A Socio-Pragmatic Study of Stupidity or Stubbornness Expressions in Jordanian Spoken Arabic

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Abstract:

The study investigated the impact of age and gender on the use of impoliteness strategies deduced from the use of metaphorical expressions of stupidity and stubbornness in Jordanian Spoken Arabic (JSA). The data has been collected through a Discourse Completion Task (DCT), which consisted of 20 situations related to stupidity and stubbornness. The participants of the study were 200 Jordanian males and females whose ages ranged between 20-65-year-old. The study adopted Culpeper's (1996) model as a theoretical framework to analyze the data. The findings showed that the most frequently used strategy is positive impoliteness while the least used strategy is sarcasm among male and female speakers. It was also found out that younger speakers outperformed the other age ranges of speakers in the use of impoliteness strategies. Jordanian elderly female speakers used the positive output strategies more than males in JSA, whereas middle age speakers used these strategies the least.

Keywords: impoliteness strategies, Jordanian Spoken Arabic, positive output strategies, stubbornness, stupidity.
دراسة اجتماعية - براغماتية عن تعابير الغباء أو العناد في اللهجة العربية المحكية الأردنية

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ملخص:

الكلمات المفتاحية: استراتيجيات عدم اللباقة، اللهجة العربية المحكية الأردنية، الاستراتيجيات الإيجابية، العناد، الغباء

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1. Introduction

Undoubtedly, the use of metaphorical expressions has a great impact on the receiver and thus the matter of judgement begins to calculate the intended meaning. People have implicitly specific rules to use such expressions to address people to avoid what is called Face Threatening Act (FTA). In fact, the use of negative terms falls within the umbrella of impoliteness theory and linguists vary in defining this concept. Thus, a number of scholars have devoted much attention to this theory. The notion of impoliteness comes into existence as a reaction to Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory and hence Culpeper, in his book *Language and Characterization*, illustrates the difference between politeness and impoliteness. He said that, "it should be noted that the key difference between politeness and impoliteness is a matter of intention: whether it is the speaker's intention to support face (politeness) or to attack it (impoliteness)" (Culpeper, 2001: 246).

Since the beginning of impoliteness, linguists have devoted much attention to the conceptualization of impoliteness to rest on a comprehensive definition but they show different perspectives. For example, Culpeper (1996: 20) viewed impoliteness "as the use of strategies designed to attack face, and thereby cause social conflict and disharmony." This definition states that there are a number of strategies that are used to cause offence on the addressee. In addition, Bousfield (2008: 132) stated that impolite acts must be intentionally performed in twofold: firstly, unmitigated in contexts where mitigation is required. Secondly, with deliberate aggression, that is, with the face-threat exacerbated, boasted or maximized in some way to heighten the face damage inflicted. Intentionality acts as a primary component to cause a straightforward threatening effect on the receiver.

Jordanian males and females use different expressions for stupidity and stubbornness. These expressions can be direct, i.e. the meaning is explicit to the hearer or indirect, i.e. the meaning is implied or implicit for the hearers. This study aimed to investigate the socio-pragmatic use of these expressions in Jordanian Spoken Arabic. In addition, it explores the gender differences in the use of these expressions among Jordanian males and females of different age groups. Therefore, the present study aimed to answer the following question:

1. What are the stupidity and stubbornness expressions used by Jordanian males and females?
2. To what extent do gender and age affect the use of metaphorical
expressions of stupidity or stubbornness in Jordanian Spoken Arabic?

2. Literature review

Impoliteness simply as a universal phenomenon revolves around the act of causing offence or disharmony toward the addressee. The notion of impoliteness has grabbed the attention of linguists. Goffman (1967: 14) assigned the core tenet of calling the action impolite where “[t]here are incidental offences; these arise as an unplanned but sometimes anticipated by-product of action - action the offender performs in spite of its offensive consequences, though not out of spite.” Culpeper (1996) worked as a reaction to the framework of Brown and Levinson's (1987) framework of politeness to formulate impoliteness strategies in his article Towards an Autonomy of Impoliteness. However, Mills (2002) criticized the emergence of Culpeper's (1996) framework since the principles and insights of impoliteness are mainly based on naturally impolite situations, namely, the army training documentary in that the dominant group (i.e. the police officer) commands the lower group (i.e. soldiers). This type of criticism highlights the norm of interaction among the interlocutors, and the way they evaluate the delivered utterances.

