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A Sociolinguistic Study of the Speech Act of Criticism

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Abstract

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This study is an intralanguage and sociolinguistic analysis of the speech act of criticism. It examines the types of criticism and their strategies that are used by the participants in Al-itti?ah Almu9aakis 'The Opposite Direction', a program on Al-Jazeera Satellite Channel (JSC). The most common and frequent type of strategies adopted by the participants and its influence on the process of communication are examined. In this study, it is argued that the nature of such argumentation (in our case a political one) affects criticism. The conversational analysis has been employed in conducting this study in relation to the notion of politeness as suggested by Brown and Levinson (1987). For this purpose, the script of two episodes was transcribed, and the content was analyzed to identify the type and the strategy used in the process of argumentation. The findings reveal four types of criticism: direct addressed to the criticized person,
direct addressed to the criticized person via a third party, indirect addressed to the criticized person, and indirect addressed to the criticized person via a third party. Furthermore, the use of direct criticism is more common than the indirect one. The data also show that the most frequent strategy of direct criticism adopted by the participants is the negative evaluation strategy and the most indirect one is the demand for change strategy.