



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

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. *انا 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 انا مش معك بهيك راي بس رأيك احترمه*), (*mitigated disagreement expression(s) followed by strong disagreement expression(s)*) (e.g. *زي مابذك, بس*) (*and mitigated disagreement expression(s) prior to strong disagreement expression(s) followed by mitigated disagreement expression(s)*) (e.g. *فكره كويسه سيدي, لكني*). (a good idea Mr., but I disagree with you because the high costs will reduce the company's profitability). 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* (*الناس هساصارت تتطلع على المظاهر أكثر من كل شي*), (*People now look at appearance more than anything else*), *suggestion* (*قبل ماديا الموضوع ندرس لازم*), (*we should study the topic financially before anything else*), *use of address terms* (*يا ابي*, father), *use of hedges* (*أنا متأكد*, "I am sure"), *request for clarification* (*بإجابتك أنت إقتعني*, convince me with your answer), *positive remarks* (*الشخص رائع جدا*, "the person is very wonderful"), followed by the use of *token/partial agreement* (*بس كلامك صحيح*, your speech is correct but), *exclamation* (*!! معقول هيك, impossible!!!*), and *swearing* (*عليك بالله*, swear to God). The three least used mitigated strategies were *recognition of imposition* (*تقلتها عليك*, I impose on you), *humor* (*Barcelona only*, واقطع برشلونه), and *indirect refusal* (*مش 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 إحنا شغل*, "we are only interested in eating"), followed by the use of

performative (بالرأي بخالفك , I disagree with you”). The two least used strategies are the use of *complaints* (“ هذا ظلم ” , “this is not fair”) and *insult and negative judgment* (“ قديمة دقه ” , a very old fashion”). The study has contributed to knowledge theoretically and practically.

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

1. Introduction

Speech acts play a crucial role in the language since they are associated to human behaviour (Austin, 1962 and Searle, 1975). They were first studied by Austin (1962) who asserted that uttering words leads speakers to carry out particular speech act which is the smallest unit of the utterance. This implies that a speech act is an utterance which serves a function in communication such as request, refusal, greeting, and disagreement.

'Disagreement' is one of the prominent speech acts which take place in our conversation repeatedly. It is defined as a dual act, an act of saying “what the hearer thinks” and indicating “that the hearer doesn't think the same as the speaker” Wierzbicka (1987: 128). It occurs when a speaker considers untrue some proposition uttered or assumed to be espoused by an addressee.

Disagreement is a conflicting view offered as a response to an expressed view of a previous speaker (Choyimah, 2014). This means that disagreement is a response move and not an initial move. This is what distinguishes it from many other speech acts (e.g. request and offer). Moreover, unlike other speech acts discussed by Searle (1972) (e.g. directives or commissives), disagreement is always reactive, i.e. it is always a reply for a prior utterance from an interlocutor (Soring, 1977, p. 364). For the purpose of this study, disagreement is defined as follows:

A speaker (*S*) disagrees when s/he considers untrue some proposition (*P*) uttered or presumed to be espoused by an addressee (*A*), and reacts with a verbal or paralinguistic response, the propositional content or implicature of which is *not p* (Rees-Miller, 2000, p. 1088).

A speech act is known as a social act that occur in a course of conversation executed by a community of speakers who abide by specific rules. Such rules make speech both comprehensible and normally appropriate. This means that speakers may cooperate in generating sense in conversation as stated by Grice's (1968) Cooperative Principle and its associated maxims. On the other hand, people often do not say accurately what they mean rather they depend on indirect expression whereby one illocutionary act is cloaked in the form of another (Searle 1975) and is understood by interlocutors by way of implicature (Grice 1968). Therefore, to achieve good understanding, the interlocutors must engage in a problem-solving process relying on speakers' words, context, their general knowledge of the world, besides the hearer's awareness of the speaker. Along with requirements for speakers to be clear, they need to be polite so as to preserve social harmony (Goffman, 1967; Lakoff, 1973; Leech, 1983). Lakoff (1973) recognized the incompatible requirements of clearness and politeness and voiced three rules that guide polite behavior. The satisfaction of these rules is based on the relative power and social intimacy or distance of speaker and hearer: (1) don't impose; (2) give options; (3) be friendly. Nonetheless, these rules do not accurately define politeness. Spotting the tension amongst Grice's Cooperative Principle and social needs, Leech (1983: 81) proposes a Politeness Principle (i.e. Maximize expression of beliefs favorable to the hearer, and minimize expression of beliefs unfavorable to the hearer). Six maxims of this Politeness Principle have been proposed.

Green (1989) defines politeness as "whatever means are employed to display consideration for one's addressee's feelings (or face), regardless of the social distance between the speaker and addressee" (p 145). Goffman (1967) defines face as "the positive social value a person effectively claim for himself and image of self-delineated in terms of approved social attributes" (p5). Therefore, self-respect and consideration for others helps people to maintain his own face and the face of others so as to preserve social relationships (Goffman 1967: 11, 41).

Goffman's notion of face was improved by Brown and Levinson's (1987) positive and negative sides of face-wants or face-needs that reflect the inconsistent needs of solidarity with others and independence from others. Positive face is the need of people to be accepted, to have others share the same needs. Negative face is the desire of people to be unrestrained, to evade being imposed upon by others (Brown & Levinson 1987: 62). This perception results in positive and negative politeness. Whereas positive politeness seeks to serve the

positive face-wants of others, negative politeness seeks to evade imposing on the negative face-wants of others (Brown & Levinson 1987: 58-60).

Fraser (1990: 229) views disagreement as one of those communicative acts (e.g. complaining, criticizing, etc.) known as FTAs (face threatening acts). These acts inherently threaten to the addressee's desire to be appreciated and approved of (Brown & Levinson 1987). This entails that speakers choose amongst innumerable strategies to lessen or remove the gravity of the threat by either moderating their communicative tokens or covertly expressing them. The choice of politeness strategies is influenced by three variables (i.e. relative power (P), social distance (D) and ranking of imposition (R) (Brown and Levinson, 1987). This implies that disagreement, which is an FTA that needs to be hedged to lessen the potential threat.

