

# The Language of Facebook Comments on Political Articles in Jordan

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## Abstract

The present study aims to investigate the types of impoliteness strategies used by Jordanian Facebookers when commenting on some local political posts. To achieve this goal, one hundred comments were collected from ten political posts in Jordan. The types of impoliteness strategies were analyzed according to super and sub-strategies following the model of Culpeper (1996). The findings showed that most strategies were used by Jordanian Facebookers in political posts, including the following: bald on record, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, and sarcasm impoliteness. In addition, due to the religious orientation of most people, Jordanians often use supplications, a new strategy not mentioned in Culpeper (1996). Negative and sarcasm impoliteness are the most frequent super-strategies, while bald on record is the least frequently used super-strategy. Each negative and positive impoliteness has sub-strategies. Positive impoliteness is expressed into disassociating from the other, being disinterested, seeking disagreement, and using taboo words. Using taboo words is the most dominant type in positive impoliteness. Negative impoliteness is expressed into frightening, condescending, putting the other's indebtedness on record, and associating the other with a negative aspect. Associating the other with a negative aspect is the most dominant type in negative impoliteness used by Jordanian Facebookers.

**Keywords:** Impoliteness, Political posts, Facebook, Comments, Jordanian

## 1. Introduction

People now communicate with their families and friends through social media in a new phase of communication which is the electronic one. It has become the main channel of communication among people all over the world. Smart phones and their applications are nowadays in everyone's hands (Sen 2018:7).

Related to social communication is the politeness theory, a fundamental concept in sociolinguistics first formulated by Brown and Levinson(1987). Thomas (1995) defines politeness as a real desire to be enjoyable to others, or as the primary motivation for an individual's linguistic behavior. On the other hand, impoliteness is defined as any kind of linguistic behavior that is evaluated as intending to threaten the face of the hearer or social identity, or as infringing on the supposed community of norms of suitable practice (Mills 2002: 268).

Culpeper and Kadar (2010:9) argue that politeness and impoliteness as concepts deal with "social dynamics of human interactions" indicating that the terms that are related to politeness are 'respect', 'courtesy' and 'deference', whereas those related to impoliteness are 'rudeness', 'discourtesy', and 'verbal aggression'.

Brown and Levinson (1987) distinguish between types of politeness that involve maintaining threats to positive and negative face. Negative face is "the want of every competent adult member that his actions be unimpeded by others" (p. 62). On the other hand, a positive face is "the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others" (p. 62).

Facebook is a platform of social media that people use to communicate with new people or people that one already knows (Baron 2008: 84). In Jordan, Facebook is widely used as a social media tool. Therefore, people make comments on posts or follow one of the posts and comment on it. One type of posts is the political one. If a political post is shown on Facebook, then a huge number of people try to make comments, a matter that has motivated the researchers to carry out the present study on comments on such political posts.

The politeness theory was first proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). Politeness is defined as "an appropriate behavior in particular situations in an attempt to achieve and maintain successful social relationships with others" (Lakoff 1972:910).

Brown and Levinson (1987:61) state that all competent adult members of a society have two faces, either negative or positive face. Face as defined by Brown and Levinson is "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself." For the same researchers (p. 62), the positive face deals with the positive personality that wishes to be appreciated or approved, or the self-image that is claimed by interactions. On the other hand, the negative face represents the desire of each competent adult member to proceed with his actions without being impeded by others. Still according to Brown and Levinson (1987:94), politeness theory is divided into four super strategies:

1) Bald on record strategy: when the speaker does the face threatening act (FTA) with maximum efficiency more than he wants to satisfy hearers. A good example of this is direct imperatives:

Give me the notebook

2) Positive politeness: this strategy is oriented to the addressee's positive face by claiming the positive self-image for himself. In this strategy, the speaker attempts to minimize the threat to the hearer's positive face. This strategy is not only usable for face threatening act, but also to make a kind of social correlation between the speaker and the hearer. Positive politeness includes three board mechanisms, presented below:

a) Claiming common ground: it involves that both speaker (S) and hearer (H) have some set in common and share specific wants (goals and values). There are three ways to make this claim.

1) Speaker (S) can convey that hearer's goal or want is wonderful and interesting to S too.

2) S may claim group membership, by indicating that both S and H belong to a category or group of persons who share the same wants.

3) S may claim that both S and H have common perspective without necessarily belonging to a group or membership.

b) Conveying cooperation with the speaker (S) and the hearer (H): if the speaker and the addressee are cooperative, then it means that they share same goals and serve addressee's positive face.

c) Fulfilling addressee's want for some X reason: this last positive politeness strategy includes speaker deciding to redress addressee's face immediately via fulfilling some of addressee's wants.

3) Negative politeness: the speaker attempts to minimize the threat to the addressee's negative face. This strategy can be done by using some sub-strategies such as: be direct, be pessimistic, and giving defense, and so on.

4) Off record: if a speaker wants to do face threatening act and wants to avoid the responsibility for doing it, he can use off record by providing the hearer to decide how to interpret it through a set of defensible interpretations. The language of this off record utterances is indirect.

Regarding the impoliteness strategy, it was established by Culpeper in 1996. Impoliteness " comes about when: 1) the speaker communicates face attack intentionally, or 2) the hearer perceives and constructs behavior as intentionally face attack, or a combination of (1) and (2)" (Culpeper 2005:38).

