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Impoliteness Strategies in Facebook Comments on Ministry of Health's Declarations and Posts on Covid-19

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Abstract

The present study aims to investigate the impoliteness strategies employed by Facebookers commenting on declarations of the Jordanian Minister of Health about Covid-19. It also aims to examine the socio-cultural considerations behind the use of impoliteness strategies. To this end, the researchers adopted Culpeper's model (2011) of impoliteness as a theoretical framework. The data of the current study were collected from the official Facebook page of the Ministry of Health. The data included 400 comments (14253 tokens). The findings revealed that Facebookers used seven of Culpeper's 2011 conventionalized impoliteness strategies, namely insults, challenging or unpalatable questions and/or presuppositions, pointed criticism, dismissals, silencers, negative expressions/bad wishes, and condescension. Moreover, the findings showed that the most frequent impoliteness strategy used by Facebookers was challenging or unpalatable questions. In addition, the study revealed that due to some sociocultural and political considerations, certain impoliteness strategies such as enforcing messages and threats were not employed.

Keywords: Impoliteness; Media Discourse; COVID-19, Culpeper Impoliteness Model.

1. Introduction

Impoliteness is one of the recent topics that attracts the attention of researchers in pragmatics. It is a social phenomenon manifested in social interactions, social media, TV shows, and other digital communication. Culpeper (2010) considers impoliteness a "negative attitude" that occurs because of unexpected behaviors in a specific context, which is accompanied by emotional consequences.

The most prominent approach to the impoliteness theory was proposed by Culpeper (1996). He tackles the opposite direction of the politeness theory of Brown and Levinson (1987). Brown and Levinson base their politeness model on saving or maintaining hearers' faces i.e., one's public image or

reputation. The term face is used by Erving Goffman (1967) to denote self-image or self-esteem and then language can cause a loss to the face (face threatening) or save face (face-saving). Culpeper, in the opposite direction, considers impoliteness an intended behavior to cause offense and damage to others' faces. He defines impoliteness as using language to cause offense, damage, and disharmonic relations with others. In light of Culpeper's model, impoliteness is viewed as a negative attitude toward particular behaviors happening in specific contexts. Thus, impolite acts or behaviors are those that are not expected to be preferred by the interlocutors due to their negative emotional effects. They cause offense and damage to others' faces. The negative effects of such offensive and impolite behavior can be exacerbated by various factors, such as the addressees' understanding of whether a behavior is strongly intentional or not (Culpeper 2011).

Locher and Bousfield (2008: 3) define impoliteness as "a behavior that is face-aggravating in a particular context." They reckon that impoliteness is a deliberate act initiated by speakers to fulfill an inner intention to distort others' faces. The social conversation does not always proceed cooperatively. Sometimes speakers tend to attack each other rather than save or maintain their self-image. Culpeper (2005) claims that "impoliteness comes about when the speaker communicates face-attack intentionally, or the hearer perceives and constructs behavior as intentionally face-attack, or a combination of (1) and (2)." Mullary (2008) focuses on the second part of this definition and emphasizes the role of the hearer and the intentionality of a speech act. In other words, face-attacking might happen intentionally on the part of the speaker, but the hearer does not perceive it as a face-attacking act, or the speaker's intention is not to attack the hearer's face, but the hearer constructs intentional face-attacking acts. That is why Locher and Bousfield (2008, 3) assert that impolite behavior is perceived to be face-aggravating in a particular context. Lakoff (1989) supports this proposition by emphasizing that rude behavior does not utilize politeness strategies to result in an interpretation of certain utterances as intentionally and negatively confrontational.

Vividly, the impolite use of language is an essential aspect of the social functions of language. Users of media discourse may use impolite language to express their emotions and communicate ideas. Relatively, the notion of impoliteness is an intentional behavior that carries explicit and implicit meanings and messages. Thus, the current study is of paramount importance to uncover the communicative functions of using impolite language and identify the strategies of impoliteness used by Facebookers in their comments on the declarations of the Ministry of Health on Covid 19. The current research is expected to show and reflect peoples' dissatisfaction with the officials' performance and decision at the Ministry of Health and draws their intention to some instances of corruption at the Ministry of Health. Moreover, identifying the impoliteness strategies and their communicative functions could also motivate the officials at the Ministry of Health to conduct real reforms.

1.2. Culpeper (2011) impoliteness model

Culpeper (2005, 38) defines impoliteness as a "situation in which a speaker communicates face-attack intentionally, and/or the hearer perceives the face-attack as intentional."

Additionally, in his book *Impoliteness: Using Language to cause offense*, Culpeper (2011) considers impoliteness as a multidisciplinary field which can be approached in sociology, psychology, and media studies (Culpeper 2011, 3). He confirms that impoliteness is to some extent inherent in linguistic expression. In this regard, Culpeper (2011, 133) proposes the conventionalized impoliteness formulae which refer to behaviors that include linguistic or verbal expressions. He presents two methods for identifying conventionalized impoliteness formulae:

1. Study those specific contexts in which participant(s) regularly display an understanding that something impolite was expressed (what expressions were used, if any?).

2. Study the meta-discourse concerning behaviors understood to be impolite (what expressions are they talking about, if any?)."

Culpeper (2011, 135-136) confirms the important role context plays in determining the degree of the offense. He categorizes conventionalized impoliteness formulae as follows: 1. Insults

Insults are divided into four subcategories:

A.Personalized negative vocatives which include name calling such as, [You are fucking/rotten/dirty/fat/little/etc.] [Moron/fuck/plonker/dickhead/
B. Personalized negative assertions:
[you are So/such a shit/stink/thick/stupid/bitchy/bitch/hypocrite/ disappointment/gay/nuts/nuttier than a fruit cake/hopeless/pathetic/fussy/ terrible/fat/ugly/etc.]
[you] [can't do] [anything right/basic arithmetic/etc.]
[you] [disgust/make] [me] [sick/etc.]
C. Personalized negative references
[Your] [little/stinking] [Mouth/act /body/etc.]
D. Personalized third-person negative references in the hearing of the target
[The] [Daft] [Bimbo]
[She's] [nutzo]

2. Pointed criticism/complaints: the speaker used criticism and complaints to attack the hearer's face, such as:

[That/this/it][Is/was][Absolutely/extraordinarily/unspeakably/etc.]
[Bad/rubbish/crap/horrible/terrible/etc.]