It is supposed that some communicative acts pose a threat to both the positive or negative face of the speaker or addressees. Disagreement is perceived as one of face-threatening acts (FTAs) According to Brown and Levinson's framework, disagreement is an act that poses a threat to the speakers' positive face as it indicates that the speaker does not share the hearer's wants or opinions (Brown & Levinson 1987: 66). It may also pose threat to the speaker's positive face if the speaker cannot preserve his position and thus appears as insensible (Brown & Levinson 1987: 68). If a speaker wishes to assert "Not P" contrary to an addressee A's assertion P, and if the speaker wishes to preserve social harmony, he/she must do so in a way that social bonds are not permanently ruined. Conventions of politeness rooted in a community of speakers may demand that "Not P" be accomplished either with some form of redress to the hearer's face or indirectly so that the illocutionary force of the speech act is unclear (Brown & Levinson 1987: 68-74).

In executing disagreement, speakers can select from a number of conceivable strategies. One strategy is simply not to execute the act at all, while there are numerous options if the speaker chooses to make the act. If the speaker chooses to perform the speech act directly and unambiguously, certain linguistic expressions can nevertheless be utilized to redress the threat to the hearer's negative or positive face. To intensify feelings of companionship and smear the hearer's positive face, the speaker can use incomplete agreement, informal language, and the first person plural (Lakoff 1973, Brown & Levinson 1987: 68-74). Contrariwise, establishing distance, the speaker reduces the threat to the hearer's negative face and lessens the imposition on the hearer (Lakoff 1973). To establish distance, the

speaker can employ interrogatives instead of declaratives, hedges that soften the illocutionary force of the utterance, and impersonal and passive forms (Brown & Levinson 1987: 131). If the speaker decides to execute the speech act "off-record", he/she may use an indirect form, concealing one speech act in the guise of another (Brown & Levinson 1987, Searle 1975).

Fernandez (2013) revealed that both Egyptians and Americans employed similar strategies. However, Egyptians utilized mitigated disagreement expressions such as token agreement and hedges more often. The topic played a fundamental role in determining the kind of strategies participants use. Both Egyptians and Americans resorted to more mitigated disagreement in highly controversial topics. In the contrary, the less polemic topics included stronger disagreement strategies.

Parvaresh and Eslami Resekh (2009) indicated that in Iranian culture the addressee's gender highly affects the use of strategies while performing the speech act of disagreement even there is a high amount of solidarity. Women were found to employ conflictive, which have the most impolite intention, mostly when and where the addressee is of the same sex.

Vera (2010) showed that the speakers draw on a range of different discursive strategies to express disagreement in business negotiations namely contradictions, challenges, counterclaims and counterproposals. In the first phase of the negotiation, where participants take a stand and introduce their proposals, very few contradicting and challenging acts were detected. The results revealed that during the second phase of the negotiating fragment the speaker pay more attention to the transactional goals of the interaction, concentrating on solving the task at hand, than to the interpersonal side of the communicative event. So, during this phase, they exhibited a preference for directness when expressing their contradictions during. In conclusion, as for the use of contradictions and challenges in the first and last phase of the negotiating fragment, these two discursive strategies were perceived as impolite. Instead, the interactants revealed a preference for the use of counterproposal and counterclaims in these two phases. The study has also revealed that the choice of discursive strategies depends on the personal negotiating style that each participant adopts.

2. Statement of the Problem

This research study was motivated by a number of relevant observations. First, the fact that cultures are different and the ways people communicate are influenced by cultural beliefs, values, and attitudes. This means that whether speakers communicate in their first or second language, they seem to follow particular socio-cultural norms/rules which are largely culture-specific. These norms/rules could constrain their communicative behavior (i.e. what speakers say, to whom, and under what conditions) and guide the comprehension and interpretation of communicative acts (Gumperz & Hymes, 1986; Gass & Neu, 2006). Kihékaya (2010) argues that social, cultural, situational, and personal factors shape the linguistic output of the speakers which in turn complicates the situation for language learners in selecting and utilizing certain kinds of speech acts. The expressions of disagreement are not an exception. In everyday life, speakers talk to each other, exchange ideas, and evaluate things, events, and other people. Their interlocutors may agree or disagree with them. The way the hearers convey their disagreement to the speakers is both language-specific and culture-specific. The unawareness of the impact of such cultural differences on the comprehension of the expressions of disagreement could cause misunderstanding and misjudgment, primarily because differences are not recognized as cultural; rather, they are assumed to reflect conforming or not conforming to a single set of socio-cultural norms presumed shared by both cultures, as (Daniel, 1975) observes. Besides, the issue of language and power is also very controversial in pragmatics and sociolinguistics field. However, it is among the least examined areas in Arabic use (Bavarsad et al., 2015).

Second, the researcher's interest in examining disagreement was spurred by numerous cases observed when there was a breach of communication between Jordanian speakers because of inappropriately stated opposite opinions. The communicative act of disagreeing has been specifically chosen for investigation in this study due to the rich potential of the communicative act of disagreement to yield more fruitful insights about the way people deal with and handle interpersonal rapport. This is because disagreement is a frequently observed communicative act in everyday events. It is considered not only to be a linguistic action but also a social action as it refers directly to the relationship amongst the speakers. Unlike agreement which embodies an alliance, cooperation, and support amongst speakers' positions, disagreement is perceived to be an expression of interpersonal contrast. Hence, it is perceived to be a complex, sensitive and face-threatening act by its nature, but polite

strategies can be used to minimize the threat to the face of interlocutors (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Hence, speakers should be aware of when and how to express disagreement in their language and culture and other target languages and cultures in order to maintain each other's face.

Third, compared to the communicative acts such as requesting, compliment, apology, the review of related literature reveals that the act of disagreement has attracted little attention to research on pragmatics (Parvaresh & Eslami Resekh, 2009; Vera, 2010; Behnam & Niroomand, 2011; Izadi, 2012; Koczogh, 2012; Niroomand, 2012; Fernandez, 2013; Mehregan et al., 2013; Samar et al., 2013; Choyimah, 2014; Patrawut, 2014; Bavarsad et al., 2015; Norouzi, 2015 and Sadrameli & Haghverdi, 2016).

