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The Pragmatic Functions of the Ostensible Communicative Act of Invitation in Jordanian Arabic¹

Abstract

The present study investigates the speech act of ostensible invitations in Jordanian Arabic from a pragmatic point of view. The corpus of the study is built upon one hundred and twenty observed and recalled instances of genuine and ostensible invitations extended in Irbid City, Jordan. The analysis focuses on the pragmatic functions of ostensible invitations. The results show that ostensible invitations in Jordanian Arabic are joint actions of two layers; at the top layer these invitations look like genuine invitations. In such a layer, the inviter and the invitee pretend that the extended invitation is genuine and act as if it were to be taken seriously. At the bottom layer, they mutually recognize that the extended invitation is not to be taken seriously as it serves other functions. The study shows that ostensible invitations in Jordanian culture can be utilized as mitigating devices in various face-threatening situations, persuasive devices and provocative ones.

1. Introduction

Ostensible invitations have been studied in many cultures: English (Isaacs & Clark 1990; Walton 1998; Link 2001; etc.), Persian (Beeman 1986; Eslami 2005; Salmani-Nodoushan 2005, 2006; etc.), Chinese (Lu Ying 2008, cited in ChaiSi 2009; ChaiSi 2009) and Moroccan Arabic (Naim 2011). The fact that there is very little research on ostensible invitations in Jordanian Arabic and knowing that ostensible invitations are bound to

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cultural differences, the current study is needed to broaden the knowledge base of how ostensible invitations function in different languages. What are ostensible communicative acts? And what functions might they serve?

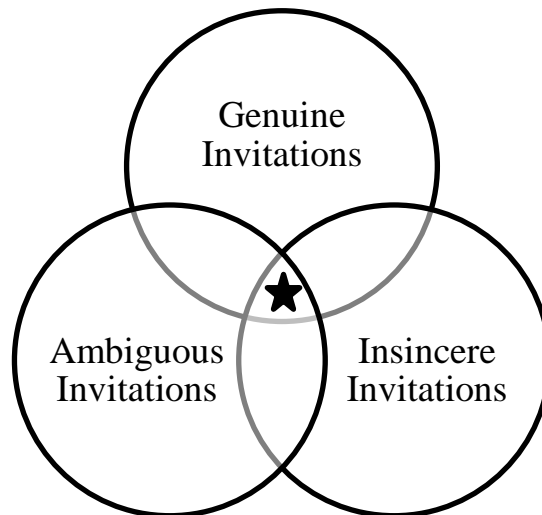
Austin (1962: 6) argues that there are certain sentences that do not serve to describe an action or to state that an action is being done, but are uttered to do actions. He calls this type of sentences or utterances 'performative utterances' and suggests that speech acts should fulfill a number of felicity conditions to be realized as sincere. These conditions are propositional content, preparatory conditions, sincerity conditions, and execution conditions. The violation or suspending of any of these conditions can affect the truth value of the speech act and make it prone to insincerity. However, the equation is not always realized this way because there is another category of speech acts that violate some of these conditions and yet could not be described as insincere, as their outcome is mutually recognized between the communicators. That is, the receivers of these speech acts know that these acts should not be taken as sincere. These speech acts are what Isaacs and Clark (1990) call ostensible communicative acts.

According to Bach and Harnish (1979: 51), in genuine invitations, an initiator, S, invites a receiver, M, to an event only if "S requests [M]'s presence and promises acceptance of his [or her] presence. S is sincere in making such an invitation only if he or she wants [M]'s presence and intends to accept it". According to Isaacs and Clark (1990: 496), insincere invitations violate some of the felicity conditions proposed by Searle (1969), "bearing the same relation to sincere invitations as lies bear to assertions, insincere invitations would simply deceive" (Isaacs & Clark 1990: 496).

Ostensible communicative acts have questioned the traditional view of speech acts and challenged powerful cognitive pragmatic theories (e.g., Relevance Theory) because their realizations are not limited to the cognitive processes of any individual in any interaction but to the cognitive processes that take place jointly between the initiators of the invitations and their receivers. The core of the joint cognitive realization of ostensible acts is what the communicators know about each other (i.e., common ground). Thus, what is stored in the mind of the speakers about each other coats genuine-like speech acts with a transparent layer of ostensibility. This layer is dim enough to be realized yet transparent enough to make communicators engage in a genuine-like pretense (Clark 1996).

Ostensible invitations², “invitations issued but not intended to be taken seriously” (Isaacs & Clark 1990: 494), are common in everyday life, yet they are opaque. In fact, the opacity of ostensible invitations is the result of their closeness to genuine invitations in their surface form. In their daily interactions, Jordanians might find themselves at a loss to whether they should accept or reject invitations because, it is well known, that not all invitations are meant to be accepted. This is due to the fact that ostensible invitations utilize genuine invitations in their appearance, make use of clear violations that are associated with insincere invitations and lack the spatial and temporal definiteness of ambiguous invitations. Yet, it is not accurate to describe them within the domain of any of these categories as they are not meant to be taken seriously (in contrast with genuine invitations), nor meant to be ambiguous³ (in contrast with ambiguous invitations) nor to deceive (in contrast with insincere invitations). They utilize all the features of these invitations yet belong to none of the categories, as they are mutually recognized not to be taken seriously. The star symbol below represents the position of these invitations (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Ostensible invitations in the intersection of different types of invitations



To set ostensible and genuine invitations apart, Isaacs and Clark (1990: 496) set out five properties: pretense, mutual recognition, collusion,

² Based on Isaacs and Clark (1990: 494) and Salmani-Nodoushan (2006: 905), ostensible invitations cover both ostensible invitations and ostensible offers.

³ According to Wolfson (1989: 112), ambiguous invitations are invitations of three features: a) time is always left indefinite, b) response is not required and c) a modal auxiliary is always used.

ambivalence, and off-record purpose. That is, the interactants engage in *pretense* when the inviter pretends that s/he is extending a real invitation and the addressee receives it as real and rejects it as if s/he is rejecting a genuine invitation, yet both of them *mutually recognize* that the offer/invitation is not genuine. Even though the invitee realizes that the offer is not genuine, s/he finds no choice except to respond as if s/he is responding to a genuine invitation (i.e., s/he *colludes* with the inviter). However, if the invitee fails to collude with the inviter, the inviter must fulfill what s/he offered through being ambivalent.

