Ostensible Invitations in Jordanian Arabic: A Sociopragmatic Study

By:
Saleem Mohammed Naif Abdel Hady

Supervisor:
Prof. Mahmud Wardat
2013
Ostensible Invitations in Jordanian Arabic: A Sociopragmatic Study

By:
Saleem Abdel Hady

B.A. English Language and Literature, Yarmouk University, Jordan

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of Master of Arts in Linguistics in the Department of English Language and Literature

Yarmouk University, Irbid, Jordan

Examination Committee:

Prof. Mahmoud Wardat .................................................. Chairman

Dr. Lutfi Abulhaija ............................................................. Member

Prof. Mohammed N. Al-Ali ................................................. Member
Table of Contents

Acknowledgement ................................................................................................... III
Table of Contents ...................................................................................................... V
List of Phonetic Symbols ........................................................................................ IX
List of Tables .......................................................................................................... XI
List of Figures ........................................................................................................ XII
Abstract ................................................................................................................. XIII

CHAPTER ONE ...................................................................................................... 1
INTRODUCTION ...................................................................................................... 1
1. Theoretical Background ..................................................................................... 2
1.1 Pragmatics ........................................................................................................ 3
1.2 Speech Act Theory ........................................................................................... 5
1.2.1 Invitation Speech Act ..................................................................................... 7
1.2.2 Conversational Implicature ........................................................................... 8
1.3 Politeness Theories .......................................................................................... 10
1.3.1 Politeness Principle (PP) .............................................................................. 11
1.3.2 Face and Face-Threatening Acts (FTAs) ...................................................... 13
1.4 Clark’s Theory of Language Use (Action Theory) ......................................... 17
1.4.1 Staged Communicative Acts ....................................................................... 19
1.4.2 Ostensible Communicative Acts .................................................................. 21
3.8 Data Collection .................................................................................................................. 63
3.9 Instruments ......................................................................................................................... 65
3.10 Reliability and Validity ..................................................................................................... 66
3.11 Data Analysis .................................................................................................................... 67

CHAPTER FOUR ...................................................................................................................... 70

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION ............................................................................................. 70

4.1 The Sociolinguistic Functions of Ostensible Invitations .............................................. 71
4.1.1 Mitigating Devices .......................................................................................................... 71
4.1.1.1 Softening Partings ...................................................................................................... 72
4.1.1.2 Expressing Thanking and Gratitude .......................................................................... 80
4.1.1.3 Responding to Compliments and Requests Showing Envy .................................... 81
4.1.1.4 Apologizing Anticipatorily ...................................................................................... 84
4.1.1.5 Reducing the Effect of an Imposition ....................................................................... 87
4.1.2 Persuasive Devices ......................................................................................................... 95
4.1.3 Provocative Devices ...................................................................................................... 99

4.2 Staging Linguistically for Ostensible Invitations ......................................................... 106
4.2.1 Violating the Preparatory Conditions ........................................................................ 106
4.2.1.1 The Implausibility Strategy ..................................................................................... 107
        4.2.1.1.1 The Initiator is Able to Host ........................................................................... 108
        4.2.1.1.2 Legitimate Position to Offer Hospitality ......................................................... 110
        4.2.1.1.3 The Offer is Practically Feasible .................................................................... 116
        4.2.1.1.4 The Receiver is Able to Accept ....................................................................... 120
4.2.1.1.5 The Receiver is Not Interested ........................................................... 122
4.2.1.2 The Indefiniteness Strategy ..................................................................... 125
4.2.2 Showing Lack of Commitment ................................................................... 129
  4.2.2.1 The Motivation Strategy ................................................................. 129
  4.2.2.2 The Persistence Strategy (Invitational Discourse) ................................. 133
  4.2.2.3 Using Equivocal and Hedged Utterances ............................................ 136
  4.2.2.4 Utilizing Contextual Signals and Using Inappropriate Cues .................. 142
  4.2.2.5 The Soliciting Strategy ...................................................................... 148
4.3 Final Remarks on Decoding Ostensible Invitations ....................................... 150
  4.3.1 The Intersection of Ostensibility Strategies with Genuine Invitations ... 152
4.4 Concluding Remarks .................................................................................. 156

CHAPTER FIVE .................................................................................................. 159

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ...... 159

5.1 Summary and Findings ............................................................................. 159
5.2 Conclusions ............................................................................................... 164
5.3 Recommendations .................................................................................... 169
References ....................................................................................................... 170
Appendices ....................................................................................................... 179
Appendix (1) ..................................................................................................... 180
Appendix (2) ..................................................................................................... 181
Appendix (3) ..................................................................................................... 183
Arabic Abstract ............................................................................................... 186
List of Phonetic Symbols

