret or mitigation. Also, the responses commonly employ politeness strategies, with negative politeness commonly used in face-threatening or commanding situations, and positive politeness appearing in more supportive and cooperative contexts. Overall, the findings suggest that ChatGPT can generate pragmatically appropriate responses that generally align with well-known principles of speech act theory and politeness behavior,

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although its responses tend to follow predictable patterns and remain limited by contextual constraints.

Keywords: Pragmatics, ChatGPT, Speech Acts, Politeness Strategies, Applied Linguistics, AI-generated language.

الأفعال الكلامية واستراتيجيات التأدب في الاستجابات المؤلدة بواسطة
ChatGPT

تحليل تداولي

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الملخص

تتناول هذه الدراسة الخصائص التداولية للاستجابات التي يولدها ChatGPT، مع التركيز على الأفعال الكلامية واستراتيجيات التأدب. ومع التوسع المتزايد في استخدام نماذج الذكاء الاصطناعي اللغوية في مجالات التواصل والتعليم، تزايد الاهتمام بمدى قدرتها على إنتاج لغة تتناسب مع مختلف المواقف التواصلية في الحياة اليومية. وقد اعتمدت الدراسة المنهج الوصفي النوعي، من خلال تحليل 30 استجابة أنشأها ChatGPT في ستة مواقف تواصلية مختلفة، شملت: الطلبات، والاعتذارات، والرفض، والاقتراحات، والتعبير عن الامتنان، والشكاوى. واستند التحليل إلى نظرية الأفعال الكلامية ونظرية التأدب بوصفهما الإطارين النظريين الرئيسيين للدراسة.

أظهرت النتائج أن ChatGPT يوظف أفعالاً كلامية تتوافق بوجه عام مع الأهداف التواصلية المقصودة. فقد برزت الأفعال التوجيهية بصورة رئيسية في الطلبات والاقتراحات، بينما هيمنت الأفعال التعبيرية على الاعتذارات والتعبير عن الامتنان والشكاوى. أما الرفض فقد ظهر غالباً في صورة أفعال التزامية، وعادة ما كان مصحوباً بتعبيرات تعكس الأسف أو التخفيف من حدة الرفض. كما كشفت النتائج عن الاستخدام المتكرر لاستراتيجيات التأدب، حيث ساد التأدب السلبي في المواقف التي تتطلب على قدر من الغرض أو تهديد الوجه الاجتماعي، في حين ظهر التأدب الإيجابي بصورة أوضح في

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المواقف ذات الطابع الداعم والتعاوني وبصفة عامة، تشير نتائج الدراسة إلى أن ChatGPT يمتلك قدرة ملحوظة على إنتاج استجابات تتسم بالملاءمة التداولية وتتوافق إلى حد كبير مع المبادئ الأساسية لنظرية الأفعال الكلامية ونظرية التأدب. ومع ذلك، فإن هذه الاستجابات تميل إلى الاعتماد على أنماط لغوية متكررة، كما تتأثر بالقيود التي يفرضها السياق التواصلية الذي ترد فيه.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التداولية، ChatGPT، الأفعال الكلامية، استراتيجيات التأدب، اللغويات التطبيقية، اللغة المؤلدة بالذكاء الاصطناعي

Introduction

Linguistic communication needs more than forming grammatically correct sentences; it also requires using language in ways that are suitable to the context itself. In everyday communication, people perform a variety of speech acts through language, such as making requests, offering apologies, refusing invitations, and giving advice. The successful performance of these acts depends on pragmatic competence, which enables speakers to select expressions that suit different social and communicative situations.

Recently and with the increase of using artificial intelligence systems such as ChatGPT, communication became not only limited to interactions between humans. Instead, it expanded to include interactions between humans and AI-powered language models. ChatGPT is one of these models, which assists in generating responses that are similar to natural conversation, making it a very useful tool used in education, writing, and everyday communication. This development, with time, leads to an important linguistic question about how well an AI system can handle pragmatic meaning across different communicative contexts?

Although previous literature has focused on the accuracy, fluency, and educational use of AI-generated language, pragmatic aspects such as speech acts and politeness strategies are still less explored well yet. Understanding these aspects is very important because pragmatic failure in language can lead to communication that is grammatically accurate but socially or contextually unsuitable.

