

Research Article

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The Communication of Viewpoints in Jordanian Arabic: A Pragmatic Study

<https://doi.org/10.1515/opli-2022-0191>

received April 28, 2021; accepted May 17, 2022

Abstract: Expressing opinions is considered a significant communicative act frequently taking place in our conversations. It is one of the fairly neglected areas of research in the Arabic context. Among the studies conducted on the communicative acts, to the best of our knowledge, there has been no attempt to investigate the expressions of opinion and its strategies specifically in Jordanian Arabic (JA). To this end, the current study intends to investigate the communicative act of opinion giving in JA with reference to gender disparities. Data elicited from 50 male and 50 female speakers of JA via Discourse Completion Task and role-plays revealed that Jordanians resort to a mixture of expressions to convey their opinion clearly. They use various types of strategies, including direct expression of opinion, indirect manifestation of opinion, advice, suggesting, enumeration, prayers, address terms, complaining, personalized hedges, and rarely opting out. In addition, gender differences were also noticed in expressing this speech act. Males use direct expression strategy and imperative expression significantly more than the female participants, whereas the females used six strategies significantly more than their male counterparts: indirect expression, advice, personalized hedges, suggesting, prayers, and address terms.

Keywords: gender, Jordanian Arabic, politeness, speech act, the expression of opinion

1 Introduction

Language is paramount in shaping reality through influencing people's perceptions. In our daily lives, people communicate to convey information, identify identities, express feelings, share thoughts, give opinion, and strengthen relationships. We communicate using different utterances with different meanings and different functions, and such verbal productions can be referred to as speech acts. Austin (1962) defined speech acts as the actions executed in saying something, whereas for Lyons (1977, 730) it is "an act performed in saying something." Speech acts such as inviting, thanking, threatening, promising, and advising play a vital role in language as they are related to human behavior and can help us study the social and cultural norms of a language in a certain community. Giving opinion is one of these speech acts that are most commonly found in daily conversations. However, it is expressed differently across societies. In this research, the focus will be on the Jordanian society, showing how they express their opinions and how both genders could differ in demonstrating their viewpoints.

Several linguistic studies (e.g., Brown and Levinson 1987, Barron and Schneider 2009, Al-Adaileh 2007, Al-Fattah 2010, Al Hammuri 2011, Al-Zubaidi 2011, Eshreteh 2014) have been conducted on discourse analysis and pragmatics because of the impact of the community and the language in shaping and influencing people's opinions. Some of them concentrated on the structures that can be used to describe the

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positively and negatively perceived strategies and structures of the discourse and their connection to various related ideologies (Van Dijk 2001). One of the most important techniques is studying the language as a cultural and social phenomenon (Fairclough 1992). Culture is viewed by Kroeber and Kluckhohn's (1952, 86) as consisting of "patterned ways of thinking, feeling and reacting, acquired and transmitted mainly by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historical derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values." In light of the fact that cultures are diverse, the underlying norms, values, and attitudes that affect the ways people communicate might be reflected differently in their usage of language. For instance, Jordanian people may express their opinions differently about a specific situation that totally differs from that of other people. In this regard, variables like the dialect, context, and social factors and education degree perform a significant role. Therefore, critical analysis of linguistic expressions used for conveying opinions helps in revealing the attitude, the cultural norms, and values of the speaker that drive him/her to carefully select one linguistic form rather than another.

The communicative act of giving opinions relies on the exchange of arguments and views among speakers and the articulation of individual opinions in public (Tocqueville 1984). Various theories have linked individual behaviors like opinion expression to macro-level factors such as the perception of opinion climates (Glynn et al. 1997). One of these theories considers that perceptions of the distribution of opinion on a given issue will influence individuals' willingness to express their opinions on these issues (Noelle-Neumann 1993). The expression of opinions is a multidimensional construct (Scheufele 1999). Some dimensions (i.e., age, social, and contextual variables) are the focus of this research study as they exert some influence on the expression of opinion. That is why speakers vary in their selection of certain linguistic ways rather than others which may give dissimilar effects in different situations. For example, the speaker can describe his/her opinion, about English language by saying: ("اختر انجليزي بس اذا انت تحبه و مهتم فيه", "Choose English only if you like it or are interested in), ('على ما اعتقد ان اللغة الإنجليزية ضرورية'), ("I think English is necessary"), ("choose English and English only, فقط واختار انجليزي و انجليزي فقط"). Linguistic may be spontaneous but intended at the same time, and analyzing such choices displays the discourse advantages that many expressions may exhibit.

2 Statement of the problem

Speech acts play a significant role in all cultures across the world. Despite the fact that several studies were conducted to investigate speech acts in Jordanian Arabic (JA) (Bataineh 2006, Al-Adaileh 2007, Al-Momani 2009, Al Hammuri 2011, Al-Khawaldeh and Žegarac 2013, Al-Khawaldeh 2014, 2016, Al-Khawaldeh and Abu Hijlah 2018), speech act of giving opinions is rather under investigated. Because little attention has been paid to the communicative acts of giving opinion in the Jordanian culture, the present study is an attempt to fill the gap by investigating Jordanian's style of conveying opinions. This study focuses on the linguistic expressions used in giving opinion and the gender differences.

The current researcher has paid attention to certain speech act features in Jordanian discourse concerning the well-known expressions of opinions. Such linguistic expressions are distinctive in linguistics which are worth studying. For instance, the researcher realized that specific positive and negative expressions were clearly utilized to influence listeners' views concerning a specific situation that may act among Jordanians. Where positive politeness involves expressing solidarity and preserving a positive self-image that the addressee claims for himself/herself designating that the speakers want what the hearer wants, negative politeness involves showing the speaker's recognition of the addressee's unwillingness to interfere with the addressee's action choice (Brown and Levinson 1987). Whether people converse using their first or foreign language, they largely follow culture-specific rules. These rules could constrain our production and interpretation of the target speech act. The unawareness of specific cultural features could lead to misrealization and misinterpretation of speech acts used.

Gender is considered a vital variable that has a substantial impact on communicative acts' production and perception (Mulac et al. 2001, Al-Khawaldeh and Žegarac 2013). Nevertheless, there is no study relative

to gender on the expression of opinion in the Jordanian culture. Moreover, gender differences and their underlying representation are still a very much debated topic. Some people claim that these dissimilarities mirror cultural influence of the power differential among males and females, whereas others argue that they do not (Mills 2003). Furthermore, Jordan is influenced by the tribal community that exerts certain limitations on social interactions motivated by religious and sociocultural norms, which are likely to be clearly reflected in the production/interpretation of speech acts by both sexes.