Culpeper's model of impoliteness involves five strategies as follows:

1) Bald on record impoliteness; 2) Sarcasm Impoliteness; 3) Positive Impoliteness; 4) Negative Impoliteness; 5) Withhold Impoliteness.

Also, positive impoliteness includes sub-strategies which are: 1. Ignoring and snubbing the other; 2. Excluding the other from an activity; 3. Disassociating from the other; 4. Being disinterested, unconcerned, or unsympathetic; 5. Using inappropriate identity markers; 6. Using obscure or secretive language; 7. Seeking disagreement; 8. Making the other feels uncomfortable; 9. Using taboo word; 10. Calling the other names.

Negative impoliteness includes five sub-strategies which are: 1. Frighten; 2. Condescend, scorn, or ridicule; 3. Invade the other's space; 4. Explicitly associate the other with a negative aspect; 5. Put the other's indebtedness on record.

This study aims to analyze some impoliteness strategies used in Facebook comments on political posts based on Culpeper's (1996) model; these strategies will be explained more in the theoretical framework.

## **2. Social Media**

Recently, social network sites have become one of the most popular destinations for online traffic (Kushin & Kitchener, 2009). Social network sites are defined as "web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system" (Boyd & Ellison 2008:1).

The sites of social media such as Snapchat, Bebo, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and so on, have attracted millions of users on a daily basis. Every site varies from others in terms of communication tools like photo/ video sharing. Some sites attract people based on common things like shared racial, sexual, religious, or national orientations.

People begin to join on social network sites by creating a profile, and then connect with existing friends for contact through the site. A profile contains a list of identifying information such as birthday, education, religion, hometown, and personal interest. The aims of using these sites vary from one person to another. According to Dwyer (2007), these aims are to: 1) know the latest news in the world; 2) post public testimonials; 3) share photos, activities, and events; 4) present an ideal person; 5) maintain relationships by chatting and sending messages.

Social network sites make possible new ways to think, act, and participate with political events. As cited in Fenton (2011:181), these ways of thinking lead to empower social media, create the autonomy with political intent individuals and promote social change (see also Castells, 2009; Stiegler, 2008)

Ellion et al. (2007) claim that one of the most popular sites on SNS is Facebook, which was created in 2004. In 2007, its members surpassed 21 million registered persons achieving 1.6 billion of page views each day (Needham & Company, 2007). According to Rouse (2009), Facebook is defined as "a popular free social networking website that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and videos, send messages and keep in touch with friends,

family and colleagues."According to the same author, Facebook involves public features such as the following:

- 1) Groups enable members to share things of interest to interact with each other.
- 2) Events allow members to advertise an event, and then invite guests to attend this event.
- 3) Pages offer members the ability to make a public page about a specific topic and promote it.
- 4) Marketplace allows members to post, read and respond to classified advertisements to buy or sell items.
- 5) Technology allows members to see which contacts are online and chat with them.

In a few years, the possibility for individuals to engage in online discussion about political issues has grown rapidly (Kushin & Kitchener, 2009). Evidence has emerged that indicated an effect of political discussion on Facebook. For example, Facebook was effective as a means to find others with similar political views and to plan 2011 street protests in Egypt (Khamis & Vaughn (2011), cited in Khamis et al. (2012: 5). Moreover, Dalacoura (2012:68) emphasizes the role of 18 social media, especially Facebook and Twitter, in organizing the Arab revolts in 2011 and linking the protesters to each other and the outside world.

Many studies have been conducted on Facebook contents in many fields of social interest like birthdays, weddings, and offering congratulations or condolences. In addition, the role of Facebook and other social media was remarkable during the so-called "Arab Spring" and other political upheavals in 2011 and the following years (see, for example, studies by Iskander 2011; Goodman 2011; Valenzuela 2014; Mor et al. 2015). Debates on Facebook were also heated during elections in various countries, including the USA Presidential Elections since 2008 (see Williams and Gulati 2008; Robertson et al. 2008; Fernandes et al. 2010; Carlisle and Patton 2013; Pennington et al. 2015; Lin 2017; Apuke and Apollos 2017). Public and politicians' participation in political discourse on Facebook has also been the subject of several studies, including ones on comments on political posts and issues (see Chen and Sali 2010; Clarke and Steekamp 2014; Vraga et al. 2015; Heo et al. 2016; Haenschen 2019). Reactions to Facebook extremist political comments (Almoqbel et al. 2019) and hostile media bias on social media expressed in users' comments (Gearheart et al. 2020) were also the subjects of some recent studies.

### **3. Theoretical Framework**

Culpeper (1996: 357-358) defines impoliteness as a situation where a speaker communicates a face-attack or the hearer perceives behavior as intentionally face-attacking. As mentioned earlier, Culpeper classifies impoliteness strategies into five types.

- 1 Bald on record impoliteness: in this strategy, the FTA is established directly, clearly, and unambiguously. This strategy is not related to the hearer's face.
- 2 Positive impoliteness: this strategy aims at damaging the positive face of the hearer.

- 3 Negative impoliteness: this strategy is used to damage the receiver's negative face.
- 4 Sarcasm impoliteness: politeness strategies are used by the FTA insincerely.
- 5 Withhold impoliteness: this strategy is followed when the politeness work is absent where it would be expected from the speaker.