3. Challenging or unpalatable questions and/or presuppositions: this strategy used questions to attack the hearer's image, such as: "Why do you make my life impossible?" "Which lie are you telling me?" "What's gone wrong now?" "You want to argue with me, or do you want to go to jail?".

4. Condescension which happens when the speaker shows superiority over the hearer, as in:

[that] ['s/being] [babyish/childish/etc.]
5. Message enforcers

listen here (as a preface) you got it? (as a tag) read my lips do you understand [me]? (as a tag)

6. Dismissals which occur when the speaker dismisses the hearer impolitely by using such expressions, such as:

[go] [away] [get] [lost/out] [fuck/piss/shove] [off]

7. Silencers: which include different expressions to force the hearer to stop talking.

[shut] [it/your mouth, face/etc.] [shut] [the fuck] up

8. Threats: which are used to annoy or frighten the hearer, such as:

[I'll] [I'm/we're gonna] [smash your face in/beat the shit out of you/box your ears/bust your fucking head off/straighten you out/etc.] [if you don't] [X] [X] [before I] [hit you/strangle you]

9. Negative Expressions (Curses and ill-wishes): the speaker used ill wishes and curses to attack the hearer's face by using many expressions, such as:

[go] [to hell/hang yourself/fuck yourself]
[damn/fuck] [you]

1.3 Culpeper (1996) impoliteness strategies

Culpeper (1996) proposes five impoliteness strategies oppositely parallel to Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies.

A. Bald on record impoliteness

Bald on record impoliteness occurs when the speaker intends directly and clearly to damage the hearer's face, so he/she performs a deliberate impolite utterance to attack the hearer's face. It seems that Culpeper adopts the Face Attack Act (FAA) instead of the Face Threat Act (FTA) of Brown and Levinson. Culpeper (2005) lists seven pragmalinguistic forms used in bald on record impoliteness, such as giving advice, assessing (appearance and intelligence), telling the truth, comparing (social class and appearance), associating with negative aspects, astonishing, and using figurative language (contradiction).

B. Positive impoliteness

Positive impoliteness is a strategy designed to damage the hearer's positive face wants. In this regard, the speaker tries to attack the positive face of the hearer via several techniques:

a. Ignoring the hearer's presence

b. Excluding the hearers from an activity

c. Disassociating from the other. The speaker denies association or common ground with the other; so, he avoids sitting together.

d. Being disinterested, unconcerned, and unsympathetic.

e. Using inappropriate identity markers. The Speaker uses titles and surnames when a close relationship pertains, or nicknames when a distant relationship pertains.

f. Using obscure or secretive language. The S mystifies the other with jargon or uses a code known to others in the group, but not the target addressee.

g. Seeking disagreement. The speaker selects a sensitive topic making the other feel uncomfortable. The S does not avoid silence and jokes or use small talks.

h. Using taboo words – swearing or using abusive or profane language.

i. Calling the other names. The S uses derogatory nominations.

C. Negative impoliteness

A negative impoliteness strategy is employed to damage the addressee's negative face wants. This means that the addressee's will or need to be unimpeded, not distracted by others, and free from all kinds of imposition is subject to the speakers' attack.

D. Sarcasm/mock politeness or off-record impoliteness

This strategy was proposed by Culpeper (2005) in contrast with the mock and sarcasm polite strategy. The speaker, via sarcasm, implicature, and other devices, uses a polite utterance to convey an impolite act. In this regard, the speaker attacks the hearer's face implicitly and indirectly.

E. Withhold politeness

Culpeper (1996, 357) points out that the withhold politeness strategy implies "the absence of politeness work where it would be expected." In this strategy, the speaker avoids and leaves the expected polite expressions, which, in turn, intrinsically causes damage and loss to the addressee's face. The speaker shows that the hearer is no longer wanted but disregarded.

1.4 Media discourse

The concept "media" is derived from the Latin word "medium". Media is a means of communication and interaction where people can deliver information, interact, entertain, and educate. Media discourse is a diverse discourse in the sense that it addresses an unlimited number of audiences and covers multidisciplinary fields. Thus, it constitutes a challenge to discourse analysts in terms of its various economic, social, and political contexts. Media has several forms and functions, in particular after the expansion and advancement of technology. In this domain, media reflects and represents the social, economic, and ideological reality via various channels such as TV, radio, newspapers, Facebook, and other social media platforms.

Nowadays, the Facebook network has become an influential and effective means of communication. A vast number of politicians, officials, and ordinary people communicate their messages and achievements via their posts on the Facebook platform. Thus, a lot of linguistic studies have investigated media discourse from several perspectives, such as pragmatics, discourse analysis, anthropology, and conversational analysis. Facebook is considered one of the most used media platforms as it plays a significant role in social, economic, and political life (Yannopoulou Liu, Bian, and Heath 2019; Bosch, Mare, and Meli 2020). It could shape people's reality and change their ideologies as well.

1.5 Aims of the study

This paper focuses on the discourse used by Facebookers in their comments on the declarations of the Jordanian Minister of Health. It employs Culpeper's (2011) theory of impoliteness to investigate how participants use impoliteness strategies in the context of social interactions. The current research aims at:
1) Identifying the impoliteness strategies used by Facebookers commenting on the declarations of the Minister of Health.
2) Investigating the social and cultural factors behind the use of impoliteness strategies.

2. Literature review

Many studies explored impoliteness theory (e.g., Dynel 2015; Bustan and Alakrash 2020; Feng and Ren 2020; Khazraie and Talebzadeh 2020; Culpeper 2021). Mirhosseini and Mardanshahi (2017), for example, investigated impoliteness strategies in the Iranian movie "Mother" using Culpeper's (1996) model. The results of their study revealed that male characters used more impoliteness strategies than the female characters in the movie. The study suggested that the difference between males and females in the use of impoliteness was due to differences in power as men in Iran have more power than women. The study also showed that positive politeness was the most frequent strategy.

In another study, Kantara (2010) explored the impoliteness strategies used by 'Dr. House' in the TV series *House, M.D.* toward his colleagues, bosses, friends, patients, and trainees. The researcher analyzed the collected data using a model proposed by Culpeper (1996) and Culpeper, Bousfield, and Wichman (2003). The study revealed that Dr. House extensively employed sarcasm.