3 Significance of the study

The importance of this study lies in the fact that linguistic features of giving opinion by Jordanians have not been investigated by researchers before. So, this study is an attempt to enlighten people about the way linguistic expressions are used by Jordanians to convey their viewpoints. Thus, this makes the study distinct and unique in terms of interest. It helps other speakers from different cultural backgrounds understand the Jordanian social-cultural norms and reduce the amount of the chances of miscommunication. It is evident that Jordanian society used a variety of distinct strategies that may differ from strategies used in other societies in expressing their opinions that could be attributed to religious factors and sociolinguistic features. Any difference in the linguistic realization and the sociopragmatic judgments relating to the use of certain strategies other than others in specific contexts could lead to misunderstanding between speakers of different languages. Highlighting the distinctive sociocultural features and their impact on the perception and usage of opinion giving strategies could help language learners not to fall in the trap of misunderstanding. It is also expected that this study will enrich and bridge the gap in the field of pragmatics and discourse analysis, especially the speech acts in Jordanian variety of Arabic. Researchers who are interested in cultural differences in communication may use this study as a reference point for further, advanced comparative research.

4 Theoretical background

The study falls within the field of pragmatics, mainly speech act theory and politeness theories. Expressing opinion is a speech act: an utterance that has a performative function in communication and closely related to the context. The speech act of giving opinions or suggestions is considered to be a directive act, by which the speaker gets the listener to commit him/her to some different beliefs and/or actions. Studies in pragmatics have identified opinions as a potential point of miscommunication between two speakers and/or cultures (Polish and Anglo). Wierzbicka (1985, 160) states that opinions are expressed “forcefully” and they are to some extent similar to statements of fact. Previous theories have attached individual behaviors such as opinion expressions to macro-level factors such as the understanding of opinion ambience, that is, the understanding of opinion distribution in a specific society (for more details, see Glynn et al. 1997). Opinions need to be carefully delivered in situations so as to avoid direct or negative expressions. Employing positive politeness strategies according to Brown and Levinson (1987) includes expressing solidarity, showing respect to his/her face (i.e., self-image or his/her desire) that his/her respect is maintained when expressing opinion, whereas employing negative politeness involves showing the speaker’s recognition of the addressee’s unwillingness to interfere with the addressee’s action choice.

5 Literature review

As mentioned earlier, though numerous studies have been carried out on other speech acts in the Jordanian culture, very few studies have been carried out on the speech act of giving opinion. Mullan (2010, 59) claims that “expressing opinion is highly valued among French speakers comparing with English, whereas Australian English speakers stay without restriction for the social harmony or without imposing their opinion on

their interlocutor.” A similar point was raised by Brown and Levinson (1987, 116), who discussed the hedging of opinions in English to the positive politeness strategies, “due to make one’s opinion safely mysterious” and reduce disagreement. As Brown and Levinson (1987, 116) explained, hedges, such as “sort of” “may be utilized to soften face-threatening acts of suggesting or giving opinion complaining, by blurring the speaker’s intent” (Brown and Levinson 1987, 116). This can also be applied to expressing opinions.

Paramasivam and Alkhawaja (2015) aimed to explore the use of hedges in giving opinion in order to attain politeness between the two groups of learners during a discussion with focused groups on WhatsApp application. They asserted that to communicate properly in the target language (English language), both English as a second language (ESL) and Malaysian and Arab English as a foreign language (EFL) learners must develop a language and pragmatic understanding of the target language. One aspect of such development is their usage of linguistic hedges to adjust their speech acts and recognize politeness. A descriptive design was utilized in the current study to identify the forms, frequencies, and pragmatic roles of hedges in relation to politeness with quantitative and qualitative methods. The sample consisted of four EFL Arab learners and five ESL learners from Malaysia who study English at a university in Malaysia. Based on Fraser’s (2010) Taxonomy of English Hedges, data gathered in comment form through centered group discussions were coded and analyzed. Then, the frequency and percentage of the types of hedges used were submitted to Excel. Trying to follow this, Brown and Levinson’s (1987) theory of politeness was used as the analysis framework. Both groups of learners used hedges to express their views. The results showed that they utilize various categories and hedge forms and recognize politeness differently.

Çaşıor (2015) presented the findings of an intercultural Irish–Polish analysis of opinions performed in Irish English. He applied the theory of cultural scripts to evaluate opinions on the framework of a conventional approach to the application of speech act studies. The Irish and Polish formulas were noticeable for expressing opinions and sociopragmatic attitudes toward this act of speech, by comparison a variation in cultural scripts of opinions in each community. The study found a logical approach to making good evidence to support one’s claims among the participants, apart from already well-documented Polish honesty in opinions. With regard to the Irish opinion script, the results correspond to previous Australian English opinion classifications, showing confirmed scale of uniformity of variation within this respect between the English-speaking cultures.

Another study that is closely related to the speech act of giving opinions is the one conducted by Pishghadam and Sharafadini (2011) in which they compared Iranian EFL learners’ and English native speakers’ recognition of speech act of suggestion. The data were collected through an open-ended questionnaire in the shape of Written Discourse Completion Task (WDCT). The questionnaire included six situations. The respondents were asked to read each situation; after that, they must imagine themselves in that situation and write what they would say in a real situation. Through WDCT and from Iranian native speakers of Farsi, the data were collected. Then, the data were analyzed based on Jiang’s (2006) distribution of speech act of suggestion. Following Jiang (2006), the data for native speakers were used from a corpus of a previous study on speech act. The data from both corpuses were then compared through frequency analysis. The findings manifest that imperative and to-clauses were the most frequently utilized strategies by Iranian EFL learners, whereas English native speakers utilized *let’s* and imperative as the most frequently used strategies. The frequency pattern of other strategies by Iranian EFL learners is conditional, yes–no question, wh-question, performative, and *let’s* strategies. English native speakers also used wh-question, conditional, performative, to-clause, and yes–no question as the most fully frequently utilized strategies. These findings also offered the role of language dexterity and gender in the investigation of speech act in general and suggestion in particular.

6 Methodology

6.1 Population of the study

This study investigates the linguistic expressions that can be used by Jordanians in expressing their opinions. A total of 100 male and female Jordanian participants who are native speakers of spoken JA

(dominant language) residing in both Amman and Al-Zarqa Municipality were recruited. They were 50 males and 50 females from similar age groups studying at the Hashemite University. All the participants ranged from 20 to 24 years old from different social statuses. They vary in their specializations: engineering, medicine, political sciences, English, and Arabic languages.

6.2 Questions and hypothesis of the study

This study focuses on the expression of opinion in JA. It attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What are the most notable strategies utilized by Jordanians in expressing their opinions?
2. Are there significant differences between male and female Jordanian speakers of Arabic in expressing their opinions?