The communicative act of disagreement is one of the comparatively neglected areas of research in the Arabic context. The vast majority of work has focused on English language (Harris, 2001). Amongst the few studies conducted on the communication of disagreement, to the best of the present researcher's knowledge; there has been no investigation of the expressions of disagreement and its strategies in Arabic, more specifically in the culture of Jordan. Consequently, the present study is anticipated to fill the gap in the literature of the communicative act of disagreement. Hence, it attempted to present an account that shows how Jordanian speakers perceive and produce the speech act of disagreement in Jordanian Arabic.

4 Significance of the Study

The main empirical merit of the present study stems from different vital sources. This study is the first endeavor that investigates the strategies and perceptions of Jordanians regarding the expressions of disagreement. It casts some light on the linguistic behavior involved in the communication of disagreement in Jordan, focusing on a number of universal theoretical concepts and some culture-specific values placed on a small number of important variables such as the positive and negative face, power, social formality, and social status. This, in turn, may help in reducing the risk of communication breakdown in intra-cultural and intercultural communication situations between Jordanians and others when conveying disagreement.

The study makes a substantial contribution to knowledge by enriching the growing body of mono-cultural research, especially that which comes under the speech acts theory and politeness theory. Therefore, the study reinforces the knowledge of Arabic speakers, students of linguistics, and speakers of other languages concerning the speech act of disagreement in Jordanian Arabic. The study may be used as a baseline for further cross-cultural studies, i.e. in order to compare the realization and perception of the disagreement act between speakers of Jordanian Arabic and native speakers of other languages and associated cultures.

The study is a great enrichment of the field of applied linguistics, providing a great help to language teachers and learners. Achieving the aims of the study will enable and motivate them to update their existing curricula and develop new instructional plans accordingly.

5. Methodology

5.1 Sample of the Study

The sample consisted of native speakers of Jordanian Arabic only. They descended from parents who were also Jordanians and share an important number of cultural representations. The total number of participants that were recruited is 80 in the academic year 2015/2016. The group of participants consisted of 40 male and 40 female speakers of Jordanian Arabic. The participants in this study were selected from a group of undergraduate students in Jordan from different disciplines (science, and humanities). Their ages range from nineteen to twenty-one.

5.2 Data Collection and analysis

Mixed methodology was applied in this study (i.e. Discourse Completion Task and interview). The Discourse Completion Task (DCT) (Appendix 1) is a written questionnaire, which "consists of a situational description followed by a brief dialogue, with, at least, one turn as an open slot to be completed by the participant," (Kasper and Rose 2002: 90). This instrument was given to both male and female Jordanian speakers of Arabic. The subjects were asked to write their disagreement. They were asked to write what they believe they would say if the situations mentioned in the DCT arose in daily interactions. The DCT in the

present study is considered by many a controlled elicitation method, which meets the demand for pragmatic research, and allows researchers to control the variables such as the imposition of the situation and status of the interlocutors consequently providing a consistent body of data. Furthermore, it has been proved to be quick and efficient in gathering a large amount of data (Cohen & Olshtain 1981; Beebe & Cummings 1996; Wolfson 1989; Beebe *et al* 1990; Gass & Houck 1999). Another advantage of controlled techniques like the DCT is that they provide prototypical responses (Kwon 2004). Hill *et al* (1986) argued that the DCT is more likely to trigger subject's mental prototypes, while natural speech data are more likely to include typical items. Collecting naturally occurring data for investigations of communicative acts is a very complicated task for researchers since it may result in many difficulties (Shariati & Chamani 2010). It would be time-consuming and a way that does not help researcher control all the social and contextual variables (Cohen, 1996) Therefore, it may not provide sufficient and accurate information about the communicative act of disagreement (Archer *et. al*, 2012). In light of this discussion, it could be argued that the DCT is a sufficient instrument for investigating the participants' realization or production of the speech act of disagreement.

After the collection of the data, the researcher coded the subjects' responses considering the elicited data and the newly devised coding schemes by reading and understanding and giving specific markers to the participants' utterances in DCTs. The disagreement strategies were identified in terms of semantic formulas. "A semantic formula refers to a word, a phrase, or a sentence that meets a particular semantic criterion or strategy; any one or more of these can be used to perform the act in question" (Cohen 1996: 265). The researcher counted the frequency and mean of each semantic formula used by Jordanian speakers of Arabic. Descriptive and statistical analyses were applied to the data. The frequencies and percentages of disagreement strategies as part of the descriptive analysis were calculated using the Excel program which in turn explicated the respondents' 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.

6. Findings and discussion

The analysis of the data revealed five communicative patterns used by Jordanian speakers of Arabic when expressing disagreement. Besides employing either “mitigated disagreement expression(s)” only (e.g. *حبيبيتي, اللي بدك اياه*), (my darling, as you want) or “strong disagreement expression(s)” only (e.g. *انا رافض هالفكرة تماما*), (*I totally reject the idea*) which were less frequent, they employed mostly “strongdisagreementexpression(s) followed by mitigated disagreement expression(s)” (e.g. *لا انا مش معك بهيك راي بس رأيك احترمه*), *mitigated disagreement expression(s) followed by strong disagreement expression(s)* (e.g. *زي مابذك, بس المحاضره مهمه كثير*) and *mitigateddisagreementexpression(s) prior to strong disagreement expression(s) followedby mitigateddisagreement expression(s)* (e.g. *فكره كويسه سيدي , لكني اخالفك الرأي لانه التكاليف العاليه ستقلل من مريح الشركة وعلى كل حال اللي تشوفه*) (a good idea Mr.,but I disagree with you because the high costs will reduce the company’s profitability). This means that in most of the cases the speakers resort to using a combination of strategies instead of one simple disagreement strategy. The use of complex disagreement (i.e. a combination of strategies) helps the speaker employ more mitigated expressions which in turn play a great role in softening the threat to the addressee’s face.

