

Jordanian Males' Impoliteness Strategies While Commenting on the Physical Appearance of Females on Facebook

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Abstract—This study aims to examine Jordanian males' comments on females' physical appearance on Facebook to identify the impoliteness strategies that Jordanian males utilize in online communication. The socio-cultural factors affecting the selection of impoliteness behavior in males' comments are also investigated. As for the corpus of the study, a total of 470 comments and replies were chosen from 32 females' picture posts posted on two different Jordanian groups on Facebook. This study draws on Culpeper's (1996) impoliteness framework. All Culpeper's (1996) impoliteness strategies except withholding impoliteness (i.e., bald-on-record, sarcasm/mock, negative, positive) were employed. It was also found that making a clear boundary between different impoliteness strategies is not easy; more than one impoliteness strategy can be realized by the same expression. Furthermore, males were found to use other additional impoliteness strategies not mentioned in Culpeper's (1996) impoliteness framework, namely, third-party implicit impoliteness, supplications, and negative interjections. The data analysis also revealed that some comments were subsumed under new categories not mentioned in previous (im)politeness frameworks: ambiguous (im)politeness and adversative (im)politeness. The use of such various strategies can be ascribed to the effect of socio-cultural and religious background on males' behavior.

Index Terms—Jordan, Facebook, (im)politeness strategies, physical appearance, males' comments

I. INTRODUCTION

The last two decades have witnessed increase in communication among people via different social media platforms. Such social networking sites have enabled people to communicate and express their opinions, thoughts, feelings, etc., more easily than face-to-face communication. According to Herring (2001, p. 621), "one characteristic feature, especially of many text-based CMC modes of communication (e.g., blog, emails) is that they are 'anonymous' (faceless, bodiless) forms of interaction". Consequently, communication through computer-mediated contexts (CMC) gives people the chance not to obey any rules.

Nevertheless, every community has determined some social norms/rules to follow through communication to show politeness (Fraser, 1990, 2005). Therefore, people need to choose their words politely and wisely to show respect to their counterparts and build smooth and effective communication. The violation of these norms leads to the occurrence of inappropriate or impolite behavior. This violation has become common and visible on social networking sites. According to Wibowo and Kuntjara (2013), in most cases, participants in computer-mediated contexts exhibit more impolite behaviors in comparison with face-to-face communication. Impolite language is remarkably dominant in (CMC) more than traditional face-to-face interaction (Thurlow et al., 2004).

Communication through Facebook is one of the most popular computer-mediated contexts. Many users post/share their photos on groups or pages containing male and female users. Physical appearance has thus been the focus of

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attention for many Facebook users in photo comment sections (Dörtkulak, 2017; Aberg et al., 2020).

Facebook is one of the primary mediums of social communication in Jordan. About 2.7 million Jordanians are Facebook users (Alarabiat & Al-Mohammad, 2015). Various negative comments have been noticed in comment sections on Jordanian females' pictures on Facebook, particularly from males who criticize what has been posted by females. Consequently, it is essential to investigate impoliteness strategies employed in this mode of communication in the Jordanian context. Furthermore, many scholars have shown interest in investigating gendered language from (im)politeness perspective. In fact, numerous studies have investigated (im)politeness strategies in diverse cultures (see, e.g., Spencer-Oatey, 2008; Kecskes, 2015; Yu, 2019) and have confirmed the importance of detecting the factors that influence the presence of (im)politeness. However, studies investigating Jordanian males' impoliteness when addressing females are rare. A primary motivation for the current study is the dearth of such studies.