Therefore, this study focuses on analyzing ChatGPT-generated responses from a pragmatic perspective by analyzing the speech acts

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and politeness strategies employed across a range of communicative situations. Through this analysis, the study seeks to explore the extent to which ChatGPT demonstrates pragmatic appropriateness and to provide further insights into the nature of pragmatic competence in AI-generated language.

Statement of the Problem

Although the fast-increasing use of ChatGPT in communication and education fields, where English is one of them, there is still limited understanding of how well it performs from a pragmatic perspective. Most previous studies have focused on linguistic accuracy, grammar, and general usefulness, while pragmatic meaning has received limited attention to how it conveys suitable meaning in different social situations.

In daily communication, people use language not only for speaking, but also to perform actions such as requesting, apologizing, refusing, and giving advice. These actions require the use of suitable speech acts and politeness strategies that suit the context. However, it remains unclear whether ChatGPT can consistently follow these pragmatic rules when responding to various situations. Therefore, there is a need for further research to examine the pragmatic reliability of AI-generated language and to determine how effectively ChatGPT produces socially appropriate responses.

Research Objectives

This study aims to:

1. Identify the types of speech acts used in ChatGPT-generated responses across different communicative contexts.
2. Investigate the politeness strategies employed by ChatGPT when generating different communicative responses in different situations.
3. Evaluate the pragmatic appropriateness of ChatGPT-generated responses in relation to different communicative situations.

Research Questions

1. What types of speech acts are used in ChatGPT-generated responses?
2. Which politeness strategies are commonly used by ChatGPT across different communicative contexts?

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3. How pragmatically appropriate are ChatGPT-generated responses in different communicative situations?

Significance of the Study

The significance of the current study lies in its theoretical and practical contributions. From a theoretical perspective, it contributes to the field of applied linguistics by exploring the pragmatic features of AI-generated language, by enhancing understanding of how speech acts and politeness strategies are realized in speech produced by intelligent language models.

From a practical perspective, the study may benefit students, educators, and researchers who deal with AI-powered language tools. For students, the findings may encourage a more critical awareness of AI-generated responses and their suitability for different communicative purposes. For educators, the study may provide a clearer understanding of the communicative skills and limitations of AI systems, supporting informed decisions about their use in educational settings. For researchers, the findings may contribute to future investigations into AI-mediated communication and the pragmatic scopes of language generated by artificial intelligence.

As the use of AI language technologies expands in educational and communicative environments, exploring their pragmatic performance becomes very important for ensuring effective, appropriate, and context-sensitive communication.

Literature Review

These days, artificial intelligence has become an important part of language and communication studies, which requires a greater effort and attention from researchers. Tools such as ChatGPT are now commonly used because they can generate useful and meaningful responses in different situations. This development has increased interest in understanding how these systems work and use language in real-life communication.

This section of the literature review presents the key terms and concepts of the study, theoretical framework that guides the analysis, previous studies to the current topic, and the gap of the knowledge that this study aims to address.

Key terms and concepts of the Study

Pragmatics refers to a branch of linguistics that studies how people understand and produce meaning in real communication. It focuses on how context, situation, and speakers' intention influence what is actually understood, beyond the literal meaning of words. (Levinson, 1983).

ChatGPT is an artificial intelligence language model designed to generate responses like humans] based on large –scale of given training data. It produces coherent and context-sensitive text, making it commonly used in communication and educational contexts. (Floridi & Chiriatti, 2020).

Speech Acts refer to actions performed through language. When people speak, they are not only giving information but also doing things such as requesting, apologizing, refusing, or suggesting. This idea was first introduced by Austin (1962) and later developed by Searle (1969).

Politeness Strategies are ways people use language to manage social relationships and avoid conflict during communication. These strategies help speakers reduce pressure and keep respect in interaction, especially when dealing with sensitive or face-threatening acts. (Brown & Levinson, 1987)

AI-Generated Language refers to text produced by systems like ChatGPT. Although this type of language is usually fluent and well-structured, it is still being studied to understand how well it generates text like human. Especially in terms of meaning in context and social appropriateness. (Floridi & Chiriatti, 2020).

Theoretical Framework

This study is based on two main pragmatic theories: (1) Speech Act Theory and (2) Politeness Theory. These two perspectives are both used to understand language more than just a grammatical system. Instead, language is seen as a tool for performing actions and for maintaining social relationships in communication. In other words, meaning is shaped by how, when, and why something is said, not only by the words themselves.

