

## **Linguistic Patterns of Politeness Forms and Strategies in Palestinian Arabic: A Functional- Pragmatic Analysis**

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**Abstract.** Natural data are presented in this paper for a functional pragmatic analysis where 38 utterances were selected for their politeness value from an informal dinner table conversation. The paper provides an analysis of polite forms in educated Palestinian Arabic (EPA). They are fairly typical and representative of a Palestinian table conversation to highlight various occurrences of polite forms. It illustrates how politeness strategies vary and reveals notable correspondence between pragmatic and social functions of polite forms as used in informal conversation, where EPA choices of forms of direct positive strategy predominate. Choices of politeness strategies correspond closely to Halliday's three metafunctions: the ideational content, the interpersonal or social aspects and the textual discourse which are taken into account.

### **1. Introduction**

1.1. Politeness is related to certain widely cited principles by linguists and other specialists. Politeness "is basic to the production of social order, and a precondition of human cooperation."<sup>(1)</sup> Politeness phenomena involve universal principles such as Grice's Cooperative Principle and its four maxims (Quality, Quantity, Relevance and Manner). Politeness involve six (or more) maxims of Tact, Generosity, Approbation, Modesty, Agreement and Sympathy.<sup>(2)</sup> Leech claims that the Cooperative Principle and Politeness Principle are coordinated principles. The Politeness Principle explains why, despite Grice's Maxims of Quality and Quantity, people sometimes quite appropriately say things that are false or less informative than is required.<sup>(3)</sup> However, politeness phenomena are reflected directly in language although they "may differ from group to

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- 1) See P. Brown and S.C. Levinson, *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), xiii.
  - 2) Geoffrey N. Leech, *Principles of Pragmatics* (London: Longman Group Limited, 1983), 16-132.
  - 3) Leech, *Principles*, 80; and see Brown and Levinson, *Politeness*, 4.

group, from situation to situation, or from individual" to individual."<sup>(4)</sup>

The term strategy, as taken in this study, is related to what is literally said and to what might have been intended or implicated.<sup>(5)</sup> Certain strategies are employed by the speaker (S) in the context of mutual vulnerability of face in order to avoid face-threatening acts (FTAs) in the process of communication, where at least three wants of relative weightings are taken into S's consideration to communicate the content of the FTA, another want is to be efficient or urgent, and the third is to maintain H's face to any degree.<sup>(6)</sup>

The following is a discussion of the main set of possible strategies and their types as schematized by Brown and Levinson.<sup>(7)</sup>

## 1.2. Positive and negative politeness/direct or indirect

In EPA speech acts may be performed either directly as in commands such as: (**'u'9ud 9ind 9ammak**): **Sit beside your uncle**; requests for action, as in: (**law t'a99di C 9ala haada lkursi**) **How about making C sit on this chair!**; requests for information as in: (**eesh Saar fi 'izaa9tu?**) **what happened to his radiostation?**; and assertions, as in: (**hayyha, bass mish 'aadir**): it is here, but I can't eat ; or indirectly as in: (**.....ma fish Deef..**): **there is no guest!** S's intention in this example appears to be totally the opposite to its surface meaning. It is meant to be very polite by indirectly conveying that the hearer (H) is treated as one of the owners of the house. 'Conversational implicature' is very important in order that the last example be understood. Semantics and pragmatics describe the meaning and utterance in different ways.<sup>(8)</sup>

These direct and indirect speech acts may be expressed by the two types of politeness; positive or negative.<sup>(9)</sup>

## 1.3. Politeness strategies

'Estimation of risk' of face loss is involved when politeness strategies are discussed.<sup>(10)</sup> The choice of a strategy is an act performed on record act baldly, without redress in the most direct, clear, unambiguous and concise way possible.<sup>(11)</sup> At the same level of doing FTAs, redressive action can also be done in that no such face threat is intended or desired by S towards H. S in general recognizes H's face wants and himself wants them to be achieved. Such redressive action takes one of two forms, depending on

(4) Brown and Levinson, *Politeness*, xiii.

(5) See *ibid.*, 8-9.

(6) See *ibid.*, 68.

(7) See *ibid.*, 69.

(8) See *ibid.*, 8.

(9) See Leo Hickey, "Surprise, But Do So Politely," *Journal of Pragmatics*, 15 (1991), 367-72; and see Leo Hickey, "Politeness Apart, Why Choose Indirect Speech Acts?," *Lingua e Stile*, 26, no. 1 (1992), 77-87.

(10) Brown and Levinson, *Politeness*, 60.

(11) See *ibid.*, 69-70.

which aspect of face (negative or positive) is being stressed.<sup>(12)</sup>

This strategy is in conformity with Grice's Maxims of Quality, Quantity, Relevance and Manner. These Maxims are an intuitive characterization of conventional principles that would constitute guidelines for achieving maximally efficient communication.<sup>(13)</sup>

Negative Politeness (NP) is essentially avoidance-based.<sup>(14)</sup> Direct linguistic forms uttered with FTAs have corresponding indirect forms which are formal conventionalized indirect speech acts, hedges, apologies for intrusion, etc.<sup>(15)</sup> The more effort S exerts in face-preserving work, the more he will be seen as trying to be polite. Thus, some indirect forms are more polite than others.

Positive Politeness (PP) is oriented towards H's positive face. In some respects it indicates H's wants by treating H as a friend. The potential FTA is minimized by the fact that S's wants are at least some of H's wants.<sup>(16)</sup>

Off record is developed for doing FTAs by which the actor leaves himself out by providing himself with defensible interpretations of his act. It is essentially indirect uses of language, and includes among other linguistic strategies metaphors, irony, rhetorical questions, understatements, tautology and hints, so that the meaning is to some degree negotiable.<sup>(17)</sup> It, therefore, violates the four Gricean Maxims.