The following phonetic symbols are used in this study

Consonants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic Consonants</th>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ن</td>
<td>٧</td>
<td>Voiceless glottal stop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ب</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>Voiced bilabial stop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>س</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>Voiceless dento-alveolar stop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ض</td>
<td>th</td>
<td>Voiceless inter-dental fricative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ج</td>
<td>j</td>
<td>Voiced post-alveolar affricate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>خ</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>Voiceless pharyngeal fricative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>خ</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>Voiceless uvular fricative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>د</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>Voiced dento-alveolar stop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ن</td>
<td>ة</td>
<td>Voiced alveolar fricative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ر</td>
<td>r</td>
<td>Voiced alveo-palatal trill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ز</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>Voiced alveolar fricative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>س</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>Voiceless alveolar fricative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ط</td>
<td>ʃ</td>
<td>Voiceless alveo-palatal fricative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ص</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Voiceless alveolar emphatic fricative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ض</td>
<td>ة</td>
<td>Voiced alveolar emphatic stop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ط</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Voiceless dento-alveolar emphatic stop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ظ</td>
<td>Đ</td>
<td>Voiced alveolar emphatic fricative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>م</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Voiced pharyngeal fricative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>غ</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Voiced uvular fricative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ق</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>Voiceless labio-dental fricative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q</td>
<td>Voiceless uvular stop</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k</td>
<td>Voiceless velar stop</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l</td>
<td>Voiced alveolar lateral</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>Voiced bilabial nasal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>Voiced alveolar nasal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>Voiceless glottal fricative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>w</td>
<td>Voiced labio-velar glide</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>y</td>
<td>Voiced palatal glide</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Arabic Vowels**

**A) Short vowels**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>فتحة</td>
<td>Front, nearly half-open, low unrounded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ضمة</td>
<td>Back, nearly close, high rounded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>كسرة</td>
<td>Front, open, high unrounded</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**B) Long Vowels**

Long vowels are indicated by the double vowels. They are as follows:

aa, uu and ii
List of Tables

Table 1: The Distribution of the Implausibility Strategy ................................................ 107
Table 2: The Distribution of the Indefiniteness Strategy ................................................ 126
Table 3: The Distribution of the Motivation Strategy ..................................................... 130
Table 4: The Distribution of the Persistence Strategy ..................................................... 134
Table 5: The Distribution of Hedged and Equivocated Utterances ................................. 139
Table 6: The Distribution of Inappropriate Cues and Contextual Signals ...................... 143
Table 7 :The Distribution of the Soliciting Strategy ....................................................... 149
List of Figures

Figure 1: Invitations Intersection (Ostensible Invitations) ................................................ 31
Figure 2: The Development of Nonserious Invitations across Cultures ............................. 56
Figure 3: The Coordination of Face in Ostensible Invitations ........................................ 104
Ostensible Invitations in Jordanian Arabic: A Sociopragmatic Study

By:
Saleem Mohammed Naif Abdel Hady

Supervisor:
Prof. Mahmud Wardat

Abstract

The present study investigates the speech act of ostensible invitations in Jordanian Arabic from a sociopragmatic 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 data has been analyzed from three interconnected perspectives: the sociolinguistic functions of ostensible invitations, the tactics of encoding invitations to be realized as ostensible and the ways of decoding these invitations to be understood for what they are meant to be. 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. To engineer their invitations as ostensible, Jordanians make use of the seven tactics proposed by Isaacs and Clark (1990). However, the study shows that the tactics are not enough by themselves to set ostensible and genuine invitations apart; they should be interpreted in light of the communicators’ shared beliefs, shared suppositions and shared knowledge (i.e., common ground) to float the ostensibility behind invitations. The study shows that the main ingredient behind the realization of ostensibility is the contrast between the demonstrated situation and the real purpose of it. The study, therefore, concludes that the driving force of ostensibility in the Jordanian culture is the two sides of the notion of common ground: the personal and communal sides.

Ostensible invitations are only part of a large category of ostensible communicative acts (e.g., ostensible lies, ostensible compliments, ostensible apologies and others). One promising line of research would be investigating such communicative acts in the Jordanian culture within the framework of Action Theory, Relevance Theory or other theories that focus solely on analyzing the role of body language on ostensibility.

**Key words:** Pretense, Joint Action, Common Ground, (Joint) Commitment, Politeness, Collusion, and Layering