It is worth noting that the meaning of impoliteness has been an argumentative issue in the field of pragmatics. To put it simply, the notion of impoliteness is a culturally based phenomenon and hence a number of scholars debate long to agree on its definition. Watts (2003: 9) argued that "(im)politeness is a term that is struggled over at present, has been struggled over in the past and will, in all probability, continue to be struggled over in the future." Consequently, scholars had a long debate whether impoliteness is inherent in linguistic expressions or not. Scholars who advocate the notion that there is correspondence between impoliteness and linguistic expressions raise the value of the context and culture to cause offence or not. For example, Culpeper (2010) stated some examples taken from egalitarian Igbo society of Nigeria where people find requests, criticism, thanks and offer are part of a reciprocal social contact. That is, these acts are mainly social duties in which people spontaneously communicate them.

Accordingly, scholars have devoted much time to unveil the meaning of impoliteness. Watts (2003: 1) argues that impoliteness becomes apparent when "it goes against the cannons of acceptable, appropriate behavior operative for the ongoing social interaction." In a later study, Culpeper (2005: 38) argued that “impoliteness comes about when: (1) the speaker communicates face-attack intentionally, or (2) the hearer perceives and/or
constructs behavior as intentionally face-attacking, or a combination of (1) and (2).” Additionally, Bousefield (2008) reformulated the version of Culpeper’s (1996) model by narrowing the five super strategies into two ways: on-record impoliteness and off-record impoliteness. He also added further strategies such as avoid agreement, the frighten strategy or criticism. It seems that the judgment of impoliteness ends with the conclusion of acknowledging the appropriateness of the behavior and thus Mills (2009: 1055) argued that, “judgements about impoliteness rest on the basis of an assumption that within a particular interaction we know what the appropriate behavior is.”

Scholars and linguists have recently developed the conceptualization of impoliteness. They classified impoliteness into different types in accordance to the functions they perform in different situations. For example, Culpeper (2011a: 223) suggested that there are three types of impoliteness; namely, affective, coercive, and entertaining. With regard to the first type, the speaker exposes his anger towards the hearer and this consequently generates a negative emotional atmosphere between the speaker and the hearer (Huang, 2014: 150). The second type is more likely associated with asymmetrical social relationship between the interlocutors in that the dominant party has more powerful status than the attacked lower party does. This sort of impoliteness could be widely found in institutional organizations.

Recently investigated, Yating (2014) conducted a study on gender and conversational humor in a televised situational comedy called Friends. It mainly aimed to explore gender identities enacted in the performance of humor. The findings indicated that male characters used impolite strategies and contestive humor to negotiate values, whereas female characters mostly use politeness strategies and supportive humor to encourage common values. Mirhosseini et.al. (2017) investigated the role of gender and culture on the use of impoliteness strategies in the movie” Mother.” The results showed that female characters tended to resort to politeness strategies while male characters relied on impoliteness strategies. The findings of the study illustrated that females resort to politeness strategies to compensate their weaknesses.

Al-Shlool (2016) found out that gender and topic have a great impact on the use of impoliteness strategies in social media network, namely Facebook. The findings revealed that males outweigh females in the use of impoliteness strategies in which males used posts and comments
representing 34.4% while females used them 12.6%. Regarding topics, males used positive impoliteness strategy in the 'voice' webpage with 45 occurrences, whereas females used it in the same webpage with 13 times. Furthermore, Yasin and Rabab'ah (2018) examined impoliteness strategies in African American film ‘The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air’. The results showed that male characters preferred to call the others with unfavorable aspects when damaging the hearer’s negative face, while female characters did not. For example, male characters repeatedly used 'stupidity' to attack the face of the hearer.

Gender differences have shown a great impact on the use of impoliteness strategies. Consequently, Yating (2014) studied gender differences in conversational humor by analyzing the American comedy show “Friends.” The study found that female characters are more likely to be polite rather than impolite. The results of the study showed that male characters used impoliteness strategies in humor to threaten the other person’s face, whereas, female characters tended to use off record strategy to reflect the sense of indirectness. In a recent study, Ibrahim (2020) conducted a study on the impact of gender and age on the use of impoliteness strategies used in political tweets. The findings stressed that male participants used rude and impolite expressions more frequently than females do. They also revealed that male Twitter users of 25-35 utilized the most frequently impolite terms, whereas younger and older Twitter users were recorded the lowest frequency in using impolite expressions.