However, Clark (1996: 379–380) restates, omits, and blends some of these properties. He claims that ostensible invitations have six properties instead of five: joint pretense, communicative act, correspondence, contrast, ambivalence and collusion. These properties do not differ much in their application. Yet, this overlap should be clarified because in all ostensible invitations, speakers should realize the contrast between the actual and the demonstrated situation, but not all of these invitations, as the researcher argues in subsequent sections, are of off-record purpose. According to Isaacs and Clark (1990: 505), some properties (e.g. the collusion property) cannot always be present. They attribute the absence of the collusion property to the addressees, as their responses cannot be guaranteed to be in concord with the inviters' wishes and plans (Isaacs & Clark 1990: 505). Based on these features, Isaacs and Clark (1990: 498) set out seven tactics for engineering ostensible invitations:

1. A⁴ makes the invitation implausible (i.e., the inviter extends invitations beyond the ability of the other party, the invitee, to accept what is being offered),
2. A hedges the invitation (i.e., the inviter uses some hedging devices like *if*, *maybe* and others to show uncertainty),
3. A does not insist on the invitation (i.e., A does not extend the invitational discourse beyond single structures – A invites and B rejects. A does not invite again),
4. A leaves the arrangements vague (i.e., A does not specify the time and place of the invitation by using *sometime*, for example),
5. A does not extend the invitation beyond social courtesy,
6. A uses inappropriate non-verbal cues such as gaze avoidance and
7. A issues the invitation after B solicits the invitation (i.e., A extends an invitation to B when B asks directly or indirectly for an invitation).

⁴ In the seven tactics above, instead of using S, A is used, because it is the way Isaacs and Clark (1990) introduce the strategies in their article.

According to Isaacs and Clark (1990: 497), ostensible invitations are joint processes in which the inviter and the invitee coordinate with each other based on their common ground. Thus, to achieve the goal, the inviter must extend the invitation with certain signals that are already understood by the invitee based on his/her background knowledge of the inviter. The invitee must play his/her part in this game in coordination with the inviter. That is to say, an ostensible invitation is a two-party game. Each player has to play their part fully so that the game can proceed.

The following two sections provide a review of related literature and an overview of the methodology and procedures that were used in collecting and analyzing the data used in this study.

2. Review of related literature

The speech act of invitation has been studied from different perspectives. In fact, invitations have been studied in many societies from a pragmatic point of view (Al-Khatib 2006; Naim 2011). Some studies have dealt with the discourse structure of invitations (Szatrowski 1987; Mao 1992; Tseng 1996), while other studies have focused on the politeness strategies involved throughout the process of making and responding to invitations (Garcia 1999; Bella 2009). Moreover, the clarity and sincerity of invitations have been tackled in different cultures (Beeman 1986; Wolfson 1989; Isaacs & Clark 1990; Walton 1998; Eslami 2005; Salmani-Nodoushan 2005, 2006; ChaiSi 2009; Rakowicz 2009; Dastpak & Mollaei 2011; Naim 2011; Izadi, Atasheneh & Zilaie 2012). Some studies have focused on the comprehensibility of these invitations based on the strategies used in shaping them (Link 2001; Link & Kreuz 2005).

A number of studies have focused on how invitations issued nonseriously work under the effect of common ground (Beeman 1986; Wolfson 1989; Isaacs & Clark 1990). While these studies have much in common, they noticeably differ in the way researchers look at these invitations. Thus, while “offhand invitations” (Beeman 1986) depict nonserious invitations in high-context cultures⁵ like the Jordanian culture, Wolfson’s (1989) “ambiguous invitations” and Isaacs and Clark’s (1990)

⁵ High-context cultures are cultures that depend on contextual cues (i.e., body language and intonation) more than words for communication. Low-context cultures, on the other hand, communicate through explicit utterances more than contextual cues (Hall 1976: 30).

“ostensible invitations” are more oriented toward invitations issued in low-context cultures.

The first study that has tackled the issue of ostensible invitations is that of Beeman (1986). In his attempt to characterize the interaction of Iranians socio-syntactically, he notices that Iranians’ invitations are status sensitive (i.e., they can be affected by the status of the interactants) (1986: 185). Accordingly, he divides invitations in terms of two categories: genuine invitations and “offhand invitations”. He argues that for genuine invitations to take place between status inferiors and superiors, Iranians must execute their invitations properly and set them in advance. Unlike genuine invitations issued between status inferiors and superiors, genuine invitations between status equals have to be insisted upon. However, “offhand invitations” are invitations extended between status equals, but these invitations are not insisted upon.

In their study of ostensible invitations, Isaacs and Clark (1990) point out that people may sometimes extend invitations that are of two layers. At the top layer, speakers seem to extend a sincere invitation; yet they intend to express something else and addressees should recognize that these invitations are not to be taken seriously. They argue that the aim of such invitations is not to establish invitations but to accomplish some other unstated purpose.

Another issue covered in their study is how the invitees come to interpret the intentions of the inviter. They pose a question: How can the invitee interpret the ostensibility behind the genuine-like invitation? Isaacs and Clark suggest that the invitee can work out the real purpose behind the invitation through the collaboration of three elements: “(1) the expectable effects of an invitation on the invitee, (2) the situation, and (3) the inviter’s choice of an ostensible invitation in that situation” (Isaacs & Clark 1990: 502). That is to say, the invitee goes under the perlocutionary effect of the speech act of invitation – the feeling that the inviter wants him to accept the invitation – in a situation where it is quite clear for both the inviter and invitee that the invitee cannot accept what is being offered (e.g., the invitee is busy for some reason). At the end of the study, the writers show how ostensible invitations are related to other types of nonserious language use such as irony, teasing and play acting.

Ostensible invitations have been studied in one Arabic culture, Moroccan Arabic. In his study of speech acts in Moroccan Arabic, Naim (2011) distinguishes between the two types of invitations, genuine and ostensible, based on the sociocultural variables. He claims that ostensible

invitations are extended to individuals not belonging to direct family or intimate-friends context. Naim (2011: 329) argues that the term ostensible invitations, proposed by Isaacs and Clark (1990), fails to account for ostensible invitations that are accompanied by intensifying devices such as swearing. Thus, he proposes a new term, ostensible reinforced, to cover this category of invitations.

In the Jordanian society, Al-Khatib (2006) has pragmatically investigated the nature of invitation making and acceptance. In his study, the invitation speech act is studied from three angles: extending an invitation, accepting an invitation and declining it. The collected data are studied, categorized and analyzed following Austin's (1962) and Searle's (1989) concepts on speech act theory, and Brown and Levinson's (1987) notion of politeness and face-threatening acts. The analysis shows that when extending invitations, Jordanians use many strategies: explicit and implicit ways of inviting as well as a number of intensifying devices such as offering good wishes, stressing common membership, swearing by God or all that is holy or of great value and through a promise of repay (Al-Khatib 2006: 280). Al-Khatib's (2006) study is the cornerstone study of invitations in Jordanian culture. It depicts the case of invitations adequately. However, Al-Khatib has studied invitations as if they were of one kind, genuine. Hence, a line should be drawn between the two kinds of invitations: genuine and ostensible in terms of their functions.