Null hypothesis:

H0. There are no significant differences between male and female Jordanian speakers of Arabic in expressing their opinions

6.3 Data collection methods and procedures

The data were gleaned using WDCTs and role-plays. The participants were asked to sign a participation consent sheet. A corpus of 50 audio-recorded role-played conversations comprising the speech act of giving opinion in JA is collected and analyzed. The oral data collected were analogous to spontaneous and natural in real scenarios of everyday life. In addition, WDCTs were distributed to 50 participants. The participants were asked to imagine themselves in that situation, and then say/write what they would say in the real situation. The situations were a replication of real-life social scenarios of daily interactions in family, friendship, dealing with strangers, and university domains. The Discourse Completion Task (DCT) was developed as a consequence of observation of the naturally occurring conversations. This is considered essential as observation of the naturally occurring interactions is most commonly utilized to identify the participants' linguistic and nonlinguistic behavior (Kothari 2004). The researcher then started writing such situations in a log book. The final version of the DCTs consisted of ten situations. After that, the researcher chose two situations to represent each situation. The DCTs were then distributed to 50 participants to answer them orally and to 50 students to write their reply to these situations. The researcher analyzed the data and extracted codes of strategies used for giving opinions. The researcher then sought help from a coder who holds an MA degree in English language. After approving on the final code scheme, the researcher ran a descriptive analysis to analyze the collected data; frequencies and percentages of the used strategies were calculated. In addition, an inferential analysis was conducted to roll out the significant differences among both genders.

The DCT has been the most extensively utilized technique for collecting data in pragmatic research. According to Kasper and Dahl (1991, 221), the DCT is defined as "written questionnaires including a number of brief situational descriptions, followed by a short dialogue with an empty slot of the speech act under study." Utilizing this way requires that participants provide responses to many described situations by what they would say if they were in situations like that in real life (Kasper and Dahl 1991). The response that is selected would be a sociolinguistic appropriate speech act. DCTs as Cummings and Beebe (2006, 80) stated are "highly effective means of instrumentation" because of different advantages. Despite the fact that they have been criticized for not being able to elicit naturally occurring data and their data are different from natural speech with respect to types and frequency of formulation, utilization, elaborations, repetition, and depth of emotion (Cummings and Beebe 2006, Schauer and Adolphs 2006), they help researchers collect a

huge amount of data quickly with low costs about the semantic strategies consistent with naturally occurring data (May 2011) and control the social and situational variables (age, social distance, status,) that may affect communicative act performance (Cummings and Beebe 2006). Also, this form of instrument is much valued for covering the data that reflect the directions revealed in natural data (Roever 2001). It is still a successful technique demonstrating which particular forms and strategies the participants choose to employ in a given situation under certain circumstances. In order to recompense for these shortcomings and overcome the difficulties of recording the naturally occurring conversation in daily interactions and so as to gain the benefits of it, the researcher used role-plays.

Role-plays are defined as “a social or human activity in which participants take on and act out specified roles, often within a predefined social framework or situational blueprint (a scenario)” (Kasper and Rose 2002, 86). They are considered as simulated authentic social communications assumed and accomplished by participants’ acknowledged roles within specific social scenarios. In light of Hendrik’s (2002) call for employing role-play to enhance as well as enrich the written DCT data, Kasper and Dahl (1991) also recommended researchers to use role-play as it can substitute genuine communication as they share the same features. Though role-plays have the same shortcomings of DCTs, they enable the researcher to elicit data comparable to the real-life data considering the intricacy of natural data. They are easier to administer than the observation of naturally occurring data. Both the DCTs and role-plays enable regulating social variables and can be repeated which in turn permits eliciting a specific speech act besides examining the impact of social and contextual variables on the realization of the speech act under investigation.

6.4 Data analysis

The 50 audio-recorded conversations and the 50 written DCTs data were analyzed considering different theoretical views. The researcher took into account the model of Van Dijk (2001) in which language is utilized to form means in order to describe different ideologies in the expressions of giving opinions and Dunn et al.’s (2011) view of language as a tool to influence its receivers and incite them take particular actions with regard to a specific situation that may happen.

To achieve the study’s aims, the researcher employed quantitative and qualitative methods to identify the strategies used for giving opinion. After coding and classifying the opinion giving strategies, they were then uploaded to Microsoft Excel to find the frequency and percentages of these strategies. In addition, inferential statistics were then run to find out if there are statistical differences between male and female participants of the study. The measure of significance used in this study is ($p < 0.05$); the result is statistically significant if the p -value is less than or equal to the alpha ($p < 0.05$). This was followed by a detailed pragmatic analysis based on speech act theory and politeness theory. The findings showed that the participants used different types of speech acts to convey opinions. However, they were used differently by males and females to realize politeness. The researcher used mixed methods to analyze the data as recommended by Creswell and David (2017). The data were analyzed qualitatively to code the linguistic expressions used by the participants to express their opinions and analyzed quantitatively to identify the participants’ preference and tendency to use certain strategies rather than other to express their opinion.

7 Results

7.1 Opinion-expressing strategies used by JA speakers

The data collected revealed that Jordanians opt to use various strategies for giving opinions. Twelve strategies were utilized by Jordanian participants when expressing their opinions. However, in most cases,

they prefer using a combination of different types of strategies in order to make themselves clear. By using descriptive analysis of the collected data, frequencies and percentages of the most notable strategies utilized by Jordanians in expressing their opinions were found for each strategy the participants used, which were calculated using Microsoft Excel, as demonstrated in Figure 1.

As shown in Figure 1, the most frequently employed strategies were direct and indirect expression of opinion. They were used to show independence and self-confidence in expressing the direct opinion and to avoid being forceful in expressing the opinion in using indirect expressions. The majority of the participants preferred directly stating their viewpoints as in (“استخدام الإنترنت افضل,” ‘using the internet is much better’ and indirectly as in such as “اللي تشوفه انت,” ‘as you see’). The percentages for both strategies are 21 and 20%, respectively. They also resort to using some personalized forms. They tended to preface their opinion expression by numerous lexical verbs (e.g., يبدو, seem, أظن, think, أعتقد, believe), modal verbs (e.g., قد, may), disjunct adverbs, (عادة, usually; صراحة, frankly), or expressions such as برأيي, in my opinion and أنا واثقه انه, I am sure that. The use of these personalized hedges to mitigate the level of harshness accounted for 15%. Then, the strategy of suggesting, such as اقترح عليكى ترتاحى يكفيكى تعب, I suggest you get rest now, you got enough, comes to form 10% followed by the strategy of giving advice as in انصحك تزور العقبة وجرش, I advise you to visit Aqaba and Jerash) at 8%. Although the imperative expressions (e.g., خبره الان, tell him now) were used at 7% for giving opinion, the usage of address terms (e.g., يا ماما, my brother, my mother) reached 6%. The participants tended to also preface their expression of opinion by a frequently used swearing word (e.g., والله انه تخصص الانجليزي افضلك, Swearing by God). English major is much better at 5%. In some cases, they tended to preface and end their expression of opinion by prayers (e.g., الله يهديك, May God guide you) with 3%. Furthermore, the results show that the participants use both complaining strategies (you always disturb our peace. دايمًا فالق راحتنا) and enumeration (اول شى دوري على النت وبعدين تقدرى تقري اكثر كتاب له علاقة بالموضوع) at same 2%. The least used strategy was opting out (e.g., دبر حالك, sort it yourself) which accounted for only 1% of the expressions of opinion used. Table A1 (see Appendix A) demonstrates strategies used for expressing opinion among speakers of JA along with examples and their translation.