The current study investigates the language of Jordanian males when commenting on females' physical appearance through Facebook to consider the impoliteness strategies that males use in online communication. The study thus contributes to previous literature and seeks to present a better understanding of impoliteness strategies in a way that fits culture and society. Specifically, the study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. What impoliteness strategies do Jordanian males employ when commenting on and responding to females' physical appearance on Facebook?
2. What socio-cultural factors determine the selection of impoliteness behavior in males' comments and responses?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

One of the basic notions in pragmatics is politeness which is defined as "an appropriate behavior in particular situations in an attempt to achieve and maintain successful social relationships with others" (Lakoff, 1972, p. 910). Brown and Levinson (1987) argue that politeness is the best way to behave and protect the addressee's feelings; accordingly, they advanced one of the most practical models of linguistic politeness, the kernel of which is rooted in the concept of 'face' which they define as a public self-image everyone needs to protect. They assert that face is the reason behind politeness. Through interaction, a face can be lost, protected, or fortified.

Brown and Levinson categorize an individual's face into two forms. The first is the 'positive face', which represents an individual's desire to be accepted and loved by others; it is "the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 312). They, therefore, orient 'positive politeness' to protecting and saving the positive face of others. By positive politeness, we use verbal expressions that indicate solidarity with the hearer.

The second type is the 'negative face', which indicates that the individuals are free in their behaviors, and their actions are not imposed by others. A negative face is "the want of every competent adult member that his actions be unimpeded by others" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 312). In this type, 'negative politeness' is oriented to expressions that show deference to the hearer. Nevertheless, 'face' can be threatened in most cases when the speaker's utterances indicate a threat to the hearer/addressee. Any action, expression, or utterance (whether negative or positive) that causes potential damage to the face of the speaker is called a face-threatening act (FTA). The FTA is the act that threatens or damages the face of the speaker or the addressee by acting in opposition to the desire of the other (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

The introduction of Brown and Levinson's notion of politeness has led to the emergence of new concepts that were mainly built on their theory, most noticeably, the notion of impoliteness of Culpeper (1996). Several definitions of impoliteness can be identified in the literature. Goffman (1967), for example, defines impoliteness as an aggressive face work. Culpeper (1996, p. 355) describes impoliteness as "the use of communicative strategies designed to attack face which causes social conflict and disharmony". Impoliteness is also perceived as a face-threatening activity in a specific situation (Bousfield & Locher, 2008).

Culpeper (1996, p. 8) argues that "instead of enhancing or supporting face, impoliteness super-strategies are a means of attacking face". Consequently, Culpeper (1996) advanced a new model of impoliteness opposite to the politeness framework of Brown and Levinson (1987). Specifically, Culpeper (1996) proposed impoliteness strategies to attack face. These strategies are bald-on-record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, sarcasm/mock politeness, and withhold politeness.

Bald-on-record Impoliteness is the form of impoliteness in a clear and direct utterance/statement from the speaker attacking the hearer's face. In this type, the speaker attacks the addressee's face intentionally, and the (FTA) is carried out in a direct and clear way where the face is not minimized (Culpeper, 1996, p. 356). Using imperative commands baldly to attack the face of the parking attendant by saying "Shut up and act like a parking attendant", for example, is an instance of this type (Culpeper et al., 2003, p. 1556).

Attacking the wants of the addressee's negative face is considered negative impoliteness, whereas attacking the addressee's positive face wants is regarded positive impoliteness (Culpeper, 1996, p. 356). Sarcasm or mock politeness strategy, on the other hand, means that the face-threatening-act is performed through the insincere use of politeness strategies (Culpeper, 1996). In other words, the individual can use sarcasm strategy to show his/her opposite feelings that are not included in the actual meaning of what was uttered. In this impoliteness strategy the individual speaks lies to damage someone politely.

Withhold politeness is a strategy used in a way that deviates from performing the anticipated politeness strategies. Politeness is absent in situations where it is expected to be present; the hearer does not respond to the speaker's utterances and instead keeps silent. For example, when someone does not thank for a favor, it might be taken as deliberately withholding politeness (Culpeper, 1996).

Culpeper et al. (2003) argue that these impoliteness strategies may rarely occur as single realizations; these impoliteness strategies can be combined and appear as multiple strategies in the sense that a speaker can use more than one strategy in one sentence. For instance, it is common for someone to use a taboo word that belongs to the positive impoliteness strategy with a negative impoliteness strategy. Hence, Bousfield (2008) maintains that impoliteness could be simple or complex; simple impoliteness is a statement or an utterance with one impoliteness strategy, whereas complex impoliteness consists of more than one strategy within the same sentence.