3. Methods and procedures

To get a full view, the problem of the study, its aims and significance, the questions upon which the study is based and its limitations are stated first. Then, the section introduces the way in which the researcher collected and analyzed the data.

3.1 Purpose of the study

Ostensible invitations are cultural bound speech acts that hold off-record purpose within their folds. Most literature (Isaacs & Clark 1990; Walton 1998; Link 2001; etc.) have focused on the way interactants use to engineer their invitations as ostensible, neglecting the role such invitations play in the social interaction. Extending the study of ostensible invitations to new cultures can help to determine such functions.

This study explores the speech act of ostensible invitation in the Jordanian culture and provides new information on its functions. This aim furthers a larger goal of bridging a gap between intercultural and cognitive pragmatic studies of ostensible communicative acts.

The following questions are raised: What are the functions of ostensible invitations in Jordanian Arabic? And how do they manage 'face' interactions?

3.2 Regional setting and ethnographic background

Irbid city is the second biggest city in Jordan after the capital Amman. In Jordanian society more generally, people have strong traditional family ties and relations. Based on agreed upon traditions, people in Irbid adhere to norms of communal common ground in their interactions to express their feelings toward each other. Al-Khatib (2006: 273) notices that "one way which Jordanian people express their feelings toward each other is by inviting one other". Making an invitation is expected in many social spaces to follow the social norms and to manage face wants and needs. However, the acceptance of invitations is critical as not all invitations are meant to function as genuine invitations.

3.3 Data collection

Ostensible invitations depend heavily on social and cognitive aspects of context. The researcher collected the examples (n = 120 invitations: 60 ostensible and 60 genuine⁶) in four ways following Isaacs and Clark (1990: 494–495) and Eslami (2005: 457): (1) During face-to-face interviews, informants were asked to record/recall any instance of sincere or insincere invitations or offers they observed or experienced. (2) Based on Eslami's (2005: 457) way of collecting data, a second set of examples was added through the researcher's and/or the interviewees' direct observation of ostensible and genuine invitations in Jordan. For this purpose, the researcher interviewed random subjects (70 persons from Irbid City, Jordan); they were of both genders and their ages were between 15 years old and 50 years old. (3) The third set was gathered and recorded directly from telephone conversations with the researcher. (4) The fourth set which aimed to capture computer-mediated invitations included invitations

⁶ For the purpose of the current study, only ostensible invitations are examined.

extended via computer-mediated social networks⁷ such as Facebook. By and large, data were collected through direct observations and interviewees describing and recalling instances of genuine or ostensible invitations.

The data collected were either tape-recorded (Isaacs & Clark 1990) or transcribed (Eslami 2005). Thus, two instruments were employed for data collection: The first one was a digital recording device, Nokia N8 mobile phone. This instrument was of twofold use; it was used to record the researcher's telephone conversations between the 1st of October, 2012 and the 21st of January, 2013 using an automatic calls recording program. The researcher used this instrument also to record the collected subset of data and the information obtained from the interviews. However, tape-recording was not always an option due to cultural issues in the Jordanian culture; a male researcher tape-recording a person, especially females, is not always considered appropriate. Some informants were bashful and reluctant to be recorded. The researcher, in order to overcome this problem, transcribed the instances that were reported during the interviews using a notebook.

3.4 Data analysis

The approach used in this study is a qualitative one and the analysis is divided into two complementary stages. The first and primary stage was to set ostensible and genuine invitations apart. Following the procedures of Link and Kreuz (2005), the researcher initially depended on his intuitions as a native speaker of Jordanian Arabic and on the intuitions of his informants to set the two types of invitations apart. Then he reflected the judgments on the six defining properties proposed by Clark (1996: 379–380): joint pretense, communicative act, correspondence, contrast, ambivalence and collusion. Thus, if the invitation satisfied these properties or some of these properties – at least pretense, it was classified as ostensible, or else it was considered as genuine. In this part of data analysis, it is worth noting that any invitation that did not contain a clear context was excluded.

In the second stage, to analyze the sociolinguistic functions of ostensible invitations, the researcher deployed two frameworks of politeness: Leech (1983) and Brown and Levinson (1987), coated with

⁷ Speech acts of all types exist in computer-mediated social networks (Carr, Schrock & Dauterman 2012) and are part of Clark's (1996) joint projects. However, this type of invitations has been overlooked by previous studies on ostensible speech acts.

Clark's (1996) theory on language use. The functions were analyzed using these theoretical frameworks as follows: the functions were deduced from the set of collected examples. Each function was described in the way it threatens the face wants (positive/negative) of the interlocutors. Then, through a profound analysis of the interaction, it was deduced how ostensible invitations mitigate or enhance the face wants of the interlocutors as deference and solidarity politeness strategies. To analyze the other side of ostensible invitations, however, the researcher deduced again how ostensible invitations themselves threaten the face wants of the interlocutors. In the following text, one example is provided to illustrate each function. Other examples are added to illustrate the sub-points of each function. Each example is transcribed, glossed and translated for the sake of clarity.

4. Findings and discussion

The following discussion aims to cover the pragmatic functions of ostensible invitations/offers in Jordanian Arabic. The focus is on how these various functions deal with face wants. The data analysis shows that these invitations work as mitigating devices that serve the following functions: softening partings, giving thanks and expressing gratitude, responding to compliments and requests showing envy, apologizing anticipatorily and reducing the effect of an imposition. They also can be used as persuasive devices and provocative ones. The three devices and their functions are clarified in the following discussion.

4.1 Mitigating devices

4.1.1 Softening partings

The first arena where ostensible invitations are heavily used in Jordanian conversations is the final exchange in telephone goodbyes.⁸ According to Clark and French (1981: 1)⁹, the "final exchange does not terminate the

⁸ These utterances could also be used in face-to-face partings.