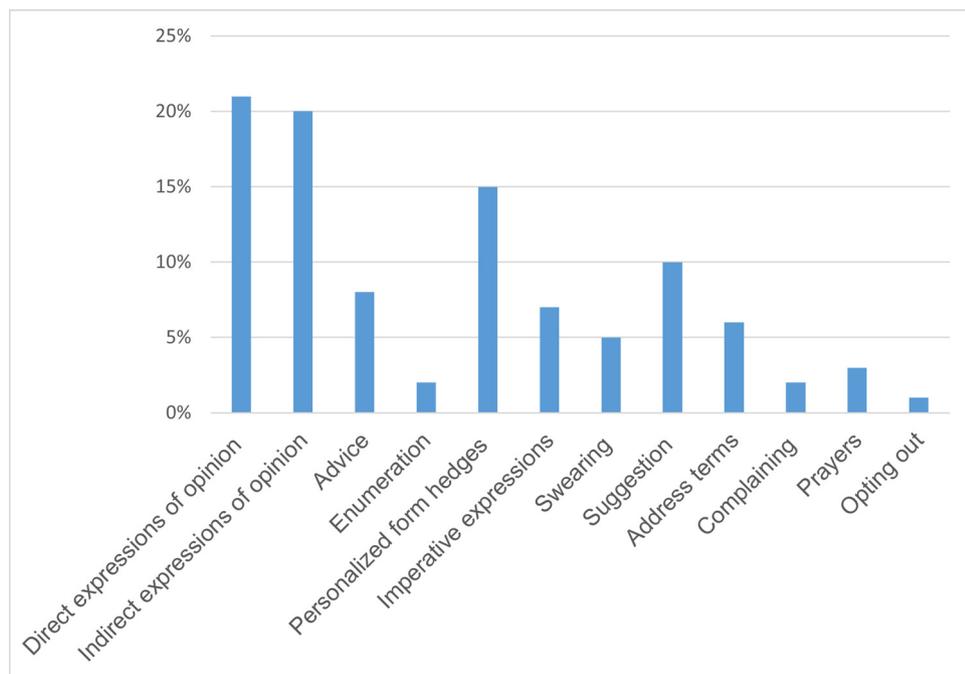


Figure 1: Opinion-expressing strategies used by JA speakers.

7.2 The differences in expressing the opinions between male and female Jordanian speakers of Arabic

This section presents the results concerning the differences between male and female Jordanian speakers of Arabic. As shown in Figure 2, it is evident that females use more strategies than males for forming their opinion.

The *T*-test analysis shows significant differences between Jordanian males and females in the number of the strategies used for expressing opinion (i.e., *p*-value 0.000) at the level of ($p < 0.05$) because of maintaining the respect of the interlocutor as shown in Table 1.

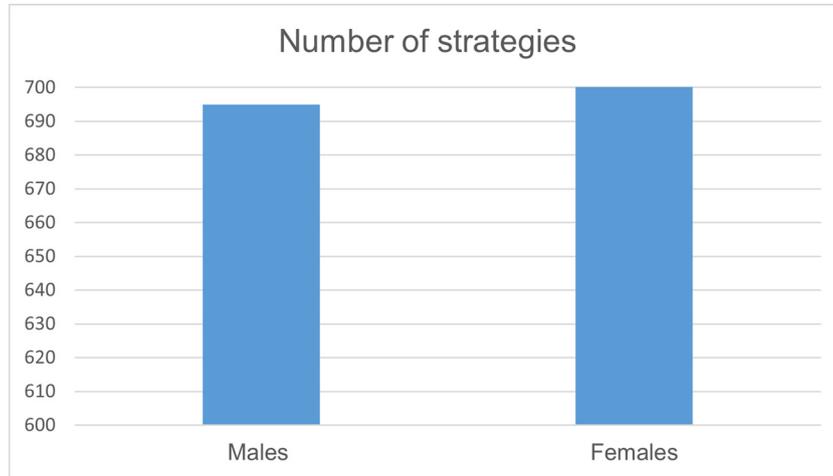


Figure 2: The number of strategies used by females and males for expressing opinion.

Males and females vary also in the way they pass their opinion. As shown in Figure 3, it appears that there are certain differences regarding the various types of strategies used for expressing opinion. Males prefer expressing their opinion directly more than their female counterparts. On the other hand, the female participants tended to give their opinion indirectly more than their male counterparts. In addition, it is evident that male participants expressed their viewpoints using imperatives, swearing, enumeration, and opting out strategies more than the female participants. In contrast, the female Jordanians used personalized advice.

The *T*-test analysis shows significant differences between Jordanian males and females in the type of strategies used for expressing opinion. It is evidently shown in Table A2 (see Appendix B) that males use *direct expression* strategy (*p*-value 0.000), *imperative expression* (*p*-value 0.000), significantly more than the female participants, whereas females used six strategies significantly more than their male counterparts: *indirect expression* (*p*-value 0.000), *advice* (*p*-value 0.000), *hedges* (*p*-value 0.000), *suggesting* (*p*-value 0.023), *prayers* (*p*-value 0.000), and *address terms* (*p*-value 0.000). However, no significant differences were found in four strategies used by males and females for expressing opinion: enumeration and swearing, opting out and complaining. Thus, the results contradict the null hypothesis (H_0 : there are no significant differences between Jordanian males and females in expressing opinion) because it evidently appears that Jordanian males and females vary considerably in the number and type of expressions they employ to pass their viewpoints.

Table 1: T-Test results of the number of strategies used by Jordanian males and females for expressing opinion

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Std. error mean
Number	Male	50	13.9000	0.41650	0.05890
	Female	50	15.3200	0.47121	0.06664

	Levene's test for equality of variances		Test for equality of mean values			95% confidence interval of the difference			
	F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean differences	Std. error differences	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	12.209	0.001	-15.966	98	0.000	-1.42000	0.08894	-1.59650	-1.24350
Equal variances not assumed			-15.966	96.544	0.000	-1.42000	0.8894	-1.59653	-1.24347