The analysis of the data also revealed that Jordanian speakers of Arabic utilized three main strategies when voicing disagreement to other interlocutor’s previous say and/or opinion. They ranged from highly mitigated disagreeing responses (e.g. *دكتور انا بعرف انك شخص رائع و عندك بعد نظر*), (Dr. I know that you are a wonderful person with precognition), more aggravated ones (e.g. *مشروعك هذا رايح يخسر الشركة*), (your project will make the company lose) to opting out strategies where the participants avoid giving any type of rejoinders to certain social situations (e.g. *”بقدرش“* “ I can't say anything because he will fail me”). The analysis of the DCT revealed that the tendency of the participants was manifested in frequently employing the strategies of mitigated disagreement more than those of strong disagreement and the opting out. Figure 1 demonstrates the main disagreement strategies used by speakers of Jordanian Arabic along with frequencies.

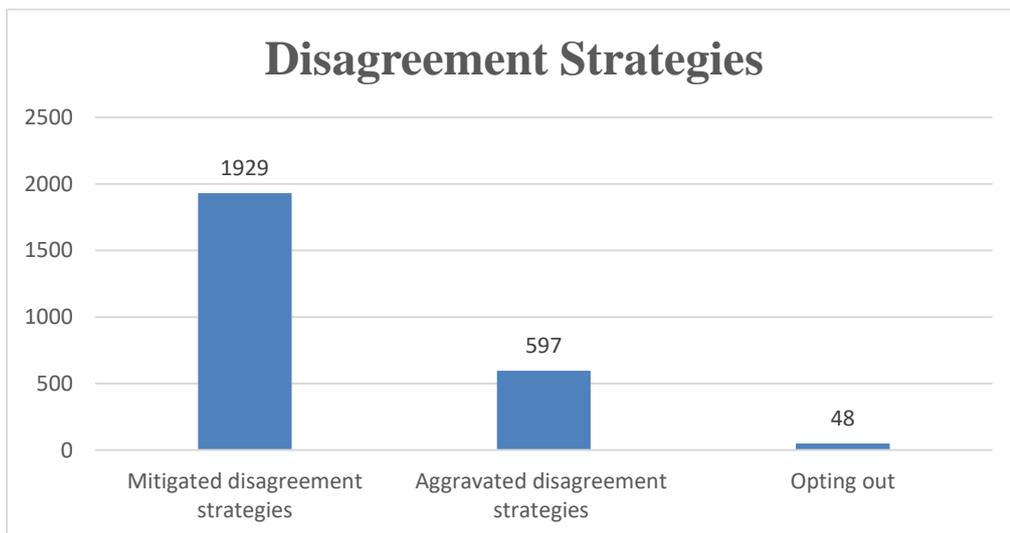


Figure 1: Main disagreement strategies used by Jordanian native speakers of Arabic

As shown in the Figure 1, Jordanians used the mitigated disagreement strategies with the frequency of (1929), the aggravated disagreement strategies with the frequency of (597) and the opting out strategies with the frequency of (48).

The analysis of the sub-strategies used by Jordanians for disagreeing revealed that they employed several strategies with varied frequencies. Figure 2 demonstrates the

disagreement sub-strategies used by Jordanian speakers of Arabic in all the given social situations along with frequencies.

Disagreement Strategies

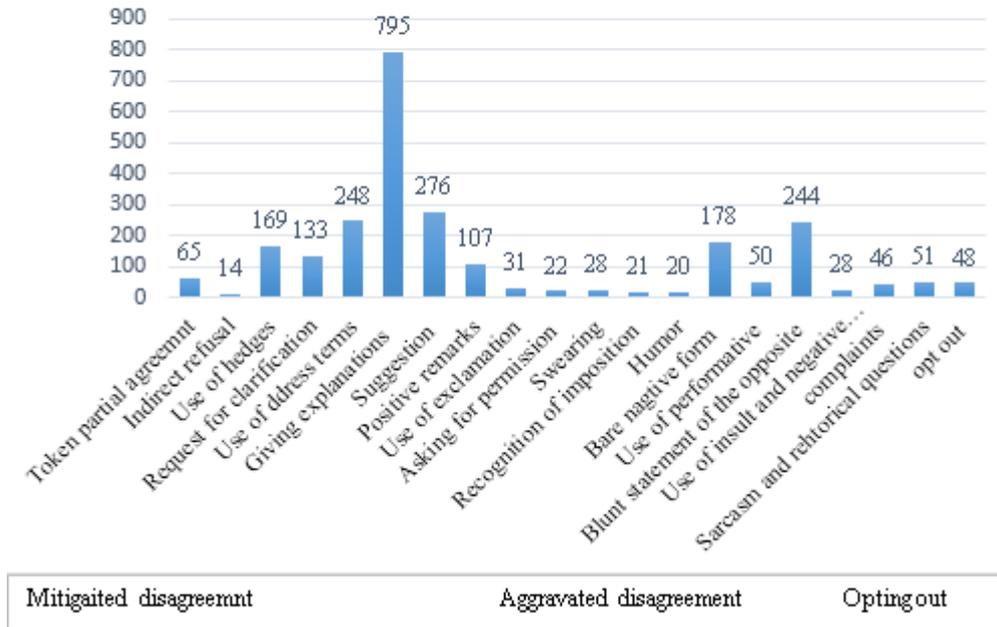


Figure 2: Disagreement sub-strategies used by Jordanian native speakers of Arabic in all given social situations

As shown in Figure 2, the most frequently used mitigated disagreement strategies are *giving explanation* (الناس هسا صارت تتطلع على المظاهر اكثر من كل شي"“), with the frequency of (795), *suggestion* (لازم ندرس " we should study the topic financially before anything else") with the frequency of (276), *use of address terms* (يا بابا "father") with the frequency of (248), *use of hedges* (انا متأكد "I am sure") with the frequency of (169), *request for clarification* (اقتعني انت "convince me with your answer") with the frequency of (133), *positive remarks* (الشخص رائع جدا "the person is very wonderful") with frequency of (107), followed by the use of *token/partial agreement* (كلامك صحيح بس "your speech is correct but") with the frequency of (65), *exclamation* (معقول هيك !! "impossible!!!") with the frequency of (31), and *swearing* (بالله عليك "swear to God) with the frequency of (28). The three least used mitigated strategies were *recognition of imposition* (تفانها عليك "I impose on you") with the frequency of (21), *humor* (برشلونه واقطع "Barcelona only") with frequency of (20) and *indirect refusal* (مش مقتنع بالحل "I am not convinced of your solution") with the frequency of (14).