Several studies have analyzed impoliteness strategies in the written language mode, mainly the language of a computer-mediated context like Facebook, building on Culpeper's framework (see, e.g., Wibowo & Kuntjara, 2013; Al-Shloul, 2016; Abdul Ghani, 2018; Hameed, 2020; Pasaribu, 2021; inter alia). However, no study has focused on the impoliteness of Jordanian male Facebookers while commenting on females' physical appearance. As such, this study is an attempt to fill this gap in the literature.

III. METHODS

This study tackles Jordanian males' positive and negative comments on females' physical appearance in order to identify the impoliteness strategies utilized in such a context and the socio-cultural factors that affect the selection of such impoliteness behavior.

A. Data Collection and Sampling

The data necessary for the purpose of this study was collected from comments made by Jordanian males on images of females posted on two Facebook groups: Its 2008-2012 Jordan and SanagelJo. Facebook was used as the source of data as it is the commonest social media platform among Jordanians; accordingly, Facebook has formed the major source of data necessary for different Jordanian studies (see, e.g., Al-Daher et al., 2022).

These two Facebook groups contained Jordanian male and female users. Females posted their pictures in these two groups to get reactions from Facebookers, especially males. Each post included two pictures demonstrating the girl's appearance before and after a change in look or two pictures taken in different years. Thirty two posts were selected to achieve the goals of this study (14 posts from its 2008-2012 Jordan group and 18 posts from SanagelJo group). The males' comments and responses to these 32 females' picture posts were collected over a period of four months (from February 2021 to May 2021). The male comments were identified based on the profile name, personal picture, and personal information from the Facebook account.

Two types of comment were found in each post: (i) Single comments, where a male user directly commented to a female's post, and (ii) chain comments, where (an)other male(s) commented on the first male's comment to a female's post. It is possible in this latter type for the first male commenter to reply to the other male users' comments and they can in turn respond to his reply, hence chain comments. The total number of the collected comments and replies was 470.

B. Procedures of Data Analysis

The collected Jordanian males' comments and responses were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. Firstly, comments were classified based upon Culpeper's (1996) impoliteness strategies. The frequencies and percentages for each strategy were then calculated; the use of each strategy was tabulated and presented numerically. The socio-cultural factors affecting the selection of impoliteness behavior in males' comments and responses were then discussed.

To validate the strategies, a sample of 100 comments was randomly selected and given to two specialists in pragmatics and discourse analysis to reanalyze them following the suggested theoretical framework. The intercoder reliability showed 89% of agreement between their analysis and ours. So, we sat with each other and reclassified the strategies till we reached an agreement.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data analysis revealed that Jordanian males made use of all Culpeper's (1996) impoliteness strategies, except the withholding impoliteness, when commenting on females' photos. It was also found that impoliteness strategies can overlap. Impoliteness strategies not mentioned in Culpeper's (1996) model (i.e., third-party implicit impoliteness, supplications, and negative interjections) were also identified in the data 123 times (26.2%). It was also found that some comments involved ambiguous (im)politeness and adversative (im)politeness, which are both new strategies in the sense that they are not part of any previous (im)politeness framework. The percentages and numbers of the comments in which each strategy was employed are presented in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1
ALL IMPOLITENESS STRATEGIES

Strategy	Number of comments	Percentage
Impoliteness strategies of Culpeper (1996)	292	62.1%
Overlapping impoliteness strategies	12	2.6%
Impoliteness strategies not mentioned in Culpeper's (1996) model	123	26.2%
Ambiguous (im)politeness	17	3.6%
Adversative (im)politeness	26	5.5%
Total	470	100%

A. *Impoliteness Strategies of Culpeper (1996)*

As shown in Table 1, Culpeper's (1996) impoliteness strategies were the most used strategies by the male commenters with a percentage of 62.1%. Moreover, Jordanian male commenters were found to employ impoliteness strategies more than the participants of other studies (see, e.g., Abdul Ghani, 2018; Mirhosseini et al., 2017).