Speech Act Theory, first introduced by Austin (1962) and later developed by Searle (1969), explains that speaking is a form of action, where people do things through language, such as offering



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suggestions, making requests, expressing refusals, or giving apologies. Searle classified these actions into five categories:

(1) Assertives, (2) Directives, (3) Commissives, (4) Expressives, and (5) Declarations. In this study, the theory itself is applied to identify and categorize the communicative function of each response generated by ChatGPT.

In addition, Politeness Theory, developed by Brown and Levinson (1987), focuses on how individuals use language to maintain social harmony and protect each other's self-image, known as "face." It explains how speakers change their language depending on the situation, using strategies such as direct speech, positive politeness, negative politeness, or indirect expressions. In the present study, it is used to examine how ChatGPT selects linguistic forms that appear socially appropriate across different contexts.

The combination of the two theories is important because they address different and connected aspects of communication at the same time. Speech Act Theory explains the purpose of an utterance what action is being performed, while Politeness Theory explains the way that action is delivered in a socially acceptable manner. Together, they provide a more complete framework for analyzing pragmatic meaning in language use.

This mixed framework is relevant to the present study because ChatGPT generates responses that look similar to human interaction. Its outputs are not only linguistically accurate but also context-sensitive and socially framed. So, analyzing both the function and the politeness level of responses allows for a more realistic understanding of how the system communicates in different situations.

Overall, this framework supports the aims of the current study by offering structured tools for analysis. It helps classify speech acts, identify politeness strategies, and evaluate how appropriately ChatGPT responds to different communicative situations and intentions.

Table 1 presents the main Categories of Speech Acts in Searle's Framework, which provide the analytical basis for classifying the speech acts identified in ChatGPT-generated responses.

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Table 1: The Main Categories of Speech Acts in Searle's Framework

Speech Act Category	Function
1. Assertives	Means utterances used to convey information, beliefs, or statements about the world.
2. Directives	Means utterances intended to get the hearer to perform an action.
3. Commissives	Means utterances that commit the speaker to a future course of action.
4. Expressives	Means utterances that express the speaker's feelings, attitudes, or emotions.
5. Declarations	Means utterances that bring about a change in a situation or social reality.

Note: These categories provide the analytical framework used in the present study to identify the communicative functions performed in language. In the present study, they are used to classify the speech acts found in ChatGPT -generated responses across different communicative situations.

Previous Studies.

In recent years, researchers were encouraged to examine ChatGPT and its skills in educational and communicative settings, because of the increasing use of ChatGPT as a generated model assistant. Lately, previous research has explored ChatGPT from different perspectives, including language teaching, AI-generated communication, pragmatics, and language learning. The following studies, published between 2023 and 2025, are organized from broader studies on the educational use of ChatGPT to more specialized research on pragmatics and speech acts. Wishing that reviewing these studies helping highlight the background of the current study and shed light the research gap that the present study aims to cover and other studies do not enough explore it.

Kohnke, Moorhouse, and Zou (2023) explored the potential of ChatGPT in language teaching and learning. This study was conceptual in its nature. The study discussed possible educational uses of ChatGPT, its benefits, challenges. The study also highlighted the importance of digital competencies required for its



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effective and ethical use in language education. The findings revealed that ChatGPT can support language learning, but its outputs should be evaluated critically because they may contain inaccuracies or limitations.

Although this study focused on the educational applications of ChatGPT without exploring speech acts or politeness strategies. The present study, empirically analyzes the pragmatic features of ChatGPT-generated responses.

A quantitative comparative study conducted by Chen, Li, and Ye (2024) to investigate whether AI-generated conversations could be used as a reliable source of data for pragmatic research. The compared between 148 ChatGPT-generated conversations and 82 human-written conversations, in addition to 354 human evaluations, to evaluate the similarities and differences between data. Using linguistic coding, and statistical analysis. The findings showed that ChatGPT performed similarly to humans in most pragma linguistic and socio pragmatic features, while producing more formal and syntactically diverse responses. Participants were generally unable to distinguish AI-generated conversations from human-written ones.

Although, both studies explore pragmatics, the present study investigates pragmatic performance, specifically focuses on speech acts and politeness strategies across different communicative situations.

