The pragmatics of invitation making and acceptance in Jordanian society

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Abstract
The present study explores the nature of invitation making and acceptance in Jordanian society from a pragmatic point of view. It attempts to systemize the various strategies used for the purpose of inviting in Jordanian society; and to highlight the socio-pragmatic constraints governing their use. Three major aspects of inviting were examined: inviting, accepting an invitation and declining it. The sample is composed of 120 informants. The data was studied and analyzed following Austin (1962), Searle (1967, 1976) concepts on speech act theory, and Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) notion of politeness and face threatening acts. The study has shown that the process is patterned, functional and rule-governed. Furthermore, it shows that social distance in relation to sex and age of the individual speaker is important factor in determining the type of strategies used for inviting, accepting an invitation or refusing it. It has also been argued that Jordanian Arabic has a special patterning of inviting that can be understood and appreciated only by people sharing the same socio-cultural background. The results of the study have implications for intercultural communication, and applied linguistics as well as for a possible theory of foreign/second language teaching.

Introduction
This paper examines invitation making and acceptance in Jordanian society from a pragmatic point of view. Invitations are a common occurrence in everyday life, particularly in the maintenance of good relationships. They usually aim to address the invitee's positive face. An attempt will be made in this study to demonstrate that upon inviting Jordanian people engage in a "facework". Specifically, they take into account the vulnerability of "face", and therefore take certain procedures to maintain it.

As a polite and constructive type of behavior, an invitation can be seen as a social act. Speech act theory as developed by Searle’s (1969) following Austin’s (1962) model is based on the assumption that language is a form of behavior, and it is conditioned by a set of rules (1969:22). The idea that language is behavior is the basic element that helps us understand how language functions in a social context. Previous
research on varied politeness formulas shows that social norms vary from culture to culture. Therefore, what can be seen as a polite behavior in one culture may not be seen so in another. However, in all speech communities, an invitation can be seen socially as an acceptable humanitarian polite behavior. Parallel to the definitions suggested by Holmes (1990) of an apology, and Al-Khatib (1997) of congratulation and thank-you announcements, an invitation for this study can be defined as a communicative act addressed to B's face-needs and intended to enhance and strengthen good and healthy relations between A and B (where A is the inviter and B is the invitee). Having agreed that invitations are communicative acts, we will attempt in this study to uncover what communicative functions they intend to serve, how and by what means such functions are served.

For the purpose of this study, by invitation making we mean all those social occasions (e.g. party, meal, drink etc.) in which someone is verbally invited to take part. Written invitations, therefore, do not fall within the scope of this study.

Before we proceed any further in our investigation, it is worth giving a brief idea of the socio-cultural background of Jordanian society. Speaking of the importance of providing the reader with such important information in any ethnographic analysis of communicative events, saville-Troike (1997:126) argues: In understanding an ethnography of communication in a particular locale, the first task is to define at least tentatively the speech community to be studied, attempt to gain some understanding of its social organization and other salient aspects of the culture, and formulate possible hypotheses concerning the diverse ways the socio-cultural phenomena might relate to patterns of communication.

**Jordanian Society and how an invitation is made**

Just like many other Arab countries, Jordan is characterized by being a tribal society. Social life in the Arab world in general, and in Jordan in particular, has always centered on the family and attitude of the individual toward the family. Even though the traditional Jordanian family which was extended in nature has become something of the past, the great majority of Jordanian people still identify themselves with their individual families, as the role and influence of the family/tribe in supporting an individual morally, and in some cases financially, is still the norm. Therefore, it can be said that the traditional family loyalty remains an influential force in Jordanian society.

Socially, the conventional expectations of Jordanian society are that brothers, sisters, relatives, friends and even neighbors will remain in contact with each other, and be mutually loyal and helpful. One way through which Jordanian people tend to express their feelings toward each other is by inviting one another. Arabs are renowned of their hospitality. Upon inviting, the inviter has to be a real provider of hospitality. An invitation to dinner, for example, may mean the offering of a wide range of food. The more diverse of food the host offers the higher he would be ranked on the scale of generosity. Another mark of hospitality is that when someone is invited for a meal, the host has to keep on offering the invitee to eat just a bit more. That is to say, the invitee would be kindly asked to eat above and beyond his capacity of eating. Another traditional expectation is that a guest has to be fed before the host feeds himself. At smaller events, it is common to wait to take a bite until everyone at the table has received a serving. A host or hostess may urge his/her guests to eat immediately upon receiving the food, and he/she should wait until everyone at the table has begun eating.
How well one treats his guest, what type of food and how much he offers to his guests is a typical Arab tradition, and seen as a direct measurement of what kind of a person he is (Hasan, 1999). However, hospitality is not confined only to the home. So, when two friends or acquaintances, for example, go to a coffee-shop, as a matter of courtesy, each one of them feels obliged to compete for paying for the drink.

As far as the invitee is concerned, when invited to a party or event, especially at someone's home, an appropriate host or hostess gift could be a valuable pack of chocolate, some sweets, flowers, or a small item for the home, such as a vase. Thanking the host for the nice time someone had at the party or event is a must, and inviting him/her in return is a nice gesture.

Jordanian society has a special pattern of inviting/offering. When two people engage in an encounter, the one who offers should insist on offering and the one who is being invited should bashfully reject the offer- but in reality intends to accept it later. Put it differently, the invitee is expected to reject an offer several times, before accepting it with a show of reluctance. Al-Khatib (2001:190) has reported that "to invite without insistence means that the concerned person is not serious about the invitation, and offers it as a mere remark of courtesy; and to accept the offer without reluctance means that the recipient is gluttonous, and may be described as an ill-behaved person."

Theoretical background

In this study, it is hypothesized that the socio-cultural context in which invitation making occurs as well as a number of social factors such as sex, age, and the social distance between the participants that are involved have a fundamental impact on the type of strategies employed by them. My approach to the present data is based on two pervasive principles which have been used widely in the field of interactional discourse. These are: speech act theory which was developed earlier by Searle (1969), following Austin’s (1962) work; and the notion of politeness as developed by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987).