It is also evident in Figure 2 that the most frequently used aggravated disagreement strategies are *blunt statement of opposite* (انا مقتنع بحلي "I am convinced of my solution") with the frequency of (244), *bare negative form* ("لا", "No") with the frequency of (178), *sarcasm and rhetorical questions* (احنا شغلاكل "we are only interested in eating") with the frequency of (51), followed by the *use of performative* (بخالفك بالرأي "I disagree with you") with the frequency of (50). The two least used strategies are the use of *complaints* (هذا ظلم "this is not fair") with the frequency of (46) and *insult and negative judgment* (دقه قديمة "a very old fashion") with the frequency of (28).

The analysis of disagreement strategies according to domains (i.e. home, university and work) revealed that these strategies were employed with different frequencies. The noticeable result is that the mitigated disagreement strategies were the most

frequently employed strategies in all the given domains followed by the aggravated and the opting out strategies. The total number of the strategies used in the home, university and work domains was (744), (1127) and (703) respectively. Figure 3 shows that the disagreement strategies used in the home domain.

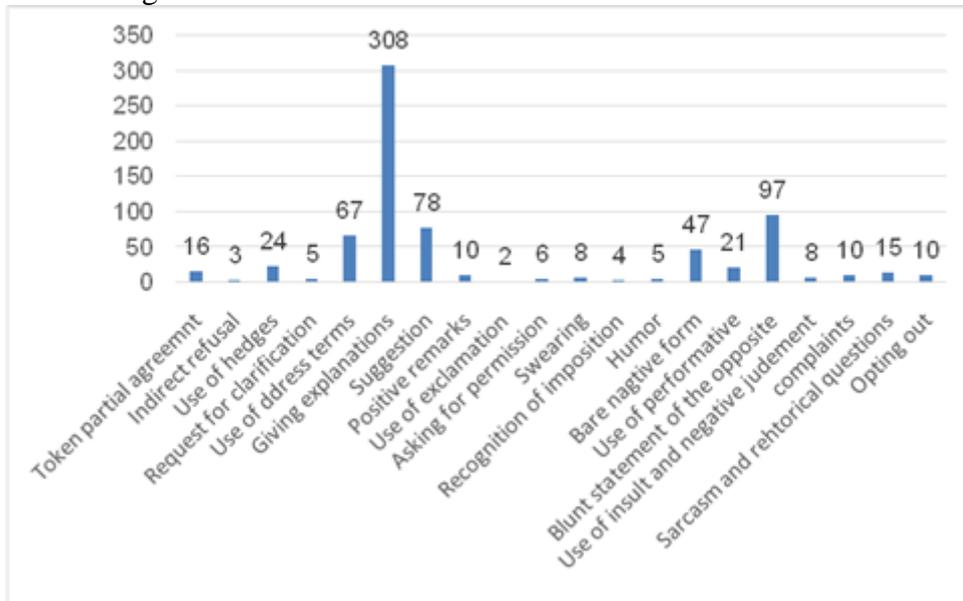


Figure 3: Disagreement sub-strategies used by Jordanian native speakers of Arabic in the home domain

The participants frequently utilized the strategy of *giving explanation* with the frequency of (308), *blunt statement of opposite* with the frequency of (97), *suggestion* with the frequency of (78), *use of address terms* with the frequency of (67), *bare negative form* with the frequency of (47), *use of hedges* with the frequency of (24), *token of partial agreement* with the frequency of (16), followed by the use *sarcasm and rhetorical questions* with the frequency of (15). It is also evident in Figure 3 that the participants employed some strategies with same frequency; *complaints*, *positive remarks* and *opting out* with same frequency (10), *swearing* and *insult and negative judgement* with the frequency of (8) as well as *request for clarification* and *humor* with the frequency of (5). The least used disagreement strategies were *recognition of imposition*, *indirect refusal* and *use of exclamation* with the frequency of (4), (3), and (2) respectively.

Figure 4 shows that the disagreement strategies used in the university domain.

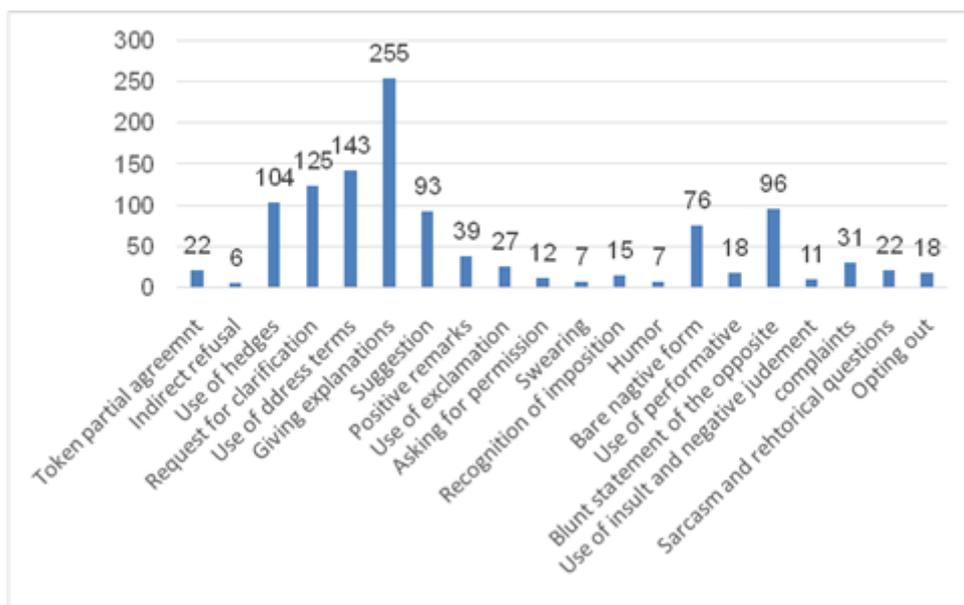


Figure 4: Disagreement sub-strategies used by Jordanian native speakers of Arabic in the university domain

It is obvious that the most frequently used strategy was *giving explanation* with the frequency of (255), *use of address terms* with the frequency of (143), *request for clarification* with the frequency of (125), *use of hedges* with the frequency of (104), *blunt statement of opposite* with the frequency of (96), followed by *suggestion* with the frequency of (93) followed by the *use of bare negative form* with the frequency of (76). *Positive remarks* were utilized with frequency of (39), followed by the use of *complaints* with the frequency of (31) and the use of exclamation with the frequency of (27). Several strategies were employed with the same frequency; the *token of partial agreement* and *sarcasm and rhetorical questions* with the frequency of (22), *bare negative* and *opting out* form with the frequency of (178), as well as *swearing* and *humor* with the frequency of (7). The least employed disagreeing strategy was *indirect refusal*.