Lo, Yu, Xu, Ng, and colleagues (2024) conducted a systematic review of empirical studies on the use of ChatGPT in ESL and EFL education. The researchers analyzed previous empirical studies about ChatGPT and how it has been applied in language teaching and learning, to identify the main benefits, and the challenges connected with its use. The findings showed that ChatGPT can support language learning and writing development, although some issues regarding accuracy, ethics, and responsible implementation in educational settings.

This review examined ChatGPT from an educational perspective, whereas the current study focuses on pragmatic features of the language generated by ChatGPT.

A quantitative experimental study conducted in China by Quan and Chen (2025) to examine how ChatGPT responds to polite and



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impolite user prompts. The researchers created 200 questions representing four levels of politeness and analyzed the corresponding ChatGPT responses using linguistic, sentiment, and discourse analysis. The results showed that ChatGPT produced shorter and less positive responses to impolite prompts while responding more positively to polite ones, reflecting patterns similar to human interaction.

Although this study studied politeness in ChatGPT responses, the current study adopts a broader perspective by exploring both politeness strategies and speech acts within multiple communicative situations.

Lee and Cook (2024) in a mixed-methods study make an evaluation to explore the suitability of ChatGPT for teaching pragmatics in second language learning. The researchers analyzed 144 discourse completion tasks (DCTs) involving requests, apologies, and refusals under different levels of social distance and power. The analyses showed that ChatGPT generally created appropriate requests and refusals, whereas its apologies were evaluated lower in terms of appropriateness, politeness, and language quality. The researchers concluded that ChatGPT can support pragmatics instruction, but its responses should be evaluated carefully.

Both studies examine speech acts from a pragmatic perspective. But the previous study focuses on evaluating ChatGPT as a teaching tool, whereas the present study aims to provide a direct comprehensive pragmatic analysis of ChatGPT-generated responses by examining both speech acts and politeness strategies.

Although previous studies have provided deep insights into the use of ChatGPT, some areas still need further research. Kohnke et al. (2023) discussed the educational potential of ChatGPT through a conceptual review without collecting empirical data or examining its pragmatic performance. Similarly, Lo et al. (2024) reviewed empirical studies on the use of ChatGPT in ESL and EFL education; however, their focus was primarily on educational applications and learning-related issues rather than on the pragmatic characteristics of AI-generated language.

Also, Chen et al. (2024) adopted an experimental approach and compared conversations generated by ChatGPT with those produced by humans to examine the feasibility of using AI-

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generated data in pragmatic research. However, the study's main focus was on similarities and differences between human and AI-generated conversations and did not provide a comprehensive analysis of speech acts and politeness strategies as major pragmatic features. Likewise, Quan and Chen (2025) investigated the impact of different levels of politeness in user prompts on ChatGPT's responses, but their analysis was limited to politeness and did not address speech acts. Similarly, Lee and Cook (2024) evaluated the effectiveness of ChatGPT in pragmatics instruction through discourse completion tasks, with the primary aim of assessing its educational value rather than providing a comprehensive analysis of its pragmatic behavior.

Unlike the previous studies, the present study adopts a qualitative descriptive design to analyze ChatGPT-generated responses across a variety of communicative situations without comparing them to human responses or focusing on their educational effectiveness. At the same time, it examines two major pragmatic aspects: speech acts and politeness strategies, while evaluating their appropriateness in relation to context and communicative intent. By integrating these two aspects within a single analytical framework, the study seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of ChatGPT's pragmatic performance and to address a gap that has received limited attention in previous research.

Methodology

To explain the methodological approach used in this study, the study presents the research design, sample size, sampling techniques, research instrument, data collection, and data analysis process used to examine ChatGPT-generated responses from a pragmatic perspective. Indeed, to the ethical considerations the study followed.

Research Design

This study used a qualitative descriptive design based on pragmatic analysis. A qualitative approach was suitable because the study seeks to explore and interpret the pragmatic features of ChatGPT-generated responses rather than measure them quantitatively. Since the main focus is on understanding how speech acts and politeness strategies are used in different communicative situations. Indeed, qualitative analysis provides a suitable framework for examining

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communicative functions, contextual meaning, and pragmatic appropriateness. The study analyzed AI-generated responses only, as its main purpose was to investigate ChatGPT's pragmatic performance without the need to compare it to human communication.

