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The present study aimed to investigate the use of politeness and impoliteness strategies by British and Egyptian participants in sports talk shows. The study conducted a contrastive analysis between spoken Egyptian Arabic and spoken British English. The study followed the pragmatic framework of Brown and Levinson’s (1987) theory of politeness and that of Culpeper’s (1996) model of impoliteness, focusing on the pragmatic functions and linguistic realizations of politeness and impoliteness strategies employed by the participants. In addition, a quantitative analysis of the identified strategies in the data was conducted in terms of the frequencies and percentages of occurrence of each strategy.

The results showed significant similarities and differences between the two groups. Both groups tended to use more positive politeness strategies than negative ones. The two groups similarly used a few impoliteness strategies. Egyptian participants used more positive politeness strategies than British participants, while British participants used more negative politeness strategies. Also, differences between the two groups were identified in relation to using certain linguistic techniques as realizations of politeness and impoliteness strategies. The most salient differences were found in the use of address terms, cajoler, hedges, question tags, and religious expressions. Cultural differences and contexts of sports talk shows were found to have an effect in using politeness and impoliteness strategies by the two groups. The study proved the applicability of Brown and Levinson’s (1987) theory to the Egyptian context of sports talk shows.