⁹ Even though Isaacs and Clark (1990: 495) notice the use of ostensible invitations in telephone conversations, they do not comment on their function within the discourse, nor do Clark and his proponents, Bangerter, Clark and Katz (2004), include them as part of the existing entry of telephone conversations for, as we argue, it may be a culture specific issue.

conversation per se but brings to completion the procedure of leave-taking in which the two parties confirm their acquaintance before breaking contact”. Based on their communal common ground, Jordanians use several expressions for this purpose. For example, the pre-closing ostensible invitation *xalliina ʔinšuufak* ‘let us see you’ shows how Jordanians maintain face before closing their conversations or softening their partings. This and other similar expressions, e.g., *ʔibga mur* ‘come to visit’ and *mayyil* ‘come to visit’ do not set a definite time when the invitation will take place nor provide a specific place where the inviter and the invitee will meet. Yet they provide the invitee a sense of feeling that the speaker values his relationship enough to want it to continue. However, the full sense of its use cannot be realized in this one-sided action because face work involves ‘joint commitment’. When the interlocutors are cooperative, they are expected to collude and hence respond in an appropriate way to the presented invitation: their response should utilize their joint commitment. As our data show, the usual response for such an utterance is *ʔinšaallaa* ‘God willing’. To see how the pre-closing response works, let us consider the following alternatives that could be provided:

- S: *xalliina ʔinšuufak*¹⁰
 let.us we.see.you
 ‘Let us see you sometime.’
- M: 1. *mataa biddak ʔitšuufni*
 when want.your you.see.me
 ‘When do you want to see me?’
2. *ma ʔnaa bukra biwijnhak*
 PART I tomorrow in.face.your
 ‘But, tomorrow you will see me.’
3. *ʔinšaallaa*
 if.want.God
 ‘God willing.’

The first two alternatives reduce the politeness of the utterance *xalliina ʔinšuufak* ‘let us see you sometime’ simply because the first one implies that the speaker, S, is vague which puts what S tries to put off-record on record. The second one implies that S knows the fact that the two parties

¹⁰ The examples use the IPA with the following exceptions: ʈ, ɖ = pharyngealized alveolar stops; j = voiced palato-alveolar affricate; ʂ = pharyngealized alveolar fricatives; ʃ = palato-alveolar fricative; y = palatal approximant.

are going to meet each other the next day, yet he intentionally overlooks it and appears instead to feign foolishness over the hearer – which is not the case. However, the utterance *ʔinšaallaa* ‘God willing’ shows the coordination of the hearer as he colludes on the ostensibility of the invitation. The use of this religious expression denotes that the hearer understood the implied message, as their future meeting is dependent on the will of God; this, in turn, provides the speaker the closure that is needed for parting. In fact, this mutual agreement, the realization of the ‘joint salience’, on partings is what paves the way for S to inform M that he is leaving, yet in a diplomatic way.

4.1.2 Giving thanks and expressing gratitude

Partings could involve thanking and gratitude, especially when a person does another a favor. The use of expressions of gratitude, however, can threaten the speaker’s personal freedom. Ostensible invitations in Jordanian culture can be used to express thanking and gratitude indirectly, i.e. without using direct expressions of thanking such as *šukran* ‘thank you’. Ostensible effects soften the effect of such expressions by providing the inviter a chance to maintain equity in an attempt to maintain balance with the kind act done by the other person. Expressions of invitation issued after a person delivers another to his house, for instance, are considered “sincere remarks of thanking and gratitude and rarely [are] meant to be sincere invitation[s]” (Beeman 1986: 186–187). Consider the following exchange for a demonstration of this function:

Context: S is seeking for someone to give him a ride to his house as his car is broken down. M offers him a ride. Reaching S’s house; S opens the door of the car and prepares to leave.

Social and psychological world: S knows that M is going home as he is tired from teaching all the day long. M offers S the ride since he is going to that direction anyway. They are acquainted with each other.

People: S is a fifty-six-year-old teacher. M is an approximately twenty-five-year-old teacher.

1. S: *ṭayyib hassa ʔamaani ʔitfaḍḍaluu ʕaliina*
 ok now seriously¹¹ please.PL to.us
 ‘Well! Come in.’

¹¹ Arabic expression used for emphasis.

2. M: *alla yibariik fiik abuu X ?inšaallaa bi-l-?afraah*
 God bless in.you father X if.want.God in-the-ceremonies
 ‘Thanks. That’s kind of you; we will be honored to do that later.’

The exchange reveals how M has done S a favor by driving him to his house. Due to age differences, S felt ill-behaved to thank M directly through giving a direct expression of thanks, as saying so would not only threaten his face but would not be enough to retain equity with M’s favor. With this in mind, S resorts to thanking M indirectly extending an invitation to his house that is going to be rejected. M plays his part and rejects the invitation. He understands that S only ostensibly invites him to his house as a way of expressing thanking and gratitude. Saying so decreases M’s debt on S which makes S equitable with M’s favor.

4.1.3 Responding to compliments and requests showing envy

Giving a compliment may be considered a face-threatening act because it leads to “the complimenter’s debt” (Holmes 1986: 487). According to Holmes (1986: 488), “complimenting is a complex sociolinguistic skill” which can have “a darker side”, as it may be interpreted as offensive, patronizing, sarcastic, or as an instance of envy (Holmes 1995: 119, cited in Grossi 2009: 54). One of the functions of ostensible invitations/offers in Jordanian culture is to mitigate the darker side of compliments – the side that might be interpreted as showing envy. Consider the following example.

Context: Two teachers, S and M, meet by chance in the teachers’ room. S is preparing a lesson plan. In the previous day, S bought a watch for 20 JDs.
Social and psychological world: S and M’s relationship is very intimate since S is M’s friend outside school. M knows that the watch is expensive since he knows that S was looking for a specific brand of watches, Seiko.
People: M is about twenty-eight years old. S is about the same age.

1. M: *šuu yaa šuu hassaaʕa ?il-ħilwi*
 what hey what this.the.watch the-nice
 ‘What a nice watch!’
2. S: *?alla yiħalli ?ayaamak*
 God may.he.beautify days.your
 ‘Thanks. That’s kind of you.’

3. M: *ʔaʕtiini ʔʕuufha*
give.me I.see.it.F.SG
'Let me see it.'
4. S: [gives him the watch]
5. M: *walla mrattaba* [looking at the watch] *ʕizna fiiha yaa zalami*
by.God nice.F give.us in.it.F.SG oh man
'Wow, it is nice. Buddy, would you mind if I take it?'
6. S: *ʔimgaddama* [while writing]
presented.PASS.PART.F
'It is all yours.'
7. M: [gives the watch back] *maa bitgaʕsir walla* [pause]
NEG you.delay by.God
bamzaħ maʕaak
I.am.kidding with.you
'That's kind of you. I was kidding; you are really generous.'
8. S: [takes the watch back and wears it again]

In Jordanian culture, people can show their interest in an object as a way of complimenting the person who owns it (see Holmes 1986; Boyle 2000; Maíz-Arévalo 2012). Yet, complimenting a person over an object he owns is inappropriate in this culture because people are afraid of envy, and, thus, doing so could be considered impolite behavior. As an essential of Jordanian culture, people believe in what is called the 'evil eye' – a common religious belief that people can harm each other if they show their direct interest in a thing without using the religious expression *maaʕaʔalla* (lit. 'What God wants', indicates a good omen). This common belief, which is grounded in Jordanians' daily exchanges, highlights the darker side of such compliments.