Al-Yasin and Rabab'ah (2018) investigated gender differences in impoliteness strategies used by African American characters in the TV series 'The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air.' The data consisted of 151 impolite utterances taken from Season 1 of the 'The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air.' The study showed that, in general, males initiate impoliteness more than females.

Aydınoğlu (2013) investigated the gender differences in using impoliteness strategies in Geralyn Horton's plays. The study used Culpeper's classification of impoliteness strategies and Bousfield's framework of responses to impoliteness. The study found that impoliteness was rarely used in the plays. The results also revealed that female characters are more polite than their male counterparts.

Same to the current study, Onwubiko (2020) investigated the impoliteness strategies used by Facebookers in their comments and posts over the SC ruling and their goals. The study adopted Culpeper's (1996) theory. The results indicated that Facebookers employed four impoliteness strategies: bald on record, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, and sarcasm or mock politeness. Bald on record impoliteness is the most used strategy among the four ones.

Rabab'ah and Nusiebah (2020) investigated impoliteness strategies used in the comments section of the Al-Jazeera Arabic news. The study used Culpeper's bottom-up model (2011, 2016) to identify impolite acts and Neurauter-Kessels' framework (2011) to classify different kinds of impolite behavior. The results of the study revealed some features of Arabic impoliteness discourse, including the use of interjections, colloquialisms, proverbs, religious expressions, and idioms.

Lucky (2015) investigated impolite strategies performed in the British TV series Sherlock. The study found that the characters used all types of impoliteness strategies, including bald on record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, off-record impoliteness, and withhold politeness. The findings also showed that withhold politeness is the least used strategy and negative impoliteness is the most used strategy.

Hammod and Abdul-Rassul (2017) explored impoliteness strategies in English and Arabic Facebook comments using Culpeper's (1996) model. The study found some strategies were used: bald on record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, sarcasm/mock impoliteness. The study revealed that withdraw

politeness is not used in the text, and positive and negative impoliteness is the most commonly used strategy.

Cahyono (2018) examined the impoliteness strategies used by Donald Trump on his Twitter. The researcher designed the study following the Scollon and Scollon's (2001) model of impoliteness and power. The data included Trump's tweets collected from January 21, 2017 to March 20, 2018. Culpeper impoliteness strategies (1996) were used to classify the data. The findings revealed that Donald Trump used a lot of offensive remarks to show his wrath and disappointment.

Rababa'h and Rababa'h (2021) explored the impact of gender on the use of impoliteness strategies in Jordanian and American TV sitcoms. The data were collected from the American TV sitcom "The Big Bang Theory/season 12 and the Jordanian TV sitcom "dʒaltˤah/ season 1". The analysis of the data showed that in both cultures, males used more impolite acts than females.

Erlinda (2022) conducted a qualitative documentary analysis to examine the impoliteness strategies used by the lecturers when they give feedback to the student-teachers in Microteaching classes. She adopted Culpeper's (2005, 2011) impoliteness model. The study revealed that lecturers employed positive, negative, and off-record impoliteness strategies when they give comments and feedback on student-teacher teaching performance. Moreover, the results also showed some of the main impoliteness strategies employed by lecturers such as inappropriate identity, using a derogatory name, condescending, and scum, among others.

This review of related literature showed many researchers were interested in impoliteness strategies. However, there were few studies that investigated impoliteness strategies used on Facebook and in Jordanian culture. Thus, the present study is needed to enrich the existing literature by revealing the impoliteness strategies used by Facebookers in commenting on the Ministry of Health's declarations and posts on Covid-19 and examining their underlying social and cultural considerations.

3. Methodology

The choice of the selected data is motivated by several considerations. First, Facebook is one of the most commonly used media in Jordan, which attracts a considerable number of viewers. Second, the data could present and reflect a comprehensive representation of the nature of the impolite language used in Jordanian society in computer-mediated communication as it differs from face-to-face communication. The current study adopts Culpeper's impoliteness model (2011) to identify the conventionalized impoliteness strategies used by Facebookers in commenting on the declarations of the Ministry of Health posted on its official Facebook page. Culpeper (2011) identified nine conventionalized impoliteness strategies. The first strategy is insult, which is subcategorized into four strategies: 1. Personalized negative vocatives 2. Personalized negative assertions 3. Personalized negative references 4. Personalized third-person negative references in the hearing of the target. The other strategies are Pointed criticisms/complaints, Challenging or unpalatable questions and/or presuppositions, Condescension, Message enforcers, Dismissals, Silencers, Threats, and Negative Expressive (Curses and ill-wishes). These conventionalized impoliteness strategies are used across several cultures and languages.

3.1 Data collection

The data of the current study were taken from the official Facebook page of the Ministry of Health. The entire corpus was initially filtered. Four posts were purposefully selected since they were rich with comments addressing and touching significant social, national, and international issues. The data were collected between September 6th, 2021 and September 29th, 2021. The researchers collected the first 100 comments on each post (14253 tokens). Out of 400 comments, the researchers chose 250 comments that contained impolite and offensive words. After choosing the comments, two researchers classified them into different strategies using Culpeper's impoliteness model (2011). Inter-Coder Reliability was used to test the reliability of the data analysis. Inter-Coder Reliability is one of the techniques that was used to test the reliability of the qualitative data by investigating the degree of agreement between two coders when they use similar coding schemes. One way to investigate inter-coder reliability is by using the Holsti formula (1969) for reliability testing, which states: $CR = \frac{2M}{N_1+N_2}$

Information:
CR = Coefficient reliability
M = Number of statements approved by the two researchers
N1 = Number of units coded by the researcher 1
N2 = Number of units coded by researcher 2

Cr= $\frac{2(200)}{250+290}$
$CR = 0.8$

According to the results above, the data has a high level of reliability, which exceeds the minimum reliability score of 0.7.

After choosing the data, the researchers transcribed the data and translated them into English for further analysis.

