The Linguistic Expressions of Disagreement in Jordanian Arabic: A Pragmatic Study

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Abstract

Disagreement is one of the prominent communicative acts which repeatedly takes place in our conversation. The communicative act of disagreement is one of the fairly neglected areas of research in the Arabic context. Among the few studies conducted on the expressions of disagreement, to the best of the present researcher’s knowledge, there has been no serious attempt to investigate the expressions of disagreement and its strategies specifically in the culture of Jordan. Therefore, the present study aims to explore how Jordanians express disagreement in Jordanian Arabic. Data were elicited from 80 male and female speakers of Jordanian Arabic at the Hashemite University using Discourse Completion Task. Descriptive and statistical analyses were applied to the data to reveal the participants’ preference of which disagreement strategies (i.e. strategy’s number and type) to use according to which situation and in light of which variables (i.e. the social familiarity, social status, the degree of harm being caused or the degree to which the addressee was being made uncomfortable by the act). The results revealed that Jordanians employ various strategies when disagreeing with others’ prior say or opinion (i.e. “mitigated disagreement expression(s)” only (e.g. حبيبيتي, اللي بدك اياه (my darling, as you want) or “strong disagreement expression(s)” only (e.g. اننا رافض هالفكرة تماما (I totally reject the idea) which were less frequent, they employed mostly “strong disagreement expression(s) followed by mitigated disagreement expression(s)” (e.g. لا اننا مش معك بهيك راي بس رأيك احترمه, mitigated disagreement expression(s) followed by strong disagreement expression(s) (e.g. زي مايدك, برز)))

Jordanians exhibit a preference for using mitigated expressions of disagreement as well as a concern to evade the sense of confrontation. The most frequently used mitigated disagreement strategies are giving explanation(شي كل المظاهر أكثر من، (People now look at appearance more than anything else”), suggestion (“قل ماليا الموضوع ندرس لازم”, “بنا, we should study the topic financially before anything else”), use of address terms “بابا”, “father”), use of hedges (ناتي اتفاعلي, “I am sure”), request for clarification (إجتنرك أنت إجتنرك, “convince me with your answer”), positive remarks (“الشخص رائع جدا”, “the person is very wonderful”), followed by the use of token/partial agreement(كلمك صحيح, “your speech is correct but”), exclamation (“عذري على الله” , impossible!!!), and swearing (“ملعول عليك, swear to God). The three least used mitigated strategies were recognition of imposition (ثقلته عليك, “I impose on you”), humor (واقفع برشلونه”, “ Barcelona only”) and indirect
refusal (مث مقتنع بالحل, I am not convinced of your solution). The most frequently used aggravated disagreement strategies are blunt statement of opposite (أنا مقتنع بحلي, “I am convinced of my solution”), bare negative form (لا, “No”), sarcasm and rhetorical questions (أكل احناشغل, “we are only interested in eating”), followed by the use of performative (بالرأي بخلافكم, I disagree with you). The two least used strategies are the use of complaints (هذاظلم, “this is not fair”) and insult and negative judgment (دقه قديمة, “a very old fashion”). The study has contributed to knowledge theoretically and practically.

**Keywords:** Disagreement, speech act, politeness, Jordanian Arabic, intra-cultural communication.
References