Culpeper, at the same time, illustrates a number of sub-categories for both positive and negative impoliteness as follows:

Positive impoliteness includes:

- 1 Ignoring and snubbing the other: when someone fails to acknowledge the other's presence.
- 2 Excluding the other from an activity.
- 3 Disassociating from the other: when someone rejects association or common ground with the other.
- 4 Being disinterested, unconcerned, or unsympathetic.
- 5 Using inappropriate identity markers: when the speaker uses title and surname. When a close relationship is used, a nickname, or when a distant relationship is used.
- 6 Using obscure or secretive language: when the speaker uses a code known to others in the group but not the targeted person.
- 7 Seeking disagreement: selecting a sensitive topic.
- 8 Making the other feel uncomfortable: when someone does not avoid silence, jokes, or uses small talk.
- 9 Using taboo words: swearing or using abusive or profane language.
- 10 Calling the other names: using derogatory nominations.

Negative impoliteness includes:

- 1 Frightening: when someone threatens others that some detrimental action to the other will occur.
- 2 Condescending, scorning, or ridiculing: treating the other in a no serious way, or belittling the other.
- 3 Invading the other's space (literally) such as asking for or speaking about information of intimacy given the relationship.
- 4 Explicitly associating the other with a negative aspect.
- 5 Putting the other's indebtedness on record.

#### 4. Purpose and Method

The goal of this study is to investigate the impoliteness strategies used by Facebookers when commenting on political posts and to, linguistically, examine these comments as written by Jordanians.

The population of the study includes the political posts and comments on them on Facebook in Jordan. From this population, a sample of 100 comments was chosen from 10 different political posts to get the impoliteness strategies used by Jordanians.

Data were collected through reading and observation executed by the researchers to get the data. A word document was used to write down those comments and categorize them according to strategies and sub-strategies, following Culpeper (1996). The comments and posts were randomly selected, and they varied from long (10 lines) to short (1 line) comments. All the posts were written in standard Arabic Language, but most comments were written in Jordanian Colloquial Arabic. The political posts were gathered from the following seven pages on Facebook: Roya news, Dr. Omar Razzaz (then (June 2018-October 2020) Prime Minister of Jordan) with two posts, The Jordanian Ministry of Water and Irrigation, Prime Ministry of Jordan with three posts, SahihKhabarak (Correct your news), Khaberni (Tell me), and Wadifati (My Job). The posts are numbered as follows for reference:

1. Dr. Omar Razzaz (1)
2. Khaberni (Tell me)
3. Prime Ministry of Jordan (1)
4. SahihKhabarak (Correct your news)
5. The Jordanian Ministry of Water and Irrigation
6. Prime Ministry of Jordan (2)
7. Roya news
8. Dr. Omar Razzaz (2)
9. Prime Ministry of Jordan (3)
10. Wadifati (My Job)

After collection, data were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively by categorizing them according to main and sub-strategies following the model of Culpeper (1996). A table was designed to show the five impoliteness strategies and the percentage of each to show the differences between strategies. The researchers then analyzed the data linguistically by observing the comments from different political posts on Facebook.

#### 5. Findings

This section includes the findings and the analysis of the data collected in the domain of the impoliteness strategies stated by the taxonomy of Culpeper (1996). As mentioned earlier, the

strategies include bald on record, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, sarcasm impoliteness, and withhold politeness. The section also exposes the most common super-strategies and sub-strategies used by Jordanian Facebookers by analyzing them qualitatively.

Table 1 below presents the percentages of super strategies and sub-strategies used by Jordanian Facebookers in their comments. The data analyzed were 100 comments from 10 political posts in Jordan.

Table 1. Percentages of impoliteness strategies used by Jordanian Facebookers

<b>Types of Impoliteness Strategies</b>					
<b>No</b>	<b>Super Strategies</b>	<b>Sub-strategies</b>	<b>Number of findings</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
1	Bald on record		3	3	3%
2	Positive impoliteness	Disassociating	4	17	4%
		Being disinterested	4		4%
		Seeking disagreement	1		1%
		Using taboo word	8		8%
3	Negative impoliteness	Frightening	8	56	8%
		Condescending	13		13%
		associating the otherwith a negative aspectexplicitly	26		26%
		Putting the other'sindebtedness on record	1		1%
		Supplication	8		8%
4	Sarcasm impoliteness		24	24	24%
5	Withhold politeness		0	0	0
	Total			100	
	Percentage				100

Table 1 shows that not all impoliteness strategies are used. Withhold politeness is not used by Jordanian commenters on political posts on Facebook. In fact, only four out of five super strategies are used by Jordanians on Facebook to comment on political posts: bald on record, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, and sarcasm impoliteness. The results also show that negative impoliteness is the most frequent super strategy used on Facebook by Jordanians and occurs (56) times or 56%. Sarcasm impoliteness is the second most frequently used with (24) frequencies or (24%). Positive impoliteness is the third super strategy used by Jordanian Facebookers and has (17). Bald on record is the least used strategy and represents only (3%) of the strategies.



As a result, both positive and negative strategies are achieved in some ways. Positive impoliteness is expressed in four sub-strategies, namely, disassociating from the other, being disinterested, seeking disagreement, and using taboo words. The most frequent type is using taboo words with (8%). Being disinterested and disassociating from the other are the second most frequent and represent (4%) each. Seeking disagreement is the least frequent as it represents only (1%). On the other hand, negative impoliteness strategy is expressed in four sub-strategies, namely, frightening, condescending, associating the other with a negative aspect explicitly, and putting the other's indebtedness on record. The most frequent (26%) is associating the other with a negative aspect explicitly, followed by condescending, scorning, or ridiculing (13%), frightening (8%), and putting on record (1%). In what follows, the different super and sub strategies are discussed with examples.