3.2 Data analysis

Culpeper's (2011) conventionalized impoliteness formulae were used to identify and categorize the selected data. The results of the pilot study fit perfectly in this model. The first research question is answered via a profound reading and analysis of the selected data to identify the impoliteness strategies used by Facebookers. Then, statistical analysis is employed to come up with the frequency and percentage of each strategy used by Facebookers. To address the second research question, the social and pragmatic functions of the impoliteness strategies are investigated in relation to the context. The researchers identify the way impoliteness strategies are employed to fulfill and reflect social purposes.

4. Results and discussion

This section presents the frequencies and percentages of impoliteness strategies used by Facebookers in their comments on the declarations and posts of the Ministry of Health on Facebook. The analysis of the selected data is shown in the following table:

Impoliteness Strategies in Facebook Comments on Ministry of Health's Declarations
and Posts on Covid-19

Table1: The Impoliteness Strategies Used by Facebookers

Strategy	Frequency	Percentage %
Challenging or unpalatable question and/or presupposition	60	24%
Insults	53	21.2%
Negative expression (curses and ill wishes)	39	15.6%
Pointed criticism/complaints	36	14.4%
Dismissals	27	10.8%
Silencers	20	8%
Condescension	15	6%
Total	250	100%

4,1 Challenging or unpalatable questions and/or presuppositions

Challenging or unpalatable questions and/or presuppositions is one of the powerful impoliteness strategies in which the speaker uses questions and presuppositions to attack the target's face. Based on the selected data, this strategy is the most frequent one in the comments. It occurs 60 times which represents 24% of the whole data. The following examples demonstrate how Facebookers employed a challenging or unpalatable questions and/or presuppositions in their comments.

(1) ما فائدة فرق التقصي بعد فتح الحدود؟ /mæ fæʔɪdət firəq ʔltæqəsi: bəʕd fətɪħ ʔl ħʊdu:d/ (what is the *benefit of Epidemiological investigation teams after opening the borders*)

As seen in the above example, the Facebooker attacks the Minister of Health directly via the use of challenging or unpalatable question. The comment points out the usefulness of the epidemiological investigation teams where the Ministry of Health opens the borders. Such an unpalatable question ridicules the decision made by the Ministry and explicitly attacks the Minister of Health's face. Sarcastically, the Facebooker criticizes the Minister of Health for the contradictory decisions, opening the borders and employing epidemiological investigation teams.

(2) ليش ما سيطرتوا على الوضع من الأول لما كانت الاعداد قليلة؟ /leɪʃ mæ seɪtʕærtu: ʕəlæ əlwdʕɪʕ ləmmæ kænət ʔl əʕdæd qæli:ləh/ (*why don't you treat the pandemic before its spread*)

Comment (2) implies that there are negligence and corruption in the Ministry of Health in the sense that the Ministry has not conducted proper procedures and plans to deal with Coronavirus at an early stage. Thus, the Facebooker impolitely attacks the face of the Minister of Health and derogates his performance and policy by showing the Ministry's failure at dealing with the pandemic.

4.2 Insults

The analysis of the selected data shows that insults are evidenced by 53 tokens which represent 21.2 % of the total comments. Insult is one of the impoliteness strategies proposed by Culpeper (2011) where the use of negative vocatives and assertions causes loss to others' faces. Some of the insults are provided in the following examples.

(3) كذابين / kəðæbi:n / (liars).

Several Facebookers use the insult / kəðæbi:n / 'liars' as a response to the comment of the Ministry of Health which says that a total of 363 confirmed cases of Covid-19 were registered in Jordan. The use of / kəðæbi:n / 'liars' is a direct insult which is considered an impolite expression in Jordanian culture. In Jordan, attributing someone as a liar communicates a terrible and powerful offense in the sense that the addressee is not trustworthy. The next example presents another instance of insult.

(4) انت بالذات لا تصلح حارس عماره / ʔnta bɪðæt læ tasʕlʊħ ħærɪs ʔɪmærəh/ (You, particularly, are not qualified to be building's custodian).

Example (4) is another use of insult in which the Facebooker attacks the Minister's face and diminishes his performance showing that he is unfit to hold the position of Minister of Health; he is even unfit to be the building's custodian.

(5) انت طلعت شغل مظاهر ʔnta tʕlɪʕɪt ʃʊɣʊl məðʕæhɪr/ (you are just showing off)

Insult can be performed via several linguistic expressions. Example (5) presents a direct insult by which the Facebooker describes the performance of the Minister of Health as a kind of show-off. The phrase "show off" is commonly used in Jordanian culture to attribute people who do not work seriously and effectively. Show off is a negative attribute that Jordanians use to attack the face of addressees and embarrass them.

(6) انت ما بنوخذ منك حق ولا باطل ʔnta mæ bnʊxɪð mɪnnək ħəq welə bætʕil/ (We got nothing from you).

The Facebooker in example (6) intentionally insults the Minister of Health and considers his declaration fake and untrue. Additionally, example (6) indicates that the Minister of Health's speech is unauthentic and irresponsible. More examples of insults are provided in the index.

4.3 Negative expression (Curses and ill-wishes)

This strategy is employed to invoke curses or ill wishes to the target and to show anger or dissatisfaction with unpreferred acts and behaviors. There are 39 instances of negative expressions representing 15.6% of the total data. Some negative expressions (Curses and ill-wishes) are demonstrated in the following examples.

(7) الله لا يوفقكم ʔlləh læ jwəfɪgkʊm/(May Allah dis-guide you)

The Facebooker in example (7) wishes bad luck to the officials at the Ministry of Health. Conventionally, such negative wish and pray reflects the corruption in the Minister of Health which puts people in hard circumstances. The comment also indicates that Jordanians no more trust the Ministry of Health and do not expect any future reforms. The example is considered a direct attack on the face of the Minister of Health. Another instance shows the negative invocation and wishes to the Ministry of Health in the next comment:

(8) الله يكسركوا مثل ما كسرتوا الشعب ʔlləh jɪkɪɪrkʊm mɪθl mæ kəsərtu: ɪʃəʕb/ (May Allah destroy you as you destroy the people)

Here, the commenter in (8) justifies the use of negative prayer and wish to the Ministry of Health which destroys people and drags them to an unbearable situation. In the light of impoliteness theory, the negative expressive is considered a conventionalized impolite use of language oriented to cause damage and loss to the addressee's face. Thus, the commenter in example (8) intends to threaten the Minister of Health's face and designate him as an insincere official.