With this in mind, the exchange above revolves around a direct compliment. In line 5, M shows his interest in S's watch through the utterance *ʕizna fiiha ya zalami* 'Buddy, would you mind if I take it?'. This utterance indicates that he likes the watch and wishes the watch to be his, which threatens S's negative face (layer one). To mitigate the threat, S has to choose either of the two options: he can ask the speaker directly to say *maaʕaʔalla* or indirectly by pretending to offer M the watch. The first choice is unobtainable, as M, out of intimacy, has asked S directly for the watch. In fact, intentions are assumed to be understood among intimates –

the one who issues the compliment presupposes that the receiver will not have other interpretations of his compliment. This is apparent in how M adheres to S's positive face through the use of the in-group form of address *yaa zalami* 'hey buddy'; thus, telling M to say this expression might threaten his face which, in turn, violates the equity principle.

In layer two, M is not serious in his proposal since he knows that S has newly bought the watch he was looking for, yet it is expected that he compliments S on the watch because not doing so means that he is not aware of S's needs to be complimented. Yet, his proposal puts S's generosity on a test. S colludes with M on his pretense and responds using an ostensible invitation/offer. In line 6, S presents the watch for M. However, he is not serious as indicated in lines 7 and 8. It is clear that the speakers are insincere. Yet, their insincerity is different: while M reveals his intentions explicitly in line 7, S did not even think he is going to give M the watch. This is what qualifies S's utterance to be an ostensible utterance while that of M as a compliment. Thus, if M is asked whether he, seriously, wants the watch, he will answer negatively. Yet, if S were asked the same question, he would neither be able to answer yes or no honestly.

Clear as it is, the use of the ostensible invitation/offer provided S a chance not only to pass M's implied test of generosity but also to save his friend's face. Thus, the researcher suggests that ostensible invitations can be used in Jordanian culture to respond to obligatory compliments and requests which might involve face threat for their receivers.

4.1.4 Apologizing anticipatorily

Edmondson (1981, cited in Fahey 2005) asserts that speakers could apologize when predicting that what is going to be said is "inconvenient for the hearer or contrary to the hearer's views" in their attempt to soften the threat implied in their actions/speech. However, since apology itself is a face-threatening act for the speaker, speakers should search for an indirect off-record move to obtain their aims. That is, speakers should search for a device that shows their joint commitment and reduces the threat not only for the hearer but also for the speaker. In Jordanian culture, ostensible invitations are used as such a device. This function is illustrated in the following example:

Context: A family is preparing to go on a trip to Ajloun but their son, M, instead, has to study for his secondary exam, Tawjihi, that is going to be held the next day. Social and psychological world: the family decided to go on a trip so that they can provide peace and quiet for their son. Their son who is their firstborn, however, was used to accompany them on every trip. People: the son, M, is eighteen years old and his father, S, is around forty-five years old.

1. S: *ʔay saaʕa ʔimtihaanak bukra*
which hour exam.yours tomorrow
'What time is your exam going to be tomorrow?'
2. M: [while studying] *taqriiban ʕal lihdaaʕ*
around on eleven
'Around eleven o'clock.'
3. S: *bi-ʕiin ʔalla kulha ha-s-sani w-bitʕadii* [pause]
by-help.of God all.it this-the-year and-it.SG.pass
bithib tiʔlaʕ maʕna ʕala ʕajluun
you.like you.go with.us to Ajloun
'God be with you, would you like to go with us to Ajloun?'
4. M: *ʔil-marra ʔil-jay ʔinʕalla*
the-time the-coming if.God.will
'Thanks! God willing I will go with you next time.'
5. S: *ʔayyib laʕaad ʕid haalak bi-ha-l-yeebi* [leaves the room]
ok so tight yourself in-this-the-absence
'So be it. Study well.'

Before tackling how the ostensible invitation issued in line 3, *bithib tiʔlaʕ maʕna ʕala ʕajluun* 'would you like to go with us to Ajloun?', is used as an anticipatory apology, three questions must be settled: what is the offence that might threaten the son's face wants, what qualifies the ostensible invitation to be an anticipatory apology, and why does the father choose to redress the threat using an anticipatory apology instead of a remedial one? (see Fahey 2005 for further details on apology). Let us go through these questions one by one.

In Jordanian culture, excluding a member of a group is considered impolite behavior, especially when the excluded member knows that the group is not intending to include him even if their intentions for exclusion –

for his benefit – are mutually understood.¹² In this case, the excluded member cannot solicit the invitation (in contrast with Isaacs & Clark 1990: 500), yet he waits for others to anticipate his feelings and desires. Not doing so threatens his negative face wants, because the excluded member might feel that the group does not care about his feelings – while, in fact, they do. In a critical situation like this, where the excluded member waits others to anticipate his desires and hence apologize for his exclusion, ostensible invitations can help in achieving this purpose.

Thus, in the above exchange, S's implicit emotional explanation in line 1 highlights the reason that prevents him from including M, and this minimizes his responsibility (see Brown & Levinson 1987: 187; Fahey 2005). Yet, saying so is not enough because he has to show M that they, the family, still care of him enough to want him to go with them. That is, S has to apologize anticipatorily for excluding M but he does it indirectly since it is assumed that the reason is mutually understood – M has to prepare for his exams. To do so, S pretends to extend a sincere invitation so that M would refuse the invitation by himself. Doing so saves M's face and wards him off from asking questions that highlight his exclusion while showing that the family is aware of his desires and feelings. Of course, M shows his joint commitment by colluding with S's pretense since S is in power; in fact, when there is an imbalance in power between the interlocutors, the one in power can force the other to collude with pretense (cf. Walton 1998: 38).

