



## The Pragmatics of dialogic civility in the context of ethnic diversity

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### Abstract

This study is concerned with dialogic civility as an ethical pragmatic praxis which is pragmatically manifested by means of various pragmatic strategies and socially affected by some social variables. It basically aims to investigate differences in terms of the employment of the pragmatic strategies that manifest dialogic civility in the context of some traffic trials where defendants belong to different ethnic groups in the American society. The corpus of the study comprises twenty traffic trials as broadcasted on Caught in Providence Court Show which displays traffic violations committed by American defendants of different ethnic groups. To achieve its aim, this study develops a pragmatic model of dialogic civility which aims at analysing these trials taking into account whether the defendants are White-Americans or African-Americans. The findings reveal statistically significant differences in terms of the use of certain pragmatic strategies that manifest dialogic civility in the context of the traffic trials where defendants are ethnically different, i.e. White-American and African-American defendants. The study, thus, suggests that pragmatic strategies that reflect dialogic civility need to become fundamental components of effective legal dialogic discourse for defendants of different ethnic groups.

*Keywords:* Dialogic civility; pragmatic strategies; ethnic diversity; White-Americans; African-Americans

## 1. Introduction

All over the world, while it might seem that dialogic civility has been entirely mislaid in politics and largely eroded in both public and private life, courtrooms are trying to push back against the tsunami of incivility. The job is not easy simply because, for the time being, the era is the time of deepening political, radical, and religious divisions in which people with different standpoints and diverse ethnic groups are not only disagreeing but really disliking those who dispute them. This dislike has been increasing over decades. Nonetheless, in the midst of division and dislike, there is a flourishing exigency for civility. Generally speaking, dialogic civility is the act of showing regard for others by being polite and by having behavior that is respectful and considerate of other people. As Troester and Mester (2007: 251) claim, dialogic civility has become one of the "hot-button" words. That is, it is highly controversial issue or concern that triggers immediate intense reaction. Basically, dialogic civility requires, respect, restraint, and empathy. Rudeness, threats, bullying and personal attacks, on the other hand, have nothing in common with dialogic civility.

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### 1.1. Literature Review

The concept of civility is extensively exercised in diverse disciplines. A key concept in the present study is the adjective "dialogic. Ostensibly, it is easy to understand the general concept of civility, but the particular problem comes when attempts are made to understand the manifestation of civility in natural dialogic contexts. Despite its unique ubiquity, the more targeted concept of dialogic civility is not yet widely used. This study takes a fresh look at how dialogue and civility interact to concretise the concept of dialogic civility and make it real. Arnett and Arneson (1999) are the masterminds of dialogic civility who first offer this concept. Thus, the historical seeds of dialogic civility are planted in the grounds of the work of Arnett and Arneson (*ibid.*) in their thorough book entitled "Dialogic Civility in a Cynical Age: Community, Hope, and Interpersonal Relationships". Thanks to Arnett and Arneson's (*ibid.*) concept of dialogic civility, the essential ethical exigency in the practical praxis of communicative dialogue is correctly captured by devoting particular attention to the assumption that civil discourse between communicators is the firm norm. Elucidating dialogic civility for the first time, Arnett and Arneson (*ibid.*: 168) generally define it as a communicative praxis with behavioural modes and attitudes that surpass politeness, etiquette, and nicety. Intrinsically, dialogic civility is intended to satisfy the demanding ethical desideratum in any dialogue or dialogic communication where social distance between interlocutors is the standard. Against this background, dialogic civility has come to its fruition when interlocutors communicate with each other in a dialogically civil manner in conformity with a sense of sincere responsibility towards oneself and others. Notwithstanding, as Arnett and Arneson (*ibid.*: 50) clarify, no intimacy is postulated or expected in dialogic civility because intimacy can be a "tyranny" in formal communication due to the fact that intimacy implies close familiarity and friendship. Arnett and Arneson's (*ibid.*: 1) primary point is that dialogic civility is brilliantly branded as a communicative praxis that is invited and cannot be extorted to grandly guide everyday interpersonal discourse. In other words, as a desired destination, dialogic civility can be dubbed as a communicative praxis which is encouraged, but not enforced.