4.4 Pointed criticism/complaints

In this strategy, the speakers use criticisms or complaints to show dissatisfaction with the target or the target's actions. The data shows that Facebookers used 36 instances of pointed criticism which represent 14.4% of the total comments.

(9) مش عارف الواحد شو يحكي فتحتوا كل شي وسكرتوا المساجد /mɪʃ ʕærɪf ɪlwæħəd ʃu: jəħki: feteħtu: kʊl ʃi: wəsakkartu: ɪlməsædʒɪd/ (The Facebooker complains about lifting the lockdowns except the mosques).

In example (9), the Facebooker complains about the decision of the Ministry of Health which prohibits opening mosques whereas all other sectors are open. The comment is considered a direct criticism and an impolite proposition performing face threatening act to the Minister of Health. The comment also implies and communicates a negative attitude toward the declarations of the Ministry of Health.

(10) للأسف القطاع الحكومي متهالك / lɪlʔəsəf ʔɪl-qɪtˤæʕ ʔɪl-ħʊku:mi: mʊtəhælɪk/(unfortunately governmental sector run down).

The writer of comment (10) expresses his dissatisfaction with the performance of the governmental sector by criticizing it with a negative attribute. The comment implies metaphorical implication in the sense that the governmental sector is like a ruined construction. Such a description is considered a direct offense and faces a threatening act. For more examples of pointed criticism, refer to the index.

4.5 Dismissal

Dismissal strategy occurs 27 times in the comments, which represents 10.8% of the total data. This strategy is employed to make the addressees shun the conversation or argument by dismissing them impolitely. Consider the following examples:

(11) روح على بيتك احسنلك /ru:ħ ʕələæ beitək ʔħsenlək/ (it is better for you to go to your house)

In example (11), dismissal as conventionalized impoliteness formula is transparent. The Facebooker suggests that the Minister of Health should resign and quit the Ministry since he is not qualified and does not perform any satisfactory work. Dismissal is a direct impolite expression that causes damage to the addressee's face and ridicules his /her presence.

(12) سيبكم من كذبة كورونا /si:bʊm mɪn kɪðbɪt kɒrɔ:nə/ (forget Corora's lie)

The comment (12) is considered a kind of dismissal in which the writer of the comment asks the staff at the Ministry of Health represented by the Minister of Health to stop lying and underestimating

people's minds regarding coronavirus. It is obvious in the above example that the Facebooker attacks the face of the Ministry of Health and accuses him of lying.

4.6 Silencers

Based on the collected data, silencer occurs 20 times which represents 8 % of the total comments. Silencer is similar to dismissal except that it is specifically used to make addressees shut their mouths or stop speaking.

(13) سكر بوزك بكفي كذب على الناس/səkkɪr bu:zək bɪkəfi: kɪðɪb ʕəlæ ʔɪl-næs/ (shut your mouth stop lying to people).

The Facebooker in example 14 asks the Ministry of Health to stop announcing news concerning coronavirus because the news is lies. Silencer reflects the commenter's annoyance about the declaration and news pronounced by the Ministry of Health. Based on impoliteness formulas, silencers are deemed as a direct attack on the face of the addressee.

(14) خلص بيكفي عاد /xeləsˤ jɪkəfi: ʕæd/ (stop that is over)

The socio-cultural use of the word "xeləsˤ" /stop/ coveys silencer meaning. The commenter intends to offend the Minister of Health by asking him to stop talking and shut his mouth. The comment communicates that people cannot tolerate the lie and negligence of the Ministry of Health. It is transparent that the Facebooker uses impolite language to cause loss and damage to the minister's face.

4.7 Condescension

The data reveals that there are 15 instances of condescension used by Facebookers which represent 6% of the total comments. This strategy is used to the superiority of the speakers and decorates the addressee as shown in the following examples:

(15) تصرفاتكم طفولية /tesˤərufætkʊm tˤʊfu:liah/ (Your actions are immature)

(16) الولد الصغير يتصرف احسن منكم/ ʔɪl-weləd ʔɪl-sˤɣi:r jɪtsˤrəf ʔħsən mɪnkʊm/ (the young child behaves better than you)

The Facebooker in the above examples (15, 16) impolitely attributes the decisions and activities of the Ministry of Health to a child's behaviors which are irresponsible and immature. The comments are designated to attack and cause loss to the Minister of Health's face.

In the next section, we provide a profound explanation of the analyzed data and results focusing on the sociocultural factors behind the use of the conventionalized impoliteness formulas.

Based on the analysis of the selected data, the results reveal that Facebookers employ seven formulas of the conventionalized impoliteness model proposed by Culpeper (2011) in their comments on the Ministry of Health declarations and posts on Facebook. These strategies are insults, challenging or unpalatable questions and/or presuppositions, pointed criticism, dismissals, silencers, negative expressions/bad wishes, and condescension. It is worth noting here that the two strategies, enforce messages and threats, are not noticed and used among Facebookers in the collected data. These two

strategies are not used due to two reasons. First, the nature of communication is in form of writing where there are no immediate responses and interactions. Thus, the writers cannot use enforce messages, such as "listen here (as a preface) you got it? (as a tag) read my lips do you understand [me]? (as a tag)". In fact, enforcing messages entails interactive communication such as spoken discourses. The second reason for the absence of threat in the collected data is power inequality. Bousfield and Locher (2008, 8) state that power is a critically important aspect in the study of impoliteness.

Power plays a significant role in interaction and "impoliteness is an exercise of power". Culpeper (1996, 354) confirms that the use of power is related to the powerful status of the speaker. When the speaker is in a higher position, he/she can use impoliteness more freely because he/she can "(a) reduce the ability of the less powerful participant to retaliate with impoliteness and (b) threaten more severe retaliation should the less powerful participant be impolite". Based on the previously mentioned notions and the legal point of view, Facebookers cannot threaten the Minister of Health due to legal accountability.