Sample Size

The data involved 30 responses generated by ChatGPT. The responses were collected from six communicative contexts: requests, apologies, refusals, suggestions, expressions of gratitude, and complaints. Five responses were generated for each context, resulting in a total of 30 responses. These situations were selected because they represent common speech acts frequently used in everyday communication and provide appropriate data for pragmatic analysis. This number was considered enough for qualitative pragmatic analysis, as the aim of the study is not statistical generalization but in-depth interpretation of speech acts and politeness strategies across different communicative contexts.

Sampling Techniques

A purposive sampling technique was used in this study. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), Purposive sampling refers to a non-random approach where the researcher intentionally selects or constructs data based on specific criteria that align with the goals of the study, rather than choosing data randomly). In simple terms, it means selecting information that is most relevant and useful for answering the research questions.

This sampling technique was chosen because the study needed responses generated by ChatGPT that reflect particular communicative situations involving specific speech acts.

The prompts were designed to elicit responses related to requests, apologies, refusals, suggestions, expressions of gratitude, and complaints. As the study aims to explore pragmatic features deeply rather than produce statistically generalizable findings, purposive sampling allowed the researcher to collect data that aligned with the research objectives and was suitable for detailed pragmatic analysis.

Research Instrument

The main research instrument in this study was a group of structured prompts designed by the researcher herself. A prompt is a written instruction given to a generative AI system in order to guide the type of response it produces. In the context of large language models such as ChatGPT, prompts are carefully designed inputs that shape the model's outputs (responses) based on a specific communicative situation and required task (White et al., 2023).

In this study, the prompts were created to represent real-life communication situations and scenarios that involve different speech acts, such as requests, apologies, refusals, suggestions, expressions of gratitude, and complaints. The purpose of using structured prompts was to ensure consistency in the type of responses generated and to allow systematic comparison across different pragmatic contexts.

Each prompt was written in a clear and organized form so that ChatGPT would produce responses aligned with a specific communicative function. This helped maintain consistency during the data collection process and ensured that all responses were generated under similar and controlled conditions, making the dataset suitable for systematic pragmatic analysis.

Data Collection

For the current study, the data were collected by using a group of structured prompts developed by the researcher herself and provided to ChatGPT. Each prompt described a real-life communicative situation that required a particular type of response, such as a request, apology, refusal, suggestion, expression of gratitude, or complaint.

The prompts were presented to ChatGPT separately one by one, and the generated responses were documented for analysis. Collecting the data in this way helped keep consistency across the responses and ensured that each communicative situation was examined under similar conditions.

After the collection process, the responses were gathered according to their communicative contexts and prepared for further analysis using the frameworks of Speech Act Theory and Politeness Theory.

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All responses were generated using the free version available of ChatGPT (OpenAI) during the data collection period to ensure consistency in the collected data.

Data Analysis Process

The researcher analyzed the collected responses following Searle's (1969) categories of speech acts. First, each response was examined and classified. Next, the politeness strategies used in the responses were identified based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) Politeness Theory. The researcher then compared the responses across different communicative situations to explore if there are any possible similarities and differences in their pragmatic features. Finally, the findings were interpreted in light of the two theoretical frameworks in order to identify patterns in ChatGPT's pragmatic behavior and evaluate the appropriateness of its responses in different contexts.

Ethical Considerations

There are no human participants involved in this study. All data were generated through ChatGPT and were used only for research purposes. Also, no personal information was collected, and no ethical risks were related to the study.

Results

Table 2 presents the structured prompts developed by the researcher herself to generate specific speech acts from ChatGPT. Each prompt reflects a realistic everyday communicative situation designed to elicit a targeted response. These prompts were used as inputs only, and ChatGPT produced corresponding responses for each category. All the generated responses formed the dataset that was later analyzed using Speech Act Theory and Politeness Theory in the pragmatic analysis stage.