### 5.1 Bald on Record

This is the first strategy stated by Culpeper that is performed by the speaker to attack the hearer's face or to express the opinion in a direct, obvious, concise, and unambiguous way. This strategy represents only (3%) of the impoliteness strategies used by Jordanian Facebookers in political posts. The following are examples of using bald-on record.

Example (1) from post (4):

The comment in Arabic: *عشان تعبي الجيبية*

English translation: in order to fill up your pocket.

Transliteration: *ʕaʕaan tʕabbiildzēbih*

The commenter directly accused the then Jordanian Minister of Information (JumanaGhunimant) of trying to steal money. The commenter (DuniaGhabrah) expressed anger in a clear and direct way by making this bald-on record accusation against a government minister.

Example (2) from post (4):

The comment in Arabic: *طبعاً مهور رحلة نقاهه واستجمام ونهب سنحه بس*

English translation: of course, it was a journey of convalescence, recreation, and stealing. Damn you!

Transliteration: *Tabʕan mahuriHlitnaqaahawistidzmaamwanahbsanHuh bass.*

This comment further shows that the commenter also accused JumanaGhunimant that her trip to London was to relax and steal rather than to seek investments. Therefore, this statement, made by a different person, was meant to confirm the accusation in the comment in example (1) and attacked her directly with a negative aspect.

Example (3) from post (8):

Comment Arabic: *خربتوا البلد*

English translation: you have ruined the country.

Transliteration: xarrabtuu ilbalad.

The author of this comment blatantly criticized the then Jordanian Prime Minister (Dr. Omar Razzaz) by accusing him of destroying the country and attacking the addressee's face without reservation.

### 5.2 Positive Impoliteness

As mentioned in the introduction, this is one of the impoliteness strategies that is intended to attack the addressee's positive face. There are four sub-strategies of positive impoliteness found in comments on political posts in Jordan. These sub-strategies are in the form of disassociating from the other, being disinterested, seeking disagreement, and using taboo words. Seventeen comments use positive impoliteness in different political posts. Some of these comments are discussed in the following subsections.

#### 5.2.1 Disassociating From the Other

Three examples of this type are discussed below. In (4), Sarayreh objected to the decision of the Jordanian Customs Department to launch a platform to organize electronic commerce. In order to stress his rejection of the decision and defy the Customs Department, he suggested a number of measures people who take to counter and foil the Customs' decision. In the other two examples, the commenters made strong statements to attack a person or a procedure. Rababah, in example (5), attacked Dr. Omar Razzaz by asking him to resign from his position as prime minister of Jordan. The commenter, in example (6), objected to the fact that a student got an average of 100% in the Secondary School Certificate Exams (Tawjihi) by doubting this GPA, as many other Jordanians did. One must notice in example (6) the use of an English phrase "too much", probably meant to attract readers' attention to the extremely high GPA.

Example (4) from post (3):

Comment in Arabic: إذاً لن نشتري ولن ندفع الرسوم وساقوم بتسليم البطاقة للبنك... وان شاء الله ولا يتحصلوا شلن من المواطنين... وعلامها البسطات...

English translation: So, we are not going to buy, nor will we pay the fees. I will hand over the visa card to the bank... God willing, you will not get one dime from the citizens... is there anything wrong with peddlers?...

Transliteration: ?i ðaanlannaʃtariiwalannadfaʃarrusuumwas?aquumbitasliimalbiTaaqahlilbank.. wa ?in faa? allahwalaabitHaSluufilm min almwaaTin... waʃalaamhaalbasTaat...

Example (5) from post (1):

Comment in Arabic: استحي عمالك واستقيل

English translation: Have some shame and resign.

Transliteration: ?istaHiiʃaHaalakwistaqiil

Example (6) from post (8):

Comment in Arabic: بس 100% دولتك؟!؟

too much? كانه شوي

English translation: Only 100% your Excellency?! It may be too much.

Transliteration: bass 100% dooltak!!? mijka?inuhfwaytuumach??

This finding agrees with Jucker(2009:181) who maintains that disassociating represents a strong criticism of a decision or a person.

### 5.2.2 Being Disinterested, Unsympathetic, or Unconcerned

This strategy constitutes (4%) of total comments. The following examples illustrate it:

Example (7) from post (5):

Comment in Arabic: هو حدا معو يضحي لا اقطعوها معناش ندفع.

English translation: Is there anyone who has (money) to sacrifice? So, cut it out, because we can't pay.

Transliteration:huuHadaa ma<sup>u</sup>uydaHHiilaaqTa<sup>u</sup>uha ma<sup>n</sup>aa<sup>f</sup>nidfa<sup>u</sup>.

This commenter was not happy or sympathetic with the decision of the Minister of Water and Irrigation (Raed Abu Al-Saud)not to shut water off during Eid Al-Adha holidays (during which Muslims sacrifice a sheep, cow, or camel). He requested the Minister to cut water off because he could not pay for it.

Example (8) from post (2):

Comment in Arabic: ان شاء الله يكثرن

English translation: God willing, they will be more.

Transliteration: ?infaa? allahykθarin.

In the second comment, the commenter didn't sympathize with the increase of Jordanian indebtedness; instead he asked God (supplication) to increase the national public debt.

Example (9) from post (2):

Comment in Arabic: ليش تعلمونا سدوا دينكم بعيد عنا

Comment in the English Language: why are you making us know? Pay your debts without us.