4.1.5 Reducing the effect of an imposition

In some cultures known for hospitality, a person is expected to invite others to eat/drink from what he is going to eat/drink even if he does not have prior intentions to do so (cf. Salmani-Nodoushan 2012: 134), because not doing so might violate the generosity maxim which states that people should put the other person first instead of the self and threatening the other party's face. Similarly, the invitee's rejection of the invitation is based on his cultural knowledge of this social norm; accepting such invitations is considered impolite behavior. Impoliteness, thus, hovers around threatening the speaker's and the hearer's face wants; it is a threatening act

¹² Even if his desires are not mutually understood, the hearer can solicit the invitation as a kind of an admonishment; speakers, more often than not, deploy the same strategy for the implicit admonishment is mutually understood.

not to invite, and it is impolite to accept the invitation. To solve the problem, people have to act in coordination based on their communal common ground of this social norm. How do Jordanians act jointly to solve the coordination problem involved in such a situation? The following interaction exemplifies possible strategies.

Context: Five colleagues are sitting in front of the English department at Yarmouk University. One of their colleagues, S, arrives and joins the group. S is holding a can of Pepsi.

Social and psychological world: S bought the can of Pepsi for himself before meeting the group. The colleagues are S's acquaintances.

People: all the interactants including S are around twenty-five years old.

1. S: *salaam šabaab kiif ĥaalkuu*
peace guys how condition.your.PL
'Hi, how are you guys?'
2. M: *halaa X kiifak ĥinta*
hi X how.you you
'Hi, how are you X?'
3. S: *ĥil-ĥamdu lillaa* [opens the can of Pepsi] *tišrabuu šabaab*
the-thanks for.God you.PL.drink guys
'I am fine thank you. Guys, do you want to drink?'
4. M: *šaĥteen*
health.DU
'No thanks, bon appetite.'
5. S: *šuu ĥaxbaarkuu šabaab ween min zamaan maa šufnaaku*
what news.your.PL guys where from time no we.see.you.M.PL
'How do you do? It has been a long time since I met you.'
6. M: *bi-ĥa-d-dinya* [...]
in-this-the-world
'All is the same.'

[Continue talking about their exams.]

In Jordanian culture, since eating and/or drinking in front of other people is considered an imposition, Jordanians, more often than not, engage in a joint pretense to overcome this imposition. In the above example, S pretends to extend an invitation on his can of Pepsi as he is expected to do so in his attempt to save his friends' positive faces, their feelings, as he obeys the social norm; his invitation serves to put the invitees first instead of the self

which goes side by side with Leech's (1983) Generosity Maxim. The invitees, in turn, pretend that S's invitation is genuine and, thus, reject it using the polite expression *ṣaḥteen* 'bon appetit' which signals to S that they also obey the social norm related to their role. In doing so, S saves his friends' faces, and they also show that they care about his desire viz., drinking the can of Pepsi that he bought for himself.

This interaction sheds lights on the reasons that make strangers take the burden of engaging in a pretense. In other words, strangers are noticed to extend ostensible invitations when: (1) pretense is communally understood, (2) the other party's status is known and (3) the degree of acquaintedness increases unexpectedly. To reaffirm acquaintedness, strangers might extend ostensible invitations. However, other functions of ostensible invitations might emerge among this category as well. They are discussed in the subsequent section.

4.2 Persuasive devices

Even though most studies on ostensible invitations treat them as mitigating devices (Isaacs & Clark 1990; Clark 1996; Eslami 2005; Salmani-Nodoushan 2005, 2006; Dastpak & Mollaei 2011; Izadi et al. 2012), I claim that ostensible invitations/offers in Jordanian culture can be used as persuasive strategies to settle down disagreements through threatening the other party's negative face wants. In arguments, people try to convince each other through providing evidence to settle disagreements. This function is fully illustrated in the following example:

Context: M goes to S's shop to buy some clothes. Greetings are exchanged.

Social and psychological world: M knows that the clothes shop has high prices and he, in order to get a reasonable price, needs to bargain. M and S do not know each other.

People: M is an approximately twenty-seven-year-old male, S is around thirty-five years old. They negotiate over the price of a shirt.

1. M: *Ṣindkum balaayiz gabbi xanig*
have.you.M.PL shirts collar turtleneck
'I'm looking for a turtleneck shirt. Do you have any?'
2. S: *Ḥah mawjuud šuu ḥil-luun*
yes exist what the-color
'Yes, we have! What is the color you are looking for?'

3. M: *miš muhim ʔil-luun hasa* [pause] *ʔil-muhim*
 not important the-color now the-important
ʔiš-šakil w-ʔin-nawfiyya
 the-shape and-the-quality
 ‘I’m not looking for shirts of specific color. I’m looking for shirts of a good quality.’
4. S: [after showing him three shirts] *ʔayyib* [pause]
 fine
šuu raʔyak bi-ha-l-bluuzi
 what opinion.your in-this-the-shirt
 ‘Ok fine, how about this one?’
5. M: [scrutinizes the shirts] *hay ʔikuwayysi* [pause] *šuu fi*
 this good what there.is
minha ʔalwaan
 from.it.F colors
 ‘This one is good. What are its colors?’
6. S: *fi ʔaxdar w-ʔaswad* [...]
 there.is green and-black
 ‘Green and black.’
7. M: *ʔaʕtiini ʔis-suuda xalliini ʔašuuʔ ʔigyaasha* [he wears the shirt]
 give.me the-black let.me I.see fitness.its.F
 ‘Let me try the black one, please.’
8. S: *aah kiif* [amazed]
 ahh how
 ‘It fits you well, doesn’t it?!’
9. M: *ʔikuwayysi* [pause] *hasa ʔijiina la-l-juzuʔ ʔil-ʔaham* [pause]
 good now we.came to-the-part the-most.important
kam siʕirha min ʔil-ʔaaxir
 how price.its.F from the-end
 ‘It is good. How much does it cost? Tell me the net price.’
10. S: *min ʔil-ʔaaxir* [pause] *hay ʔilak bi-ʕšriin diinaar*
 from the-end this for.you with-twenty JD
 ‘The net price of this shirt is twenty JDs.’
11. M: *ʔuf laa kthiir heek* [pause] *ya zalami gultillak min ʔil-ʔaaxir*
 off no much like.this hey man I.told.you from the-end
 ‘Oh come on, this is too much; I need the net price.’