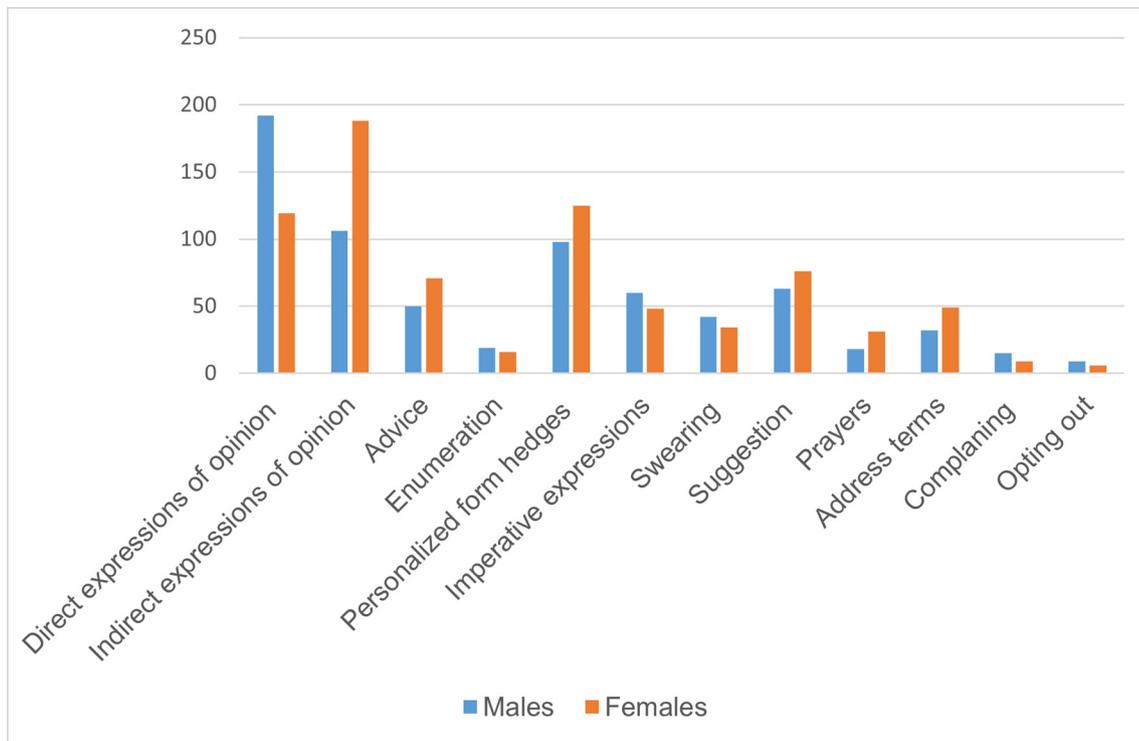


Figure 3: The frequency of the strategies used among male and female speakers of JA for expressing opinion.

8 Discussion

The study focuses on the speech act of giving opinions as a pragma-linguistic act whereby a speaker wants the hearer to perform an act for the benefit of the hearer and how he/she responds or gives opinion. The findings accentuate the fact that it is difficult to find all people agreeing on one idea. The difference between viewpoints is due to the difference in understanding between people, and sometimes, it is caused by the difference in mental and intellectual capabilities. The end is to reach the right, whatever it is and with whomever. Thus, it is of great importance that the speech in which speakers express their opinion should have clear connotations so that they are not misunderstood.

It has been found that though Jordanians opt to use various strategies for giving opinions, in most cases, they prefer using a combination of different types of strategies in order to make themselves clear and to convince the addressee. Therefore, it should be noted that these strategies are not exclusive, meaning that a combination of the strategies might be the norm in daily interactions among Jordanians. Examining the number of strategies utilized by speakers to express their opinion is pragmatically remarkable because employing numerous strategies properly could extend elaboration which in turn improves the transparency of opinion conveyed. This means that the longer the opinion expression is, the greater the sincerity is as this helps to emphasize the degree of honesty and concern about others, contrasting the fact that exaggeration could mean or imply something negative. Also, Tanck (2004) stated that speakers often tend to utilize more than one distinct speech act as an essential step to attain the desired communicative purpose, which is contrary to what appeared in this strategy. The clear and frank opinion reaches everyone on one level of understanding because the ambiguity of the opinion is the reason for the misunderstanding by others, especially if there is no opportunity to clarify it again in another context. This could further highlight the significance of possessing linguistic and pragmatic competencies of the target language in order to avoid miscommunication and ultimately communication breakdown. Speakers should be aware of the right linguistic expressions to use and the most appropriate in light of the given context and the associated social variables.

In light of the fact that caring to save each other's face is noteworthy in the Jordanian culture, satisfactory and appropriate expression of opinion is greatly cherished both verbally and nonverbally. This in turn helps speakers fulfill the faces wants of the interlocutors, show great concern and honesty for their interlocutors, and preserve the protocol of their social communication. Hence, this reinforces positive politeness and ultimately develops and retains pleasant-sounding social relationships.

The similarity between the percentages of using both direct and indirect due to the fact that there are three informal and two formal situations. A speech act is viewed as direct if the connotation of the expressions employed to accomplish the speech act is identical to the connotation that is conveyed by that act (Searle 1985). A speech act is considered indirect if the speech act executed by an expression is incompatible with the meaning of the expression used to accomplish the speech act (Searle 1985). The indirect strategy could be viewed as a way of a tactical withdrawal from being very forceful in voicing one's opinion either being very much respectful as in "زي ما بدك" 'as you like,' or "اللي انتي شايغته" 'whatever you see.' It might indicate the speaker's intention not to interfere in others' businesses. This could be ascribed to the fact that contextual variables and social relationship exert a considerable impact on the expression of communicative acts (Shahrokhi 2019, Saleem et al. 2021). In addition, utilizing the indirect or direct strategies is dependent on one's community cultural values (Alakrash and Bustan 2020, Astia 2020). This finding is consistent with the point that indirectness enables speakers generally to emphasize and intensify the force of politeness because it leads to create and evoke emotional resonance. It does support the claim that indirect communication of the intentions is regarded as face-saving features which are more significant for achieving politeness.

Tendency toward directness could help speakers express their opinions sincerely and openly as this feature is correlated with notions of truth and viewpoints toward personal life. Directness in giving opinion might be interpreted and perceived polite, less polite, or impolite based on the addressee's intended response and the relationship that connects him/her to the speakers. Accordingly, the addressee's judgments about communicative acts and the specific nature of the given context in the social communication should be taken into account for better evaluating the weightiness of contextual and social variables and relationship that vary across people. The findings of this study come in harmony with the findings of other related studies like Kasper and Rose (2002), Economidou-Kogetsidis (2010), and Chang and Ren (2020) who argue that people differ in their evaluation of contextual and social factors and cultural values concerning social familiarity, social status, the topic of conversation, age, and gender. Overall, they assert the point that politeness should not be connected to one type of speech act (i.e., indirect speech act) rather employing the expression that suits the situation could be regarded as a representation of politeness. In other words, utilizing the wrong expression could sound impolite and may result in misunderstanding and miscommunication. Consequently, this outcome is in line with the findings arrived at by Ahar and Eslami-Rasekh (2011) and Cui (2012) stating that the speakers' perceived degree of assessment of the social factors determines the number and type of linguistic expression to use in a given situation. The outcomes reveal that the use of a strategy is not restricted to its literal meaning. This implies that the linguistics realizations that indicate one communicative act in a certain situation might express another one in a different situation. The concept underlying speech act is significant because it's utilized as a criterion for coding the utterances for describing communication among Jordanian culture. Utterances may be thought of as speech acts that may be identified in terms of illocutionary (the basic linguistic act and its superficial meaning) and illocutionary (their intended purposes/function) and the proven fact that both of those aspects may not synchronize (Al-Khawaldeh 2016).