Transcription:lee<sup>f</sup> t<sup>u</sup>almuunasiddudeenkumba<sup>u</sup>:iid<sup>u</sup>anna<sup>a</sup>

In the third comment, the commenter wasn't concerned or sympathetic, requesting the government to pay the debt without telling the people. Therefore, he was disinterested with the government's problem regarding its debts.

### 5.2.3 Seeking Disagreement

Disagreeing with something or somebody is another sub-strategy of positive impoliteness, but it represented only (1%) of all data sets. Bousfield (2008: 85) emphasizes that this strategy is used to talk about a "sensitive topic or just disagree outright". The following example illustrates this type:

Example (10) from post (6):

Comment in Arabic: لو استثمرتوهم في تطوير مصارف المياه لكان احسن... حسب توقعات علماء الطقس الامطار الموسم القادم اضعاف ما شهدنا هذا العام...

English translation: if (only) you had invested them in the development of water drains, it would have been better... According to weather forecasts, rainfall next season will be double what we had this year...

Transliteration:law ?istaθmartuuhumfiitaTwiirmaSaarifaalmiyaahlakaan ?aHsan...  
Hasabtawaqu?aat?ulamaa?aTTaqsal?amTaaralmausimalqaadim ?ad?aaafmaafahidnaaha čaa  
al?aam...

The commenter in this example expressed his disagreement with what was posted on Facebook by the Prime Ministry of Jordan about funds from the Greater Amman Municipality to support Downtown merchants whose goods were flooded and heavily damaged in February 2019. He suggested to invest this money in the development of drainages instead of distributing it to merchants. Then, he gave evidence to support his opinion from warnings about even more severe floodings due to extreme weather expected the following year.

### 5.2.4 Using Taboo Words

Based on the research findings, this strategy of positive impoliteness strategy represents (8%) of total data under study. The following examples and other examples not discussed here due to space limitations show that Jordanian Facebookers use some taboo or cutting words when they criticize someone and express their opinions.

Example (11) from post (5):

Comment in Arabic(FadiAzzam): ابشرك يا وزير المياه الناس مقطوعه عندها المي يعني طقعولك:

English translation: I proclaim it to you, Minister of Water and Irrigation, people don't have water, which means they ignored you (lit., they made weird noises).

Transliteration: ?aba?rakyawaziiralmyaahannaasmaqTuu?ah  
?indhaaalmayyya?niiTaqqa?uulak.

This commenter criticized the Jordanian Minister of Water and Irrigation for his post about not shutting off water during the Eid Al-Adha holiday by using the taboo word (Taqqa?uulak) which basically means they ignored you.

Example (12) from post (10):

Comment Arabic: هو بالله تسكر ثمك

English translation: For God's sake, shut your mouth.

Transcription: huuballahtsakkirθummak.

This commenter inappropriately requested the then Jordanian Minister of Transport, Eng. AnmarKhasawneh, to stop talking by using the strong word (taboo in the Jordanian society when addressed to higher people) "shut your mouth".

Example (13) from post (8):

Comment in Arabic (Adnan Al-Mawajdeh) : متى ودك تروح وتحل عنا، متى تلحق قرييك الملقى... لن نذكركم بخير.. طاري الشيطان ولاطاريكم

English translation: When do you want to go and leave us alone?...When will you follow "your relative Al-Mulqi" (preceding Prime Minister)? ... We will not remember you (plural) for any good... We prefer to speak of the devil the devil instead of speaking of you.

Transliteration: mataawiddaktruuHwitHilʕanna, mataatilHaqqariibakalmulqii... lanna ċurakumbixayr..TaryaʕʕiiTaanwalaaTaarykum

The commenter wrote this negative comment about the then Jordanian Prime Minister (Dr.OmarRazzaz), stating mentioning his and his predecessor Al-Mulqi's names is worse than mentioning the devil's name. The Devil is known in the monotheistic religions and some other cultures as a cursed evil person who disobeyed God and thus fell in disgrace.

### 5.3 Negative Impoliteness

As mentioned earlier, this strategy is used for damaging the hearer's negative face. In the following subsections, each sub-strategy of negative impoliteness as shown above is discussed with some comments that are selected from the 56 comments including this strategy.

#### 5.3.1 Warn/Threaten

The analysis of comments yields that Jordanian Facebookers use this strategy for threatening or frightening the other by affirming that some detrimental actions will occur. This strategy has 8% of total data as can be seen in some examples below.

Example (14) from post (3):

Comment in Arabic: زيادة الضرائب لن يؤدي إلا لمزيد من

الركود الاقتصادي أن الأوان ان تجد الحكومه بديل عن الضريبه

English translation: taxes increase will only lead to more economic stagnation; it's time for the government to find an alternative to taxes.

Transliteration: zyaadataqđaraaʔiblanyuʔaddii ʔillaalimaziid min arrukuudalʔiqtiSaadii ʔaanalʔawan ʔan tadʔidalHukuumahbadiilʔan adqariibih.

In this example, the author warned the government that the tax increase will lead to more economic stagnation (if the Jordan Customs Department activates the decision to implement electronic commerce).

Example (15) from post (3):

Comment in Arabic: خطوه اخرى للقضاء على الاقتصاد الاردني.

English translation: another step to finish off the Jordanian economy

Transliteration: xuTwah ?uxraalilqaḏaa?ʔalaaal?iqtiSaadal?urdunii.

In this example, the commenter warned the government that the launch of the electronic commerce platform will destroy the economy.