In Arnett and Arneson's (*ibid.*: 197) words, dialogic civility is particularly an opportune means for keeping a particular dialogue going regardless of any social differences and diversity of views among interlocutors. Then, Arnett and Arneson (*ibid.*: 291) hasten to add that a respect for difference and distance is dominant in dialogic civility. Without delay, it is pertinent now to flag some questions worthy of extra inquisitiveness. At this point, three gates of question are opened. First, how does Arnett and Arneson's view of dialogic civility relate to other views? Second, can Arnett and Arneson's view be used in the same spirit in the present study? Or does the view of this study have to be augmented by a radically different view? Third, what is the ruling role of the adjective dialogic in dialogic civility? To answer the first question, some relevant views about dialogic civility should be briefly traced. Retrospectively, Aaronson's (1995) view, for example, precedes Arnett and Arneson's (1999) view of dialogic civility. By twinning the concept of civility and the practice of dialogue, Aaronson (1995: 141), even if he does not offer a term for this twining, affirms that civility is extremely essential by virtue of its propensity for trust and respect in its quest for resolutions through dialogue. Posteriorly, Sidorkin (1999: 134) argues that civility, as a condition in dialogue, is a cut above the rest because it is the "holistic characterization" and the quaint quality of dialogic communication. In order to achieve dialogic civility, Calhoun (2000: 256) sees that citizens are required to reach "accommodation" and "compromise" by means of "reasoned dialogue". With this in mind, civility keeps pace with respectful dialogue by dint of safeguarding a "civil tongue" and hence it is a "matter of restraining speech" (*ibid.*). Moreover, Weeks (2011: 1) carefully orchestrates the synthesis of civility and dialogue by demonstrating that civility is the pristine part of formal dialogue. In order to achieve dialogic civility, Smith and Bressler (2013: 455) assure that interlocutors should decide to control their impulses and avoid uncivil behaviors like aggression, self-interest, and

crassness. Consequently, dialogic civility can be viewed as a communication style which is most appropriate for maintaining the fundamental features of a civil society. To answer the second question, it is worth mentioning that Arnett and Arneson's (1999) view of dialogic civility is not enough in the present study for two reasons.

First, Arnett and Arneson (*ibid.*) focus on a general theoretical overview of dialogic communication in relation to civility and interpersonal relations. Such an overview seems too abstract and idealized since its key crux is that interlocutors ought to keep their dialogue conversation going by ethically communicating with each other. Their view is not perfectly profitable in perceiving how dialogic civility has much important implications in daily life. In fact, their original proposal of dialogic civility splendidly spotlights on the significance of sustaining the continuousness of any dialogue and the suitability of the give and take of that dialogue. Though from a different perspective and with a distinct paradigm, in fact, the present study has borrowed the concept of dialogic civility from Arnett and Arneson's (1999). The heart of the matter and the critical challenge of the present study is that there is a concept of dialogic civility which is not yet analytically and accurately approved, yet known to be usually used with regard to the study of human communication. What is requisitely required is a creative concept of civility; and from this creative concept, an ample and alternative approach may prudently pursue. In the present study and against this backdrop, the concept of dialogic civility is the trigger that can make the pragmatic project both more dialogical and more useful to account for all the pragmatic perspectives. To answer the third question, it is worth mention here that the descriptive adjective "dialogic" is added, then, to civility for the reason that civility has to be communicatively reflected by a skillful dialogic communication and an optimal balance between dialogicity and civility. Thus, prefixing the descriptor "dialogic" to the general concept of civility underscores the urgency of dialogic discourse and dialogic communication to handle argumentative debatable disputes and controversial contentions.

## *1.2. Research Questions*

This study attempts to investigate dialogic civility in the context of ethnic diversity in some American traffic trials by implementing a pragmatic model developed in this study for this purpose. It is hoped that the findings of this study are theoretically beneficial for the pragmatic identification of dialogic civility as used by American defendants of diverse ethnic groups. Practically, it can be a pragmatic reference for further research dealing with civility in general and dialogic civility in particular. This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- i. How do the pragmatic strategies contribute to the manifestation of dialogic civility?
- ii. What are the pragmatic strategies deployed by American defendants of diverse ethnic groups?

## **2. Dialogic Civility**

Dialogic civility requires that the speaker should use crafted civil pragmatic strategies that are intended to be well-received by the hearer in dialogic interaction.

### *2.1. Pragmatic strategies of dialogic civility*

It is a truism that interlocutors are not hypothetical speakers or hermits who live in solitude, but they are social individuals who live and socially interact in various social contexts. In this sense, interlocutors have a duplex nature in the sense that they are human individuals and social actors at the same time. In essence, language, as Weigand (2009: 25) notes, is a social phenomenon that aims to achieve a communicative dialogic understanding among interlocutors. The pragmatic angle of dialogic