The results also reveal that challenging or unpalatable questions and/or presuppositions are the most frequent strategy applied by Facebookers occurring 60 times and representing 24% of the total comments. This strategy provides a metaphorical sense in which the speaker attacks the addressees by addressing them with a challenging question that does not require an answer or information but rather sheds light on underlying messages and employs offense and hurt to the addressees. For instance, the writer of the comment "ما فائدة فرق التقصي بعد فتح الحدود؟ / *mæ fæʔɪdət fɪrəq ʔltæqəsi: bəʕd fətɪħ ʔl ħʊdu:d / (what is the benefit after opening the borders)* wants to reflect his/her rejection and dissatisfaction with the Ministry of Health's resolutions and decisions. This result is congruent with serval studies such as Rababʻah, Al-Khanji, and Bataineh (2022 and Hammod and Abdul-Rassul (2017). The comment points out that there are contradicting decisions issued by the Ministry of Health. It is essential to note that the situation and context where the comment occurred are very critical in Jordan. There is tension and distrust between the Ministry of Health and the people in Jordan. Additionally, regarding social and economic circumstances, people have suffered from curfew which alters their social life and customs and lots of people have lost their jobs. Thus, the Facebookers express their anger and disagreement with the Ministry of Health via challenging questions to intentionally offend and damage the face of the Minister of Health.

Challenging or unpalatable questions and/or presuppositions are applied by Facebookers to communicate significant messages. The comment "مش على أساس ينشف ويموت؟ / mɪʃ ʕəlæ ʔəsæs jenʃəf wə jmu:t / (isn't it supposed to dry and die?)" shows sarcasm of the declarations of the Minister of Health. The Facebooker attacks and mocks the minister for illogical and unsatisfactory information regarding the coronavirus. The Minister of Health has promised the public that coronavirus will shrink and die if people keep their distance and wear masks. In contrast, the Facebooker in the above comment confirms that the coronavirus increased, and nothing happened to the minister's promises and affirmations. The unpalatable question can be considered a direct condemnation of the minister with lies and deception. The impoliteness language used by Facebookers reflects ideological, social, and cultural issues. Jordanians do

not trust the Ministry and government's promises and declarations since nothing of them comes true in the real life. The reason behind the frequent use of unpalatable questions refers to Jordanian cultural considerations. In Jordanian culture, the unpalatable question serves multi-communicative functions. First, it addresses pivotal issues in a sarcastic sense. Second, it indirectly attacks the face of addressees to avoid any legal investigations.

Insults are the second most frequent strategy used by Facebookers which counts 49 instances out of 250 comments. Culpeper (2011) has divided insults into four sub-categories: personalized negative vocatives, personalized negative assertions, personalized negative references, and personalized third-person negative references. The analysis reveals that commenters apply all kinds of insults except personalized third-person negative references. It is apparent that the use of the attribute/ kəðæbi:n / 'liers' is the most frequent insult which reflects the distrust of the officials at the Ministry of Health. All instances of insults are considered a direct attack on the face of the Minister of Health. For example, in response to the post of the Ministry of Health which says that a total of 363 confirmed cases of Covid-19 were registered in Jordan, the Facebookers attack the Minister of Health via using كذابين / *kəðæbi:n* / *(liars,)* فاشلين/ *fæʃli:n* /) *Failures,*(كل قراراتكم زيكم زباله/ *kʊl qərərær:tkʊm zeikʊm zbæləh/ (all your decisions are futile just like you,*(وجهكم اسود من الكذب/ *wdʒu:hkʊm su:d mɪn ɪlkɪðɪb/ (you have got egg on your face due to lie*. Insults communicate that the minister is a liar who does not tell the truth and tries to misguide and deceive the public with a false declaration. All in all, the impoliteness strategy (insult) uncovers the social and personal ideology of Jordanians who distrust the government's promises and declarations. In Jordanian culture, insult is an unexpected direct damage to the face of the addressee which could cause a fight between interlocutors and put its user under legal responsibility. Thus, Facebook is a suitable medium of communication that enables Jordanians to communicate their anger and dissatisfaction with the government's decisions through the use of an anonymous entity which makes them feel safe from punishment.

The negative expression (curses and ill wishes) strategy comes as the third most used strategy in our data. There are 39 tokens evidenced in the comments with 15.6 % of the total data. Facebookers apply several negative expressions to attack the face of the Minister of Health such as الله لا يقيمكم /Ɂlləh læ jqɪmkʊm/ (Allah doesn't help you), اللهي يوكلكم ضبع /Ɂllæhi: jʊkʊlkʊm dˤebiʕ/ (hope to be eaten by hyena), لا بارك الله فيكم /læ bærək Ɂlləh fɪkʊm/ (Allah doesn't bless you). Most negative expressions come as ill wishes. In Jordanian culture, ill wishes are used in a situation where the speaker intends to express his/ her hatred and anger to the addressee. Facebookers apply negative expressions to intentionally hurt and damage the face of the Minister of Health. Moreover, the Facebookers wish bad luck to the Ministry of Health to express their anger and disagreement with the decision to lock down.

Pointed criticisms/complaints occur in 36 instances representing 14.4% of the total comments. In Culpeper (2011, 2016), pointed criticisms/complaints perform a direct attack on the face of the addressee. Facebookers use pointed criticism/complaints to deliver their dissatisfaction and anger towards the target

and the target's actions. For instance, the comment " وسكرتوا شي كل فتحتوا يحكي شو الواحد عارف مش

المساجد *mɪʃ ʕærɪf ɪlwæħəd ʃu: jəħki: feteħtu: kʊl ʃi: wəsakkartu: ɪlməsædʒɪd* / (I don't know what to say
you unlock everything except the mosques)" is perceived as a direct criticism to the Ministry of Health for
the contradictory decisions. The commenter provides two contrasting views in which the Ministry
lockdowns the mosques and opens the other sectors. This decision does not make sense since the
Ministry's justification for the mosque lockdown is to keep people distant for the sake of declining the
spread of coronavirus. The commenter expresses his disgust and rejection of the unfair decision of the
Ministry. Pointed criticism/ complaints show the weakness and disability of the governmental sector to
deal with the critical circumstances of the coronavirus. In Jordanian culture, criticism is deemed as
intentional hurt and damage to the face of addressees. The results indicate that pointed criticism/
complaints are one of the most adopted impoliteness strategies which express that people discredit the
Minister of Health and disbelieve his declaration.