Speech act theory is based on the assumption that language is a form of behavior, and it is governed by strict set of rules (Searle, 1969). The speech act, according to this theory, is seen as the minimal unit of linguistic communication. It is defined as an utterance that serves a particular function in communication. Austin (1962: 94-108) proposed a set of three simultaneous types of acts:

1) Locutionary act: (i.e., reference and sense). The meaning of the statement itself.
2) Illocutionary act: The contextual function of the act.
3) Perlocutionary act: what one achieves by saying something. This is the effect of the act upon the listener.

In his work on the theory, Searle (1976: 22) also suggests five illocutionary acts that one can perform in speaking. These are: a) Assertives: statements that may be judged true or false because they purport to describe a state of affairs in the world, such as asserting, concluding, etc.; b) Directives: statements that attempt to make the addressee’s actions fit the propositional content; c) Commissives: statements which commit the speaker to a course of action as described by the propositional content such as promising, offering, etc.; d) Expressives: statements that express the “sincerity condition of the speech act” such as apologizing, thanking, inviting, etc.; and e) Declaratives: statements that attempt to change the world through utterances, such as declaring war. However, although Searle spoke of the speaker-hearer
relationship and marked the indirectness of speech act which carries the relation between the literal meaning of the words and the implicated function, he neglects other variables such as, social status, sex, age and cross-cultural differences of certain speech act. Most of these elements, however, were accounted for by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) in their work on politeness theory, the focus of which is the notion of "face" suggested earlier by Goffman (1967).

The notion of "face" as suggested by Goffman (1967), and developed by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) is an important framework within which invitation making and acceptance can be successfully explained. The notion of 'face' has been defined in Scollon and Scollon (1999: 45) as "the negotiated public image, mutually granted to each other by participants in a communicative event." For Goffman (1967) a person's face is his image of himself in terms of approved social attributes. In an encounter all participants are responsible for maintaining their own and each other's faces cooperatively in the course of the interaction. For Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) 'face' is a favorable public image consisting of two different kinds of desires or face-wants, the desire to be unimpeded in one's actions, and desire to be approved of. The former was labeled by Brown and Levinson as "negative face" and the latter as "positive face". Brown and Levinson see negative politeness strategies as less threatening than positive politeness strategies, since the latter assume that the hearer shares the speaker's feelings of closeness. Put it differently, Brown and Levinson believe that while conducting a speech event, speakers are motivated by two basic wants of face: a) the desire of a participant that his action be approved or accepted by another participant and this is labeled as "positive face wants", and b) the desire of a participant that his actions be "unimpeded or be free from imposition" and this is termed as "negative face wants." Brown and Levinson (1987) believe that some acts, by their nature, threaten face, i.e. "face threatening acts"; therefore they require softening. Moreover, Brown and Levinson contend that the concept of face itself is universal, though the specific manifestations of face-wants may vary across cultures with some acts being more face-threatening in one culture than in another. The distinction made by Brown and Levinson between positive and negative politeness lead to another important distinction, that of positive and negative politeness societies. Brown and Levinson argued that England, for example, can be seen as a negative politeness society when compared to America. Al-Khatib (2001) assumed that, like Greece (see Sifiano 1989), Arab society in general, and Jordanian society in particular are positive politeness societies when compared with England. Foley (2000: 275-76) demonstrated that "crucial to Brown and Levinson's model of politeness is a principle of cooperation among interlocutors in the mutual maintenance of face in conversation; ideally speaker perform various types of speech acts more or less politely to preserve each other's face."

By virtue of their nature as politeness phenomena, invitations can be seen as one means through which people attempt to win the social approval of each other. Therefore, they address the participant's positive face wants, i.e. they intend to tell the invitee that his/her acceptance of the invitation is desirable and appreciated. By contrast, declining an invitation may put the inviter's positive face at risk and preserve the invitee's own. Brown and Levinson (1987, 236) were quite aware of the importance of solving such a problem when they pose a "balance principle." This principle is based on the assumption that participants have adequate motives for preserving each other's face. If somebody commits an offence against somebody else, the latter has the right to complain, the offender (i.e. the person who declines the invitation) has the obligation to apologize and the target person (i.e. the inviter) has
the obligation to accept the apology. In this way, an offence might be terminated, the
inviter's face is preserved and social harmony and interpersonal relationships may be
restored. So, it is believed that Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) model could
provide an insightful account of the various ways in which linguistic politeness can
be conveyed as far as invitation making is concerned.

Methodology and the corpus

The methodological paradigm of this research is based on the assumption that
observable differences in the choice and variation of politeness strategies, as used by
Jordanian people upon inviting or accepting an invitation may minimally originate
from the degree of solidarity between the inviter and the invitee in relation to other
sociological factors such as sex, age and social context. To examine this assumption, a
huge number of inviting speech acts was collected from various sources. Generally
speaking, the data falls into two main groups: oral and written. The oral portion of
data is spontaneous and naturally occurring intraconversational invitation acts used in
real environments of everyday communication between intimates. Among the many
sources we collected our data from are: daily interactions between dyads in the
workplace, department meetings, television programs, family gatherings, campus,
coffee shops, etc. Whenever we tried to collect the data no attempt was made by us to
inform the participants being involved in the interactions about our intention.

The written subset of the data, on the other hand, was collected by means of a
questionnaire with the help of five male and female university students enrolled at
two Jordanian universities: the University of Science and Technology in Irbid city,
and Philadelphia University in Amman city. The reason why we used assistants to
help us in collecting the data is because people in Jordanian society in general are
very suspicious of outsiders with whom they are not acquainted, or to whom they are
not, at least, been introduced through a third party, therefore a random selection of
informants was neither possible nor available. So, the only possible way for us to
draw the sample was to follow the "social network" model, suggested by Milroy and
Milroy (1978), and approach the subjects with the help of the assistants in the
capacity of "a friend of a friend" or in some cases through "a friend of a friend's
friend" (see also Al-Khatib 2001). By following this method, we were able to collect a
huge number of instances of spontaneous expressions of the type usually used by
Jordanian people in genuine social interactions. In addition, the assistants who helped
us in collecting the data were trained beforehand how to use the questionnaire. Also,
they were asked beforehand to note down the comments made by the interviewee
together with the relevant contextual details as soon and as exactly as possible. One
advantage of so doing was to elicit some extra information on the various ways in
which an invitation is made, accepted or turned down.