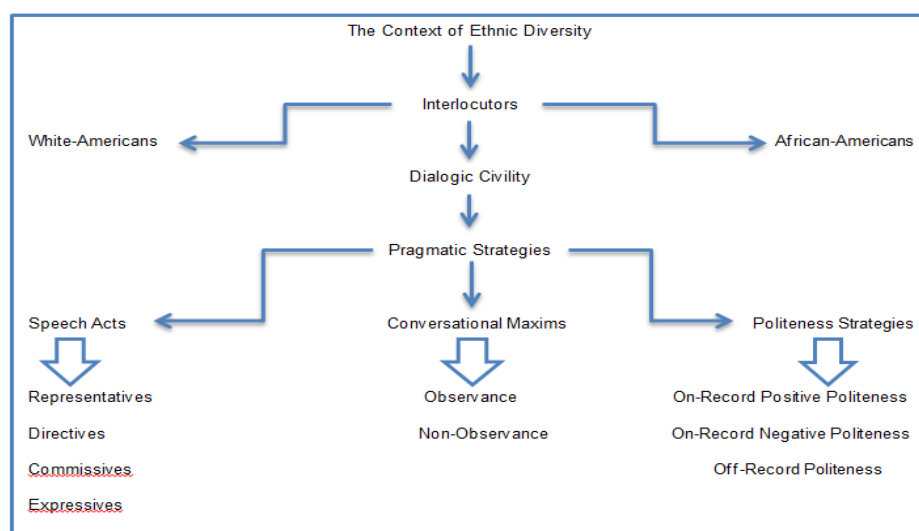
civility revolves around the way in which interlocutors civilly engage in dialogic interaction. Examining any phenomenon pragmatically can be portrayed through various pragmatic strategies. As far as dialogic civility through the lens of pragmatics is concerned, it is appropriate for some strategies including speech acts, conversational maxims, and politeness strategies. The reason of the use of these pragmatic strategies is that speech acts enable interlocutors to exchange their ideas freely, politeness strategies reflect the civility of the interlocutors, and conversational maxims mirrors that the interaction is effective and the interlocutors as cooperative, as Al-Zubeiry (2020: 1043) elaborates. These strategies lay the foundations of dialogic civility in the context of traffic trials in this study. An effective interaction requires that the involved participants be cooperative with each other.

## 2.2. Ethnic Diversity

American people live in a polarized culture with upper class versus lower class; Black versus White; educated versus uneducated; Democrats versus Republicans; men versus women; African American women versus African American men; Christians versus Jews; and a host of national, ethnic, and religious factions (Ellis, 2001: 106). This view motivates the study of dialogic civility in American contexts. The ethnic gap between the two terms "White-American" and "African-American" in the USA remains persistently large. As officially cited in the United States Census Bureau (2000: 1), USA has ethnically diverse population with two major ethnic categories, namely White-Americans and African-Americans, and from this view such terminology is adopted. One of the cudgels against such ethnic and rude terms is civility which can be considered as the social lubricant that is used to maintain the civil rights of all citizens regardless of their ethnic group, to prevent any social offense, and to equally contain all citizens in a civil society. For Al-Ramahi *et al.* (2021: 669), linguistic strategies contributes to the construction of whiteness and blackness. Hence, in this study, there are two overriding interests which are the effects of the social variable of ethnicity on dialogic civility in American legal contexts and the differences, if any, between White-American defendants and African-American defendants in terms of the use of pragmatic strategies.

## 3. Method

On the basis of what has just been demonstrated, a pragmatic model of dialogic civility in court contexts is proposed by the present study to analyze the data under scrutiny. The proposed model is simply sketched in Figure (1) below.



**Figure 1.** The proposed pragmatic model of dialogic civility in the context of ethnic diversity

### 3.1. Data Collection

This study employs both qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis as it exclusively aims at investigating the significant differences between White-American and African-American defendants in the context of some traffic trials where defendants belong to two different ethnic groups. The data of this study comprise ten traffic trials taken and transcribed by the researchers themselves to insure authenticity and reliability and they are evenly distributed between White-American and African-American defendants to increase the dataset size for better results. The traffic trials are selected after careful examination of the contextual factors that may affect the dialogic exchange. Six representative extracts of the traffic trials are illustrated in this study. These trials are converted into plain text for the sake of pragmatic analysis. This study follows a pragmatic model that is developed by the researchers which directly relates to analyzing the traffic trials as proceed by American defendants of diverse ethnic groups. The developed pragmatic model of dialogic civility serves as the reference point for the analysis in this study. The subject model categorizes dialogic civility in terms of speech acts, conversational maxims, and politeness strategies as used by White-American and African-American defendants.

### 3.2. Data Collection

The traffic trials are downloaded in video format and converted into plain transcribed text. The traffic trials are taken from the official website of Caught in Providence Court Show. The data comprise ten traffic trials in total and they are distributed according to the ethnic group of the defendants so that five for White-American defendants and in five for African-American defendants. Further, the pragmatic strategies that stand for dialogic civility are identified in the target data in addition to their frequencies and percentages.