The results show that the participants have also incorporated swearing expressions in their opinions, specifically the expression (والله) which means "By God" to intensify the frankness and clarity of their opinion. Swearing is defined by Abowitz and Toole (2010, 218) as "the invocation of the divine powers for backing what one has said or done." According to Almutlaq (2013), religious commitment is the most important factor that affects the communication. Thus, this demonstrates the great influence of Islam on Jordanians, being the dominant religion in the region. It seems that Jordanians resort to swearing for giving opinions by using the word "y God" "والله" as an emphatic religious expression to signify honesty and politeness. Swearing in this respect is used as a synonym to oath-taking different from the other sense of

swearing which is using socially unacceptable expressions in specific situations (Jumanto and Sulistyorini 2019). The result is in line with Ahmed (2020) who states that swearing is used to give more emphasis, support, ratification, trust, and confidence to the speech so as to convince the addressees. Though swearing is a universal linguistic phenomenon Ahmed (2020), there are differences in its form, sense, and purpose across cultures and situations. This outcome highlights that conventional linguistic expression, which is normally employed to signify one communicative act and express politeness in one community, might be utilized to imply a different communicative act in another community. Such finding supports Locher and Watts's (2005, 78) claim that "no linguistic behaviour...is inherently polite or impolite." It also reiterates the great role religion plays in many cultures such as the Jordanian one. This could designate the strong bond between Muslim faith and the Arabic language; they are often considered intertwined and inseparable features distinguishing the Arab-Muslim identity as Hetherington (1998, 49) puts it: "a religion is both a chosen feature of a lifestyle and one intended to give voice to emotions and mirror a response to it."

This is not astonishing because Arabic is the language of the Holy Quran. This further implies that understanding each society's stereotypes and perception of viewing politeness is mandatory to be able to define the face wants of its members in light of its social standard. However, it should be noted that such social standards and norms are subject to change and as Mills and Kádár (2011) warn us against relying on politeness norms within or across cultures because accounts about linguistic cultural norms often seem to be conventional, extremely ideological, and stereotypical. They reiterate that (ibid., 44) "preconceptions and ideological beliefs about the linguistic behavior of certain groups can be described objectively and perhaps can form part of our analysis of politeness stereotypes." Kroskrity (2004) also emphasizes the point that language ideologies are heterogeneous because they are context-bound and social-tied experience.

The performance of the speech act of giving opinion involves also utilizing other linguistic devices called personalized "hedges." Fraser (2010) stated that the function of hedges so as to mitigate the level of harshness and offensiveness imposed by performing these acts on the hearer when congregated with the speech acts. Moreover, these devices are utilized to make the speech act less direct, more palatable, and approved by the hearer. In other words, hedges are generally utilized in language as linguistic instruments to modify the meaning of words or phrases they accompany to leave a mitigating effect on the force of these words/phrases on the hearer (Fraser 2010). It was also explained that two main functions can be achieved by utilizing such hedges, the first one is linguistic and another one is pragmatic. The linguistic one is considered when the speaker wants to know the changes taking place to the semantic meaning of the expression of the speech act. Whereas the pragmatic function is considered when one is interested in knowing the effect on the hearer in any certain social context. Both functions were found in the discussion of the Jordanian participants in this study. These introductory phrases were clearly noticed in the data that were collected. Thus, the Jordanian participants used phrases like "من وجهة نظري" 'From 'my point of view', and "رأيي" 'my opinion is' "اعتقد" 'I think,' and disjunct adverbial 'honestly,' "بصراحة" in stating their opinions in the Jordanian society as forms of introductory phases. These expressions are usually utilized to preface the opinion proposed by the speaker. When utilized by subjects, these words also express lack of commitment or relate doubt to the proposed opinion. As stated by Paramasivam and Alkhwaja (2015), these words "express lack of commitment or relate doubt to the proposed opinion." Disjunct is a sentence adverb that makes a comment on what is being said or written, which means that it expresses the speaker's condition or manner in which he/she is speaking (Abbas and Mirza 2011). The adverb "maybe" was also frequently used by the participants. This not only shows a degree of uncertainty in their opinions but also demonstrates their ability to show positive politeness, as to being indirect in expressing their opinions rather than showing complete confidence. Utilizing these forms of hedges serves to communicate his/her opinion or claim without much certainty of commitment. By doing so, the speaker avoids placing much imposition on the receiver. Pragmatically, utilizing such phrase employs a positive politeness strategy. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), this includes showing respect to his/her self-image or his/her desire that his/her respect is maintained.

The results reveal the usage of terms of address when expressing opinion in various situations. These address terms range from the very informal to the formal (e.g., دكتور, سيدي, يا امي يا حبيبي). The outcomes designate that the usage of address terms and along with their interpretations differ across social situations

and their connected purposes and factors because of diverse social and cultural rules. According to Philipsen and Huspek (1985), these terms are sociolinguistic features par excellence. This could emphasize the point that these terms are an essential social phenomenon in the Jordanian milieu. The high frequency and variation of such terms across the situations could be ascribed to the related sociocultural variables. Some social variables are given more weight. For example, in Jordanian society, the variables of social status and social familiarity play a substantial role in using terms of addressing. This outcome could be attributed to the unique Jordanian social hierarchical construction and inherent cultural norms. This means that the features of social formality, respect, and courtesy are preferential in the Jordanian culture. Most of these forms were preceded by terms such as “دكتور” “سيدي”, “يا ابوي”, “ختي يا”. Such terms are frequently used across the social situations owing to the fact that they signify intimacy and respect for the addressee and help result in achieving smooth and successful communication. On the other hand, calling each other by first names is considered unacceptable and impolite in the Jordanian culture, thus Jordanians tend generally to replace names with formal titles and/or endearment terms. Such switch between the formal and informal styles of addressing each other affirms their awareness and acknowledgment of their significance of considering social variables in communication (Mills 2011). Any misusing of terms for addressing others could indicate negative attitude and may result in miscommunication (Janicki 1991).

The participants resort also to suggestion as a way to give his/her opinion. The strategy of suggestion has many forms based on two theoretical frameworks: speech act theory and politeness theory. The theory of speech act is particularly relevant, because we address those universal pragmatic strategies of direct and indirect forms mentioned by Kasper and Schmidt (1996). These strategies are also related to the politeness theory developed by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987). One of the most important forms of suggestion involves that of direct strategies, in which the speaker obviously states what he/she means. Direct suggestions are performed by means of performative verbs (Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford 1996, 180). Considering the utilization of performative verbs, such as ‘I suggest that you change the date’ “اقترح ان تغير الموعد”, according to Wardhaugh 1985, Koike 1994, Tsui 1994, Kasper and Rose 2002, several authors have debated that this formula is not widely employed in everyday life or any speech in general. This is in line with what has been found through in the current study.