Example (16) from post (2):

Comment in Arabic: ولسه الحبل ع الجرار لا اخر السنه ولا السنه الي بعدها بتزيد او رح تزيد وتزيد طول ما النهج نفسه

English translation: More is still to come! it's going to continue to increase and increase more to the end of the year and even in the next one and so on, as long as it is the same policy.

Transliteration:

walissahilHablʔaldzaraarllaa ?aaxirassanihwassanihiliibaʔdahabitziid ?auuraHtziid w  
tziidTuulmaaannahdznafsu

In this comment, the writer strongly warned that Jordanian indebtedness will be increasing for an unspecified time to come.

The impoliteness of these examples is shown in that the threat denotes both sides of face as the writer warns the other, instilling a belief that his or her action will prove its damage in the end (Culpeper 1996:356). The writer also shows a strong criticism of the government's past behaviors and potential future decisions, which reinforces the harm to face (Jucker2009:175).

### 5.3.2 Condescend, Scorn, or Ridicule

This sub-strategy is not as common as that of associating with a negative aspect explicitly (see section below) and represents 13% of total data. Some Jordanian Facebookers tend to belittle the other by using proverbs or groups of words, such as when the commenter, in example (17) below, used the Jordanian well-known saying that when "someone is doing his job, it is not a great achievement". The commenter also, in example (18), used an Egyptian proverb to refer to someone who brings worthless things despite serious efforts to make the best of him. On the other hand, the commenter, in example (19), used a phrase to scorn, or ridicule the government.

Example (17) from post (4):

Comment in Arabic: انجاز عظيم. زغردي الها ياهلاله.

English translation: great achievement. Make a ululation (expression of great joy), Hilalah (typical Jordanian feminine name); it means that if someone is doing his job it is not a great achievement.

Transliteration: ?indzaaz. ?að?im. zayridii ?ilhaayahilaalih.

Example (18) from post (6):

Comment in Arabic: ياما جاب الغراب لأمه

English translation: What did the crow bring to its mother? (Egyptian Proverb which means that someone brings worthless things in spite of the efforts that the mother made to bring him up).

Transliteration: yaamaadzaab al-yuraabla?ummuh.

Example (19) from post (3):

Comment in Arabic: ماشين عكس العالم، استمروا.

English translation: you are going against the whole world, keep on going.

Transliteration: maafiiin?aks al?aalam, ?istamirruu.

These examples emphasize that scorn is accompanied by contempt by not seriously reading the other, as in example (19), or by belittling the other, as in examples (17) and (18) (Culpeper :1996:358).

### 5.3.3 Put the Other's Indebtedness on Record

There was only one case where the participant appeared to put the other's indebtedness on record. He adopted his negative criticism from an old sentence which is always said in most political speeches, as presented in the following example:

Example (20) from post (7):

Comment in Arabic: الانسسسسسان اغلى ما نملك سواليف قديمه وكذب بسلامه بسلامه بسلامه شكرا حموده.

English translation: "the human being is the most precious thing we have"; that is an old saying and a lie. Bye, bye, bye and thanks Hamoudah.

Transliteration: al?insaana ?aylamaanamliksawaaliifqadiimihwaki ?bbissalaamihbissalaamihbis salaamihshukranHamuudh

The commenter means that this saying, which was first stated by the late King Hussein of Jordan, has been repeated so often by less caring politicians that it has lost its original seriousness and truth.

### 5.3.4 Explicitly Associate the Other With a Negative Aspect

Culpeper (1996:358) categorizes this strategy as an attack of the interlocutor's negative face. It is often used by Jordanian Facebookers and appears in 26% of the total data. It is shown in

the examples below that these expressions are used in a negative way by using explicitly associate the other with a negative aspect.

Example (21) from post (1):

Comment in the Arabic Language: معاليك لو جربت تروح بالباصات عالعبية وتمر من الطريق الصحراوي الي كل يوم بموت في ناس من وري الحوادث بدل ما رحلت بالطيارة أنت وفدك. حسو بالمواطن ولو شوي شبعنا حكي وسواليف الفيس بوك الي لا بتقدم ولا بتأخر

English translation: (I wish) you tried, your Excellency, to go to Aqaba by bus through the Desert Road where car accidents take place and people die every day instead of going with your delegation by plane. Think only a little about your citizens, because we are fed up with the talk and stories of the Facebook posts that have been making no progress whatsoever.

Transliteration: maʕaliik law dzarrabitruuHbilbaaSaataʕalʕaqabahwitmurr min  
aTTariiqaSSaHrawiilliikulyoombimuutfiinaas min  
waraaalHawadiθbadalmaaruHtbiTTiyaarahʔantawwafdak.  
HissuubilmwaaTinwalawfwayyʕbiʕnaHakiiwsawaaliifilfeesbukillilaabitaqaddimwalabitʔaxxi  
r.

In this example, the writer strongly criticized Dr. Omar Razzaz for going from Amman to Aqaba (310 kms. to the south) by plane rather than by bus or car which common people use. He thought the then Prime Minister of Jordan should have shown some sympathy with the common populace.

Example (22) from post (2):

Comment in Arabic: سبب ارتفاع الدين العام.... السرقات والفساد يتم تصدير هذه الأموال للخارج.

English translation: The reason behind the high rate of the general debt is related to thefts and corruption; money is being exported outside the country.

Transliteration: sabab ʔirtifaaʕaddeen alʕaam ....  
assariqaatwilfasadyatimtaSdiirhaθhialʔamwaallilxaaridz

The commenter, in this example, also applied this strategy by stating the reasons for the increase of indebtedness such as "thefts and corruption".