### 3.3. Data Analysis

The analysis is done systematically by following the model proposed by the present study. The representative extracts are reduced to the defendants' dialogic role only by deleting the utterances obtained from the Chief Judge due to the fact that this study concentrates on the ethnic diversity of the defendants and its effect on dialogic civility in terms of pragmatic strategies. Then, the transcribed utterances are numbered for the sake of ease of reference. The next step is the pragmatic interpretation of the target data to infer some significant conclusions.

#### 3.3.1 Example from White American Defendants

Case Number: 1

Case Name: Don't Try to Sell Me.

Traffic Violation: Obstructing traffic.

Defendant Name: Russell Fairy.

Case Context: Russell Fairy is a sales rep for Land Air Express Trucking Company. He comes into the American Providence Court to represent the pick-up and delivery driver who commits an obstructing traffic violation.

Extract No. 1

Russell: (1) Yes sir, Your Honor. (2) First I'm an employee Land Air Express Trucking Company with our home base up in Wilston, Vermont. (3) I'm actually a sales rep for them. (4) I grew up, born, and raised in Providence, but I live in Cranston now. (5) Yes, that's why they sent me in, Your Honor. (6) Exactly, they asked me to come and represent them. (7) It's an everyday thing, Judge, 'cause I'm a

sales rep so I have to. (8) That is correct (Laughing). (9) No, that would be our, you know, our pick-up and delivery driver. (10) From my corporate office yesterday. (11) Yes, yes. (12) The driver himself. (13) Basically our driver claimed that, you know, apparently he got the ticket. (14) He claimed that he didn't see that. (15) With our offices being in Vermont, they're saying that they never received the initial ticket to pay. (16) So they asked me to come in today. (17) After receiving this notice, they asked me to ask for the mercy of the court.

In the above extract, Russell uses the representative speech act of affirming as the head act in (1) and in (2) and (3), the representative speech act of stating is used by Russell to state that he is an employee, a sales rep, in Land Air Express Trucking Company who lives in Vermont. Russell, then, in (4) and (5), uses the representative speech act of stating to state that he has grown, born, and risen in Providence, but he lives in Cranston. In (6) and (8), Russell feels it necessary to resort to the representative speech act of affirming and asserting in (7) to avoid disunity and create solidarity. In his reply to the judge's questions, Russell employs the representative speech act of stating in (9), (10), and (12) to state that the one who commits the traffic violation is the pick-up and delivery driver of the company. Nevertheless, in (11), the representative speech act of affirming is also used by Russell and in (27-31), the representative speech act of reporting is activated to give an account of what has been really happen in the past concerning the obstructing traffic violation. In relation to conversational maxims, Russell flouts the quality maxim as he says that for which he lacks adequate evidence in (13-17) because he is not the one who drives the car so he speaks on the behalf of his corporate office. In terms of politeness strategies, Russell resorts to on-record positive politeness using the strategy of exaggerating the hearer's interests in (6) as evident in the use of "exactly". Besides, the strategy of intensifying the hearer's interests is used by Russell in (9) when he uses the orientated positive politeness device "you know" to scaffold the pragmatic coherence of interaction and it can be considered as an attenuating device in this context. In (5), (6), and (8), and (11), the strategy of avoiding disagreement is used by Russell using incivility avoidance-based utterances. Also, in (5), (6), and (7), Russell uses the strategy of giving reasons to engage Judge Caprio in the interactive dialogic activity when he provides reasons to assume cooperation. Moreover, on-record negative politeness is also triggered using the strategy of giving deference as it is clear when Russell uses "sir" and "Your Honor" in (1) and (5) when addressing Judge Caprio.

Case Number: 2

Case Name: First Ticket in 70 Years!

Traffic Violation: Red light violation.

Defendant Name: Victor Rock.

Case Context: Victor Rock is charged with a red light ticket and he claims that this is the first ticket that he receives in seventy years. Also, he tells Judge Caprio that he was a Korean War veteran and Judge Caprio believes that this brave veteran deserved a break especially since this was his first ticket in his many years of driving.

Extract No. 2

Victor: (Laughing). (1) Many years ago, sir. (2) Navy. (3) Started out in Hawaii and stationed in Japan. (Laughing) (Audience laughter) (4) No, as far as I'm concerned, they owe me. (5) I got out in 54, Your Honor, I was in the Korean. (6) Your Honor, may I say something? (7) In 70 years I've been driving, I think that's the first red light ticket I've gotten. (8) All of a sudden, I made a boo boo. (All laughing).

