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## **Exploring Politeness in Saudi Hospital Settings: Insights from Nurses' Intercultural Perceptions**

Politeness comprises two levels: first-order politeness and second-order politeness. The primary focus of this paper is on first-order politeness, which pertains to how individuals of a specific socio-cultural group perceive and discuss politeness (Watts, Ide & Ehlich, 2005). Studying individuals' perceptions of language is essential for understanding their evaluations of the communication process (Culpeper, O'Driscoll & Hardaker, 2019; Jaworski, Coupland, & Galasiński, 2004). Comprehending communication styles then helps raise people's awareness and ensures effective communication in specific contexts. Because politeness is culture-specific (Culpeper, Haugh & Kadar, 2017), it can be vital within multicultural environments, particularly those centred around (multicultural) medical settings, due to the potential impact that varying levels of politeness may have on healthcare outcomes. Although there is considerable literature on politeness within medical contexts, it is rarely examined in Saudi settings and has never been explored from an intercultural perspective (to the best of my knowledge). In response, this study focuses on nurses' perceptions of politeness from various cultural backgrounds. I interviewed 12 nurses, including 3 Saudis, 3 Filipinos, and 3 Indians; I used thematic analysis to analyse the gathered data. The study identified two main themes in nurses' perceptions of politeness in Saudi hospitals. First, the importance of clear and informative verbal communication to facilitate intercultural competence; second, the significance of respect as a politeness concept when interacting with nurses from diverse cultures. Consequently, it is crucial for nurses to enhance their awareness of these cultural differences to prevent potential relationship breakdowns and ensure a healthy workplace environment. Recommending a training course could be beneficial in facilitating intercultural healthcare communication among different groups.

### **References**

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### **Bio-note**

Badryah Alalawi is a PhD candidate in Applied Linguistics at the University of Nottingham, UK. Having earned an MA in Applied Linguistics from the same institution in 2020, her passion lies in linguistics, particularly in pragmatics, politeness, healthcare communication and intercultural communication. Her current research explores the communication dynamics among nurses from diverse cultural backgrounds who employ English as a lingua franca in Saudi hospitals.