The sample of this study consisted of 120 Jordanian subjects who were made
up of 63 females and 67 males. The subjects involved are of various age groups: 54
were above 40 years-old and 66 below 40 years-old. It should also be noted that 42 of
the respondents were from Amman city and 62 from Irbid city, the largest urban
centers in the country. We have also tried from the very beginning to diversify our
sample in the best possible way according to the residential area and socio-economic
status of the subjects. Moreover, an examination of the educational background of the
subjects indicates that 52 are highly educated (i.e. university education or more), 50
are moderately educated (i.e. preparatory schooling or more), and 18 are non-educated
(i.e. little or no schooling).
The questionnaire consisted of four main sections. They were created to elicit the specific speech acts comprising the focus of study. The first comprises five questions intended to elicit some demographic data. The other three have equal number of questions; each has ten questions covering a wide range of strategies of inviting, accepting an invitation and refusing it, ranging in formality from the most formal (e.g. inviting someone for a wedding party or dinner) to the least formal (e.g. inviting someone for a cup of coffee). The basic of the questions included in these sections were two scales; the social distance scale which is concerned with the participant relationships, and the formality scale relating to the setting and type of interaction. Scenarios involved the subject and another colleague, the subject and a manager, the subject and a neighbor, or the subject and a relative. In each scenario, the subject is supposed to be familiar with the participant. Each prompt simulated a situation that could be formal (i.e. where the invitation is made to take part in a wedding party), or informal (i.e. where the invitation could be made for taking a cup of coffee).

The collected data was analyzed by the researcher for the components of each speech act included in the responses. Employing the subjects’ responses to the questionnaire, a speech act set was formulated for each item depending on the subject’s response. For instance, an acceptance could be comprised of one speech act (e.g. thank you) or three individual speech act components: (a) Thanking (e.g. thank you very much), (b) Stressing common membership (e.g. I need no invitation, I consider myself one of you), (b) Offering good-wishes (e.g. I much hope you always have happy occasions). The presence of each component was calculated for frequency of use for the subjects, and then we worked out the percentage score for the type of speech acts (strategies) used by each subject. By way of comparison, the percentage scores for the different speech acts are presented in the form of tables.

**Strategies of inviting in Jordanian society**

Building on the work of earlier researchers on similar politeness formulae like, for example, apologizing (Holmes 1990, Blum-Kulka and Olshtain 1984, Olshtain and Cohen 1983, Frazer 1981); gift offering (Hua et al., 2000); compliment and compliment responses (Wolfson, 1983; Knapp et al., 1984; Farghal and Al-Khatib, 2001) this article will analyze invitation making and acceptance in Jordanian society according to a categorization of strategies.

**Invitation Strategies**

Thus, a satisfactory categorizing system for the naturally occurring strategies in the Jordanian corpus comprises the following basic three categories, with a number of sub-categories:

1- **Invitation making**
   A- An explicit way of inviting IFID (e.g. explicit illocutionary force indicating device)
   B- An implicit way of inviting
   C- Employing intensifying devices
      a. Stressing common membership
      b. Swearing (by all that’s holy and valuable) so as to make the invitee accept the invitation
      c. Promise of repay
      d. Offering good-wishes

2- **Accepting an invitation**
   A- Thanking and appreciating
B- Stressing common membership
C- Expressing gladness
D- Complimenting
E- Offering good-wishes

3- Declining an invitation
A- Apologizing
B- Justification
C- Asking for forgiveness
D- Promise of compensation
E- Offering good wishes and rejecting

Data analysis shows that the subjects of this study used various strategies for inviting, accepting an invitation or declining it. It should be noted here that, just like Janet Holme's (1990) work on apologies in New Zealand English, these strategies are not mutually exclusive. That is to say, the subjects of this study appear to have employed more than one strategy during the complete act of inviting, repeating some of the strategies several times. For illustration, consider example (1) below. Someone invites a friend of him to join a Jaha (Groom's representatives visit the bride’s home so as to negotiate the marriage agreement with the bride’s family).


Today, it is my son's Jaha (i.e. marriage delegation); I come to invite you to join us, though you need not be invited because you are one of us (i.e. you are as close friend as a family member). We would be honored if you would accept to join us. To be repaid on similar happy occasions, God willing.

Cases like these can be seen as a set of speech acts each of which is a combination of individual speech acts that, when produced together, comprise a complete speech act (Murphy and Neu, 1996). To develop the illocutionary force desired a speaker often needs more than one discrete speech act. Thus, in the case of inviting one finds himself in need for more than one speech act in order to be able to convey the intended message, namely addressing the positive face of the invitee, and informing him/her that his/her attendance is appreciated.

Results and discussion
We will detail the distribution of these strategies in the speech of the selected sample, the results, and the conclusions drawn from those results under three main headings: invitation making, invitation acceptance and invitation-refusal.

Invitation making
Inviting in Jordanian society, like inviting elsewhere, is based on the relationship between the inviter and the invitee. According to Searle (1976), the goal of spoken interaction is to communicate things to the hearer by getting him/her to recognize the intention that one has to communicate those things. The speaker then must achieve the intended effect on the hearer by allowing him/her to recognize his/her intention to achieve that effect. So, the recognition of the intention or intended meaning of the utterance (speech act) seems crucial in achieving a level of success in understanding. As far as invitation making is concerned, Jordanian society has a special patterning of inviting. That is to say, in several cases it has been noticed that
an inviter tends to exploit the negative face of the invitee (i.e. the want not to be imposed upon by others) for the purpose of addressing his/her positive face (i.e. the want to be thought of as desirable person).