A closer look at the data reveals that the participants in the work domain have used mitigated disagreement strategies more than aggravated disagreement or opting out expressions. As demonstrated in Figure (5), it is apparent that *giving explanation* and *suggestions* were also the most frequently used strategies in the work domain with the frequency of (232) and (105). Three strategies were employed with approximately similar frequencies; *positive remarks* (58), *bare negative form* (55) and *blunt statement of the opposite* (51). *Hedges*, *address terms* and *token of partial agreement* were also used with the frequency of (41), (38), and (27) respectively. The strategy of *opting out* appears to be used the most in this domain with the frequency of (20) compared to its frequency in the university domain (18) and that of the home domain (10). *Sarcasm and rhetorical questions* were employed with the frequency of (14) and *swearing* was utilized with the frequency of (13). The least used strategies in this domain were *complaints* and *indirect refusal* with the frequency of (5), *asking for permission* with the frequency of (4), *request for clarification* with the frequency of (3) as well as *exclamation* and *recognition of imposition* with the frequency of (2).

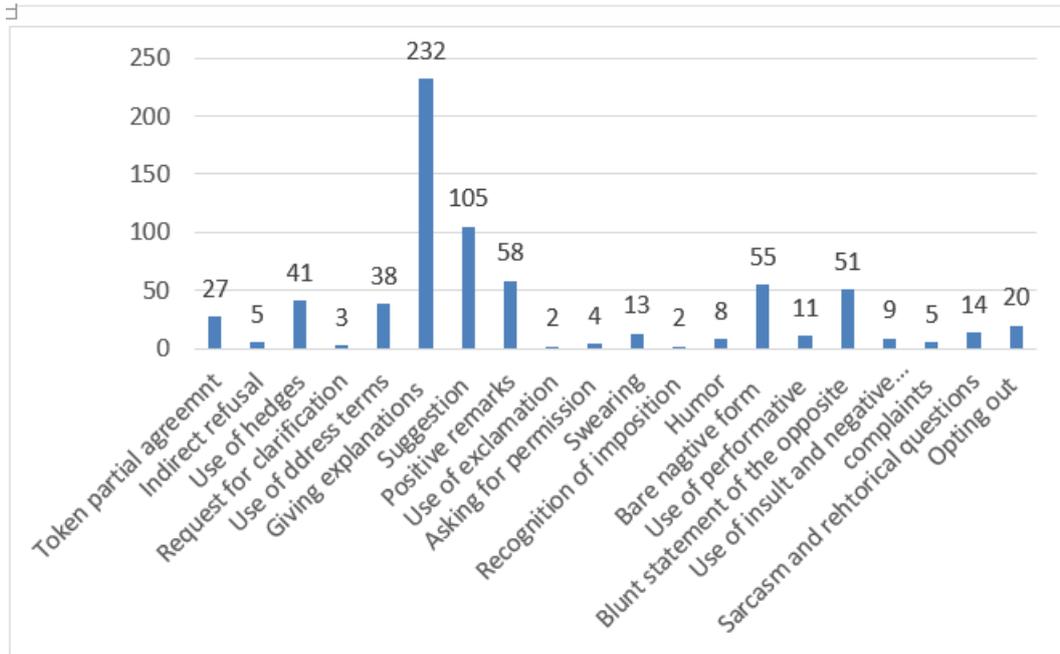


Figure 5: Disagreement sub-strategies used by Jordanian native speakers of Arabic in the work domain

From what has already been illustrated earlier in this chapter, it is evident that the first important finding is that Jordanian native speakers of Arabic prefer using mitigated strategies to voice disagreement across different social situations, followed by aggravated disagreement strategies. The opting out strategies were the least used in the context of disagreement in the given social situations. This finding may be attributed to the idea that using mitigated strategies is considered to be more polite when voicing disagreement. The use of mitigated strategies helps the person expressing disagreement save the addressee's face as there was no direct contradiction. Thus, this finding supports other researchers' finding (e.g. Koczogh, 2012; Flora, 2014; Taqim, 2016) that the use of mitigated strategies to voice disagreement is regarded as an attempt to soften the threat to the addressee's face.

Regarding the most preferred mitigated strategy, the data showed that the most frequently used strategy by Jordanian native speakers of Arabic for expressing disagreement was giving explanations. The participants tended to soften their disagreement expression by providing reasons and justifications for their disagreement. Building upon the previous speaker's say helps them include additional information, reasons, and certain details to ascertain common ground, thus show somehow support of that say. It is a type of further negotiation of the prior which generally tend to be preceded by mitigating devices such as partial agreement (e.g. ممكن تكون صحبس ; "maybe your right, but..."). According to Kirkpatrick (1991: 183), providing justifications functions as face saving behaviour as it is perceived to be the speaker's way of demonstrating respect for the addressee before making an imposition, a refusal or a disagreement.

Suggestion was also employed when disagreeing. The use of this type of expression might be ascribed to the speaker's attempt to propose an alternative claim or opinion that does not directly contradict or challenge others' claim or opinion. Suggesting is distinctive because the propositional content of suggestions (e.g. what is better for the addressee or what the addressee should do) can be regarded as an advice and recommendations for better choices not a signal of contradiction.