The high frequency of impoliteness strategies in the data can be explained as follows: The collected data is online, meaning there are no face-to-face interactions between the girls in the photos and the male commenters. Therefore, commenters did not abide by the social inhibition factors; they were in a state of disinhibition (cf. Suler, 2004). In other words, the commenters made use of this state to direct their comments more impolitely towards the girls, making a case of 'toxic disinhibition' (Suler, 2004) where the males are impolite toward females by using rude language and harsh criticisms or threats.

Culpeper's model suggests five strategies of impoliteness: negative impoliteness, positive impoliteness, sarcasm impoliteness, bald-on-record impoliteness, and withholding impoliteness. Table 2 below summarizes the results related to the comments that employed Culpeper's impoliteness strategies.

TABLE 2
CULPEPER'S IMPOLITENESS STRATEGIES

Impoliteness strategy	Number of comments	Percentage
Negative impoliteness	160	54.8%
Positive impoliteness	107	36.6%
Sarcasm or mock impoliteness	21	7.2%
Bald-on-record impoliteness	4	1.4%
Total	292	100%

Table 2 shows that negative impoliteness is the most frequently used impoliteness strategy with a percentage of 54.8%; positive impoliteness was also highly-used by commenters with a percentage of 36.6%. The commenters also used sarcasm impoliteness and bald-on-record impoliteness but to a much lesser degree (7.2% and 1.4%, respectively). However, the withholding impoliteness strategy was absent in the comments of Jordanian males. Withholding impoliteness manifests when responding to others with silence. Employing this strategy thus requires face-to-face interaction. This means that it cannot exist in the type of data collected for this research, namely, written comments (cf. Abdul Ghani, 2018).

(a). *Negative Impoliteness*

Negative impoliteness is designed to attack the addressee's negative face wants (Culpeper, 1996, p. 356). The data analysis revealed that negative impoliteness was the most frequent impoliteness strategy with a percentage of 54.8%. Since male users stated their opinions about girls' appearance and personality through commenting on their photos, the negative face wants of these girls who posted their photos was attacked, hence the high frequency of this strategy.

According to Culpeper (1996), there are five negative impoliteness sub-strategies: invading other people's places or spaces, condescending or scorning, connecting other people with negative things explicitly, scaring someone from doing or not doing something, and putting the other's indebtedness on record. The percentages and numbers of these negative impoliteness sub-strategies are given in Table 3, and examples 1-6 are sample comments employing these sub-strategies:

TABLE 3
NEGATIVE IMPOLITENESS SUB-STRATEGIES

Negative impoliteness strategy	Number of comments	Percentage
Invading other people's places or spaces	75	46.9%
Condescending or scorning	48	30%
Connecting other people with negative things explicitly	25	15.6%
Scaring someone from doing or not doing something	7	4.4%
Putting the other's indebtedness on record	5	3.1%
Total	160	100%

1. *Invading Other People's Places or Spaces:*

As Table 3 above shows, ‘Invading other people’s places or spaces’ was the most used sub-strategy of negative impoliteness (#75 = 46.9%). In this sub-strategy, commenters try to act/comment as if they have close relations with the girls. The commenter may invade the girl’s space directly or indirectly by, for example, asking her to get into a relationship with him.

The segregation between males and females in the Jordanian society may be the reason for the high frequency of this sub-strategy. Since this society is still largely conservative, the chance for face-to-face interaction between opposite genders is infrequent. Therefore, males may resort to expressing their emotions via online communication away from social pressures and expectations. Commenters seem to resort to this sub-strategy to start relationships with girls, to demonstrate to girls that they are bold, or to show off by making jokes. This sub-strategy was utilized in two ways: directly (61 instances) and indirectly (14 comments). Comment 1 below demonstrates an example of invading the addressee’s space directly where the male commenter directly attacks the girl’s negative face by asking her to get into a relationship with him:

(1) حبيبي بعرف اطبخ والله

“Love me. I swear I can cook.”