Example (23) from post (4):

Comment in Arabic: استثمارات شو مهني نص المستثمرين راحو على تركيا ومصر من كثر الضرائب

English translation: what investments are you talking about? Half of the investors went to Turkey and Egypt because of the many taxes.

Transliteration: ʔistiθmaraatʕuumahinuSSalmustaθmiriinrahuuʕalaaturkiaawamaSr min  
kuθraldaraaʔib

Additionally in this example, AlaaAlyan confronted the Minister of Information with the fact that half the investors left Jordan to Egypt and Turkey because they could not afford paying the many taxes imposed on them.



### 5.3.5 Supplication

There is another sub-strategy of negative impoliteness strategy presented in this study which does not belong to any of the classifications established by Culpeper's (1996). This strategy is examined under the negative impoliteness strategy because Jordanian Facebookers use negative supplications to comment on political posts. Some examples of invocations can be seen in the examples below.

Example (24) from post (9):

Comment in Arabic: البين يطسك مصدق حالك مراسل في البلديه بمون احسن منك لو بتستحي بحكي روح نام احسنك.

English translation: May you be plagued with death. Do you really believe yourself? An office boy in the municipality is more influential than you are. If you have some shame, go to sleep because it is better for you.

Transliteration: ilbeenyTussakmSaddiqHaalakmuraasilfiilbaladiyyihbimuun ?aHsanminnak law bitstaHiibaHkiiruuHnaam ?aHsanlak.

In this comment, the author insulted the Jordanian Prime Minister by calling a curse upon him through the Karaki (Jordanian southern city) term (ilbeenyTussak) which means "I wish some calamity occurred to you" (supplication for something bad). He also tried to belittle the Prime Minister by saying that an office boy in a small municipality has more power than him.

Example (25) from post (10):

Comment in Arabic: الله يسخطكو بس

English translation: May Allah make a calamity fall on you.

Transliteration: allahyisxaTkuu bass.

The commenter objected to an utterance of the Jordanian Minister of Transport by invoking upon him the negative supplication stated in the example, which is usually made for enemies or evil persons.

Example (26) from post (1):

Comment in Arabic: روح يا شيخ منك لله الله لا يسامحك

English translation: Go away, Sheikh; Allah will take care of you; may He never forgive you.

Transliteration: ruuhyafeexminnaklalaallahlaaysaamHak.

The commenter also used negative impoliteness to attack the the Jordanian Prime Minister by invoking on him the supplication "MayAllah never forgive you". The reason why he called him 'sheikh' is not clear but it may been have used to refer to the Prime Minister as the head of a tribe rather than the head of a government, which further illustrates his disdain of Razzazz.

#### 5.4 Sarcasm

This strategy is another type of impoliteness strategies found by Culpeper's (1996). Sarcasm or mock politeness, as mentioned before, is performing the face threatening act with politeness strategies that are clearly insincere to the addressee's face. This strategy in the study constitutes (24%) of total data. Examples of sarcasm can be seen in the following comments.

Example (27) from post (2):

Comment in Arabic: عفيه النشامى

English translation: Good job, Champions.

Transliteration: 'afiyihinnfaama

The commenter in this example apparently lauded but actually sarcastically mocked the Jordanian government for increasing Jordanian indebtedness.

Example (28) from post (1):

Comment in Arabic: سعدنا بمعرفة سفرك للعقبة بالطائرة بينما المواطن العادي يسافر ع الطريق الصحراوي. سررنا بمعرفة انه ما في فرق بين مواطن ومسؤول فيكي يا بلدي.

English translation: we were delighted to learn that you traveled by plane to Aqaba while the normal citizen travels through the Desert Road. We were also delighted to know that there's no difference between a citizen and an official in you, my country.

Transliteration: su'idnabima'rifatsafaraklii'aqabahbiTTiyyarahbaynamaalmawaaTin al'aadiibysaafir'aTTariiqassaHrawii. surinabima'rifat ?innuhmaafiifarq been muwaaTinwamas'uulfiikiyabaladii.

The writer, in the comment above, used the style of mockery to criticize Dr. Omar Razzaz for going to Aqaba by plane instead of using the desert road which common people use. Sarcastically stated, the travel by plane shows that there is no difference between ordinary citizens and government officials.

Example (29) from post (3):

Comment in Arabic: ياخي والله لازم تحطوا ضريبة بدل استهلاك هوا... على كل واحد بتتنفس في الأردن... هيك ممكن تزيبط معكوا.. بس عاد البير قاعه مكسور.. مش راح يمتلي..

English translation: Hey, brother, you must add a tax on air consumption by each breathing person in Jordan...by this way, you might be able to make up (for your budget expenditures)...But the bottom of the well is broken (leaky)...so it will never be filled.

Transliteration: yaaxiiwallahlaazimtHuTTuudariibihbadal ?istihlaakhawa... ?alaakulwaaHidbitnaffasfiil?urdan... heekmumkintuzbuT ma'kuu.. bass'aadilbiirqaa'uh maksuur.. mijraHyimtalii..

In this comment, the writer sarcastically called to add a tax for air consumption in order to fill up the government's treasury; then, he regrets, also sarcastically, the fact the treasury is always leaking, so it will never fill up. He here uses a well-known Jordanian saying: the floor of the well is broken/cracked to compare the treasury to always leaky water well.

