

The Impact of Gender Differences on the Expressions of Refusal in Jordanian Arabic

Authors : Hanan Yousef, Nisreen Naji Al-Khawaldeh

Abstract : The present study investigates the use of the expression of refusal by native speakers of Jordanian Arabic (NSsJA) in different social situations (i.e. invitations, suggestions, and offers). It also investigates the influence of gender on the refusal realization patterns within the Jordanian culture to provide a better insight into the relation between situations, strategies and gender in the Jordanian culture. To that end, a group of 70 participants, including 35 male and 35 female students from different departments at the Hashemite University (HU) participated in this study using mixed methods (i.e. Discourse Completion Test (DCT), interviews and naturally occurring data). Data were analyzed in light of a developed coding scheme. The results showed that NSsJA preferred indirect strategies which mitigate the interaction such as "excuse, reason and, explanation" strategy more than other strategies which aggravate the interaction such as "face-threatening" strategy. Moreover, the analysis of this study has revealed a considerable impact of gender on the use of linguistic forms expressing refusal among NSsJA. Significant differences in the results of the Chi-square test relating the effect of participants' gender indicate that both males and females were conscious of the gender of their interlocutors. The findings provide worthwhile insights into the relation amongst types of communicative acts and the rapport between people in social interaction. They assert that refusal should not be labeled as face threatening act since it does not always pose a threat in some cases especially where refusal is expressed among friends, relatives and family members. They highlight some distinctive culture-specific features of the communicative acts of refusal.

Keywords : gender, Jordanian Arabic, politeness, refusals, speech act

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