Darani and Maghaddam (2020) conducted a study on the use of a politeness marker 'please' to reflect on impoliteness situations in EFL English and Iranian learners. The findings showed that though speakers concern about the positive face of the addressee by inserting the politeness marker 'please', the utterance conveys face-threatening act. The study also reveals that Iranian EFL learners do not use freestanding 'please' especially in exclamatory conditions due to the low level of proficiency of the Iranian EFL learners. Additionally, Idrees (2020) went further to explore the use of impoliteness when the participants are engaged in violent online games. In this regard, Idrees noted that participants uttered impolite expressions due to some reasons including expressing anger and frustration, absence of social bond, rudeness, trolling to scorn the other or get funny.
3. Method and Procedures

3.1. Subjects of the study
The participants of this study consisted of 200 native speakers of Jordanian Arabic. The age of the participants ranged from 20 to 65 years old. The subjects were divided into three age groups in accordance with their age: Age group 1 (20-29 and 30-39), age group 2 (40-49) and age group 3 (50-65).

3.2. Data Collection and Procedures
The data collection instrument adopted for the present study is a written discourse completion task (henceforth DCT). The use of this tool helps respondents to have enough time to act out upon given situations. Kasper (2000) considered DCT as a convenient tool to collect data. The questionnaire used in the present study introduced a couple of instructions to the respondents. To illustrate, they were given 20 different situations representing stupidity and stubbornness in Jordanian Spoken Arabic. Each participant needed to choose one metaphorical expression for each situation out of a list of metaphorical expressions of stupidity and stubbornness. The researchers also told them that the elicited data will be confidentially used for academic purposes.

3.3. Validity and reliability
For the sake of validity and reliability, the researchers chose real situations that took place in the community where they live in. As they live in the community, the researchers observed the situations where Jordanian speakers used expressions of stupidity and stubbornness to come up with as natural and authentic data as possible. Additionally, they sent a copy of the questionnaire to two professors of linguistic at the University of Jordan. They provided their suggestions about the situations and the expressions used in the survey. The researchers, therefore, made the required amendments accordingly. However, to maximize reliability the researchers did 'inter-rater reliability' test to ensure the consistency of the two raters. The total probability of agreement of Cohen’s kappa is (.91). IPA transcription of Arabic is used for writing the Arabic examples.

3.4. Data Analysis
The responses of the participants were analyzed and categorized to find out the use of impoliteness strategies. When analyzing the collected data, the researchers found withhold strategy has never been used. Thus, it was excluded from the provided tables. To analyze the gathered data, the
researchers used Culpeper's (1996) model. The impoliteness strategies were then grouped in tables and their percentages were also calculated. In addition, the researchers illustrated the use of stupidity or stubbornness expressions under each category.

4. Results and discussions

Table (1) Number and percentages of impoliteness strategies used by male speakers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impoliteness Strategies</th>
<th>Number and percentages impoliteness strategies used by male speakers</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Age group (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20-29 (N= 411)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Impoliteness</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bald-on-record</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarcasm</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Impoliteness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table (1) shows that age group (1) employs positive strategy more frequently than age group (2) and (3) do. Thus, age group (1) used this strategy 25.6% and 34%, respectively, while the other groups used it 21% and 19.4%, respectively. It is apparent that older speakers reluctantly use this strategy as they possibly care about the desired face of the hearer. In contrast, the younger age group has more tendency to attack the positive face of the interlocutor than the other age groups. This clear increase in the proportion of this strategy over the other strategies is probably a reflection of the speakers’ awareness of the degree of threat this strategy could leave on the addressee. Consequently, this tendency could imply that Jordanian speakers implicitly reformulated internal pragmatic rules, which in turn assist them to verify the appropriate strategy to address people in Jordanian Spoken Arabic.