In this extract, various pragmatic strategies are operated to embody dialogic civility. In his response to the judge's questions, Victor performs the representative speech act of stating in (1), (2), and (5) to

denote some justificatory issues of his traffic violation. In (3), Victor resorts to the representative speech act of reporting to tell Judge Caprio that he served as a Navy who started out in Hawaii and then stationed in Japan. In (17), the representative speech act of stating is also used by Judge Caprio to argue that Victor owes the government some money for because he serves in in Hawaii, but Victor uses the representative speech act of asserting in (4) to argue that the government owes him instead. In (6), the directive speech act of requesting is used by Victor to request Judge Caprio to give him a chance to say something. In (7), the representative speech act of assuring is used by Victor to assure that this is the first time in which he commits a red light violation in his seventy years of driving. In (8), Victor admits Judge Caprio's critical opinion but with a kind of humour. Basically, utterance (8) marks the closure of this extract and this set of exchange. With reference to conversational maxims, Victor adheres faithfully to these maxims in most of his utterances. Accordingly, his interactive dialogic role is maximally efficient in so far as it is informative, non-spurious, relevant, and perspicuous. However, some exceptions are noticed when Victor flouts the maxim of relation in (7) when produces overtly irrelevant response when he assures that the ticket in question is his first red light ticket that he has gotten as an attempt to make Judge Caprio gives him a break on it. As for politeness strategies, on-record positive politeness is triggered through the strategy of using in-group identify markers by Victor in (4). This strategy is obvious when Victor refers to Hawaii considering the time spent in it as vacation. Moreover, the strategy of avoiding disagreement is used by Victor in (8) when he admits Judge Caprio's opinion. Needless to say, such politeness strategies mirror the sense of solidarity in this dialogic exchange and the sense of civility by which the dialogic exchange seems smooth. In terms of on-record negative politeness, it is operated by the strategy of giving deference by Victor using "sir" in (1) and honorific forms in (5) and (6). With reference to off-record politeness, it is operated using the strategy of using contradiction by Victor when he assures that the red light ticket in question is his first one in (7) and, then in (8), he admits Judge Caprio's opinion that he is behaving himself.

Case Number: 3

Case Name: A Victory for a Vet

Traffic Violation: Red light violation.

Defendant Name: Leonard Clark.

Case Context: Leonard Clark is an army artillery veteran who comes to the American Providence court on his eighty-fifth birthday for his first driving violation. He comes to the court with daughter to support him and Judge Caprio feels happy to see them and he says that the family unit is the basic unit of the society and it warms his heart when he sees close family units.

Extract No. 3

Leonard: (1) Army artillery. (2) Oh, Lord, a century ago or so. (Judge Caprio's laughter). (3) 1956 to 1958. (4) No, sir. (5) Your Honor, in sixty seven years of driving, it's the first time I've had an infraction like that. (6) I don't know what happened.

In (1), (2), and (3), the representative speech act of stating is used by Leonard to answer Judge Caprio's question. In (4), the representative speech act of asserting through negative assertion is used by Leonard to assert that he does not see the red light. Then, in (5) and (6) Leonard uses the expressive speech act of apologising by expressing his sorrow or regret for the red light traffic violation that he is responsible for. As for conversational maxims, non-observance is conceived in (2) when Leonard overstates the past time in which he serves in the military by flouting the maxim of quantity. Also, in (5), Leonard flouts the maxim of relation when he shifts the focus of the topic to say that the violation in question is the first ticket in his sixty seven years of driving. Also, in (6), Leonard opts out the maxim of quantity by saying that he does not know what happened. Pertaining to on-record negative

politeness, it is triggered by Leonard in (4) and (5) using the strategy of giving deference via formal forms of address that indicate deference. Add to this, off-record politeness is observed in (2) by Leonard when he exaggerates a reference to the past time of his military serves more than is warranted and higher than the actual state of affairs using the strategy of overstatement.

### 3.3.2 Examples from African American Defendants

Case Number: 4

Case Name: My Parents Raised Me That Way

Traffic Violation: Going through a red light.

Defendant Name: James Herring.

Case Context: James Herring is a motorist who commits a red light violation. However, he goes through the red light when the time is two tenths of a second. Typically, the traffic police do not prosecute cases for camera red lights if the time is two tenths of a second. However, James is prosecuted for two tenths of a second. Due to the fact that James has athletic strong appearance, Judge Caprio asks him if he plays any kind of sports and James, thus, presents some facts about his life and his three athletic sons who play for different American Athletic teams.

Extract No. 4

James: (Laughter) (1) Well, I wasn't gonna miss it anyway. (2) I did when I was younger. (3) I mean I'm 67 now. (4) My kids did. (5) I got three sons. (6) They played for North Carolina Central, one played for North Carolina State, and the other one played here at community college here. (7) All three of my sons are taller than me. (8) But I tell them that I am still the boss and they give me respect and that's all I ask for because my mother and father gave me respect. (9) They taught me how to do that. (10) So this is how I live my life. (11) Thank you.

