VISITORS' LINGUISTIC ETIQUETTE

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Abstract

Visitors' Linguistic Etiquette.

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The language of casual visits in Jordanian Arabic exhibits patterns of verbal behavior determined by socio-cultural norms of linguistic etiquette which are shared by both the visitor and the host. The present study explores the nature of these linguistic patterns in Jordanian Arabic shedding light on the compatibility of these patterns with Brown and Levinson’s universal theory of politeness (1987). Jordanian visitors employ various mitigating strategies that pay attention to the face needs of the host by decreasing the degree of imposition or avoiding a face-threatening act. Indirectness as a mode of politeness is normally employed to minimize an offensive intent, to show the speaker’s humility of the hearer, to minimize social tension, and to settle personal scores.

In this study, about one hundred spontaneous conversations during casual visits were observed and written down to establish the most prominent patterns of linguistic etiquette as reflected in:
i) Greetings on arrival.

ii) Asking about each other’s health.

iii) Domestic small talk.

iv) Asking for something (requesting).

v) Favor asking and the purpose of the visit.

vi) Leave-taking.

This study further shows that the choice of polite linguistic usage normally depends on the age, sex, and status of the hearer. Following the lines of Brown and Levinson’s politeness theory, each chapter may offer further validation for their theory and models of politeness strategies in respect of Jordanian Arabic. This study calls for further research to determine the nature and full implications of visitor’s linguistic etiquette.