In a close examination of the table above, the age group that most frequently employed positive impoliteness strategy is the middle-age group (i.e. 30-39-year old). The use of positive impoliteness briefly means that the speaker attacks the desired face of the hearer (Culpeper, 1996). Consequently, middle-age group speakers tended to damage the desired face of the interlocutor. This implies that the middle-aged group respondents find this strategy appropriate to address Jordanian speakers. This is in line with
Mirhosseini et al. (2017) who analyzed the interaction between two characters in the movie *Mother* based on Culpeper’s (1996) model.

Like the positive strategy, age group (1) outperformed the other age groups in the use of negative impoliteness strategy. Younger speakers utilized this strategy 32% while age group (2) and (3) used it 19.3% and 24%, respectively. This tendency could imply that younger Jordanian speakers have preference to attack the negative face of the hearer. This could also indicate that younger male speakers tended to rely more on negative impoliteness strategy than older speakers did as they possibly reflect power or status among peers. Consequently, Culpeper (1996: 7) stated the main dimensions affecting face threat, namely relative power, social distance, and the rank or size of imposition of the act involved. However, older speakers are possibly conservative about the negative face of the interlocutor. To illustrate the use of negative impoliteness strategy, consider the following examples:

1. متمسح/*mtaːmsiː/*, mindless (i.e. a stupidity expression)
2. معطوب/*maːtˤuːb/*, retarded (i.e. a stupidity expression)
3. ثور/*θaːwːr/*, yak (i.e. a stubbornness expression)

A glance at table (1) shows that age group (1) speakers strikingly outweigh the older age group speakers in the use of the bald-on-record strategy. Thus, the former speakers used it 24.4% and 37.2%, respectively while the latter speakers utilized it 19.7% and 18.6%. It seems clear that the group that most frequently used this strategy is age group (1) particularly 30-39-year old speakers. They used it 37.2%. This tendency could mean that the use of this impoliteness strategy possibly reflects the degree of intimate relationship among speakers at this stage. This argument has been supported by one result carried out by Al-Shlool (2016) who stated that the use of bald-on-record strategy could soften the relationship among close friends and consequently it is possible for Jordanian young speakers to use such strategy to build up solidarity and strengthen social relationship. To exemplify on this strategy, they used metaphorical expressions to address stupidity or stubbornness situations such as حمار/*himmaːr/* (i.e. donkey), تيس/*taːs/* (i.e. male-goat).

The least used strategy among the age group speakers is sarcasm or mock impoliteness. Jordanian speakers tend to rarely rely on this strategy to address people in Jordanian Spoken Arabic. Table (1) also shows that like the previous strategies, younger speakers employed this strategy more frequently than older speakers did. The former speakers utilized it 33.3%
while the latter speakers used it 19.4% and 13.8%, respectively. Since the purpose of this strategy is to use polite expressions insincerely, Jordanian speakers tend to use stupidity or stubbornness expressions explicitly. For instance, the expression (凡لا انك واحد ناصح, /fiʕlan ?inak wa:hd na:sˤħ/ (i.e. you are indeed a fat person) implies that the intended person is not really fat but it is sarcastically meant a stupid. Accordingly, this strategy works when the user implicitly attempts to hide the actual motivations behind the use of this strategy.

Table (2) Number and percentages of impoliteness strategies used by female speakers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impoliteness Strategies</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Age group (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20-29(N=411)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Impoliteness</td>
<td>164 29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Impoliteness</td>
<td>69 23.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bald-on-record</td>
<td>20 21.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarcasm</td>
<td>12 36.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table (2) shows the distribution of impoliteness strategies among different age-range groups of female Jordanian speakers. It can be noticed that the positive impoliteness strategy is the most commonly used strategy among the three female age groups, and sarcasm strategy is the least commonly used one. Age group (1) used this strategy the most with 29% followed by age group (3) with 27.5% then age group (2) with 20.5%. This could imply that younger female speakers more likely attack the positive face of the addressee. Similarly, elderly speakers outperformed middle-age speakers in the use of this strategy when addressing people in JSA. This may mean that elderly speakers possibly enjoy a high status to threat the desired face in Jordanian society. In contrast, age group (2) employed this strategy the least, which consequently imply that they are probably cautious about the positive face of the hearer.