## 2. Context and method

I used my native speaker's intuition as a criterion to select the social situations in relation to the three metafunctions of ideational content, interpersonal aspect and textual discourse as discussed by Halliday.<sup>(18)</sup> The three metafunctions (or aspects), developed by functional grammar, are the most directly relevant theoretical framework for this study and correspond closely to the context of this paper.

Polite linguistic patterns in EPA as understood here are directly reflected by these three functions (or aspects) of language involving S and H. "The one aspect of the use of Language-language in its experiential or ideational function expresses content,

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(12) See *ibid.*

(13) See *ibid.*, 94-95.

(14) See *ibid.*, 70.

(15) See *ibid.*, 57.

(16) See *ibid.*, 70; and see Leo Hickey, "Comparatively Polite People in Spain and Britain," *ACIS*, 4, no. 2 (Autuma 1991), 211.

(17) See Brown and Levinson, *Politeness*, 211.

(18) See M.A.K. Halliday, "Clause Types and Structural Functions," in *New Horizons in Linguistics*, ed. by John Lyons (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), 140-56; see M.A.K. Halliday, "Functional Diversity in Language, as Seen From a Consideration of Modality and Mood in English," *Foundations of Language*, 6 (1970), 322-61; see M.A.K. Halliday, *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (London: Edward Arnold, 1991).

relatable to the speaker's experience of the real world."<sup>(19)</sup> The content in the EPA utterance : **baaba byiHki: Dad speaks** could change in a systematic way by a choice involving two participants in the process instead of one,<sup>(20)</sup> as in: **baaba byiHki la maama: Dad speaks to Mom**. Here, we can look at the sentences' role as means of representing patterns of experience.

Language enables its speakers to build a mental picture of reality to make sense of their experience of what goes on around them and inside them. The sentence at this level (ideational), is the most significant grammatical unit that functions as the representation of the processes, or 'going-on', happening, feeling, being.<sup>(21)</sup>

The second, interpersonal, aspect involves a role relationship between S and H. In making the statement, **baaba byiHki**, S is taking upon himself a particular communication role and is inviting H to take the complementary role. So the expression of speech roles in a communication situation is one instance of the wider function whereby S enters into the communication process in its social and personal aspects, as in the EPA utterance : **hall baaba byiHki?: Does Dad speak?** The speaker is casting both himself and H in a different role relationship.<sup>(22)</sup>

The third aspect, also with a direct relation to the subject matter of this paper, texture or the textual discourse metafunction, is involved in the same statement **baaba byiHki**. It takes a particular form, as a message, that is operational in the given situation. A different message would be in: **illi byiHki huwwa baaba : The one who speaks is Dad** which has quite different presuppositions.<sup>(23)</sup>

Thus, politeness expressions denote meaning that other kinds of expressions usually express, and that may be interpreted in terms of all three functions. Components of meaning derived from these metafunctions and involved in the simple EPA statement: **baaba byiHki** are, in fact, normally present in an adult utterance.<sup>(24)</sup> Such simple sentence involves in its structure all these three elements simultaneously. As for the ideational content, the content is "this is what I have to say"; as for the interpersonal (or social) aspect, it is "this is where I come in," and as for the textual discourse, it is "this is the kind of message I want."<sup>(25)</sup>

The discussion of data in this paper tacitly involves variables such as the level of education, age and social class of participants which determine the linguistic style that affects pragmatic effectiveness. The Palestinian variety here may best be referred to as

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(19) See Halliday, "Functional Diversity."

(20) See *ibid.*

(21) See Halliday, *Introduction*, 101.

(22) See Halliday, "Functional Diversity," 325.

(23) See *ibid.*, 325-26.

(24) See *ibid.*, 326.

(25) See *ibid.*

'educated colloquial',<sup>(26)</sup> the variety dialect of Arabic which appears in our data in the sense that the question of discourse "how is speech used in social interaction?"<sup>(27)</sup> is involved. The ideational metafunction presented in deciding what politeness strategy to use is clearly affected by the people's level of education. Sex difference,<sup>(28)</sup> for instance, may be more obvious among less or non-educated people "or in certain sectors of a traditional Arab Society."<sup>(29)</sup>

The other two metafunctions of language, namely the interpersonal aspect and the textual discourse, appear to have no such marked social restrictions by reasons of the sociolinguistic variables of sex or age.

The data are oral and were collected at a dinner table conversation by taping it without the knowledge of the participants. The permission of the (all educated adults), to use the data in this study was obtained afterwards. The dinner table consisted of eight people, who were family members, in-laws and close friends. The owners of the house (the father who was in his early sixties, and the mother who was in her mid-fifties) were the host and hostess. The father-in-law of the owners' son (of a similar age to the owners) was invited together with his son and two close friends (all three were in their twenties). Finally, the daughter of the owners and her husband (both in their thirties) attended the dinner. The analysis throughout aims at answering two main questions. The first is how these polite linguistic acts function, and the second is why they are chosen. The answers always seem to involve politeness. Thus, the question of why such forms of politeness are used rather than others suggests that, whenever an indirect form is available, a direct form is also available. However, if direct and indirect forms are in complementary distribution, it makes it necessary to know the contexts and situations that determine one form and exclude the other in order to understand their use as a whole. The information conveyed by direct and indirect speech acts may be the same, that is to say, have the same illocutionary force (IF), but the most obvious difference between them is their linguistic structure, on the one hand, and their linguistic choice, on the other hand.<sup>(30)</sup>