Data analysis has shown that several strategies of inviting are utilized by the subjects of this study. To start with, it has been observed that the conventional way of inviting in Jordanian society takes place either explicitly or implicitly. By the explicit way we mean this type of expressions which indicates that the addresser has explicit intention of inviting, like for example, ?ana çazmak çala haflet çeed miladî "I invite you to my birthday party". And by the implicit way we mean that type of inviting which indicates that the addresser has the intention of inviting, but without saying that directly. For example, while two friends are passing by a coffee-shop one of them may say šura?iyak nfuut nišrablna finjan qahwa? "How about to take a cup of coffee?" And the one who initiates such question has the intention of (inviting) paying for the drink. A close attention to the data shows that this latter type of inviting is usually used only among intimates, friends, status equals, or family members in intimate situations. While the explicit way is usually used by people who have more social distance and less solidarity in a rather formal situations.

Table (1) below demonstrates that the explicit way of inviting is used by Jordanians much more often than the implicit way. This particular strategy appeared in the majority of interactions, in different realizations. It accounts for almost exactly 77% of the collected utterances.

Table (1): Distribution of the conventional strategies of inviting in the speech behavior of Jordanian people

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inviting strategy</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explicit way of inviting</td>
<td>787</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implicit way of inviting</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1631</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As pointed out earlier an inviting speech act can be made on its own (e.g. I invite you for a meal, or how about to dine together?) or made up of different combinations of semantic formulas. Almost two quarters of the total number of strategies occurring in the corpus involved some combination of strategies. It is highly likely that this latter type of data has occurred as a means for intensifying the effect of inviting speech act on the target person. The results of the analysis, as shown in table 2, demonstrate that inviting in Jordanian society is made up of different combinations of several speech acts like, for example, bukra biitfadalu ?ina çala ?ihvada çamlinu çalashan çawdit ?ibna X bisallameh, inshallah çugbal çindwladkum? Would you honor us tomorrow by lunching with us on the occasion of our son’s safe return, same to your sons God willing? Speaking of the importance of this tactic, Holmes (1990) argued that “combining strategies results in a ‘weightier’ apology, appropriate for more serious offenses”. It is highly likely that Jordanian people tend to use this tactic so as to achieve two goals simultaneously: first, to enhance the positive face of the invitee by telling him/her, in an indirect way, that he is an important person. Second, to inform him/her that his/her acceptance of the invitation is highly appreciated, therefore, he should respond to it positively.

Table (2): Distribution of the intensifying inviting strategies in the speech behavior of Jordanian people
Table (2) shows that Jordanian people tend to utilize as intensifiers a number of positive politeness strategies such as offering good wishes, claiming reciprocity or stressing common membership, Swearing by God or other valuable belongings and promising to repay for strengthening the force of an offer on the invitee. Consider the following examples:

2) yareit titfadalu zi$a $ala ?il $as$a ?ileileh "I much hope you would honor us by dining with us tonight"

3) habin niksabak $ala $il $yada $ilyom "we would like to have the advantage of having you on lunch with us today"

4) wujuudak bil hafleb byscidna "We would be very pleased by your participation"

These examples indicate that such intensifiers as you would honor us, we have the advantage of having you, We would be very pleased by your participation may be addressed to the positive face of the invitee in order to strengthen the illocutionary force of the utterance and, consequently, heighten the perlocutionary effect of the act of inviting on him/her.

Also it can be seen from Table (2) above that upon inviting, Jordanian people tend to offer a variety of good-wishes, as an important strategy, for inviting. This happens by using such expressions as ?ana jay ?aznimkum $uqbaal $ind $waldkum insallah "I come to invite you for….., your children to be next God willing- in terms of success, wedding, or any other happy occasions- or ?in$allah nrudilkum ?iyaha bel$afrah "God willing, to be repaid on similar happy occasions." It is highly likely that people in Jordanian society tend to offer a lot of such good-wishes upon inviting, because of their positive effect on the addressee. So, an appropriate use of them can be seen as a polite strategy through which the addressee attempts to arouse a positive feeling in the hearer, and as such make him accept to share this happy occasion with the inviter. Also, it should be noted here that religion was also found to play a role in the process. A considerable number of religious expressions given in the form of good-wishes were found to be used heavily by the subjects. For example, more than 278 good-wishes were found to include the name of ?aLLah or the Prophet Mohammed Like, for example ?aLLah yi$hnik or ?aLLa ya$hnik both of which mean “God bless you”. The use of such expressions is taken from the Arab and Islamic tradition, where the speaker tends to say nothing could happen without the help of God wherever he/she wishes something good to happen.

The data, as seen in table (2), has also revealed that Jordanian people tend to use swearing- by God or all that’s holly or of great value- as a means for intensifying the effect of inviting. For example, some utterances such as billahi $aleik "By God", bihyaat ?ilxa$eh "By our brotherhood", jirit ?allah $aleik or ?anashdak bellah both of which mean "for God sake" are usually used between intimates so as to strengthen the positive perlocutionary force on the recipient. This happens by making him/her feel that his/her attendance is highly appreciated and as such he/she has no choice but to accept the invitation. It should be mentioned here that using such theo-pragmatic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intensifying strategies</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Offering good wishes</td>
<td>376</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stressing common membership</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swearing by God or all that’s holly or of great value</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promise of repay</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1663</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
expressions in the context of inviting may reflect the impact of Islamic culture on Jordanian people when they perform the act of inviting.

Stressing common membership is another effective strategy through which Jordanians attempt to heighten the perlocutionary effect of the act of inviting on the invitee. As seen in table (A) (see appendix 1) people in Jordanian society opt for employing a variety of such expressions. By using in-group identity markers such as ?nta wahad mina mabidak "you are one of us, so you need not be invited (rather invites)" is seen as an effective way of inviting, since it creates an impression that the message flows from heart to heart. Additionally, the subjects' pragmatic competence is evidenced in the ease with which inviting utterances are usually accompanied by such in-group identity markers as "you are one of us" or ?ihna ?ahil "we are as close friends as family members" that might have a positive perlocutionary effect on the target person.