Like the positive strategy, female speakers utilized the negative impoliteness strategy. That is, younger speakers outperformed age group (2) and (3) in the use of this strategy. The former speakers used this strategy 23.3% and 28.4% respectively while the latter speakers used it 21.6% and
26.4%, respectively. It seems that younger speakers’ obvious tendency to use this particular strategy is a reflection of their increasing awareness of its influence on the addressee. It could be convincingly proved by the highly use of this strategy among elderly speakers who are more conservative about the sensitivity of using stupidity or stubbornness expressions to address people in the community. This outcome contradicts with Mills (2002) who advocated the hypothesis that politeness is more likely associated with femininity while impoliteness has to do with masculinity. This tendency could be associated with the argument that female participants do not directly attack the face of addressees severely negative.

A look at Table (2) shows that older age groups outweigh younger age groups in the use of the bald-on-record strategy. If percentages go from younger to older groups, the former age groups utilized this strategy 26.5% and 27.6%, respectively while the latter groups used it 21.2% and 24.4%, respectively. The analysis of the highly frequent use of this strategy by the eldest group suggests that elderly speakers have the preference to damage the face of the addressees directly without calculating the degree of offensiveness they could leave on them. It seems clear that female speakers at this stage are more likely apparent to avoid a straightforwardly negative effect on the addressee.

Notably, the least used impoliteness strategy among female speakers is sarcasm or mock impoliteness. As this strategy requires manipulating the use of expressions linguistically to cause threat to the hearer, it needs more time to be depicted aggressively. What is worth noting that younger speakers used it more frequently than older speakers did. That is, 20-29-year old and 30-39-year old speakers used sarcasm 36.3% similarly, while older age groups used it 15.3% and 12.1%, respectively. It seems that younger speakers who chose this strategy as their vehicle of interaction possibly thought that such a strategy is more likely to be present in their day-to-day interactions. However, older speakers tend to use it less frequently as they prefer to offend the addressee directly. It may advocate the argument that females have more tendency to use politeness strategies more than impoliteness ones. This tendency is more likely connected with older female speakers as they used this strategy scarcely.
Table (3) the use of output strategies of positive impoliteness strategy among male speakers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive impoliteness Strategies</th>
<th>Number and percentages of positive impoliteness strategy used by male speakers</th>
<th>Age group (1) 20-29 (N= 411)</th>
<th>Age group (2) 30-39(N=473)</th>
<th>Age group (2) 40-49 (N=333)</th>
<th>Age group (3) 50-65 (N=375)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exclude the other from an activity</td>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use inappropriate identity markers</td>
<td></td>
<td>36</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>32.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use obscure or secretive language</td>
<td></td>
<td>105</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>33.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use taboo words</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table (3) shows the use of output strategies of positive impoliteness strategy among male Jordanian speakers. It shows that age group (1) speakers used exclude from an activity strategy 28.5% and 32.5% while age group (2) and (3) speakers used it 19.8% and 19%, respectively. In particular, it is apparent that both younger speakers outperformed the other age-range speakers in the use of this output strategy. Interestingly, 30-39-year old Jordanian speakers used exclude the other from an activity strategy the most frequently in that they used it 32.5%. In contrast, the age group that used this strategy the least is age group (3). This inclination may partly reflect the Jordanian culture in which older speakers are more likely conservative and rationally aware of the positive face of their addressees. To describe stubbornness, they used /kifil/ قفل (i.e. a lock), /heetˤ/ حيط (i.e. a wall) /haːtˤ ʕala ʔuruba/ حاط على اوروبا (i.e. choose a European channel) but they used /ʔdwar/ أدور (i.e. foolish) and /yaʃiː:m/ غشيم اوجاهل (i.e. an ignorant) to call on stupidity. As such, the use of such expressions indicates that the addressee is nearly excluded from the rational group they should belong to. For instance, the Jordanian expression /yaʃiː:m/ غشيم (i.e. ignorant) makes the addressee belong to ignorant group and hence the strategy is called exclude the other from an activity.