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- (26) Alaa Elgibali, "Stability and Language Variation in Arabic: Cairene and Kuwaiti Dialects," in *Perspectives on Arabic Linguistics V*, ed. By Mushira Eid and Clive Holes (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1993), 75-96.
- (27) See Rodney Hudson, *Sociolinguistics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).
- (28) For a discussion of questions of politeness not directly related to those explored in this paper, see Jennifer Coates, *Women, Men and Language*, 5th ed. (London: Longman, 1988); B. Fraser, "A Review of Politeness Theorises," *Journal of Politeness*, special issue (1990), 14-12; R.J. Watts, et al., eds., *Politeness in Language: Studies in Its History, Theory, and Practice* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1992); R. Mao, "Beyond Politeness Theory: Face Revised and Renewed," *Journal of Pragmatic* (1994), 451-87; Janet Holmes, *Women, Men, and Politeness* (London: Longman, 1995).
- (29) Elgibali, "Stability," 78.
- (30) See Leo Hickey, Stylistics, Pragmatics and Pragmastylistics," *Langage et Littérature Modernes, Revue belge de Philologie et d'histoire*, 71 (1993), 573-86.

### 3. Discussion and results

#### 3.1. Positive politeness (PP)

The strongest and most persistent finding is the strategy of PP which predominates in the conversation used and is the greatest usage in the data. PP is oriented toward the positive face of H by indicating in some respects, S wants H's wants or at least some of them (e.g., by treating H as an in-group, a friend, etc.) ,or by the implication that S likes H so that FTA doesn't mean a negative evaluation in general of H's face. It is clear that in EPA people use direct forms as a cultural phenomenon for expressing IF especially in orders and requests, including offers among other speech acts.

3.1.1. The 'face-threatening act (FTA) is maintained on record' and S takes notice of H's wants. The following example is a complex clause which involves an exaggeration, and within the same utterance direct and indirect speech acts occur where the host, being hospitable to his guests, says the following:

(1). A ) **halla' Hishmitkum beenkum, mafii Deef, 'ana waLLahi maa ba9raf 'aDaayif.**

**Now if you are shy, your shyness reflects on you .No one here is treated as a guest, i.e., you are all treated as being members of the house , and by Allah I don't know how to be hospitable.**

The complex clause, according to Halliday, is of particular interest in spoken language, because it represents the dynamic potential of the system --the ability to 'choreograph' very long and intricate patterns of semantic movement while maintaining a continuous flow of discourse that is coherent without being constructural . This kind of flow is very uncharacteristic of written language.<sup>(31)</sup>

Two IFs are contained in the above utterance and dominated by the ideational content of S's utterance. The main IF conveys the intended meaning involved in the indirect speech form (making Hs believe that they are most welcome and should not feel shy). The other IF is secondary and is the unintended direct meaning used in the utterance form. This usage conveys a hint of exaggeration at the interpersonal aspect level and the textual discourse level. As a result, (B) greeting immediately follows (A), and was uttered by H (one of the guests) that presupposes S's knowledge of and concern for H's wants:

(2). B ) **aLLaah yHayyiik.**  
**May Allah greet you.**

This usage indicates that S knows H's wants and is taking them into account. The clause is a simple direct and positive speech act to convey clearly that S and H, here host and

(31) See Halliday, *Introduction*, 201-202.

guest respectively, are cooperating .

3.1.2. 'Exaggeration' in its positive sense as a PP strategy is much used by the Arab community in general and by EPA in particular. Many occurrences show emphasis as well as acceptable redundancy of linguistic elements. Here S wants H's wants, and the FTA is done on record without redress to H's wants. The following two examples are illustrations of interest and approval of H respectively:

- (3) **yislamu ' ideeki, kull shii bti9malii Hiiu.**  
**May Allah save your hands. Everything you make (cook) is delicious.**

The above example involves a prayer by one of the guests conveyed to the hostess as a greeting which is directly taken from the socio-religious culture. The following example uttered by the host as an approval of the guests, fulfils similar PP functions as the above and contains other linguistic elements and hedges, besides rituals, as follows:

- (4) **Tayyib, aywa, aywa.**  
**Good, yes, yes.**

Two functions predominating in the ideational metafunction appear in the above two examples. One is the socio-religious bound feature reflected through the usage of prayers, as in example (3), and accepted by all hearers as mere rituals. This feature reflects positively on the interpersonal (involving H) and textual (involving the setting) metafunctions. The second predominant feature, which is also determined by the ideational content, involving the referent, is the repetition of the linguistic elements intensifying agreement by repeating (**aywa**): *Yes* twice in example (4). Use of synonyms is another lexical device (**tayyib**) and (**aywa**) to express agreement in the same example.

3.1.3. 'Making a good story' is another PP strategy found in the data when S also shares and intensifies some of H's interests.<sup>(2)</sup> This is achieved by using the present to make H part of the events discussed. A short answer which occurs as a reaction to an event told by S when two members of the family in their package holiday had the plane delayed and they could not start their trip until the next day, and is achieved by S in the following simple clause:

- (5) **yruuH 9aleehum lyoom Tab9an.**  
**They have no time today, certainly.**

One feature of this strategy, as seen in example (5), is the use of directly quoted speech rather than reported speech. Cases such as when H is drawn into the conversation, usage of tag-questions and the usage of lexical devices such as 'you know,' etc., in English are found in EPA hedges as: (**Tab9an**): *certainly*. Such hedges in linguistic structure may have little conceptual importance but constitute commonly

<sup>(2)</sup> See Brown and Levinson, *Politeness*, 106.

used words in a language.<sup>(33)</sup>

Replies of H reflect full cooperation claiming common ground in the conversation. The technique of exaggeration is common in EPA and is found in the following example involving the same strategy of intensifying interest in H where S (here, the hostess) strongly invites H (one of the guests) to have some more to eat:

- (6) **la , la 'ishtghil b'alb wrabb.**  
**No, work with all your heart and honesty.**

The above textually bound utterance is related to the ideational content and interpersonal context.