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Table2: Prompts Used for Data Generation and ChatGPT Responses

Category	Prompt (Researcher Input)	ChatGPT Response
1. Requests	Ask someone politely to help you with your assignment.	"Could you please help me with my assignment when you have time?"
	Request more time to submit a task.	"May I kindly request an extension for submitting the task?"
	Ask a teacher for clarification about a lesson.	"Could you please explain this topic again? I didn't fully understand it. "
	Request access to a document.	"Would it be possible to access the document you mentioned?"
	Ask a friend for notes.	"Can you please share your notes with me? "
2. Apologies	Apologize for missing a meeting.	"I sincerely apologize for missing the meeting."
	Apologize for being late.	"I'm very sorry for arriving late. "
	Apologize for misunderstanding instructions.	"I apologize for misunderstanding your instructions."
	Apologize for not replying on time.	"Sorry for the delayed response."
	Apologize for making a mistake in an assignment.	"I sincerely apologize for the mistake in my assignment."
3. Refusals	Politely refuse an invitation.	"Thank you for inviting me, but I won't be able to attend."
	Refuse to lend money.	"I'm sorry, but I can't lend you money at the moment."
	Refuse a request for help.	"I would love to help, but I'm currently busy."
	Refuse to participate in an activity.	"Unfortunately, I cannot take part in this activity."
	Refuse additional workload.	"I'm afraid I cannot take on extra tasks right now."

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Category	Prompt (Researcher Input)	ChatGPT Response
4. Suggestions	Suggest a way to improve studying.	"You might try creating a study schedule to improve your learning."
	Suggest solving stress problems.	"Taking short breaks can help reduce stress."
	Suggest improving writing skills.	"Reading regularly can improve your writing skills."
	Suggest teamwork improvement.	"Better communication can improve teamwork."
	Suggest time management strategy.	"Using a planner may help manage your time effectively."
5. Gratitude	Thank someone for help.	"Thank you so much for your help, I really appreciate it."
	Thank a teacher for explanation.	"I really appreciate your clear explanation, thank you."
	Thank a friend for support. Thank someone for advice.	"Thanks a lot for being supportive." "I truly appreciate your valuable advice."
	Thank for feedback.	"Thank you for your helpful feedback."
6. Complaints	Complain about poor internet service.	"The internet connection has been very slow and unreliable."
	Complain about noise in a place.	"The noise level here is very disturbing."
	Complain about delayed service.	"The service is taking too long to respond."
	Complain about unfair treatment.	"I feel the service has not been fair."
	Complain about poor quality of food.	"The food quality was not satisfactory."

Note: The responses generated through these prompts represented the data sample of the study, which was later analyzed using Speech Act Theory and Politeness Theory.

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Table 3 presents the coding of speech acts, politeness strategies, and pragmatic functions used in the analysis.

Table 3: Coding of Speech Acts and Politeness Strategies Category

Category	Example Response	Speech Act Type	Politeness Strategy	Pragmatic Function
1. Requests	"Could you please help me with my assignment?"	Directive	Negative politeness	Softening request / reducing imposition
	"Can you please share your notes with me?"	Directive	Positive politeness	Building rapport / friendly tone
	"Would it be possible to access the document?"	Directive	Negative politeness	Indirect request / formality
	"May I kindly request an extension?"	Directive	Negative politeness	Polite formal request
	"Could you explain this topic again?"	Directive	Negative politeness	Seeking clarification politely
2. Apologies	"I sincerely apologize for missing the meeting."	Expressive	Negative politeness	Showing regret / repair
	"I'm very sorry for being late."	Expressive	Negative politeness	Acknowledging fault
	"I apologize for the misunderstanding."	Expressive	Negative politeness	Repairing communication breakdown
	"Sorry for the delayed response."	Expressive	Neutral politeness	Minimizing blame
	"I sincerely apologize for the mistake."	Expressive	Negative politeness	Accepting responsibility

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Category	Example Response	Speech Act Type	Politeness Strategy	Pragmatic Function
3. Refusals	"I'm afraid I can't help at the moment."	Commissive / Expressive	Negative politeness	Soft refusal / avoidance of direct rejection
	"Thank you, but I won't be able to attend."	Commissive Positive	Negative politeness	Polite refusal with appreciation
	"I would love to help, but I'm busy." relationship	Commissive	Positive politeness	Maintaining
	"Unfortunately, I cannot participate."	Commissive	Negative politeness	Formal indirect refusal
	"I can't take extra tasks right now."	Commissive	Direct-mitigated	Limiting imposition
4. Suggestions	"You might try creating a study schedule."	Directive	Positive politeness	Offering help / advice
	"Taking breaks can reduce stress."	Directive	Positive politeness	Supportive guidance
	"Reading regularly can improve writing skills."	Directive	Positive politeness	Encouragement
	"Better communication can improve teamwork."	Directive	Positive politeness	Cooperative tone
	"Using a planner may help manage time."	Directive	Positive politeness	Constructive advice