All in all, the use of various strategies for communicating opinion and the intricate interplay of these contextual and social variables in communication within the Jordanian community make the choice of suitable opinion expression challenging because of social rules dictating what is polite and impolite among speakers. This often leaves speakers rather embarrassed and hesitant as to whether they have performed the communicative act properly. It further indicates that the reason behind such variation between the speech acts in terms of conceptualization and interpretation is the reflection of cultural values and norms. In other words, Jordanian speakers of Arabic abide by some social rules of politeness that they regard as moral maxims, and any breach of them will incur miscommunication. Moreover, it suggests that the Jordanian social structure and relations definitely exert an excessive influence on their views of politeness and its role in their social life. Subsequently, the indispensable fundamentals of politeness or what counts as polite behavior is vital in soothing interpersonal tension, hence improving social harmony.

A very remarkable finding concerns the research instruments used. The data analysis confirms the effectiveness of DCT and role-play in yielding the same semantic strategies for expressing opinion, although with some noticeable slight differences in number of strategies yielded by each instrument: where lengthy and repetitive data enriched with natural speech features were gleaned by role-plays than with written DCTs. This could be attributed to the nature of this research instrument. This outcome supports other findings reached by many researchers (e.g., Rintell and Mitchell 1989, Yuan 2001) who found that role-plays yield longer and more elaborated utterances. Such findings propose that both the DCTs and the role-plays should be employed for collecting pragmatic data because the role-plays’ responses provide additional information. Accordingly, we support a call made by Abowitz and Toole (2010) to other researchers encouraging them to use multiple research methods so as to remedy the disadvantages of research approach and to improve the validity and reliability of the results and inferences.

The relationship among language and gender has been much examined in the field of sociolinguistics over the past 40 years or so. However, some vital questions remain wide open among which is the issue of

whether women's and men's expression of opinion differ and what the underlying reflection is. The results of the current study revealed certain marked differences among both males and females in the number and types of strategies used for expressing opinion in different social situations. This finding is not surprising because both males and females have their own way of thinking and know perfectly well what is expected from them in their society which is evidently reflected in their different ways of expressing their perspectives. Bataineh (2008) attributes gender differences in relation to the language use in the Jordanian society to the way of upbringing children. This in turn lead to having unlike expectations about social conversation. This variation could be attributed to incomparable views of the degree of politeness, the realization of socio-contextual factors, and the weightiness of the topic of conversation. This finding is in line with other researchers', Holmes (1988), Herbert (1990), Salameh (2001), Rees-Miller (2011), AlAmro (2013), finding that males and females differ in their selection of verbal and nonverbal strategies so as to show how much they take into account face redress in their communication.

Considering the differences between males and females, the female tendency to use more indirect strategies, personalized hedges, suggesting, advice, and prayers implies that they want to sound polite. This implicates women's ability of positive politeness in order to respect and save the faces of others. The males' tendency to use more direct expressions and imperatives more than their female counterparts when expressing opinions confirms the notion that they want to sound more assertive and dominant. The communication of viewpoints by males reflects strength and self-control which are mainly considered fundamental to the socially constructed notion of masculinity whereas that of females is motivated by the degree of intimacy, affection, and emotion they have for their addressees. For example, females tended to use the personalized hedges more than men do. These expressions may suggest uncertainty of the utterances produced, as well as easing the force of the utterances. This may also increase the effect and emotional content of the opinion being described.

The previous literature shows that women appear to be more sensitive to being polite than their male counterparts, employing more politeness strategies (Guodong and Jing 2005, Froh et al. 2009). This is also in line with Lakoff's (1975) point that women are more polite and tend not to hurt others by softening their speech, whereas male speakers tend to be direct and assertive, owing to power dissimilarity in their linguistic and cultural worlds. The results could be ascribed to what Baron-Cohen (2003) emphasized that dominance hierarchy echoes men's lesser orientation toward sympathy and more orientation toward systemizing practices. This further highlights that women tend to stress the value relational function of language as opposed to males who tend to value the transactional function of societal communication. The result meshes well with other studies which investigate the impact of gender on communicative acts (e.g., Al Amro 2013, Mehregan et al 2013, Al-Khawaldeh and Žegarac 2013, Yousef 2017).

The results add to the previous literature findings on gender and language. They offer some interesting insights into distinctive characteristics of the relation among gender and the communicative act of giving opinion, considering the variation of situations and the underlying socio-situational variables. The distinctive characteristics of gender-related opinion giving behavior are easier to identify for those strategies which are specific to particular situations.

9 Conclusion

The study aimed to identify the Jordanian styles of communicating opinions. It also explored differences and similarities between Jordanian males and females in expressing opinion. Data were collected using both role-play and written DCT and analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. New coding schemes were devised in light of the analyzed strategies. The findings were remarkable. It appeared that Jordanians resort to a mixture of expressions to convey their opinion clearly. It is evident that Jordanian society used a variety of distinct strategies that differ from strategies used in other societies in expressing their opinions that could be attributed to religious factors and sociolinguistic features. They use various types of strategies including direct expression of opinion, indirect manifestation of opinion, advice, suggesting, enumeration, prayers, address terms, complaining, personalized hedges, and rarely opting out.

The study suffers from certain limitations in light of which some recommendations for further research might be given. The results of this study could be considered a fruitful baseline for another remarkable research that would enrich the existing literature. A parallel study is also recommended to compare opinion giving strategies among other colloquial varieties of Arabic, using a variational pragmatic perspective. It is recommended that future studies on the expression of opinion can investigate the intended perception of communicative act. In addition, further research could be conducted using more research instruments such as interviews and observations.

Acknowledgment: I would also like to thank the participants who have taken part in the role-plays and the discourse completion task without their collaboration, this research would not have been possible.

Conflict of interest: Authors state no conflict of interest.