When the conversation becomes cooperative, it overlaps with PP strategy of seeking agreement, such as an atmosphere of intrinsic interest and communication between S and H which takes place in the following exchange sharing context as example (5):

- (7) **S laazim y9awwDuuhum yoom.**  
**The airline must compensate them for one day.**
- H raaH 9aleehum lyoom.**  
**They have lost the whole day.**

S (one of the guests) shares interests with H (the host) some of which are reflected in the overlap of seeking agreement in H's reply, which reflects ultimate cooperation, interest and agreement with H.

3.1.4. Use of in-group identity markers is a PP strategy used in numerous ways. S can implicitly claim common ground with H by using certain address forms, terms of dialect, jargon, slang or ellipsis. This occurs frequently due to the fact that the social distance among the people involved is very slight since they enjoy a close relationship, as shown in the following utterance by the host, who is the uncle of one of the guests:

- (8) **haat 'aHuTTillak min haada ya khaali.**  
**Give me (your plate) to put some food for you, nephew.**

The use of (ya khaali): nephew is used as an address form. It is also used as an in-group marker that reflects an intimate relationship, as well as a term which appears here to make the imperative (**haat 'aHuTTillak**): **Give me (your plate)** milder. The term can be considered in this use as S approaching H by rendering the expression from PP into a request which may be an FTA redress. It involves ellipsis of (**your plate**). Because of the reliance on a shared mutual knowledge to make ellipsis comprehensible,

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(33) See *ibid.*, 146-47.



there is an inevitable association between the use of ellipsis and the existence of the in-group shared knowledge. Ellipsis is always a PP when it occurs in such contexts. Similar linguistic repertoires are implied in the following by the daughter addressing her mother:

- (9) **(beddi) baas SaLaTa ya maa ma.**  
**I only want salad , Mom.**

**(maa ma):** *Mom* is the address form term used as an in-group identity marker. In the first slot, a clause such as **(beddi): I want** is ellipted. The following utterances also illustrate similar ellipsis in their first slot where (10) is used by the hostess addressing one of the guests, and (11) is the guest addressing the hostess:

- (10) **(biddak) haadi laHma. walla (biddak) jaaj ?**  
**(Do you want) meat, or (do you want) chicken?**
- (11) **(beddi) shwayit khuDra, law samaHti, bass shwayya.**  
**(I want) Some vegetables, if you don't mind. Only a little.**

The ellipsis is comprehensible here because the shared mutual knowledge of the context between S and H is established. The use in example (11), as in (9) above, is an imperative form for a request. The elliptical clauses may be **(beddi): I want (HuTTiili): put for me**, or **(’a9Tiini): give me** which may occur at the beginning of the utterance. The request precedes the usage of the ellipted imperative: **(bass SaLaTa): only salad** as in (9) above, and **(bass shwayya): only some** as in example (11) above. However, because example (10) is an offer in the form of a statement it requires a clause addressing H to fill the first slot of the offer. The clause(s) may be similar to those which can fill the first slot of (9) and (11), but the pronoun suffixes **(-ak)** or **(-ik): you** attached to the verb is inflected for the second person singular (masculine): **(biddak): Do you want; ’a9Tiik: Shall I give you; or (’aHuTTillak): Shall I serve you; etc.**

3.1.5. Seeking agreement and avoidance of disagreement are strategies of PP which overlap here. Both are discussed together below because most of the exchanges found in the data are blends. These two strategies are related in that they claim a common ground with H. But to seek agreement is for H to see if it is possible to agree with S. And to avoid disagreement is S's desire to agree with H. The following exchange is a good example where in (12) the host utters his statement, then completes it in example (13) as the speaker; and H is one of the guests:

- (12) **S maa ba9raf ’aDayyif**  
**I don't know how to to be formal ( with guests ).**
- (13) **S li’anni ma baHubbish ’atDDayyaf.**  
**because I don't like to be treated formally .**

**H ma Hada biddu taDyeef.**  
**No one is in need to be treated formally.**

The use in (12) and the exchange in (13) above show indirect PP. Using the expression to be formal is the key content in the ideational metafunction to create the context. It has been successfully manipulated at the interpersonal level as well. S in exchange (13) is justifying his previous usage in utterance (12) to avoid disagreement. H is cooperating in (13) and seeking agreement with S by stressing that no one is in need to be treated formally. Formality avoidance is the indirect implied concept of expressing the ultimate feeling of friendliness and close relationship. Such exaggerated feelings are common in using various expressions at the ideational function level in the dialect discussed.

3.1.6. The strategy of presupposing, raising or asserting common ground has many occurrences in short utterances as well as long stories or bits of gossip. Questions or requests presuming the answer 'yes' are widely used as a means to indicate that S knows H's wants, and the FTA is partially redressed. The speaker here is the daughter addressing her mother as follows:

(14) **maa ma, tu'u9di hoon?**  
**Mom, would you sit here?**

This question used by S to offer a seat to H reveals that S and H share the ideational and the textual metafunctions. Another example of a similar strategy is the following utterance by the host to all the guests:

(15) **yalla ya jamaa9a, ta9aalu.**  
**Come on (you group), come there .**

The politeness imperative form is an offer of a seat, and the answer ( yes ) is presupposed by S.