Dismissal strategy is used to make the receiver shun the conversation or argument by dismissing
them impolitely. Dismissals are used 27 times which represents 10.8% of the total comments. The
Facebookers apply dismissals to derogate the Minister of Health and cause damage to his face. Instances
such as من تبقى ما لملم *ru:ħ ʕəlæ beitək ʔħsenlək* / (it is better to go to your house), روح على بيتك احسنلك

معك الله شخصية اغراض *ləmlɪm mæ təbeqæ mɪn ʔɣrædˤ ʃexsˤɪjəh ʔlləh meʕek* /(Gather your personal stuff
and go away), and رجل يا عنا حل */ ħ ɪl ʕenæ jæ redʒol / (Get rid of us, man)* communicate the writers'
annoyance disapproval, and dissatisfaction of the Minister of Health programs, decisions and
performance. The Facebookers in the above comments underestimate and play down the role of the
minister in an impolite way. Moreover, the expression "it is better to go to your home" has cultural
connotations, and in Jordanian society, it is used in a situation where the addressee is inferior or
irresponsible.

The results also indicate that silencers are evidenced in 20 comments representing 8% of total data.
Silencers are similar to dismissals except that they are employed specifically to make someone shut their
mouth or stop speaking. In Jordanian culture, silencers are considered a direct insult and offense to the
addressees which might cause a conflict and fight between participants due to the strong offensive effects
they perform. Comments such as, الناس على كذب و حكي بكفي خلص */xæləs bɪkəfi: ħeki: wə kɪðɪb ʕəlæ ʔɪl-*
næs / (stop talking and lying to people) and تخبيص وقفوا */ wəqfu: təxbi:sˤ / (stop destroying)* apply two
impoliteness strategies; negative expression and silencer. The former is apparent in the use of terms such
as "lying" and destroying" and the latter is implemented with terms such as "stop" stop talking." The
writers of the above comments employ silencers to express their anger and hatred toward the minister and
attribute him with negative adjectives. Silencers communicate commenters' distrust of the promises of the
Ministry of Health. All silencer instances are considered impolite comments designated to attack the face
of the Ministry of Health.

Condescension is the least frequent strategy in our study. It is found in only 15 comments and presents 6% of the total comments. This strategy is used to show the speaker's superiority over the addressee who is perceived as inferior and immature. It is clear in the comments "تصرفاتكم طفولية

tesˤərufætkʊm tˤʊfu:liah / (Your actions are immature), الولد الصغير يتصرف احسن منكم/ *ʔɪl-weləd ʔɪl-sˤɣi:r*

jitsˤrəf   ʔhsən mɪnkʊm / (the young child behaves better than you) and والله عليكم عيب/ *ʕi:b ʕəleikʊm*

welləh / (shame on you)" that the Facebookers intend to condescend the Minister of Health and his party for their irresponsible decisions and actions. The Facebookers underestimate the Minister of Health's actions by describing them as a child's behaviors. From a socio-cultural perspective, the word "boy" in Jordan has been deemed an insult and offense if it is used as a term of address with adults. Moreover, the word "/ ʕi:b ʕəleikʊm" (shame on you) in Jordanian culture is perceived as a strong insult and derogation which employs the speaker's disgust and disapproval of the addressee's acts. All in all, the findings provide several invaluable insights into the creative usage of impolite language for conveying critical messages to the people in authority.

All in all, several studies have been conducted to investigate the use of impoliteness strategies in various contexts. The current study somehow presents a similar result to Kantara (2010) which investigates the impoliteness strategies employed Dr. House' in the TV series *House, M.D.* toward his colleagues, bosses, friends, patients, and trainees. Kantara's study shows that the sarcasm is the most used strategy by Dr.House and this result comes nearly in line with the current study in which some of the challenging and unpalatable questions imply sarcastic senses. Comparing to Onwubiko's (2020) study which is in the same vein of the current study, the current study presents different findings to Onwubiko's study which indicates that bold on record is the most frequent strategy used by facebookers in their comments over the SC rules and their goals. Relatively, some of the findings of the current study confirm what Rabab'ah and Nuseibah (2020) have found in their study which investigates the impoliteness strategies used in the comment section of Al-Jazeera Arabic news. Both studies indicate that some features of Arabic impoliteness discourse including colloquialism, proverbs, and religious expression are used by commenters. The findings of the current study point out that impoliteness is a common social phenomenon that varies in several social contexts.

6. Conclusion

The main aim of the present study was to identify and examine the impoliteness strategies (Culpeper 2011) employed by Facebookers in commenting on the declarations and posts of the Minister of Health on Facebook. Furthermore, the study aimed at investigating cultural and social considerations behind the use of impoliteness formulas. To do so, Culpeper's (2011) theoretical framework of conventionalized impoliteness formulae was adopted. 250 out of 400 comments were selected and analyzed in light of Culpeper's model (2011). The results revealed that seven of Culpeper's conventionalized formulas are used to attack and damage the face of the Minister of Health: insults, challenging or unpalatable questions and/or presuppositions, pointed criticism, dismissals, silencers, negative expression/bad wishes, and

condescension. This result lends support to Al-Shlool (2016) who concluded that impoliteness strategies are highly frequent when the topic is related to politics. Additionally, enforce messages and threats are not applied by Facebookers which can be accounted to power inequality between Facebookers and the Minister of Health and the non-interactive nature of communication. The results also indicate that challenging or unpalatable questions and/or presuppositions are the most frequently applied strategy by Facebookers with a percentage of 24% of the total comments. In contrast, the condescension strategy is the least frequently used strategy with a percentage of 6% of the total comments.

All in all, the data analysis shows that Facebookers express their anger, dissatisfaction, and disapproval of the performance and decisions of the Ministry of Health by using impolite language to intentionally attack and damage the minister's face.

Investigating and identifying impoliteness strategies used by Facebookers may bring new insights to the officials and politicians to reconsider their declarations to the public. They can convey effective messages and leave a more profound indication in the mind of the target addressee. The results could help improve EFL learners' competence in realizing impolite expressions and interpreting their functions in light of contexts. The findings contribute to the literature on impoliteness supporting an overarching model of analysis of impolite expressions. It is recommended that further research in the field of discourse analysis tackle a comparative contrastive study of gender differences regarding the use of impoliteness strategies on Facebook. Moreover, the current study serves as a platform for further investigation of pragmatic functions of impoliteness formulas.