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Category	Example Response	Speech Act Type	Politeness Strategy	Pragmatic Function
5. Gratitude	"Thank you so much for your help."	Expressive	Positive politeness	Appreciation
	"I really appreciate your explanation."	Expressive	Positive politeness	Strengthening relationship
	"Thanks a lot for your support."	Expressive	Positive politeness	Emotional appreciation
	"I truly appreciate your advice."	Expressive	Positive politeness	Acknowledgment
	"Thank you for your feedback."	Expressive	Positive politeness	Gratitude expression
6. Complaints	"The internet is very slow."	Expressive	Negative politeness	Indirect criticism
	"The noise level here is very disturbing."	Expressive	Direct	Expressing dissatisfaction
	"The service is taking too long."	Expressive	Negative politeness	Soft complaint
	"I feel the service is unfair."	Expressive	Negative politeness	Mitigated complaint
	"The food quality is not satisfactory."	Expressive	Negative politeness	Polite dissatisfaction

Discussions of the Results

1. Requests

As shown in Table 3, requests were realized through directive speech acts, which directly answers Research Question 1 about the types of speech acts used in its responses. This agrees with Searle's (1979) definition of directives, where the speaker tries to influence the hearer's actions. In the data, requests were expressed in indirect

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and softened forms using modal verbs such as could, would, and may, as seen in the following examples “Could you please help me with my assignment when you have time?”. This indicates a clear preference for reducing direct obligation and keeping social politeness.

Regarding Research Question 2, the findings revealed a strong use of negative politeness strategies (Brown & Levinson, 1987), especially through hedging, politeness markers like please, and softening phrases such as when you have time. These features help protect the hearer’s choice and reduce pressure. This variation in formality depending on the social relationship also suggests that ChatGPT changes its language according to context and interpersonal distance.

For Research Question 3, the findings suggest that requests generated by ChatGPT are generally pragmatically appropriate, for example they match the communicative situation and follow expected social conventions. This is consistent with previous research (e.g., Lee & Cook, 2024), while the current study further shows how such appropriateness appears consistently across different everyday contexts rather than being limited to specific tasks.

2. Apologies

According to Table 3, apologies were categorized as expressive speech acts when producing apologies, directly addressing Research Question 1. These responses typically include conventional apology expressions such as I am sorry, I apologize, and I sincerely apologize, reflecting established pragmatic patterns described by Searle (1979).

In relation to Research Question 2, the data reveal a strong use of negative politeness strategies, where apologies function as a way to repair potential social damage. Expressions of regret and acknowledgment of responsibility were commonly used to reduce pressure and show respect toward the hearer.

As regards Research Question 3, the results find that apologies are generally context-sensitive and appropriate, with variation in intensity depending on the seriousness of the situation. More serious contexts produced stronger apologies, while minor issues received

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shorter forms. This supports findings from earlier studies such as Chen et al. (2024), while also highlighting ChatGPT's ability to change the strength of apology in a relatively natural way.

3. Refusals

The analysis shows that refusals are realized through commissive speech acts, which addresses Research Question 1. In some cases, expressive elements such as apologies are also included, showing a blended pragmatic structure. Instead of direct rejection, ChatGPT usually uses indirect formulations such as "I'm sorry, but I can't..." or "I would love to help, but..."

For Research Question 2, refusals strongly reflect negative politeness strategies, as they often include explanations, mitigation, and apologies to reduce face-threatening effects. At the same time, some responses also show positive politeness, especially when gratitude is expressed before refusing.

In terms of Research Question 3, refusals appear to be pragmatically well-formed, as they balance clarity with politeness. The responses avoid harshness and keep interpersonal harmony, which aligns with findings from Lee and Cook (2024), although the present study focuses on natural communicative situations rather than structured tasks.

4. Suggestions

The findings reveal that ChatGPT uses directive speech acts to express suggestions, which addressing Research Question 1. However, these directives are softened through modal expressions such as might and may, and make them advisory rather than commanding.