The use of swearing strategy could be attributed to religious beliefs and to the notion that Arabic societies use it to mitigate the illocutionary force of the communicative act of disagreement (e.g., Abdel-Jawad, 2000). This finding also could be ascribed to the fact that most Jordanians are Muslims and the fact that language and culture are very interrelated. Utilizing such type of strategy also ratifies what has been stated in the literature concerning the frequency of religious expressions in Arabic communication (Bentahila & Davis, 1989; Al-Essa, 1990; Al-Adaileh, 2007 and Al-Khawaldeh, 2014). Generally, this newly emerging strategy could form a base for future studies on the frequency of swearing and its related functions and interpretations.

The use of such mitigated strategies (i.e. suggestions, positive markers, swearing, token of partial agreement or hedges) can be attributed to the fact that speakers in general tend not to sound very aggressive or domineering by employing the expression that help them avoid explicit disagreement. They indicate indirectness and being polite even when disagreeing with others' viewpoints.

The findings show that though less frequently used compared to the mitigated, aggravated strategies were also employed to express contradiction. These aggravated strategies help the speaker to contradict with uttering the negated proposition expressed by the previous claim. The expressions of aggravated disagreement are often marked by bare negative form (i.e. negative particles such as (لا "no") or negative performative such as ("انا ما" "I disagree with you"). The fact that the most frequently aggravated strategy was the blunt statement of the opposite implies that in particular cases the speakers need a strong expression to voice disagreement over considerations of the addressee face. Thus their resort to blunt statements of the opposite affirms the contradiction of the prior claim or say. This finding corroborates Koczogh's (2012) outcome that in particular contexts, the speakers' need to deliver opposition outweighed consideration of others' feelings and face wants.

The data also revealed a frequent use of hedges such as (ما بعرف بالضبط, اتوقع, اعتقد, طيب) (well, I think, I expect and I don't know) exactly). Aijmer (1986, p. 6) argued that "the hedge frees the speaker from the responsibility for the word and saves him the trouble of finding a 'better' word or phrase. Therefore, it plays a great role in "soften[ing] the impact of negative statements" (Tannen, 1993, p. 28).

The use of a combination of various disagreement strategies is in line with Brown and Levinson's discussion of the strategies speakers utilize to attain positive and negative politeness. The use of the mitigated disagreement strategies such as token of partial disagreement could help achieve positive politeness as they involve claiming "common ground" by conveying something as commendable or interesting, claiming in-group membership, or claiming shared viewpoint, or mutual attitude. By large and across different situations regardless of the topic, speakers orient to agreeing with one another to establish a comfortable, supportive, sociable reinforcing atmosphere. When speakers for example comment on the state of service, they tend generally to set up an agreeable arrangement. In other words, when the first speaker claims "yes, yes, yes, they provide very good service", the second speaker does not tend to say "no, no, no, they provide very bad service". He/ she may say "Yes. I definitely agree," and then may state their own viewpoint that contradicts the first speaker's opinion. This case is very noticeable especially when such conversation occurred between strangers. The speakers work together and support each other to create a cooperative spirit. Speakers set up their communicative acts in such a way that aids them to avoid facing troubles. This implies that speakers prefer the response to be the easiest, simplest, and most anticipated.

The point that a positive answer is generally perceived to be a preferred response is a cornerstone of early politeness theories (Brown and Levinson, 1987). By indicating a mutual

agreement for instance speakers build upon the same viewpoint and expand the content of the prior position. Repeating the same opinion indicates the affirmation of the agreement with the previous opinion. This in turn serves the function of a positive face through sending a meta-message of involvement. This outcome supports Tannen's (1989) claim that repetition serves a wide range of various functions among which signaling one's response to a previous utterance, establishing agreement, and giving evidence of someone's own participation in a conversation. Subbarao, et.al. (1991) argue that repeating a part of what the other speaker said is a good way to please the positive face of the hearer and to decrease any uncertainty. This finding correlates with a finding obtained by (Suleiman, 1973; Nydell, 1987; Al-Adaileh, 2007; Morsi, 2010) demonstrating the usage of excessive repetition and explanation is a feature of Arabic discourse. It also builds on Al-Khawaldehs (2014) finding showing that the linguistic act of petition is based on a cooperative behavior shared by all Jordanian speakers that repetition signifies sincerity and a great degree of indebtedness and appreciation because repetition makes the utterance more emphatic. This in turn helps maintain the etiquette of their social communication, thus strengthening positive politeness and developing and maintaining harmonious social relationships. Accordingly, this finding signifies a strong impact of the Jordanian cultural beliefs and values on daily language usage. The use of mitigated disagreement strategies helps speakers reduce the degree of negative politeness. The fact that those using aggravated disagreeing expressions are orient to establish an unpleasant, uncomfortable, offensive argumentative mood, thus threatening tone could be attributed to the explicit manifestation of holding different viewpoints.

In some cases, speakers opted out (did not express disagreement). After being interviewed, the participants disclose the reasons lying behind such act. It appeared that they would opt out when they have no power to convince the addressee to change his/ her opinion, have no time, and where they need a great amount of conversational encounters. Due to such reasons maybe others, speakers tended to be reluctant and hesitant to voice disagreement. Adding to these reasons, Beebe & Takahashi, 1989 "assume if speakers cannot provide good reasoning, they will refrain from issuing any disagreeable act".

7. Conclusion

The present study revealed various remarkable features of the way disagreement is perceived and realised in Jordan. It has been found that disagreement is a very complex communicative act; Jordanians employ various strategies and expressions when disagreeing with others prior say or opinion. The results suggest that social interaction in the Jordanian community exhibits a preference for mitigated expression of disagreement as well as a concern to evade the sense of confrontation.

The findings of the study revealed that communication of disagreement is related to people's perception of politeness and pragmatic knowledge of what is appropriate and inappropriate in their culture considering specific situations. It has also been found that the expression of disagreement appears to be considerably influenced by certain social factors such as the interlocutors' gender, social status, social familiarity, formality of the context, and politeness perception. Speakers were found more sensitive to the use of more politeness strategies when disagreeing to the professor, father, and boss.