The politeness form of the affirmation, besides questions and requests, is used as an offer too, as in the following utterance by the hostess to one of the guests:

(16) **haada kuDaar. bitHubb taakul ma9aah ?**  
**These are vegetables. Would you like to have some ?**

Another technique of politeness found in the data for offering is that of calling people by the hostess, as in:

(17) **laban? fii laban ya X.**  
**Yogurt? There is yogurt, X.**

This linguistic usage of politeness involves presupposed knowledge of H's wants and

attitudes by the hostess. The question of offering various choices as in examples (16) and (17) involves linguistic forms socially considered as friendly and hospitable.

3.1.7. Assert or presuppose S's knowledge of, and concern for, H's wants is considered as a major class of PP according to Brown and Levinson's divisions.<sup>(34)</sup> This PP class derives from the want to convey that S and H are cooperating in the relevant activity. They both share goals which serve to redress H's positive face want. H's wants are presupposed by S's knowledge in the following examples, where the speaker in (18) is one of the guests, and in (19) is the host:

(18) **'ana biddi 'abda' bhaada.**  
I want to start with this.

(19) **'Ibida' billinta 9aayzu.**  
Start with whatever you like.

Potential pressure on H to cooperate with S implies H's wants and willingness to fit in with his wants. H in utterance (18) accepts this potential pressure and cooperates with S. Utterance (19) is another example of the same strategy concerning H's wants where freedom of choice for H is confirmed.

3.1.8. Offer and promise are implemented only a few times in the data, as in the following utterance by the hostess mother addressing her daughter:

(20) **law t'a99di C 9ala haada lkursi!**  
How about seating C on this chair!

The linguistic device of a request functions as an offer. It is an indirect to redress the potential threat of the FTA by S to stress cooperation with H by offering what H wants.

3.1.9. Include both S and H in the activity is another PP strategy which stresses the cooperativeness of S's action as in:

(21) **bitHubbu ninti'il ?**  
Would you like us to move?

The question here functions as a request to invite people indirectly to move by using the inclusive (you) and (us) as shown in the plural suffix for the second person: **(-u): You** and the prefix **(ni-): We**, in (bitHubbu) and (ninti'il) respectively. Here, S calls upon cooperative assumptions and thereby addresses FTAs.

3.1.10. Give reason is another PP strategy implemented by including H in the activity in that S gives reasons why he wants what he wants. The following example takes the form

(34) See ibid., 125-29

of insertion by the hostess of one of the guests followed by reported speech in the same utterance to provide the reason:

- (22) **haada saute khuDaar. 'aalatli Z biyHubbu baaba.**  
**This is vegetable saute . Z told me that Dad likes it.**

The hostess goes off record by the act of pressurizing H and testing him to see if he is being cooperative. The context of the utterance involves ideational content in that it contains pressurizing and testing H's intention.

3.1.11. Give gifts is the final strategy found in our data related to the third major division of PP to fulfil H's wants by directly redressing his or her positive face. It indicates that S wants H's wants for H in some particular respect. Giving gifts to H includes satisfying H's positive-face wants, not only the classical giving of tangible gifts, such as in (23) below, where the speaker is one of the guests addressing the host and the hostess, and in (24) where the hostess replies to one of the guests:

- (23) **yalla. Yaarab; sallim 'ideeki ya Y. w'inshaaLLa daayman 9aamir.**  
**Come on. May Allah praise your hands, Y. May Allah bless you.**

- (24) **SaHteen w9aafya. 'ahlan wa sahlam.**  
**May Allah grant you health and well being. You are welcome.**

The above usages of politeness occur in various linguistic forms to fulfil positively the same purpose of S giving H intimacy in the assertion of rituals as well as understanding and cooperation.

### 3.2. Negative politeness (NP)

The second major politeness strategy examined involves NP, which forms the heart of respectful behavior. Where PP is free-ranging, NP is specific, focused and minimizes the unavoidable effects of FTAs. It is more common in some Western cultures than PP.<sup>(35)</sup> So, NP strategy is of a conventionalized set of linguistic strategies for FTA redress, such as etiquette, conventional indirectness, hedges on IF, polite pessimism and the like. NP is addressed to H's negative face using more complex linguistic forms than those used in PP, in order to satisfy H's face wants. It is oriented mainly towards satisfying H's negative face and self determination. Realization of NP strategies consist in assurances that S recognizes and respects H's negative face wants or freedom of action.

3.2.1. Be conventionally indirect is one maxim of negative politeness manifested in the data. The offer, here, is made by the hostess to one guest:

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(35) See *ibid.*, 29-30.

- (25) **eesh ra'yak filma'luuba ? 'ana biddiish tjaamil, laHsan tkuun maa btakulha.**  
**What do you think about (having) some of this up-side-down (meal)? I don't want you to flatter, may be you don't like it.**

An indirect offer is implemented in a question form. It is followed by a negative statement and then by giving freedom of choice to H though his acceptance is desired. However, the FTA has a negative-face redress by avoiding coercing H's response and giving H an explicit option of not doing the act. Another occurrence of the same strategy reflecting a similar class of redressing H's negative-face want using a different linguistic technique is the following utterance by one of the guests to the hostess:

- (26) **bass bass 'aLLah yirDa 9aleeki ya Y.**  
**Enough, enough, may Allah be pleased with you, Y.**

In EPA, the particle (**bass**): **enough**, and the rituals (**'aLLah yirDa 9aleeki**): **may Allah be pleased with you** are common usages in which a true feeling may be developed in the interpersonal context. The above example reveals that H suspends coerciveness on S.