Generally, age group (1) speakers utilized inappropriate identity markers strategy more frequently than the other age groups (2) and (3). The
former speakers utilized this strategy 25.4% and 33.7%, respectively while the latter speakers used it 20.8% and 19.9%, respectively. This highly use of this strategy gives an indication of the realization of actual consequences on the hearer in the use of such expressions to address people in JSA. Nevertheless, it causes offense; it may strengthen the social bond among the interlocutors. For instance, Culpeper (2011a: 207) argued that “the recontextualisation of impoliteness in socially opposite contexts creates socially opposite effects, namely, affectionate, intimate bonds amongst individuals and the identity of that group”. To illustrate the use of this strategy on these expressions, consider the following examples:

1. حيط /hiː tˤ/, a wall (i.e. a stubbornness expression)
2. مقفقل /mqqaffill/, tightly locked (i.e. a stubbornness expression)
3. أدور /ʔadwaː:r/, malfunction brain (i.e. a stupidity expression)

Regarding the third strategy, like the previous strategy, age group (1) speakers used the obscure or secretive language strategy more frequently than age group (2) and (3). That is, younger speakers utilized this strategy 22.3% and 36.8%, whereas older speakers used it 23.3% and 17.4%, respectively. The percentages indicate that 30-39-year old speakers outweigh the other age groups, which could imply that they rely on this strategy to attack the face of the interlocutor positively. For instance, they used the Jordanian expressions like /hitʃal هتشه or /ʔmbaddal مبدل (i.e. a stupid person) to call a stupid person. The idiosyncrasy nature behind the use of such expressions is the fact that they are not widely used in the country but are mainly used in a certain area and sometimes with particular situations. Consequently, it gives the speaker the opportunity to belittle the intended person secretly and consequently threat the positive face of the addressee.

The least used strategy among Jordanian speakers is the use of taboo words strategy. The use of taboo words is nearly rarely used expressions among male and female speakers, as they are more likely offensive language. They are severely face-threatening act, which could cause serious conflict among interlocutors. One possible justification for this tendency is may be due to Jordanian cultural restrictions in that in Islam, the religion of the country. It is prohibited for Muslims to use taboo words to belittle or attack others. This percentage is a clear-cut evidence for the use of this strategy. In this way, Al-Yassin and Rababa (2018) found out that African American characters have never used this strategy either offensively nor defensively.
Table (4) Number and percentage of positive impoliteness strategies used by female speakers

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20-29 (N= 411)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclude the other from an activity</td>
<td>27 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use inappropriate identity markers</td>
<td>102 28.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use obscure or secretive language</td>
<td>35 30.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use taboo words</td>
<td>0 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table (4) shows that the most frequently used sub-strategy of positive impoliteness strategy by Jordanian females is the use of inappropriate identity markers, followed by use obscure or secretive language and then exclude the other from an activity strategies. The least frequently used positive impoliteness strategy is use taboo words strategy, which might suggest that females employ impoliteness positive strategies in their utterances to address people differently. It seems that Jordanian female speakers used the strategies, namely 'inappropriate identity markers' and 'obscure or secretive language' strategies more frequently than 'exclude the other from activity' and 'taboo words' strategies. This may mean that female speakers are cautious in the sort of strategies used to attack the face of the interlocutor.

It can be noticed that the use of 'exclude the other from an activity strategy' has changed over age-range of female speakers. Age group (1) was in the lead followed by age group (3) and age group (2) in the use of this strategy. Age group (1) recorded 27% while the other age groups used it 25.5% and 20.4%, respectively. This could imply that both younger and older female speakers find excluding the addressee from interest more suitable to address the hearer in JSA. In contrast, the age group that used this strategy the least is age group (2), which could reflect the sensitivity of using it in attacking the desired face of the receiver.
It can be observed that age group (1) used inappropriate identity markers strategy more frequently than the other age groups did. The former age group used this strategy 28.9% and 22.7%, respectively while the latter age groups utilized it 21% and 27.2%, respectively. This finding places further emphasis on the point that younger speakers employed this strategy as a main vehicle to cause offence towards the positive face of addressees. This may mean that the interpretation of stupidity or stubbornness expressions among these speakers are more tolerated than age group (2) did. As such, Mills (2009) pointed out that the interaction among interlocutors decide the appropriateness of using certain expressions or not. In other words, the context formulates the circle that allows the degree of offensiveness to be tolerated in the interaction.