James uses the representative speech act of assuring in (1) to assure that he has no intention to miss this trial anyway. In (2), James replies to the judge's question with the representative speech act of affirming to state Judge Caprio's presumption as a fact. In (3) and (5-7), he performs the representative speech act of stating to denote his exact age, to state that he has three athletic sons who play for different American Athletic teams, and to tell that his sons are taller than him. In (4), he chooses the representative speech act of assuring to saying that his sons play sports. Then, a chain of utterances leads to a climactic the representative speech act of stating in (8-10) to clearly state how he lives his life so that he state that he tells his sons that he is still the boss even if his sons are old and athletic players and they give him respect because his parents gave him respect and taught him how to do that. Then, James brings his turn to an end using the expressive speech act of thanking to express gratitude to Judge Caprio in (11). As for conversational maxims, James converses in a maximally efficient, rational, and cooperative way in keeping with conversational maxims in most of his utterances in this extract. Nevertheless, some exceptional observations of non-observance of conversational maxims are denoted when James flouts the maxim of relation in not giving the sort of answer that would be required for Judge Caprio's question when he refers to his age in (3) and by mentioning some information about his three sons and about the way in which he has raised them in (4-7). In this sense, James also flouts the maxim of quantity when he provides more than the necessary amount of information in (3-10). In terms of politeness strategies, the strategy of giving reasons is used by James when he gives a reason as to why he tells his sons that he is still the boss in (8). Then, the strategy of giving gifts to the hearer is used by James when he expresses his gratitude to Judge Caprio in (11). Additionally, on-record negative politeness is activated when James uses the hedging particle "well" in (1) which can also be a turn initial marker in this context.



Case Number: 5

Case Name: God Bless Grandma

Violation: Going through a red light.

Defendant Name: Raymond Mcswain.

Case Context: Raymond Mcswain is charged with going through a red light while he was going to his grandmother. Judge Caprio, thus, finds it an opportunity to praise all grandmothers and their contributions as he describes grandmothers as America's unsung heroes.

Extract No. 5

Raymond: (1) I think I was going to my grandmother. (2) Yes. (3) Yeah. (Audience laughing). (4) Yes. (5) Yeah and I guess I thought I slowed down, but I did slow down, but I just never stopped this assignment. (6) Yes, she's awesome. (7) She's really one of the best cooks I know. (8) I don't know, all her dishes are good. (9) But that I think it was American Chop Suey. (10) I usually get her like a little knickknacks, one little knickknacks and stuff from the dollar store and put it on her table when I come over.

In (1) and (2), Raymond answers the judges question with the representative speech act of stating and affirming respectively to say that he was going this grandmother. In (3) and (4), Raymond also affirms Judge Caprio's expectation that his grandmother really offers food to him. In (5), Raymond makes a triple performance of acts. First, he affirms Judge Caprio's retrodictions using the representative speech act of affirming. Second, he reports something in the past concerning the event of his traffic violation using the representative speech act of reporting. Third, he says "I just never stopped" to perform the representative speech act of admitting his unlawful violation. In (6), (7), (8), and (9), Raymond takes the opportunity to praise his grandmother using the expressive speech act of praising to express warm admiration of his grandmother by saying that she is awesome and she is one of the best cooks he knows. Consequently, Raymond, in (10), affirms and states that he actually gives some gifts to his grandmother like little knickknacks to put them on her table. In terms of conversational maxims, observance of these maxims occurs when Raymond follows the requirements of the four maxims in some of his utterances. However, Raymond flouts the maxim of quality in different occasions as he deliberately says something that he has inadequate evidence of it. First, he says "I think" in (1) when he is asked about the place to which he was going on the day of the traffic violation. Second, he also says "I think" when he was asked about his best dish in (9). Third, he prefaces his utterances with a kind of doubtfulness saying "I guess I thought" in (5). The main of quantity is also flouted by Raymond when he deliberately gives less information than is needed as when he says "just" in (5), and "I don't know" in (8), and "stuff" to avoid mentioning the kinds of gifts that he gives to his grandmother in (10). To demonstrate politeness, on-record politeness is demonstrated by Raymond using the strategy of avoiding disagreement in (2-5) by using positive affirmation of Judge Caprio's utterances. Then, on-record negative politeness is observed using the strategy of hedging by Raymond when uses the verb "think" in (1) and (9) or "just" in (5).

Case Number: 6

Case Name: Uber Troubles

Traffic Violation: Parking ticket.

Defendant Name: Tardin Nobal.

Case Context: Tardin Nobal is charged with a parking ticket. He drives Uber taxi which offers taxi rides and food delivery through mobile applications. However, he claims that he is not familiar with Westminster Street.