The outcomes of the study would be meaningful and more representative if we could have enrolled a larger number of participants in various social situations. Second, the study's results were built only on DCT and interview, they would be more strengthened and reliable if they were supported by data elicited using other research instruments such as role play,

naturally occurring data in dyadic interchanges and varying the contexts. Third, this study was confined to investigating the type and number of disagreement strategies used by males and females. Thus, supplementary research should be done to investigate the number and type of disagreement strategies employed by Jordanians in same-gender and cross-gender interaction. Fourth, in light of the fact that this study is intra-cultural and the review of the existing literature on communicative act of disagreement reveals that adopting different strategies to voice disagreement in certain social settings varies depending on the interlocutors' cultural differences, there appears a real need for further investigations on disagreement comparing Jordanian culture with other cultures. This is because cultures are found to demonstrate different interactional styles and pragmatic behaviors which may lead to miscommunication, misinterpretation, thus cross-cultural conflict. Fifth, future empirical research needs to be conducted to explore the communication of disagreement by speakers of Jordanian Arabic and learners of Arabic as a foreign language. Such types of investigation will help researchers identify any instances of pragmatic transfer that might lead to miscommunication and communication breakdown. The results of such types will also aid researchers in identifying different ways of helping language learners develop plausible native-like competence including the use appropriate strategies for conveying disagreement politely in different social situations.

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Appendices

Appendix A: The DCT of the Present Study (English Version)

Dear respondent,

This Discourse Completion Task (DCT) is part of an MA study entitled “The Linguistic Expressions of Disagreement in Jordanian Arabic: A Pragmatic Study” conducted by Hala Salim Abdel Latif Abu-Hejleh in accordance with the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Linguistics in the Department of English Language and Literature at the Hashemite University. The DCT is written in Arabic and has been translated into English. The Arabic version is directed to participants based on their mother tongue, and the English version is used for the purpose of the present study as it's written in English. Each DCT consists of fourteen situations described accurately. You are kindly requested to complete the personal details section as well as your reaction to every situation as it is in reality- real conversation - in the space available. Rest assured that the information elicited will be confidential and used for academic purposes. We sincerely appreciate your efforts and time.

1. Gender: Male Female
2. Age:
3. Department/Major:

Setting 1: Home

I. You (son/daughter) to Father

Situation 1:

Your dad wants to move and buy a new house, as he always complains from the neighborhood where your family is dwelling. He said that there is a lot of noise in this neighborhood, and he decided to move to another place that will be much quieter. You have already searched about that place, and you found that it is so far from the place

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where you are studying and there are no means of transportation. You do not agree with your dad and you say

Situation 2:

You and your dad were sitting in the living room and watching a T.V show. The episode of the show was talking about marriage. After the show, your dad presents his point of view about marriage, and he starts saying that "the traditional marriage is a successful one". You believe that marriage is a private affair and you do not agree with your dad. You say

II. You to Brother/Sister

Situation 1:

You've decided to spend some time outdoors with your family; suddenly your brother /sister suggests that you go to a restaurant, but you prefer to go to the cinema and watch the recently released movie. You do not agree with him/her and you say

.....

Situation 2:

Your brother/sister has a job interview in a major company. He/she prepared something to wear in the interview, and he/she let you have a look at what he/she is going to wear then he/she asked for your opinion. You said to him/her that he/she will not get the job because of his/her informal look. He/she said to you that the appearance is not very important. You do not agree with him/her and you say

Setting 2: University

I. You (student) to Professor

Situation 1:

You get the test paper after your professor graded them. To one of the questions, you think that your answer is completely correct, and it should have got the full credits, but it gets only half of the total. You, by the way, ask the professor to find out why. The 79

professor does not agree with what you think, but you still hold on your opinion and you say

Situation 2:

You are doing your homework, and you are not sure how to do one of the questions. You then ask your professor who is assisting the class to do the work, "Professor x, how can I analyze this problem?" He/she gives you his/her analysis, but you do not think it is reasoning and you say

II. You (student) to Administrator

Situation 1:

You are filling a form on the front desk in the office of deanship of student affairs, and you are not sure what to fill in one of the blanks. You then ask an assistant director whom you know, "x director, how can I fill in this blank?" He/she replies, but you do not think it is appropriate. You say

Situation 2:

You and the chair of the English Department are talking about the methods of learning the English language. He thinks the reading materials on the Internet are rich and colorful, and suggests you learn English there. You do not think his suggestion applies to you and you say

III. You (student) to Friend

Situation 1:

You have an assignment. You and your close friend, who is in the same class, are doing the homework together. While you are answering the questions in your assignment, your friend says what you understand is incorrect. You do not agree with your friend and you say

Situation 2:

You meet your friend at Hakaya station for transport. Your friend suggests on you to miss the 8 o'clock class for today to have breakfast together. You will have an exam 80

tomorrow, and you remembered that the professor told the class, "he/she will discuss the exam questions on the day before the exam" which is today, and you are taking this class together. Your friend insists on missing the class. You do not agree with your friend and you say

Setting 3: Work

I. You (employee) to Boss

Situation 1:

The Chairman of the company you work for planned a meeting to justify employees in connection with a workshop on modern methods of marketing; at the end of the meeting he emphasizes the benefits the workshop will have for the company, but because of the high costs of organizing and the economic status of the company you do not agree with his opinions. You say

Situation 2:

You happen to meet with your boss in the cafeteria during the break time, and you are a football lover. You and your boss start talking about yesterday match between Real Madrid and Barcelona; Real Madrid was the winner team by a penalty kick. Your boss said that they played so hard and deserved the win, but you do not agree with him. You say

II. You (employee) to Colleague

Situation 1:

You are studying sensitive documents in your office; at the same time your colleague enters and starts talking about the new boss, he/she said that "the boss is a bad-tempered person with whom you cannot come to terms at all", but because of your own interactions with the boss and what you have heard from other employees you do not agree with him/her. You say

Situation 2:

You and your colleague are sitting and having lunch, which your colleague cooked herself, during your break time. The meal did not taste good at all, but you didn't say 81

anything because you did not want to hurt her feelings. After the meal, however, she says: "I think I should cook this meal for my fiancé's parents on the weekend. They will be impressed and like me more." You say
Thank you very much for being very cooperative