The second highest output strategy of positive impoliteness used by female speakers is secretive language strategy. It seems clear that the group showing more instances of choosing this strategy is aged group (1) (30.4%) followed by age group (3) (29.5%) then age group (2) (28%). This consistent increase of this strategy among younger and elderly speakers could imply the preference to damage the positive face of the addressee secretly. Further, it may reflect the growing role of this strategy in addressing people in Jordanian culture. For instance, female speakers tended to use uncommonly used expressions (i.e., هتشه /htʃa/, a stupid person) to describe a stupid situation. Similarly, Chen and Abedin (2014) found out that men's responses were more aggressive and counter attacked when performing face threats than women.

Table (5) Number and percentage of negative impoliteness strategies used by male speakers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative impoliteness Strategies</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Condescend, scorn or ridicule</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invade the other’s space</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>29.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicitly associate the other with a negative aspect</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>41.4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table (5) illustrates the use of negative impoliteness output strategies in the use of metaphorical expressions of stupidity and stubbornness among different age-range male speakers in Jordanian Spoken Arabic. Culpeper (1996) pointed out that speakers use these strategies to damage the negative face of addressees in which they try not to be impeded by others. It can be noticed that elderly speakers employed condescend, scorn or ridicule strategy more frequently than the other age group speakers did. They used it 29.1% while the youngest speakers used it 24.4%. Additionally, younger utilized this strategy more frequently than middle aged speakers. The former speakers used it 24.4% while the latter speakers used it 22.6%. Nevertheless, the use of this strategy causes face threatening act and aggression, elderly speakers utilized it the most among the other age groups. This could imply that elderly speakers tended to rely on this strategy to express their dissatisfaction.

It is worth noting that age group (1) employed invade the other’s space strategy more frequently than age group (2) and elderly age group. The former group used it 36.4% and 33.7%, respectively while the other age groups used it 27% and 29.7% respectively. This may mean that younger speakers could attack the face of the interlocutor negatively. It may also show that elderly speakers do not care much about the negative face of the hearer. However, middle speakers used this strategy the least to reflect the sense of maturation in the use of such a strategy to address people in Jordan. To exemplify on this strategy, Jordanian speakers used a wide range of stupidity expressions, to name but a few, /tˤabza/ طبزه (i.e. ill-educated), /tˤabarə/ طبره (i.e. stupid) /Daabba/ دابّه (i.e. a walking animal). As such, the use of these expressions means that the speaker invaded the hearer’s space.

A look at Table 5 shows that the age group that chose more instances of explicitly associate the other with a negative aspect strategy is age group (1) followed by group (2) and (3) similarly. To illustrate, younger speakers utilized it 20.2% and 41.4%, respectively while the remaining age groups used it 19% similarly. This implies that 30-39-year old speakers highly prefer to threat the face of their addressees negatively. Elderly speakers, on the other hand, employed this strategy more frequently than the other two groups as they could reflect their social status in the Jordanian community. Jordanian speakers used this strategy when they utilized expressions such as /raːs muhafɪḏ/ (i.e. a governor's head), /lsfiːha wahdal/ صفیحه وحده (i.e. tinplate alone) or /raasu yaːbis/ رأسه يابس (i.e. a solid head) to describe
stubbornness person but they used /mu ŋrif ra: su min ridʒlih/ من رجله (not know his head from his feet), /ʔsti:ʕabu sanah/ استيعابه سنه (i.e. need a year to understand) or /da:bbah/ دابّه (i.e. a walking animal) to depict stupidity in JSA. Some of these examples are proverb-based expressions. This orientation seems to underlie the motivation of middle age speakers to use this strategy strikingly. However, younger speakers utilized it scarcely as they possibly avoid causing damage to the addressee negatively.

Table (6) Number and percentage of negative impoliteness strategies used by female speakers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative impoliteness Strategies</th>
<th>Number and percentages of times the negative impoliteness strategy is used by age group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Age group (1) 20-29 (N= 139) 30-39(N=175)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condescend, scorn or ridicule</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invade the other’s space</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicitly associate the other with a negative aspect</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table (6) shows the frequencies and percentages of output strategies of the negative impoliteness strategy among female speakers. In general, the most frequently used strategy among female speakers is invade the other's space, followed by explicitly associate the other with a negative aspect. The least used strategy is condescend, scorn or ridicule strategy. It is clear that female speakers tended to attack the personal circle of the addressee negatively. This tendency indicates that females aggressively damage the face of the hearer offensively. In this way, the second used strategy is to attach a negative trait or portrait to the assigned person when addressing people. They infrequently resort to condescend, scorn or ridicule strategy to offend the negative face of the interlocutor.