Regarding Research Question 2, positive politeness strategies are dominant in this category. Suggestions are framed in an encouraging and collaborative tone, focusing on support and shared problem-solving rather than authority.

For Research Question 3, suggestions are generally appropriate and context-aware, as they provide practical and relevant advice depending on the situation. This aligns with Quan and Chen (2025), though the present study emphasizes how linguistic softening contributes to pragmatic acceptability.

5. Expressions of Gratitude

The results show that gratitude is consistently realized through expressive speech acts, addressing Research Question 1. Common expressions such as “Thank you so much” and “I truly appreciate...” reflect standard ways of expressing appreciation in English.

In relation to Research Question 2, positive politeness strategies dominate this category, as expressions of gratitude strengthen social relationships and express solidarity. Intensifiers such as really and truly enhance emotional strength and sincerity.

Regarding Research Question 3, gratitude expressions are clearly pragmatically appropriate, as they align closely with expected social norms. This reflects ChatGPT’s strong performance in formulaic expressive acts

6. Complaints

The findings indicate that complaints are mainly expressed through expressive speech acts, addressing Research Question 1. These responses convey dissatisfaction while maintaining a controlled and neutral tone.

For Research Question 2, negative politeness strategies are frequently used. Complaints are softened through indirect wording and a focus on describing the issue rather than assigning blame, which helps reduce confrontation.

In terms of Research Question 3, complaints are generally pragmatically appropriate, as they manage to express dissatisfaction without violating social norms or escalating conflict.

Overall, the results answer Research Question 1 by showing that ChatGPT produces different speech act types depending on communicative function: directives in requests and suggestions, expressives in apologies, gratitude, and complaints, and commissives in refusals. This distribution supports Searle’s (1979) framework of speech acts in real communication.

For Research Question 2, the analysis demonstrates a clear pattern of negative politeness in face-threatening contexts such as requests, apologies, refusals, and complaints, while positive politeness appears more in supportive interactions like suggestions and gratitude. This reflects Brown and Levinson’s (1987) model and

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shows that politeness strategies are systematically linked to communicative intent.

Regarding Research Question 3, ChatGPT generally produces contextually appropriate and socially acceptable responses across all categories. The model adapts its language according to situation, social distance, and communicative goal. While this supports previous studies (Chen et al., 2024; Lee & Cook, 2024), the present research adds a broader and more integrated view by combining speech acts and politeness strategies within natural communicative scenarios.

In summary, the findings suggest that ChatGPT demonstrates a consistent pattern of pragmatic behavior that reflects key principles of human communication, although its responses remain largely pattern-driven rather than fully context-sensitive in a human sense.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined the pragmatic behavior of ChatGPT-generated responses using Speech Act Theory and Politeness Theory as analytical frameworks. A total of 30 responses across six communicative situations (requests, apologies, refusals, suggestions, expressions of gratitude, and complaints) were analyzed in order to identify patterns of speech act realization and politeness use.

The findings indicate that ChatGPT reliably produces recognizable speech acts that correspond to established pragmatic categories. Directive acts were mainly observed in requests and suggestions, expressive acts dominated apologies, gratitude, and complaints, while commissive acts were primarily associated with refusals. This confirms that ChatGPT-generated language broadly aligns with Searle's (1979) classification of speech acts.

The analysis also shows that politeness strategies are consistently embedded in the responses. Negative politeness is particularly common in contexts involving imposition or potential face threat, such as requests, apologies, refusals, and complaints. In contrast, positive politeness appears more frequently in supportive interactions, especially in suggestions and expressions of gratitude. Overall, the results suggest that ChatGPT is capable of adapting its language to different communicative situations by adjusting levels



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of formality, mitigation, and directness. However, this adaptability tends to follow predictable linguistic patterns rather than reflecting a fully human-like understanding of social context. Despite this limitation, the model generally produces pragmatically appropriate and socially acceptable responses.

Recommendations

1. For researchers, future studies should compare ChatGPT with human data using larger datasets to examine pragmatic differences.
2. For language teaching, ChatGPT can support teaching pragmatics, but learners should critically evaluate its responses in context.
3. For AI development and educational use, AI systems should be improved to better handle social and contextual factors such as power and distance, and used in education in a way that promotes critical thinking.

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