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Appendix A

Table A1: Illustration of strategies used for expressing opinion among speakers of JA along with examples and their translation

Strategies	Examples	Translation
Direct expression of opinion	عالتت بدقيقتين بتطلعي كل يلي بدك إياه افضل محل تفتحه للادوات المنزليه في وسط البلد	Using the internet, you can easily find whatever you are looking for in two minutes Downtown Amman is the ideal location for you to open a home-goods shop
Indirect expression of opinion	زي ما تحب انت ادري بوضعي	As you like You are aware of my situation
Personalized form of hedges	انا راني انه تقرأي كتاب, لانه ممكن يحتوي على معلومات أكثر من وجهة نظري افضل طريقة لتقييم الطلبة هو الامتحان الانشائي	I believe it would be more beneficial for you to read a book as it includes more information Essay tests, in my opinion, are the finest approach to assessing student performance
Suggestion	اقترح ان تبحثي في عدة مواقع على الانترنت, وان تأخذي معلومات كافية عن موضوعك, وتبدأي بكتابتها بطريقة مترابطة انا اقترح اعتماد أكثر من طريقة لتقييم الطلاب مراعاةً لاختلاف قدراتهم	I recommend that you check various websites on the Internet to get adequate knowledge about your issue before beginning to write about it coherently To take into account the individual differences, I suggest employing more than one way to evaluate students
Advice	أنصحك يا أختي أن تقرئي كتاب عن موضوع بحثك أو تتصفحى المواقع الإلكترونية الموثوقة اقترح تسال أكثر من واحد قبل ما تقرر شو تختار	I advise you, my sister, you either read a book on your research topic or navigate the most credible sources on the Internet I recommend that you consult with more than one individual before making your final decision
Imperative expressions	اقرأي عن الموضوع أكثر, خذي الموضوع بطريقة اشمل من الانترنت افيد لك	Read more about the topic, consider the topic in a more comprehensive way, as this would benefit you
Swearing	عبي الطلب واختاري محاسبة بسرعة والله ما انا شايف شي نافع والله انك تستاهلي تتراحي لك فترة	Fill in the application and choose accounting now I swear by God, nothing seems to be working I swear by God you deserve taking a well-earned rest
Enumeration	اولاً شي اشرحلي شو سبب المشكلة وبعدين نفكر بحل اول شي لازم نتأكد وتدور عن الورق الاصلية, وإذا تاكدت مليون بالميه بعدين تخبر العميد	First, describe the problem to me, and then we'll come up with a solution The first step is to double-check and hunt for the original articles; once there's no room for doubt, you should notify the dean
Prayers	ربنا يهونها ربنا يختارك الافضل	May God make it easy for you May God choose the best for you
Address terms	يا خيه دكتور	Oh, My sister Doctor
Complaining	دايما موجه راسنا	You always cause us headache. (i.e, cause problems)
Opting out	حطنا كلنا بوضع محرج خلع شوكلك بايدك ما الي اي رأي وانت موجود	He put us all in an awkward position Fight your own battles I have nothing to say

Appendix B

Table A2: T-Test results of the types of strategies used by Jordanian males and females for expressing opinion

Group statistics					
	Gender	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Std. error mean
Direct	Male	50	3.8400	0.37033	0.05237
	Female	50	2.3800	0.49031	0.06934
Indirect	Male	50	2.1200	0.32826	0.04642
	Female	50	3.7600	0.43142	0.06101
Advice	Male	50	1.0200	0.14142	0.02000
	Female	50	1.4000	0.49487	0.06999
Enumeration	Male	50	0.3800	0.49031	0.06934
	Female	50	0.3200	0.47121	0.06664
Hedges	Male	50	1.9600	0.19795	0.02799
	Female	50	2.5000	0.50508	0.07143
Imperatives	Male	50	1.2000	0.40406	0.05714
	Female	50	0.9600	0.19795	0.02799
Swearing	Male	50	0.8400	0.37033	0.05237
	Female	50	0.6800	0.47121	0.06664
Suggesting	Male	50	1.2600	0.44309	0.06266
	Female	50	1.4800	0.50467	0.07137
Opting out	Male	50	0.1800	0.38809	0.05488
	Female	50	0.1200	0.32826	0.04642
Prayers	Male	50	0.3600	0.48487	0.06857
	Female	50	0.9800	0.14142	0.02000
Complaining	Male	50	0.3000	0.46291	0.06547
	Female	50	0.1800	0.38809	0.05488
Address terms	Male	50	0.6400	0.48487	0.06857
	Female	50	1.0000	0.00000	0.00000

(Continued)

Table A2: Continued

		Independent sample test									
		Levene's test for equality of variances					t-Test for equality of means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std. Error difference	95% confidence interval of the difference	Lower	Upper
Direct	Equal variances assumed	26.511	0.000	16.802	98	0.000	1.46000	0.08690	1.28756	1.63244	
	Equal variances not assumed			16.802	91.179	0.000	1.46000	0.08690	1.28740	1.63260	
Indirect	Equal variances assumed	10.480	0.002	-21.392	98	0.000	-1.64000	0.07667	-1.79214	-1.48786	
	Equal variances not assumed			-21.392	91.494	0.000	-1.64000	0.07667	-1.79227	-1.48773	
Advice	Equal variances assumed	344.171	0.000	-5.221	98	0.000	-0.38000	0.07279	-0.52444	-0.23556	
	Equal variances not assumed			-5.221	56.950	0.000	-0.38000	0.07279	-0.52576	-0.23424	
Enumeration	Equal variances assumed	1.520	0.221	0.624	98	0.534	0.06000	0.09617	-0.13085	0.25085	
	Equal variances not assumed			0.624	97.846	0.534	0.06000	0.09617	-0.13085	0.25085	
Hedges	Equal variances assumed	270.010	0.000	-7.039	98	0.000	-0.54000	0.07672	-0.69225	-0.38775	
	Equal variances not assumed			-7.039	63.706	0.000	-0.54000	0.07672	-0.69328	-0.38672	
Imperatives	Equal variances assumed	32.165	0.000	3.772	98	0.000	0.24000	0.06363	0.11373	0.36627	
	Equal variances not assumed			3.772	71.239	0.000	0.24000	0.06363	0.11313	0.36687	
Swearing	Equal variances assumed	15.017	0.000	1.888	98	0.062	0.16000	0.08476	-0.00820	0.32820	
	Equal variances not assumed			1.888	92.815	0.062	0.16000	0.08476	-0.00831	0.32831	

(Continued)

Table A2: Continued

		Independent sample test									
		Levene's test for equality of variances					t-Test for equality of means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std. Error difference	95% confidence interval of the difference	Lower	Upper
Suggesting	Equal variances assumed	14.337	0.000	-2.316	98	0.023	-0.22000	0.09498	-0.40848	-0.03152	
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.316	96.386	0.023	-0.22000	0.09498	-0.40852	-0.03148	
Opting out	Equal variances assumed	2.847	0.095	0.835	98	0.406	0.06000	0.07188	-0.08265	0.20265	
	Equal variances not assumed			0.835	95.376	0.406	0.06000	0.07188	-0.08270	0.20270	
Prayers	Equal variances assumed	241.084	0.000	-8.680	98	0.000	-0.62000	0.07143	-0.76175	-0.47825	
	Equal variances not assumed			-8.680	57.277	0.000	-0.62000	0.07143	-0.76302	-0.47698	
Complaining	Equal variances assumed	8.114	0.005	1.405	98	0.163	0.12000	0.08543	-0.04953	0.28953	
	Equal variances not assumed			1.405	95.104	0.163	0.12000	0.08543	-0.04959	0.28959	
Address terms	Equal variances assumed	576.000	0.000	-5.250	98	0.000	-0.36000	0.06857	-0.49608	-0.22392	
	Equal variances not assumed			-5.250	49.000	0.000	-0.36000	0.06857	-0.49780	-0.22220	