It can be noticed that the correspondence between age groups and the use of output strategies of the negative impoliteness strategy varies against age. It illustrates that the age group that more frequently used condescend, scorn or ridicule strategy is age group (3), followed age group (2) then age group (1). Elderly female speakers used it 30.8%, which represents the
highest percentage among female speakers. This may mean that they used stupidity or stubbornness expressions ridiculously and hence causing harshly damage to the negative face of the addressee yet this particular strategy has been ranked the least of these output strategies. Middle age speakers came the second in which they used it 27.6%. This preference could imply that those female speakers possibly tended to distance themselves from the hearer in the use of this strategy. However, younger female speakers used this strategy more cautiously than the previous age groups in which they used it 17% and 24.4%, respectively.

Regarding *invade the other's space* strategy, the findings show that younger speakers employed it the most followed elderly speakers then middle age speakers. The former speakers used it 30.6% and 29.7%, respectively while the latter speakers used it 22.7% and 16.8%, respectively. The high demand of this strategy among younger speakers could indicate that younger speakers do not care much about the negative face of the hearer. It may also reflect the desire of younger speakers to show their power and status over the addressee. In contrast, it seems clear that middle age female speakers are more likely uninterested to use this strategy to address people as it may cause threatening act on the receiver aggressively.

As shown in Table (6) the group showing more instances of choosing explicitly associate the other with a negative aspect strategy is age group (1) followed by age group (3) then the age group (2). The former age group used it 15% and 38% while the latter groups utilized it 26% and 21%, respectively. This outcome could imply that younger female speakers have the tendency to attack the face of the addressee negatively, which could be interpreted differently. As such, Culpeper (1996, p.354) suggested that "the more intimate once becomes, the more impoliteness one employs." It sounds obvious that younger speakers turn their attention away from the offensive effect of the negative effect to the social bond they build among each other. Moreover, elderly speakers showed a preference to use this strategy to attack the face of the hearer negatively. In contrast, middle age speakers reflect dissatisfaction in using this strategy in addressing people. This shift of use of such strategy is a strong reflection of the various responses of impoliteness across age differences.

5. Conclusion

The study explored the impact of age and gender on the use of impoliteness strategies via the use of metaphorical expressions of stupidity or stubbornness. It has been pointed out that the most frequently used
strategy is positive impoliteness while the least used strategy is sarcasm. This could imply that Jordanian speakers are more likely in favor of attacking the positive face of the hearer. The infrequent use of sarcasm could imply that they attempt to avoid attacking or responding to face threatening act indirectly. Moreover, the study illustrates that the age group that used impoliteness strategies the most is age group (1) while the least age group that used these strategies is age group (2). This may mean that younger speakers tend to damage the face of the interlocutor more strikingly than middle age speakers do. Consequently, middle-age speakers tend to be conservative when addressing people to maintain social relationships with addressees. In contrast, elderly speakers showed more preference to threaten the face of the hearer using the bald-on-record strategy that explicitly implies the sense of directness.

The data analysis revealed that gender plays a pivotal role in the use of impoliteness strategies in JSA. It has been found out that elderly female speakers outweigh male counterparts in the use of positive output strategies, namely 'exclude the other from an activity', 'inappropriate identity markers' or 'obscure or secretive language' strategies. Furthermore, females used 'invade the other's space' strategy more frequently than the other output negative strategies, whereas males utilized 'condescend, scorn or ridicule' strategy the most. This preference could imply that both male and female speakers tended to damage the negative face of the interlocutor aggressively. This outcome contradicts a number of studies conducted in this field, to mention but a few Mills (2002), Yating (2014), Alshlool (2016), Al-Yasin and Rababa 2018 and others.

It is recommended that researchers could investigate the role of other social variables such as region or social status on the use of impoliteness strategies. Further, researchers could compare these results with western culture. In other words, it is suggested to compare the use of stupidity or stubbornness expressions in Arabic and foreign languages. Researchers could also shed the light on the role of paralinguistic language features like prosody, intonation or body language on the use of impoliteness strategies. Interestingly, further research is recommended to explore the use of impoliteness strategies in virtual and non-virtual data.

References