For more clarification, consider also the following example which illustrates how an invitation is offered in Jordanian society:

**Context:** A conversation between two colleagues (AR and BK), working in the post office, AR is extending an invitation to BK, BK attempts by all means to escape the invitation but he, at last, finds himself, under A's insistence, obliged to accept the invitation. (Personal observation)

(4) AR. yazalamah kam marah surt čazmak ta tzurna whua ?ihna muš gad ?ilmagam (smiling)
Hey man, how many times have I invited you to visit us? Are not we of the same (socio-economic) status?

BK. ?inshallah bil?afrah
On happy occasions, God willing

We know “on happy occasions”, but we want it today

BK. račahwil kul juhdi ?inshallah
I’ll do my best, God willing

AR. (smiling) ?ana čarīf? ?inshallah bas wačid šaraf?
I know happens by God willing, but you promise on your honor to do it?

BK. wačid šaraf
Yes I promise on my honor

Hey, since it is a promise on my honor, my wife (mother of X) and I will visit you tonight provided that you would not bother yourself about us (i.e. in terms of hosting the visit)

This dialogue is a good example of an informal invitation which usually takes place between friends and colleagues. As said earlier, insistence here is a remarkable aspect of inviting. The inviter insists on the invitee to accept the invitation through using several tactics. Once again, it should be noted here that the politeness in this type of invitation basically resides in the insistence of the addressee on the addressee to accept the invitation. Upon hearing this, the addressee may communicatively receive the message by implicating that he is so important to the addressee, otherwise he wouldn't be invited repeatedly with a great deal of insistence. This implicate is brought about on the part of the addressee by making use of the generosity maxim (Leech, 1983) from an Arab point of view, where such a visit may result in
"maximizing the expression of benefit to self and minimizing the expression of cost to self". The addressee, in turn, in an attempt to decline the invitation responds by resorting to various tactics typical of Arab culture. This happens by using such expression as "Inshalla" (God willing) and so on. But he, at last, accepts the invitation.

It should be noted here that this modes of inviting and accepting usually takes place in a face-to-face encounters, where, the inviter expects to be seen as cooperative. The hearer also, who tends bashfully to reject the invitation, expects to be seen cooperative. The invitee expects the inviter to assume cooperation and to interpret the violation on that basis.

Lastly, a careful examination of the structure of the various invitations made by the respondents indicates that the most common form of sequences used for inviting took the form of “inviting/ offering good-wishes /stressing common membership, followed by promise of repay, or alternatively, using swearing (by all that’s holy and valuable) instead of the other strategies as supporting device.

**Accepting an invitation**

Islamic culture, which is mainly dominated by the Holy Qur'an and the traditions of Mohammad, calls for accepting an invitation or a gift. This fact is clearly manifested in the prophet's words (i.e. two of his traditions) when he says: ṭaḏa duḍytyum falabu "Had you been invited you have to accept", and tahadu tahabu “Exchange gifts exchange love.” Needless to say that these sources form two of the major articles of faith and are seen by Jordanian Moslems as the fundamental authority which controls and judges the actions and behavior of people in their daily interactions.

Socially speaking, in response to requests, invitations, and offers, acceptance or agreement in Jordanian society is usually preferred and rejecting or refusing is not. The act of refusal can be seen as a face-threatening act for the listener, and often realized through indirect strategies with a great deal of mitigation and/or delay within the turn or across turns. Acceptance or agreement, however, tends to be used in direct language without much delay, mitigation, or explanation. The speech act of acceptance occurs when a speaker reacts with pleasure, whereas the speech act of refusal takes place when a speaker reacts with displeasure or disapproval.

Looking at table (3) below, many observations about how Jordanian people react to an invitation can be made. First, the overall degree of Jordanians' awareness of the use of thanking and appreciation expressions upon accepting an invitation is quite high at 50% of the time. This clearly indicates that these expressions are an active component of Jordanian sociolinguistic output. Furthermore, it implies that Jordanians are, in general, politeness-sensitive when they engage in a process of responding to an invitation.

*Table (3): Distribution of accepting strategies in the speech of Jordanian people*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accepting strategies</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thanking and appreciating</td>
<td>815</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offering good wishes</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stressing common membership</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>complimenting</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The table also demonstrates that a considerable number of informants appear to rely on offering good wishes upon accepting an invitation. This strategy seems to be utilized by the informants in 21%. The other strategies: Stressing common membership, complimenting, and expressing gladness were also used by the informants to a lesser extent, namely 13%, 10%, and 6% respectively. Moreover, an examination of the data reveals that invitation acceptance in Jordanian society tends to be realized through direct strategies as will be seen in example (5) below. Also it has been noticed that the formulaic sequence of acceptance comprises: (a) an expression of thanking and/or appreciating, followed by (b) an expression of good-wishes, and ending by (c) either expressing common membership or complimenting or both. However, it has been noticed that accepting an invitation according to this formulaic sequence is not obligatory in the absolute sense, since it has been found that a few number of the responses began by expressing common membership and ending with thanking and appreciating.

To provide a clearer picture of how Jordanians react to an invitation consider the following excerpt which are taken from the oral subset of data.

**Context:** An exchange between two friends. Speaker BR was invited by his friend (speaker AA) for a lunch. (Personal observation)

(5) AA. šu ra?yek ?ana čaznik ?ilyom čalγada  
I invite you to take your lunch with me today, what do you think?

BR. balla šukran jazeelan, inshallah bil?afrah, leiš myalib halak ?ana mabidi čazumeh  
Is it? Thank you very much, on happy occasion God willing, don’t bother yourself about me, I need no invitation.

AA. walaw šuda wa, salamit wajbak  
I’ve done nothing, you deserve more than that

BR. ?allah ysalmak haða lutuf minak  
God bless you, its very kind of you.