3.2.2. Be pessimistic is another linguistic NP strategy that can be seen in the following use by the hostess to one of the guests:

- (27) **fii khubuz. binjiib khubuz.**  
**There is some bread. We(can) bring some bread.**

The utterance gives redress to H's negative face by using the expletive particle (**fii**): **There is** once, and the clause (**binjiib**): **we (can) bring** thereafter. The two lexical devices indicate a similar conversational implicature which implies politeness by confirming to H the existence of "bread" once, which is immediately followed by expressing willingness to bring it by using the clause (**binjiib**): **We (can) bring**.

3.2.3. Minimizing the imposition involves NP, as in the following offer by the hostess to one of the guests:

- (28) **ma'luuba haat yaLLa 'aHuTTillak maghrafa. bass haat.**  
**Up-side-down (meal), bring (your plate), (Do) pass your plate let me put for you a serving spoon. (Really) Just bring it.**

Deference here is expressed through the hedges on illocutionary force (IF) implied in (**yaLLa**): **(Do) Come on**, (**bass**): **(Really) just**, besides using (**maghrafa**): **a serving spoon**; all uses function as narrowly delimiting the extent of the FTA. The verb (**yaLLa**) in the imperative mood implies **(Do)** and **(please)**, and helps to minimize the imposition. It seems that, in EPA, performative hedges are encoded in devices like (**yaLLa**) and

(bass) which may hedge on IF propositional content, as in (28) above. The sincerity condition is implied in the coerciveness which may hedge the IF with no one clear literal meaning for it. As is the case here, the S is committed toward what he is saying, and in so doing modifying the IF.

3.2.4. Give deference is an NP strategy which can be realized if H is treated as being of a higher social status than S. Here deference defuses a potential FTA by indicating and recognizing H's rights. The following examples involve deference by indicating that H's wants are more important than S's, and hence become S's wants, where (29) is uttered by the guest addressing the host, and (30) is by the host:

(29) **ween ma biddak tu'9ud .**  
**Wherever you want to sit.**

(30) **laa 'illi birayyHak 'inta. ween ma biddak 'ana btifri'sh ma9i.**  
**No, whatever comforts you. Wherever you want. It does not make any difference to me.**

Utterance (29) is a short response indicating deference and in a way refusing to coerce H. In example (30), deference is more explicitly expressed by using long expressions reflecting that H's wants are more important to S than S's wants, as in (**'ana btifri'sh ma9i**): **It does not make any difference to me.** Moreover, the pronoun ('inta): you addresses the FTA reflecting S's humble attitude. S pays H positive face of a particular kind which satisfies H's want to be treated with such deference by S. Thus, deference serves to defuse potential FTAs by indicating that H's rights are recognized by S.

3.2.5. Doing an FTA can be redressed by apologizing which is another linguistic strategy of NP, as in the following appeal by one of the guests to the hostess:

(31) **laa waLLaahi ma 9aad fiyyi.**  
**No, by Allah, I really can't.**

None of the above uses admits impingement. That is S, by apologizing for doing an FTA, indicates his reluctance to impinge on H's face. One way of showing reluctance in doing the FTA is the usage of the ritual term (**waLLaahi**): **by Allah**, and the negating particle (**laa**): **no**, which are linguistic devices reflecting the implied apology of H to fulfil S's requirements. These linguistic means are commonly used in EPA showing FTA-sensitivity. Moreover, overwhelming reasons for doing the FTA may be given, implying that H's negative face will not be threatened in normal cases. The reasons are given here through swearing, as in (31) (**waLLaahi**): **by Allah**, to make such reasons more convincing.

3.2.6. Negative face is threatened directly in the data by the strategy of pluralization of the 'you' and 'I' pronouns as used in the third clause of example (32) below. The

conversation analyzed at this point tends to be more formal, close and friendly, as seen in the following utterance made by the host to the guest:

- (32) **laa ya 9ammi. w'iHna bnaakul khubuz. kulli nnaas btaakul khubuz.  
No, my friend (literally: uncle). We also eat bread. All people eat bread.**

Linguistic techniques such as the address form (**ya 9ammi**): **my friend (uncle)**, as well as the negating particle (**laa**): no help, at the interpersonal level, the requirement for S to be understood, approved of and admired. The usage contains three simple clauses. The first starts with the negating particle (**laa**) and the address form (**ya 9ammi**), in which sincere and friendly feeling is implied. The negative article used here presumes 'yes', and indicates that S knows H's wants, tastes, habits, etc., and thus enhances the mutual feelings shared by S and H. It is S's wish to convey such assumptions through this choice of polite indirect speech act. The second clause uses the inclusive 'we' instead of 'I' which reflects the friendly atmosphere. The plural pronoun provides a conversational 'out' for H: as if S were giving H the option to interpret as applying to him. Whereas S uses the general reference including himself in the second clause, he excludes himself and H by using another generalized reference to all people in the third clause. The grammatical device may be considered a sophisticated negatively polite way to solve a problem presuming interactional termination which causes intrinsic FTA redress. In other words, the plural references can be understood as motivated by S's wants to account for conversational indirectness.