## Extract No. 6

Tardin: (1) I don't know when this thing happened. (2) I do. (3) I never be in downtown at nine o'clock. (4) I'm the only one, nobody else, I don't know. (5) Odyssey. (6) Honda Odyssey. (7) Yes. (Scoffs). (8) I don't know. (9) I drive Uber. (10) I've been waiting for this time around to meet you. (11) Yeah, I've been waiting for this time. (Laughs) (12) Yes. (Both laughing).

Tardin, in his turn, tries to answer Judge Caprio's questions using the representative speech act of stating in (1), (5), (6), and (9) to say that he does not know when this traffic violation has happened, to state that he drives Honda Odyssey, and to state that he works for Uber taxi which offers taxi rides and food delivery through mobile applications. Then, he uses the representative speech act of asserting in (3), (4), and (8) to assert that he never be in downtown at nine o'clock, that nobody drives his car, and that he does not know that he has committed this traffic violation. Also, he uses the representative speech act of affirming in (2), (7), (11), and (12) to affirm that he knows where Westminster Street is, that he drives Honda Odyssey, and that he has been waiting for this time to meet Judge Caprio. In (10), a neatly-turned remark is addressed to Judge Caprio to imply commendation in speaking of him and this utterance implicitly attributes credit to Judge Caprio for his good characteristics which are positively valued by Tardin. Such utterance counts as an expressive speech act of praising which denotes well manner, civility, and solidarity. In this dialogic exchange, conversational maxims are observed when Tardin opts out the quantity maxim in not giving enough information to Judge Caprio in (1), (4), and (8) as he continues saying "I don't know". He also opts out the relation maxim in not giving the sort of answer that would be required for Judge Caprio's questions in (11) and (12) as he, all of a sudden, tries to change the topic of his traffic violation by telling Judge Caprio that he has been waiting for this time to meet him. To balance politeness considerations with the requirements of this trial, the strategy of avoiding disagreement is used by Tardin in his turn to reflect on-record politeness in (2), (7), (11), and (12) through affirmation of what Judge Caprio says. Moreover, the strategy of presupposing common ground is highlighted by referring to Uber Company in (9) by Tardin because such reference requires that Judge Caprio's knowledge is equal to Tardin's knowledge so they generate a sense of familiarity to express that both interlocutors share common knowledge. Also the strategy of giving gifts to H is used in (10) and (11) by Tardin in order to satisfy Judge Caprio's positive face by satisfying his wants to be liked, and admired. Such strategy of on-record positive politeness indicates obedience to the requirement of dialogic civility to reflect claiming common ground and solidarity in this context.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

The statistical analysis, as Table (1) shows, reveals the pragmatic strategy of speech acts is more frequent than other pragmatic strategies. However, the analysis reveals that the African-American defendants use speech acts more than the White-American defendants and their use score the percentages of (50.31) and (49.69) respectively. Similarly, the African-American defendants employ the pragmatic strategy of conversational maxims more than the White-American defendants and they respectively score the percentages of (51.15) and (48.85). In this manner, the African-American defendants appear as more civil in their dialogic exchange with the judge because they understand that the pragmatic utility of dialogic civility requires the pragmatic use of speech acts and conversational maxims significant as the best indicators of dialogic civility to appear as more cooperative and convincing. Nevertheless, the White-American defendants appear as more polite than the African-American defendants due to the analysis that shows the percentages of (54.67) and (45.33) for each ethnic group respectively so that they tend to use the most direct pragmatic strategies that reflect dialogic civility using multiple politeness strategies as their top pragmatic tools.

**Table 1.** Statistical comparison between White-American defendants and African-American defendants in terms of pragmatic strategies

Pragmatic Strategies	White-American Defendants		African-American Defendants		Total Number	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Speech Acts	244	49.69	247	50.31	491	47.58
Conversational Maxims	191	48.85	200	51.15	391	37.89
Politeness Strategies	82	54.67	68	45.33	150	14.53
Total Number	517	100	515	100	1032	100

Concerning the categories of speech acts, the statistical analysis reflects, as Table (2) demonstrates, that the category of representative speech acts is more frequent than other categories and it is used by the African-American defendants with the percentage of (52.68) which is more frequent than the White-American defendants who score the frequency of (47.32). Such finding is attributed to the fact that representative speech acts help the African-American defendants to offer their view of the world as they understand it so that what they say is true and they have evidence for it in the sense that representative speech acts are expressions of what the defendants have undertaken in their traffic violations. What follows is the category of expressive speech acts as used by the White-American defendants with the amount of (58.95) and the African-American defendants with the percentage of (41.05). Such use of expressive speech acts creates a civil atmosphere using this category of speech acts that is more polite. As for directive speech acts, the African-American defendants greatly use this category as it is clear in the percentage of (70.83) while it scores (29.17) only by the White-American defendants. Both use this category with very restricted acts like requesting permission from the judge or asking him a question. Finally, commissive speech acts are frequently used by the White-American defendants with the score of (76.47) to reflect a sense of shared commitments and mutuality, whereas the African-American defendants score (23.53).