Excerpt (5) represents a typical way of accepting an invitation in Jordanian society. The inviter begins his talk by offering his invitation in a direct way, followed by a question. Such a question “what do you think?” binds the inviter to an accounting mode. In framing the invitation by asking a closed-ended question the inviter does provide a clue towards what he would be seen as satisfactory response. By so doing, the inviter pretends here that he is trying to save the inviter’s face through asking this question, and, at the same time, preparing the way for the invitee to accept the invitation, since he knows beforehand what his friend’s response would be. In responding to the invitation, speaker BR here resorts to a tactic typical of Arab culture, i.e., using a polite move to express gladness. The use of the interjection ‘balla!’ (Is it?) in this particular context can be seen as an indicator that the invitee has the intention of accepting the invitation. Moreover, to enhance the positive face of the inviter he (the invitee) tended to empoy a combination of politeness strategies, such as thanking and appreciating (thank you very much), good-wishes, (on happy occasions, God willing), stressing common membership (I need no invitation), and finally complimenting (It is very kind of you). Pragmatically speaking, it is evident that the inviter here is so efficient in using indirectness as strategy of politeness, though he uses a closed-ended question that cannot be answered by the inviteee and at
the same time he does not use any redressive element like, for example, šura?yak tsharifna? (how about to or would you honor us)- to compensate for the hearer’s feeling of being imposed upon. By so doing, he attempts to mitigate the effect of a request by offering optionality, or “give options” as Lakoff (1973) puts it.

**Invitation-refusal**

Chen (1996, reported in Tanck, 2002:2) noted that the speech act of refusal occurs when a speaker directly or indirectly says no to a request or invitation. Refusal is a face-threatening act to the inviter, because it contradicts his/her expectations, and is often realized through indirect strategies. Therefore, unlike acceptance, it requires a high level of pragmatic competence. As said previously, accepting an invitation among Jordanians is the norm. But in case of refusing, a great deal of mitigation has to be utilized by the invitee so as to be able to turn down the invitation. Therefore, one key to getting along well with one another, friends and acquaintances should know how to deal with the face-wants that may arise as a result of declining an invitation.

It is clear from tables (4) that Jordanians tend to use a variety of apologetic strategies so as to soften the perlocutionary effect of the face-threatening act on the addressee had an invitation been rejected. Most Jordanians believe that the use of such apologetic expressions is a significant act of politeness and, hence, a redressing strategy. Basically, they are lexical and syntactic markers of politeness which speakers usually use to show their awareness that something wrong has happened and it has to be amended. So, such speech forms are seen by Jordanian people as markers of solidarity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Declining strategies</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expression of regret</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justification</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking for forgiveness or thanking</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promise of compensation</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offering good wishes</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>991</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table (4) demonstrates that the respondents tend to exploit the conventional way of apologizing strategy (i.e. using expression of regret) in almost 42%. The justification strategy, on the other hand, is more frequently employed by the subjects (31%) than the other strategies. A number of informants appear also to rely on promising to compensate as a mitigating strategy. They tend to employ it in 13%. Offering good wishes was also found to be used 9% of the time. This result indicates that offering good wishes still represents important part of the linguistic behavior of Jordanians for this particular purpose. A few number of the subjects reported that they
may ask for forgiveness in case of refusing. It has been used only 5% of the time by those who responded to the prompts included in this section. All in all, these findings indicate that the formulaic sequence used by Jordanian people seems to be similar to the formulaic sequence produced by American English speakers and Japanese EFL learners (Beebe’s et al., 1990). In their study on “speech act set of refusal and complaint” Beebe et al noticed that the formulaic sequence employed by the speakers comprised of (1) an expression of regret, followed by (2) an excuse, and ending with (an offer or alternative). In our study, the formulaic sequence, however, was found to follow a similar pattern, though it comprises more strategies than those noticed by Beebe et al. These sequences can best be described in the form of regret/justification or explanation/promise of compensation/ offering good wishes/ followed by asking for forgiveness or thanking. But it should be noted here that the use of these strategies is not obligatory in the absolute sense. It has been noticed that regret/justification/ asking for forgiveness or thanking are prevalent in the great majority of the refusals. However, the other strategies (promise of compensation/ offering good wishes) are left to personal choice. That is, they have been realized in the data to a much lesser extent.

The following are among the many terms which have been used by the subjects for achieving this purpose: ?asif ‘sorry’ which often appears with the Arabic intensifier jiddan ‘very’ as a compliment to signal the users’ serious and sincere attempt in apologizing for declining an invitation. Clearly, the explicit apology strategy as it seems to be heavily invested by Jordanians is represented by the conventional term followed by an intensifier: ?asf jiddan wallahe mabagdar ‘I am very sorry by God I cannot’. It has also been noticed that justification as an apologizing strategy is resorted to by the addressees when they feel that the addressee appears to be not convinced by their apology, hence, the situation requires a higher level of mitigation to soften the force inherent in refusing the invitation. To produce face-threatening acts without proper justifications implies disrespect. So, prefacing face-threatening acts with apologetic formulae and justification or explanation marks a higher degree of politeness. ?ana maşy̱ul kōhir ‘I am very busy’ or ‘too much busy’, fi ?amir ham binmaṇī ‘an important issue holds me back’ or ?ana mithami ‘I am on a diet- in case of inviting someone for a dinner’ are among the many most common expressions which are employed by Jordanians for justifying why they do not accept an invitation. Promising for compensation could also best be represented by the utterances xeirha byeirha "More similar occasions are coming", and ?iljayat ?akbara milrayhat "the coming are more than the passing.”

Offering the inviter a number of good wishes upon refusing an invitation appears also to have been utilized to a considerable extent. Obviously, this strategy as it seems to be satisfactorily invested by Jordanian people is represented by employing such expressions as ?inšallah bi?afrah "God willing, on other happy occasions", yislamu ?ideik "God bless your hands" (i.e. a greeting said when somebody does somebody else a favor), reitu çamir ?inšallah "Your house is full of happiness, God willing", ?allah yibarik fikum "God bless you" and so on. Also, a number of other expressions such as ?inšallah ?iđa manšy̱alit "God willing, if I don’t have something else to do", rabi yisahi "May God helps me to join you” or baqaraş ?aw̱dik bas raah ?ašmal juhdi "I cannot promise, but I'll do my best", might be used by some persons under certain circumstances as a mere mark of courtesy. That is, their use indicates that the concerned person, in reality, neither has the intention to accept the invitation nor he/she is serious about accepting it.
To illustrate, let us have a look at the following excerpt in Example (4) below:

**Context:** Exchange took place between two colleagues (MA and KS) in the workplace (a hospital).

(5) MA: ratabna larihle šu ra?yak trafigna
   We arranged for a picnic, how about to join us?