### 3.3. Bald-on-record

The third major politeness type found in our data is bald-on-record, which goes in conformity with Grice's Maxims as intuitive characterization and guidelines of conversational principles. Doing an act baldly, without redress, involves doing it in the most clear, unambiguous and concise way possible (for example, for request, say 'Do X!'). Grice's Maxims constitute guidelines for achieving maximally efficient communication. These Maxims define assumptions which underline every talk exchange. However, not all utterances must meet those Maxims when there is a desire to give some attention to face, and politeness is a major source of deviation. Generally, bald-on-record usage is chosen by S whenever S wants to do FTA to satisfy H's face wants as in offers, requests, suggestions that are clearly in H's interest and do not require great sacrifices of S.<sup>(36)</sup>

3.3.1. The FTA-oriented bald-on-record strategy occurs many times. Here, these uses can also fall under this strategy where doing an FTA is primarily in H's interest. The speaker in (33) is addressing the owners of the house; and in (34) the host addresses the guest:

- (33) **ta9aalu ya jamaa9a nu'9ud hoon.**  
**Let us sit here, guys.**

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(36) See *ibid.*, 69.

- (34) **'i9mil illi birayyHak. ween ma biddak ..**  
**Do, whatever comforts you. Wherever you want.**

The above sentences involve politeness in that they contain conversational implicature. The FTA redress is not necessary because mutual orientation between S and H is ultimately achieved. These uses may fall under the potential functional category of welcoming.

Mutual cooperation is automatically placed interpersonally and textually because such uses are common and habitual. Both S and H accept them (or similar ones) to occur and be achieved according to H's wants as in this context, which refer to as 'group specific' and hence 'idiosyncratic'.<sup>(37)</sup>

A representation of the potential FTA in the 'offer' category can be found in the following utterance by the daughter to her mother:

- (35) **maa ma 'u'u9di hoon. (with falling intonation)**  
**Mom, sit down here.**

This pre-emptive invitation is firm enough, and its politeness is guaranteed through the falling intonation. Face redress is also felt to be unnecessary where focus of interaction is task-oriented at the interpersonal level. The main IF behind the imperative form is a request to sit down which is achieved by the interpersonal function of mutual orientation. In other words, the risk that H may not wish to receive such invitation as in example (35) above is small. Thus, delivering such an invitation baldly on record helps making the conversation in this context firm. So, provided that no other face wants are infringed, the firmer the invitation, the more polite it is.<sup>(38)</sup>

### 3.4. Off-record

Off-record occurs least in our data. It occurs when S wants to do an FTA but wants to avoid the responsibility for doing it. General and different utterances from what S means occur in the data to reflect their indirect uses.

3.4.1. Invite conversational implicature is the first type of the off-record politeness strategy, which occurs in the data in the form of a simple clause. S gives a hint that is not explicitly relevant in order to invite H to search for an interpretation of its possible relevance. The guest who asks for some bread justifies his request by saying:

- (36) **'ana fallaaH .**  
**I am a countryman.**

---

(37) See *ibid.*, 63-64.

(38) See *ibid.*, 99-100.



This indirect off-record clause is accomplished by the hint of a simple concept of being a 'a countryman'. The use states motives or reasons for doing the desired act. The Relevance Maxim is generally achieved by S saying something that is explicitly relevant to the context. But here, the Maxim of Relevance is violated by S's conversational implicature where the mutual S-H knowledge guarantees H's understanding and qualifying relevance. The indirect request by S to get some bread here, has been achieved by referring to the shared cultural knowledge in the EPA.

3.4.2. Overstate is another off-record usage where the sense of exaggeration in its negative implication involves conversational implicature. This is achieved via hints by violating Grice's Maxim of Quantity, as in the following utterance used by the hostess addressing the guests:

- (37) **ma9 P'akil bninsa Haalna. laa binjiib 7up wala Haaja.**  
**We tend to forget many things when we start to eat. We haven't brought 7**  
**UP or anything else (to drink).**

There are two IFs in this usage. The main IF is in the intended indirect meaning to convey sense of apology implied in the exaggerated expressions in (**forget many things**) and (**we haven't brought... anything else**) in which S says more than is necessary; and the secondary IF is implied in the direct meaning to bring '7 UP.' The utterance conveys an excuse for not bringing the soft drink '7 UP.'

3.4.3. Rhetorical question is NP off-record strategy where the sincerity condition qualifies the Quality Maxim. Sometimes questions leave their answer hanging in mid air to do an FTA. However, the use here provides the rhetorical question emphasized explicitly by its implied answer:

- (38) **ya9ni lfallaHiin illi byaaklu bass khubuz?**  
**Do you mean that it is only countrymen who eat bread?**

The word (**bass**): **only** which carries a positive connotation, functions as a force in the rhetorical interpretation of the question here, i.e., to place on record. The question implies no intention of obtaining an answer. S wants H to provide her with the indicated information. This sincerity condition follows the quality maxim, and here the word (**bass**) forces the rhetorical interpretation.

#### 4.1. Conclusion

Positive politeness predominates in our data and is the strongest and most persistent finding in EPA conversational usage. The direct form is the most commonly occurring type of strategy, which may cause affront if used with people from those Western societies in which negative politeness may be the most predominant strategy.

PP then seems to be desired by the speakers of EPA . Various linguistic devices are manipulated, such as a complex clause representing a dynamic potential with two IFs, main and secondary, as in example (1) above. Usage of rituals and exaggeration predominates in usages, such as in examples (2), (3), (6), etc. Repetition of linguistic elements in short utterances is common for emphasis and acceptable redundancy, as in example (4). FTAs are done on record to show S's wants. When conversation becomes very cooperative, one strategy may overlap with another and an atmosphere of intrinsic interest and communication between S and H continues, as in examples (7), (12) and (13).