## 6. Discussion and Summary

The study found that impoliteness strategies are widely used by Jordanians to comment on political posts on Facebook. It was also found that Jordanian people use different strategies to comment on such posts and that this difference is due to the nature of the political post itself. The strategies used include positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, bald on record, and sarcasm impoliteness, also found in different research areas (see Zhong, 2018; Rosanti, 2016; Primadianti, 2015; Chintiabela, 2017; Gunawan, 2017; Dhorifah, 2016; Shofyah, 2015; Hammod and Abdul-Rassul, 2017; Shinta et al. 2018). All of these studies discussed examples of four of the five strategies found in this study except for Shofyah who found all five strategies of the impoliteness theory.

The study is deemed to be the first to investigate Facebook comments on political articles in Jordan by applying Culpeper's (1996) Impoliteness strategies, and it is the only one where negative impoliteness is used more than positive impoliteness. In most of the studies mentioned, positive impoliteness is the most frequent, and this agrees with results by Zhong (2018), Rosanti (2016), Chintiabela (2017), Gunawan, (2017), and Shofyah (2015), Shinta et al. (2018) who addressed the important influence of gender in social media, and Hammod and Abdul-Rassul (2017) who compared between English and Arabic Facebook comments.

Bald on record impoliteness is rarely used by Jordanian Facebookers and this differs from findings in other studies. According to Hammod and Abdul-Rassul (2017), both bald and sarcasm impoliteness are used in Arabic Facebook comments with similar frequencies. In English Facebook comments sarcasm impoliteness is the least frequent, contrary to findings in the present study where sarcasm is widely used.

Regarding the sub-strategies of negative and positive impoliteness, Jordanian Facebookers use disassociating from the other, being disinterested, seeking disagreement, and using taboo words in positive impoliteness. They also use frightening, condescending, putting the other's indebtedness on record, and associating the other with a negative aspect in negative impoliteness. Other studies used other strategies, which differ in one way or another from those in the present study.

## 7. Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the study findings, the following conclusions can be made:

- 1- The study has revealed a new strategy used by Jordanians; it is negative supplication which does not belong to any classification established by Culpeper's (1996). Using supplications or invocations reflect the religious and Islamic influence on Jordanians.

- 2- The findings of this study reveal that most Jordanians comment on political posts by using negative impoliteness. This reflects Jordanians' general negative attitudes toward their government's policies, especially regarding economic issues.
- 3- It is found that Jordanians do not use withhold politeness on Facebook because Facebook does not deal with facial expressions.
- 4- The findings of this study also show that some sub-strategies of the positive impoliteness are not used by Jordanian Facebookers such as ignoring and snubbing the other, excluding the other from an activity, using inappropriate identity markers, using obscure or secretive language, calling the other names. Only one sub-strategy of the negative impoliteness, invading the other's space, is not used. This may be due to the conservative nature of most Jordanians who generally avoid directly offending the other.

It is anticipated that the study's findings can present useful input to researchers who want to carry studies similar to this one. In the light of the study's results, the researchers suggest certain topics which can be examined in the future such as the following:

- 1- It might be useful if further studies examine the comments on political posts on Facebook within the politeness theory.
- 2- A similar study can be conducted taking into account the effect of gender.
- 3- The study did not consider the emotional faces used in Facebook; therefore, it is recommended to handle this topic in future studies.
- 4- The study handled the impoliteness strategies in Jordanian Arabic; future research to study the same topic in other Arab countries is suggested.

## 8. Phonetic Symbols of Arabic Sounds

### 8.1 Consonants

Arabic Consonants	Symbol	Description
ء	ʔ	Glottal stop
ب	b	Voiced bilabial stop
ت	t	Voiceless dento-alveolar stop
ث	θ	Voiceless inter-dental fricative
ج	dʒ	Voiced post-alveolar affricate
ح	h	Voiceless pharyngeal fricative
خ	x	Voiceless uvular fricative
د	d	Voiced dento-alveolar stop
ذ	ð	Voiced alveolar fricative
ر	r	Voiced alveo-palatal trill
ز	z	Voiced alveolar fricative
س	s	Voiceless alveolar fricative
ش	ʃ	Voiceless alveo-palatal fricative

ص	S	Voiceless alveolar emphatic fricative
ض	ḍ	Voiced alveolar emphatic stop
ط	T	Voiceless dento-alveolar emphatic stop
ظ	ḏ <sup>c</sup>	Voiced alveolar emphatic fricative
ع	ʕ	Voiced pharyngeal fricative
غ	ɣ	Voiced uvular fricative
ف	f	Voiceless labio-dental fricative
ق	q	Voiceless uvular stop
ك	k	Voiceless velar stop
ل	l	Voiced alveolar lateral
م	m	Voiced bilabial nasal
ن	n	Voiced alveolar nasal
هـ	h	Voiceless glottal fricative
و	w	Voiced labio-velar glide
ي	y	Voiced palatal glide

## 8.2 Vowels

### A) Short vowels

فتحة	a	Front, nearly half-open, low unrounded
ضمة	u	Back, nearly close, high rounded
كسرة	i	Front, open, high unrounded

### B) Long Vowels in Jordanian Colloquial Arabic

Long vowels are doubled by short ones. They are as follows:

aa, uu, ee, oo, and ii

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## Appendix

### Screenshots of Some Comments

Comment (2) from post (1)



Comment (5) from post (1):



Comment (9) from post (1):



Comment (10) from post (1):



Comment (1) from post (2):



Comment (4) from post (2):



Comment (7) from post (2):



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