12. S: *kam ʔinta yaʕni ʔaasib ʔihsaabak bi-l-bluuzi*
 how you mean count credit.your in-the-shirt
 ‘How much do you intend to pay for this shirt?’
13. M: *yaʕni laħad ʔašara [pause] šuu guliṭ*
 that.is.to.say until ten what you.said
 ‘Ten JDs only, is it ok?’
14. S: *ʔalaa ħsabak walla bala mašaari [pause]*
 on debt.your by.God without money
ʔiðaa maʕkaaš xuðha ʔibbalaas
 if you.have.not take.it.F with.free
 ‘If you do not have enough money, you can take it for free.’
15. M: *laa tislam [pause] ʔalla yxalliik bas ʔana baħibbiš*
 no may.you.be.intact God leave.you but I I.love.not
ʔan-yalib [...]
 to-defraud
 ‘No thanks, God bless you. You know I don’t like to feel defrauded.’
16. S: *ʔagullak xalaš beeni w-beenak haat*
 I tell.you finished between.me and-between.you give
θamantaʕšar diinaar walla w-ʔagal min heek btixsar
 eighteen JDs by God and-less from this you lose
 ‘Ok! Give me eighteen JDs. I swear. It is the net price.’
17. M: [gives him eighteen JDs]
18. S: *mabruuk*
 congratulations
 ‘Here you are.’
19. M: *ʔalla yibaarik fiik*
 God bless in.you
 ‘Thanks.’

In this exchange, the two speakers are negotiating over the price of a piece of clothes. In line 9, M, based on his cultural knowledge, presupposes that S is going to give a very high price for the shirt. The utterance, *kam siʕirha min ʔilʔaaxir*, implies that he is willing to enter into a negotiation process over the price if the seller does not give him the net price. At the first try, to obtain the maximum profit, the seller overlooks this implicature in line 10 and gives a very high price, twenty JDs, instead. After expressing his rejection of the price given, M gives another price for the item. To control the floor, in line 13, M gives a very low price anticipating the seller’s

rejection as it is indicated by the utterance, *šuu gūlit*. Instead of answering the question directly, the seller searches for other ways to lessen the effect of M's price and settle the disagreement.

After a long negotiation, S in line 12 offers M to get the shirt without paying anything (i.e., for free). Yet, it is clear that his offer is insincere for the simple reason that he reintroduces another price in line 14. This contradiction indicates that the utterance is not to be taken seriously. The rationale behind this utterance is that after trying to convince the customer that the first price is the net one, when it is not, the seller tries to use another strategy to hint to the customer that the price given in line 13 is far below the net price. Yet he does not say that explicitly; instead he resorts to extending an ostensible invitation/offer.

The invitation/ offer itself serves an important function within the discourse since it implies two meanings. One of these meanings is that the seller is not going to negotiate over the price given in line 13, and that the customer is over-negotiating the price which implies that he is a penny-pincher. These implicatures are used to threaten M's negative face yet in a diplomatic way. The effect of these implicatures on M appears in line 15. In this line M responds in a very polite way explaining the reason *ʔana baħibbiš ʔan yalib* for negotiating the price in order to correct the impression that the seller has.

Thus, even though M knows that S is insincere in his invitation/offer, he finds himself obliged to collude with the pretense as indicated in line 15. In fact, this move settles the disagreement and saves M's negative face. Keeping on negotiating with the seller over the price will damage and threaten his negative face wants, the need for his actions not to be unimpeded by the seller.

4.3 Provocative devices

According to Isaacs and Clark (1990: 503), most ostensible invitations aim to make the hearer pleased at the gesture, but it is also possible that these invitations make the hearer "feel hurt or insulted". In fact, when ostensible invitations are meant to highlight a deficiency of the hearer or to show that the hearer is "shy or studious", they are mostly used for teasing purposes. Teasing is a family of behaviors that vary in the balance of face-threatening aggression and redressive actions. It can involve a mild face threat that is hardly noticeable, or an extreme face threat that is considered very offensive (Keltner, Young, Heerey, Oemig & Monarch 1998: 1232).

In Jordanian culture, the use of ostensible invitations as teasing also varies in the balance of face-threatening aggression. The invitee is noticed to collude with the pretense when little face threat is involved with the invitation. However, when the invitee feels socially uncomfortable or insulted, he might put the unstated message of the speaker on record and tells the speaker frankly that he understands the fact that the speaker's offer is an ostensible one. For the clarification of the degree of teasing in ostensible invitations, consider the following interaction:

Context: S is inviting M to *gahwa* (a place like a coffee shop for men only) to have hookah with him and his friend, a teacher at the same school, in front of his friend N.

Social and psychological world: S knows that M does not smoke and does not like hookah. He even knows that M loathes *gahawi* and considers those who go to *gahawi* to waste their time as the scum of the community. A week ago an argument with S about *gahawi* and the bad effects of smoking on health reconfirmed M's position and stated his intentions clearly. However, S was not convinced and accused M of being an overly polite person who sticks to manners too much. During the argument, S's friend was not there. S's and M's relationship is not very intimate.

People: S is a thirty-year-old male teacher. M is a twenty-six-year old newly employed teacher. N is S's friend. He is an overhearer to whom S sometimes directs the talk.

1. S: *bidna ʔinruuħ ʔinʔargil bi-s-suug*
 want.our we.go we.smoke.hookah in-the-market
ʔil-yoom madaamak naazil ʔa-s-suug ruuħ ʔargil maʔaana
 the-today since.you going to-the-market go smoke with.us
wallaa šuu raʔyak N
 by.God what opinion.your N
 'We are going to smoke hookah today. Come and smoke hookah with us.'
2. M: *saddig ʔinni mašyuul ʔil-yoom maa bagdar*
 believe.2 that.me busy the-day not I am able
 'Believe me! I cannot go with you; I am so busy today.'

3. S: *ya zalami ruuħ la txaaf miš raħ tixsar*
 hey man go.2 NEG you.are.afraid NEG will lose
ʔišii kulha safa w-bitrawwiħ ma hadaa biṣraf
 anything all.it.F hour and-you.go.home no one he.knows
ʔinnak ʔitʔaxxarit ʔagullak taṣal
 that.you you.were.late I.tell.you come
w-ṣala ḥsabi laa txaaf
 and-on bill.my NEG you.are.afraid
 ‘Come on! It’s just one hour. You will not waste your time. The hookah is not going to be at your expense.’
4. M: *zay ma biddak bas gulli gaddeš ḥag ʔil-argiilah*
 like PART want.your but tell.me how.much price the-hookah
 ‘As you like, but tell me first how much does it cost?’
5. S: *leertaan* [wonder-struck]
 Jordanian Dinar (JD).DU
 ‘Two JDs.’
6. M: *ʔaṣtiini leerteen ṣašan ʔaṭṭamman* [ironic]
 give.me JD.DU so that I.guarantee
 ‘Give me two JDs so that I can guarantee that the hookah is going to be on your expense.’
7. S: *miš ʔimsaddig xuð* [gives him five JDs]
 not believe.M take
 ‘Ok! Here you are.’
8. M: *ʔiṣtabirni ʔargalit* [smashes the five JDs]
 consider.me I.smoked
 ‘Now, it is as if I smoked with you.’
9. S: [...] *šuu ʔiṣmilit* [angry]
 what you.did
 ‘What did you do?!’
10. M: *madaamak ṣaarifinni baruuħiš ṣala gahaawi leeš*
 since.you I.know that.I.go.not to cafeterias why
bitḍallak tiryi willa ṣašan twarji N ʔinnak
 you.keep you.insist or because you.show N that.you
kariim w-bitruuħ ṣala gahawi
 generous.M and-you.go to cafeterias
 ‘You know that I don’t go to gahawi; why do you keep insisting on that! Do you mean by that to puff yourself up in front of N.’