**Table 2.** Statistical comparison between White-American defendants and African American defendants in terms of speech acts

Speech Acts Categories	White-American Defendants		African-American Defendants		Total Number	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Representatives	168	47.32	187	52.68	355	72.89
Directives	7	29.17	17	70.83	24	4.11
Commissives	13	76.47	4	23.53	17	3.49
Expressives	56	58.95	39	41.05	95	19.51
Total Number	244	49.69	247	50.31	491	100

As far as the pragmatic strategy of conversational maxims is concerned, it is fulfilled by means of the four maxims that can be observed or non-observed. Table (3) illuminates the statistical analysis which reflects the considerable observance of conversational maxims by the African-American defendants and the White-American defendants since it amounts to (55.11) and (44.89) respectively and these percentages situate the observance of conversational maxims higher than the non-observance. In this way, both ethnic groups tend to be informative, truthful, relevant, and perspicuous in their dialogic exchange to reflect a kind of dialogic civility in their interactive roles in order to appear as more authoritative, credible, and convincing throughout the traffic trials. Thus, they use the same strategy but with different degree and percentages. Nonetheless, the White-American defendants

use the non-observance of these maxims more than the African-American defendants and they score (54.22) and (45.78) respectively.

**Table 3.** Statistical comparison between White-American defendants and African-American defendants in terms of conversational maxims

Conversational Maxims			White-American Defendants		African-American Defendants		Total Number	
			F	%	F	%	F	%
Observance of Conversational Maxims			101	44.89	124	55.11	225	57.54
Non-Observance of Conversational Maxims			90	54.22	76	45.78	166	42.46
Total Number			191	48.85	200	51.15	391	100
Non-Observance	Flouting	Quantity Maxim	31	47.69	34	52.31	65	51.18
		Quality Maxim	22	88	3	12	25	19.69
		Relation Maxim	7	43.75	9	56.25	16	12.60
		Manner Maxim	18	85.71	3	14.29	21	16.53
	Total Number		78	61.42	49	38.58	127	100
	Opting Out	Quantity Maxim	8	47.06	9	52.94	17	43.60
		Quality Maxim	1	10	9	90	10	25.64
		Relation Maxim	0	0	6	100	6	15.38
		Manner Maxim	3	50	3	50	6	15.38
	Total Number		12	30.77	27	69.23	39	100

In terms of politeness strategies, the analysis, as it is evident in Table (4), shows that three types of strategies are used which are on-record positive politeness, on-record negative politeness, and off-record politeness as they are activated by both ethnic groups. Regarding on-record positive politeness, the statistical analysis reveals that the African-American defendants use this type of politeness with the percentage of (50.53%) because they consider on-record positive politeness as a strategic means to achieve their overall goal of gaining appropriate hearing for their messages and to satisfy the judges positive face, whereas the White-American defendants score (49.47) to reflect civility and solidarity on their language. Also, it can be noted that on-record negative politeness records the second rank with the percentage that amounts to (26.67%) and with the percentages of (52.5) by the White-American defendants and (47.5) by the African-American defendants to indicate their preference for satisfying the judge's needs to be free from any kind of communicative imposition. Off-Record Politeness is used by the White-American defendants with the percentage of (93.33%) and by the African-American defendants with the percentage of (6.67) to satisfy their needs of independence in language use.

**Table 4.** Statistical comparison between White-American defendants and African-American defendants in terms of politeness strategies

Politeness Strategies	White-American Defendants		African-American Defendants		Total Number	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
On-Record Positive Politeness	47	49.47	48	50.53	95	63.33
On-Record Negative Politeness	21	52.5	19	47.5	40	26.67
Off-Record Politeness	14	93.33	1	6.67	15	10
Total Number	82	54.67	68	45.33	150	100

## 5. Conclusions

On the basis of the findings, it can be concluded that very limited types of pragmatic strategies can be used to realize dialogic civility in the context of ethnic diversity. American defendants differ in the type and the frequency of such pragmatic strategies. Thus, there are significant differences between the White-American defendants and the African-American defendants in terms of the pragmatic strategies used to embody dialogic civility in the context of traffic trials. The pragmatic strategies used in the data are various namely speech acts, conversational maxims, and politeness strategies with their multiple strategies. Hence, such types of pragmatic strategies are predominantly combined with dialogic civility in communication. Pragmatically speaking, dialogic civility is possibly employed as a social pragmatic praxis that is used by the American defendants, whether White-American or African-American, to avoid any potential breaking of the judge's face.

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