KS: ?asif wallahi maš yuul indi miit ša γyarah w šyarah yareit bagdar
   Sorry, by God, I’m busy. I have a hundred of things to do. I wish I could!

MA: yazallami ?ana ẓazmak
   Hey man, I invite you (i.e. you are not going to pay for that)

KS: walla yareit, ?inšalla maratanyeh, wbtmanallkum ri ħleh saçıdeh
   By God I wish I could. Anyway, another time God willing. I wish you a happy picnic.

Once again, the politeness in this scene basically resides in the insistence of the invitee on his friend (the addressee) to join them. But the invitee attempts by all means to decline the invitation. This happens, as seen above, by employing several politeness strategies. Among these are: apologizing in different ways, an explanation of why he rejects the invitation, promising to compensate, and offering good wishes, though the invitee performed the (FTA)- I invite you, (i.e. implicating that you are not going to pay for that)- on record without redressive act. It is worth noting that such utterance could represent in Jordanian society a face-threatening act to the addressee since it could be explained on the ground that the addressee is a miser (i.e. a person who does not like to share because he is afraid of spending some money). However, the inviter here reacted positively because such behavior appears to be facilitated with understanding of the amount of solidarity which links them to each other. Commenting on this issue Brown and Levinson (1987:229) assume that in contexts of friendship and intimacy, conventionalized insults may serve as a mechanism for stressing solidarity.

The impact of social distance in relation to sex, age and social context on invitation making and acceptance

One of the most important aspects discussed by Brown and Levinson (1987) was identifying three parameters which influence the choice of politeness strategies. These are: the social distance (D) between the speaker and the interlocutor, the relative power (P) between them, and the rank of imposition. According to Brown and Livenson (1987), the speaker can calculate the size of face-threatening act (FTA) on the basis of these three parameters. He can acknowledge them by performing face-threatening act strategies. In her study on 'apologies in New Zealand English', Janet Holmes (1990) spoke of a remarkable effect of social distance in relation to age and sex on the type of apologetic strategies used by the subjects.

As far as this study is concerned, the following common features of the influence of these factors on invitation making and acceptance are established:

1) The degree of social distance or solidarity between the interactants in relation to other social factors such as relative age, sex, social roles, whether people work together, or are of the same family were found to be of great effect on the type of strategy being used by the individual speaker upon inviting, accepting an invitation or declining it.

2) All informants, of both men and women, demonstrate preference for performing the (FTA) (refusing an invitation) on-record with a lot of
redressive action (bald-on-record). This happens, as seen above, by using several apologetic expressions that may be prefaced to the face-threatening act to tone down the illocutionary force of the utterance of refusal on the inviter. Although this was the trend among all subjects, females tended to use such strategies much more often than males, and they were more likely to use them with males than females.

3) There were highly significant gender differences in the frequency with which they employed certain type of expressions. While females, for example, showed a significant preference for using a lot of good wishes upon refusing an invitation (73%), males, by contrast, demonstrated preference for using the strategies of explanations (i.e. justifying their refusal) and promise of compensation (60% and 68% respectively).

4) There were also highly significant gender differences in the frequency with which they displayed certain emotions (judged by facial expression), with males being associated with more boldness expressions, females with looks of shyness and embarrassment. Males were more frequently clear than females. Females were seen as honest more frequently than males were or appeared to be so. Females also smile upon accepting/declining an invitation more than males.

5) The younger speakers (15-29) were more likely to reject an invitation than the middle (30-49) or older (50+) age groups. This could be explained on the ground that older people are quite aware of their role as guardian of their society’s values. Younger people, by contrast, tended to do that in defiance of the cultural norms of society.

6) Casual invitations (e.g. an invitation for a cup of tea) were over three times more likely to be declined in non-domestic as in domestic settings, while formal invitations (i.e. invitation for a wedding party) were about as likely to be accepted in the home as outside it.

Conclusion

I have provided a detailed analysis of the pragmatic devices which are employed by Jordanian people in inviting, accepting an invitation and/or declining it. Several aspects of the many strategies, presented here as a case study, have been highlighted and approached from a socio-pragmatic perspective. The analysis has shown that the interactional strategies utilized by Jordanian people for the purposes of inviting, accepting an invitation and rejecting it are culturally shaped by interactive elements and that they could be understood and appreciated by people sharing the same cultural background. The results of the current study, therefore, stand in strong support of Y. Kachru’s (1997) claim that “people who share a common language and culture have an easier time ‘making sense’ of each other’s utterances and actions”.

Based on the study results, conclusions made and implications drawn, the following recommendations are proposed. First, it is recommended that further study be done to identify other factors that may affect invitation making and acceptance in this particular milieu. A second recommendation is to continue to track the young group of speakers' behavior based on their daily exposure to other cultures through their use of the internet and other means of communication. A final recommendation is to disseminate the information gleaned from this study to studies concerned with other politeness formulae.
Notes:
1. It is worth mentioning that a considerable number of the informants (24) have refused to respond to this section of the questionnaire on the pretext that an invitation has not to be rejected.

References


usage. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.


Lakoff, Robin (1973) The Logic of Politeness; or minding you P’s and q’s. Chicago: Chicago Linguistic Society.