الاستراتيجيَات غير المهذبة في تعليقات الفيسبوك على تصريحات ومنشورات وزارة الصحة حول كوفيد-19

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الملخص

تهدف الدراسة الحاليّة إلى استقصاء الاستراتيجيات غير المهذَبة التي يستخدمها مستخدمو فيسبوك في التعليقات على تصريحات وزير الصحة بشأن كوفيد-19. كما تسعى إلى فحص الاعتبارات الاجتماعيَة والثقافيَة الكامنة وراء استخدام هذه الاستراتيجيات؛ ولتحقيق هذا الهدف، اعتمد الباحثون نموذج كوليبير (2011) للاستراتيجيات غير المهذَبة كإطار نظري، وجُمِعَتْ بيانات الدراسة من الصفحة الرسميَة لوزارة الصحة على منصة فيسبوك، وشملت البيانات 400 تعليق (14253 كلمة)، وكشفت النتائج أن مستخدمي فيسبوك استخدموا سبعًا من الاستراتيجيات غير المهذَبة التقليديَة التي حددها كوليبير (2011)، وهي: الإهانات، والأسئلة والافتراضات التحديَة أو غير المريحة، والنقد المباشر، والإقصاء، وإسكات الآخرين، والتعبيرات السلبية/الأماني السيئة، والتعالي. علاوة على ذلك، أظهرت النتائج أن أكثر استراتيجيات الوقاحة شيوعًا كانت الأسئلة أو الافتراضات التحديَة وغير المريحة. كما بينت الدراسة أنه بسبب اعتبارات اجتماعيَة وثقافيَة وسياسيَة معينة، لم تُستَخْدمْ بعض الاستراتيجيات غير المهذَبة مثل فرض الرسائل والتهديدات.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الاستراتيجيات غير المهذَبة ؛ الخطاب الإعلامي؛ كوفيد-19؛ نموذج كوليبير للاستراتيجيات غير المهذَبة.

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Appendix

1. Insults

فاشلين /fæʃliːn / (Failures)

كذابين / kəðæbiːn / (liars)

كل قراراتكم زيكم زباله/ kʊl qərara:tekʊm zeikʊm ziba:ləh / (all your decisions are futile just like you)

وجهكم اسود من الكذب / wəʒuːhkʊm suːd min alkæðib /(you have got egg on your face due to lie.

2. Pointed criticism

خافو الله بالشعب/ xæfuː ʔlləh bi alʃaʕeb/ (pity the people in the sake Allah)

افسم بالله تعقدنا حتى المساجد سكرتوها/ ʔqsəm billah təʕqadəna ħættæ almasaʒid sakærtuha/ (I swear we became complicated even you have closed mosque)

اذا صحتي بتهمكوا وفرولي علاجاتي الشهرية /əða sˤiħtiː bithemkʊm, waferu:li alʕilæʒ alʃ ahri/(if you care about my heath make my monthly medicine available)

روحوا شوفو قسم جراحة طوارئ بمستشفى الزرقاء الحومي لا تباعد ولا شي / ruhuː ʃufuː qisem altˤawari bimustaʃaː alzarqa alħukumee la tabaʕud wala shee/(inspect surgical emergency department at alzarqa hospital, there is no spatial distance among people)

كذب وافتراء/ kiðib wæfteraʔ/ (lie and slander)

قرفتونا بكورونا/ qəraftuːna bi kæruna/ (you disgusted us with corona)

سويتوها قصة العمي بعيونكم / səweituːha qisʕah alʕama jʕmiːkʊm/ (you made a lot of exaggeration, shit)

كلامك غير صحيح وغير منطقي باعداد الفحص العشوائي/kəlæmək ɣiːr səħiːħ wəɣiːr məntˤeqi: bi əʕ daːd alfaħis alʕaʃwaʔi/ (the numbers of corona cases are incorrect and illogical)

3. Negative expression

الله لا يقيمكم/ ʔlləh la jeqimkʊm / (Allah doesn't help you)

اللهي يوكلكم ضبع /ʔlləhiː jukulkʊm dˤabiʕ / (hope to be eaten by hyena)

لا بارك الله فيكم /læ bærək ʔlləh fikʊm/ (Allah doesn't bless you)

الله لا يوفقكم // ʔlləh læ jwafigkʊm / (Allah does not guide you)

الله ياخذكم /ʔlləh jæxəðkʊm/ (Allah curse you)

4. Pointed criticism

هل البنية التحتية جاهزة لكل الظروف؟ /h_ɔl albuniah altaħtei_ɔh ʒæh_ɔza le k_ul alðˤ_ɔru:f/(Is the infrastructure ready for all conditions)

كيف عرفتوا ان الكلب معه كورونا؟ /ki:f ʕeriftu: _ɔn alkaleb mæʕu kæru:na/ (how do you know the dog is infected by corona?)

الواحد مش عارف مين بده يصدق! /alwaħid mu ʕarif mi:n jesˤadiq/ we don't know who to believe)

وين المشكلة لو يتم الفحص بانتظام لكل الناس؟ /w_ein almuʃkellah l_ɔw jatim alfæħis bi antiðˤam/ (where is the problem if the medical test is not conducted regularly)

شو فايدة حظر الجمعة؟ /ʃu faʔedat hadˤer alʒumʕa/ (what is the benefit of Friday's lockdown?)

5. Dismissal

لا تتعبوا حالكم على الفاضي/ /la t_ɔtʕ_ɔbu anfiskom ʕala alfadˤi/ (Don't get tired of it)

لملم ما تبقى من اغراض شخصية الله معك/ lamlim ma tabaqa min aɣradˤ ʃaxsˤeeh allah maʕak/ (Gather your personal stuff and go away)

حل عنا يا رجل /hil ʕ ena ja raʒul/ (Get rid of us, man)

سيبكم من كذبة كورونا /seebkum min kiðbat karona / (forget Corora's lie)

لاتغلبوا حالكم على الفاضي/ /la ataʕbu anfiskum ʕala alfadˤi / (Don't get tired of it)

6. Condescension

عيب عليكم والله /ʕi:b ʕ_ɔleik_ʊm wallah / (shame on you)

فضيحة الي تعملوه هو احنا ناقصنا /f_ɔdˤ_eiħa _ɔli t_ɔʕmulu:h hu _ɔħna nagesˤna/ (what you are doing is shameful, we cannot tolerate more)