NP is the other most common type of politeness used by speakers of EPA and the direct form predominates. Devices vary to minimize the unavoidable effects of FTAs such as an indirect offer using a question form, as in example (25) above. A negated statement and giving freedom of choice are other linguistic devices to avoid coercing H. Rituals appear again as a common device, as in example (26), where a sincere feeling is developed using NP. Explicit linguistic devices occur for expressing pessimism through using certain lexical forms, as appears in example (27) above. To minimize imposition, imperatives may be used as in example (28). Deference which defuses a potential FTA is used by explicitly indicating that S recognizes H's rights, as in (29), (30) and (32) above. Apologizing is another linguistic NP device as in (31) above.

The bald-on-record type has the lowest number of examples in the data under scrutiny. It occurs almost solely in direct forms, which seem to be highly culture-specific. As a result, mutual cooperation is automatically placed interpersonally and textually. The indirect forms dominate in some utterances which share with PP the direct forms as in giving gifts to H by satisfying his positive face wants, overstate and rhetorical questions as frequent devices in EPA, as in examples (36),(37) and (38) above.

Hedges also appear in all strategies. Usages of mixture of strategies in the one utterance takes place as in PP seeking agreement and avoiding disagreement.

When FTA minimization reaches a considerable level, certain strategies are sought in EPA to mitigate potential threat to face. These mitigators are like usages of certain terms as: **(ya 8ammi) : my uncle (Sir)**, repetition of phrases or words, swearing by Allah, and expressions of positive intentions. These usages may be explained as contradictions of H's unexpected opinions, beliefs or expectations, and a potential threat to face.

In EPA, linguistic devices together with the potentiality of the three metafunctions of language are involved in determining the degree of the polite forms used. Here, S spends effort more in face-maintaining linguistic behavior which makes S communicate his sincere desire in order to satisfy H's face wants. This takes place even though that politeness phenomena may differ from group to group, from situation to situation or

from individual to individual.

#### **4. 2. Recommendations for further research**

This paper casts light on politeness strategies as used in EPA. A casual context has been the focus of attention here, which reveals considerable features of politeness usages occurring naturally around a dinner table. The study paves the way for more investigation not only in the Arabic dialect of Palestine, but also in other Arabic dialects.

There are other levels on which further research into this subject is required to complement conclusions of this research. The first is a more formal level involving people with less intimate relations so that other usages of politeness forms are naturally revealed.

Another level for investigation is a general one on which research would be carried out in other less socially related contexts such as in offices or, among school staff, for the interest in acquiring more understanding of how politeness is used in partly similar or partly different contexts.

Empirical research might use video or audio equipment to record selected social events in particular situations such as a meeting in an office by applying the same functional framework as this paper. One could hypothesize a similar conclusion as the one arrived at here, that positive politeness requires more intimate acquaintance to manifest itself in linguistic expressions that does negative politeness.

## Appendix 1

### 1.1. Abbreviations:

EPA : Educated Palestinian Arabic  
 IF(s) : Illocutionary Force(s)  
 S : Speaker  
 H : Hearer  
 FTA(s): Face Threatening Act(s)  
 PP : Positive Politeness  
 NP : Negative Politeness

### 1.2. Transliteration system:

#### 1.2.1. Short vowels

i  
e  
a  
o  
u

#### 1.2.2. Long vowels

ii  
ee  
aa  
oo  
uu

#### 1.2.3. Diphthongs

aw  
ay  
iy

#### 1.2.4. Consonants

b	m	<u>th</u>	: Voiceless dental fricative	H	: Voiceless pharyngeal fricative
d	n	<u>sh</u>	: Voiceless postalveolar fricative	L	: Dark (L)
f	p	<u>gh</u>	: Voiced velarfricative	q	: Voiced uvular plosive
g	s	<u>kh</u>	: Voiceless velar fricative	'	: Voiceless glottal plosive
h	t	S	: Emphatic (s)		
j	v	D	: Emphatic (d)		
k	y	T	: Emphatic (t)		
l	z	9	: Voiced pharyngeal fricative		

## دراسة لغوية لتراكيب ظاهرة التلطف وصيغها في اللهجة العربية الفلسطينية:

### تحليل وظائفها - براهماتيكي

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**ملخص البحث.** يحتوي المقال على بيانات تم تجميعها بصورة طبيعية من أجل إجراء تحليل وظائفها - براهماتيكي لصيغ التلطف ، حيث تم انتقاء ٣٨ استخداما من البيانات ، تحتوي على أكبر قيمة في استخدام التلطف ، وذلك من محادثة تمت حول مائدة عشاء غير رسمية . ويستعرض البحث تحليل التراكيب اللغوية في اللهجة الفلسطينية للمتعلمين، كما تعتبر الاستخدامات المتنوعة للتراكيب اللغوية التي تستخدم عادة في المحادثات الفلسطينية حول مائدة عشاء . وتبرز النتائج تراكيب ظاهرة التلطف اللغوية ومدى ارتباطها المباشر بالوظائف البراهماتيكية والاجتماعية في المحادثات غير الرسمية ، ويهتم الاختيار على التلطف الإيجابي بالدرجة الأولى في هذه اللهجة ، كما يتم استخدام أنواع التلطف الأخرى . وتوضح النتائج أيضا ارتباط اختيار أنواع التلطف ارتباطا مباشرا بكل من النظم الوظائفية الثلاثة التي درسها وطورها اللغوي هاليداي ، في تفسير سياق الموقف ، وهي : المكون الفكري ، والمكون العلائقي، والمكون النصائي اللغوي .