### Appendix A

#### Inviting strategies: Frequent inviting utterances used by Jordanian people

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inviting strategy</th>
<th>Frequent inviting utterances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conventional way of inviting:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A- Explicit offer</strong></td>
<td>a) ?ana jay ?açzimak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) ?ana çazmak çala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) bahib ?açzimak çala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d) yareit türfuna çala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e) habib niksabak çala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>g) ?ifadalu çindana çala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>h) šura?yak nuxið finjan gahweh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B- Implicit offer</strong></td>
<td>a) I come to invite you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) I invite you for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) I would like to invite you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d) I wish you do us the honor for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e) We would like to (attain) your company on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f) please visit us for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>g) How about to take a cup of coffee?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stressing common ground</strong></td>
<td>a) you are one of us, you need no invitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) we are one our family-though they</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) you are the first to be invited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d) you are at the top of invitees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Swearing by God or all that’s holy or of great value</strong></td>
<td>a) By God don't decline it (i.e. Accept the invitation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) By our brotherhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) By our intimacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Promise of repay</strong></td>
<td>a) God willing, we will be the first to take part in your happy occasions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) By God, I'll be the first to accept your invitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) You will see what we will do-on your future happy occasions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Offering good wishes</strong></td>
<td>a) God willing your home is always full of happiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) It will be always available in your house, God willing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) It is your sons' turn, God willing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Miscellaneous</strong></td>
<td>a) Tomorrow for launch, God willing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) It is my turn this time to pay—could be for drink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) It is shame on you if you don't accept my invitation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Appendix B

#### Accepting strategies: Frequent accepting utterances used by Jordanian people

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acceptance strategy</th>
<th>Frequent accepting utterances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thanking</strong></td>
<td>a) šukran jazeelan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| appreciating | b) leiš mýalib halak šukran  
| c) yeslamu ?ideik šukran  
| d) šukran barak allah fiik | b) You need not bother yourself, thank you  
| c) God bless your hands, thank you  
| d) Thank you, God bless you |
| --- | --- |
| Stressing common ground | a) walaw ?ana wahad minkum wrambidna çazumeh  
| b) ?ihna ?ahil wçašan heik lazim ?akuun hadir  
| c) ?ihna bidna çazumeh  
| d) ?ilbeite beitna  
| e) hay jeibe wahadeh ?ana baçzmak | a) I am one of you, I need not be invited  
| b) we are like one family-though they are just friends or acquaintances- so I have to be there  
| c) Do we need be invited?  
| d) Your home is ours-Indicating a great deal of solidarity  
| e) It is one pocket (i.e. an expression said upon paying, for example, for a drink), I invite you |
| --- | --- |
| Expressing gladness | a) haḍa yom ?ilmona  
| b) ?akid jay la?inu ?anaktir farhan  
| c) Wallah ?ana tayran mnìlfarah  
| d) kuluh mšani ? oh ! | a) This is the day we are looking for (i.e. Indicating he will Accept the invitation)  
| b) Sure I ma coming, I so happy for that  
| c) By God I feel myself flying because I am so happy  
| d) Is that all for me? oh! |
| --- | --- |
| Complimenting | a) ?il?afra ?ilkum welabalaš  
| b) ?inta ?abu ?ilkaram  
| c) mašallah ?iši berfaç ?iraas | a) Happy occasions are yours or not  
| b) You are the father of Generosity  
| c) God bless you, every thing is perfect- making us very proud |
| --- | --- |
| Offering good wishes | a) ?alfmabruuk  
| b) ?inşalla ?ilafrah çamreh bitubatum  
| c) daymeh inshallah  
| d) çuqbaal çind ?ilçazabeyeh ?inşalla  
| e) çuqbaal ?alfsaneh  
| f) yajçaluh çamir ?inshallah | a) A thousand of congratulations  
| b) God willing your home is always full of happiness  
| c) It will be always available in your house, God willing  
| d) It is the singles' turn, God willing  
| e) I wish you a thousand years (a birthday wish)  
| f) It (the inviter's home) is always inhabited by its owners, God willing |
| --- | --- |
| Miscellaneous | a) çala baraket allah  
| b) ?inshallah baçmal kul juhdi la?aji | a) God bless you occasion  
| b) God willing, I'll do my best to come |

Appendix C

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>declining strategy</th>
<th>Frequent declining utterances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Conventional apology (explicit) | a) çukran jazeelan, ?asif wallah marah ?aqdar ?aji  
b) bništ?araf, bas mabaqdar ?aji  
c) yeslamu ?ideik wallah ?ana  
?asif yareit baqdar bas ma baqdar  
d) Mabaqdar samiñi halmarah | a) Thank you very much, But I am sorry I will not be able to come  
b) It is my honor, but I am sorry I cannot come  
c) God bless your hands, by God I wish I could but I cannot  
d) I cannot, forgive me this time |
| Justification | a) walaw ?ana mašyuul ktiir  
b) bidak tuçòurni fi ?amir ham bimnaçni ?aji  
c) yareit bas ?ana mašyuul bil?in?ihanat  
d) yareit bas ?ana çamil rujiim | a) I am so busy  
b) Please, excuse me there is something important that prohibit me  
c) I wish I could, but I am so busy with the exams  
d) I wish I could, But I am on diet |
| Asking for forgiveness | a) samiñi halmarah  
b) tuçòurni Ina mabaqdar  
c) maçalaš ?ahl ?isama  
d) bawçidak maratanyeh | a) Forgive me this time  
b) Excuse me, I cannot  
c) Do not worry, forgivers are good |
| Promise of compensation | a) šukran xaliha mara tanyeh inšaallh  
b) maçalaš ?iljayat ?ak?ar miljyaat  
c) bawçidak maratanyeh | a) Thank you, next time God willing  
b) Its ok, the coming are more than the going occasions.  
c) I promise to compensate |
| Offering good wishes and declining | a) inšalla bil?afrah  
b) çamarn inšalla  
c) daymeh inshallah  
d) çuqbaal çind ?ilçazabeyeh ?inšalla  
e) çuqbaal ?alfsaneh  
f) yajçaluh çamir ?inshallah | a) God willing, on other happy occasions  
b) On more happy occasions, God willing  
c) It will be always available in your home, God willing  
d) It is the singles' turn, God willing  
e) I wish you a thousand years (a birthday wish)  
f) It (the inviter's home) is always inhabited by its owners, God willing |
| Miscellaneous | a) ?inshallah ?iða manša?alanit  
b) ?inshallah baçmal kul juhdi la?aji  
c) mabruuk wbn?araf if I can come  
d) baqdarìš ?awç bas rah ?ac?mal kuljuhdi | a) God willing, if I were not busy  
b) God willing, I'll do my best to come  
c) Congratulation, its my honor if I can  
d) I cannot promise, but I'll do my best |