11. S: [after some exchanges] *ʔna baʕtaðir minnak*
 I I.apologize from.you
bas saddigni kunt haabak tiji
 but believe.me I.was liking.you you.come
 ‘I’m sorry, but I was serious, believe me.’
12. M: *ya zam ʕalay ha-l-ħaki ma-ʔiħna dafniinha sawa*
 hey man on.me this-the-talk PART-we buried.PL.it.F together
 ‘Come on, your game is over.’
13. S: [No response]

This interaction is two folded; to elucidate the function of the ostensible invitation *ruuħ ʔargil maʕaana* ‘come and smoke hookah with us’ issued in line 1, we should unfold this interaction into two self-complimentary stages based on the collusion of M. The first stage represents M’s collusion with S’s pretense: S extends an invitation to M to go with him to *gahwa*; however, M refuses the offer politely by giving S an ostensible excuse – he pretended that he is busy and has other things to do – as indicated by the utterance *saddig ʔinni maʕyuuł ʔil-yoom ma bagdar* ‘Believe me! I cannot accompany you; I am so busy today’. His pretense is clear as M loathes *gahawi* so whether he is really busy or not, he will not go to such a place. However, since M’s pretense is mutually known, S reissues the invitation and extends it beyond social courtesy to provoke M (in contrast with Isaacs & Clark 1990). The utterances *ya zalami ruuħ la txaaf miš raħ tixsar ʔiři* ‘Come on! Don’t worry, you will lose nothing if you go’ and *miš raħ tixsar ʔiři kulha saaʕa wbitrawwiħ* ‘Come on! You will not waste your time. It’s just one hour’ signal to M that S realizes his ostensible excuse, yet rejects it. His inducements are not sincere for a close look at the word choice reveals that S is only pretending to make his invitation more attractive. The words *la txaaf* ‘don’t worry!’ and *w-bitrawwiħ* ‘you will go home’ imply that M is unsociable and is only acting like a child. This word choice is meant to draw the overhearer’s, N’s, attention to M’s “social ineptness”, as he does not go to *gahawi* as they do, which embarrasses M and threatens his face. The second stage goes as follows: since S chooses not to collude with M’s pretense, M, realizing the unstated intentions of S, puts S’s off-record intentions on record and shows S that he is insulted by his offer. Thus, in line 10, M faces S with the truth that S is only extending his invitation ostensibly.

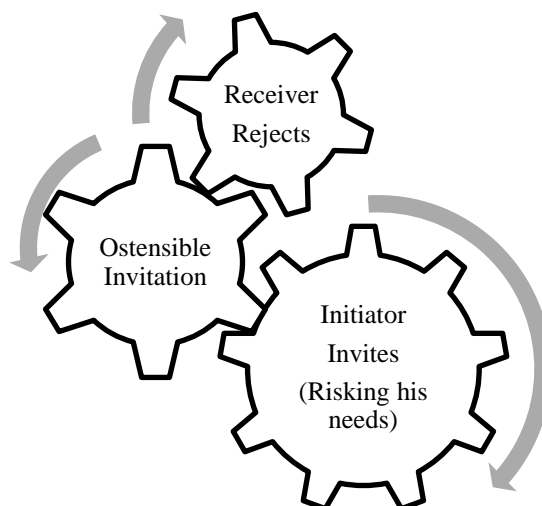
Why does M interpret the invitation extended as a provocation, rather than an anticipatory apology for his exclusion? In fact, recipients of

provocation perceive the tease in more negative terms when “teasers aim to amuse others through their teasing” (Shapiro et al. 1991, cited in Keltner et al. 1998: 1233). Since S intentionally ignores the common ground between S and M – the fact that M does not go to *gahawi* – to amuse his friend N, as indicated by the utterance *wallaa šuu raʔyak N* ‘N, he should go with us, shouldn’t he?’ makes M not only take his ostensible excuse back but also to subvert S’s intentions. The utterance *madaamak šaarifni baruuħiš šala gahaawi leeš bitdallak tiryi* ‘You know that I don’t attend Gahawi. Why do you keep insisting on that?’ supports the aforementioned claim. To round up, ostensible invitations in Jordanian culture are not always utilized for the sake of politeness. They can also be utilized in Machiavellian ways.

5. Conclusion

To sum up, face work in ostensible invitations in Jordanian culture goes as follows: the initiator is supposed to invite the hearer, as not doing so is considered impolite behavior. The hearer, in turn, is expected to reject the invitation, as accepting it would threaten the speaker’s face wants and needs. In fact, ostensible invitations are a device of two sharp edges: on the one hand, it is face threatening not to invite, yet at the same time, it is face threatening to accept. Thus, a pendulum balance must be mutually coordinated, or else the initiators’ and the receivers’ face wants are prone to get damaged. In short, when an ostensible invitation moves for the sake of politeness, the initiator should extend his invitation, and the receiver should reject it in normal situations (see Figure 2 below)¹³.

¹³ Adapted from Clark’s (1996) book cover.

Figure 2. The Coordination of Face in Ostensible Invitations

Unlike in other cultures where ostensible invitations are used as mitigating devices (see Isaacs & Clark 1990; Eslami 2005), here the speech act of ostensible invitation has been found to serve three major functions based on the interactional situation of the interlocutors. Ostensible invitations in Jordanian Arabic are found to be used largely as face-mitigating devices in various face-threatening situations: softening partings, expressing thanking and gratitude, apologizing anticipatorily, responding to compliments and requests showing envy and reducing the effect of impositions. However, in Jordanian culture, ostensible invitations can also be utilized in Machiavellian ways to achieve other purposes. That is, they can be used to persuade and provoke the interactional partner.

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