Likewise in example (2), the male commenter attacks the girl’s negative face indirectly by telling his male friend to go with him to the ‘Jaha’, one of the marriage ceremonies in Jordanian culture in which a group of men goes to the girl’s family for marriage proposal. Consequently, he indirectly invades her space and employs a negative impoliteness strategy.

(2) عشان تروح معي عالجاهه

“You need to go with me to the Jaha.”

2. *Condescending or Scorning:*

The ‘Condescending or scorning’ sub-strategy was the second most frequent corresponding to 30%. Commenters scorned or belittled the girl’s appearance, personality, or actions by treating her as an inanimate object, as shown in example (3):

(3) عمليات نفخ

“Filler injections”

In this example, the commenter scorns the girl’s look and action by just mentioning ‘Filler injections’ thus criticizing her beauty. He indicates that her appearance is artificial or unnatural. The commenter treats the girl as an object (i.e., a balloon) and attacks her negative face by condescending her appearance.

3. *Connecting Other People With Negative Things Explicitly:*

This sub-strategy constitutes 15.6% of negative impoliteness. Commenters were found to achieve this sub-strategy by stating that girls look like males, bad males, servants, cartoon or TV shows ugly characters, and so on. In the following example, the male commenter explicitly links the girl with negative aspects; he states that the girl in the photo looks like his male cousin, which is an inappropriate and rude way of criticizing the girl’s appearance:

(4) بصراحه فيكي شبه من ابن خالتي

“To be honest, you look like my male cousin.”

4. *Scaring Someone From Doing or not Doing Something:*

This sub-strategy constitutes 4.4% of negative impoliteness. Commenters frighten and threaten the girl in the photo by doing something terrible like burning if she does not follow his decision.

(5) امسحي صورتك لاحرق عمان وانيمها قبل السحور

“Delete your photos, or I will burn Amman and make it sleep before Suhur.”

In this comment, the male commenter chose to attack the girl’s negative face by frightening her of burning Amman if she does not delete her photos; he used an exaggerated comment to scare the girl about posting her photos in the group.

5. *Putting the Other’s Indebtedness on Record:*

This sub-strategy was realized in only 5 comments (3.1%). Using this sub-strategy, the commenter states that he is barely enduring to see even one more picture of the girl, so she should not put more burden on him making him see other pictures of her in the group:

(6) بعدين معك انتي صورة بروفايلك لخالها معذبتنا جايه تنزلي صورتك كمان

“It is not enough that your profile picture is tormenting us, and now you are also posting other pictures here!”

(b). *Positive Impoliteness*

This strategy is utilized to attack the addressee’s positive face wants (Culpeper, 1996). Females pay a great deal of attention to their appearance; they mostly post their pictures to receive comments from others, especially males. However, in the current study, females received more criticism of their appearance, and, consequently, the positive face wants of the girls who posted their photos were attacked. As demonstrated earlier (see Table 2), commenters highly employed positive impoliteness with a percentage of 36.6%. The data analysis revealed that commenters employed 8

different positive impoliteness sub-strategies. The percentages and numbers of these sub-strategies are presented in Table 4. After that, each sub-strategy is discussed and exemplified.

TABLE 4
POSITIVE IMPOLITENESS SUB-STRATEGIES

Positive impoliteness strategy	Number of comments	Percentage
Searching for disagreement	47	43.9%
Using secret or obscure language	39	36.5%
Using inappropriate name or identity	6	5.8%
Making others feel uncomfortable	5	4.6%
Utilizing profane words, abusive, taboos, or swears	4	3.7%
Calling others ridicule or derogatory names	3	2.8%
Discriminating from others	2	1.8%
Not showing kindness, sympathy, and caring	1	.9%
Total	107	100%

1. Searching for Disagreement:

The results showed that searching for disagreement was the most used positive impoliteness sub-strategy corresponding to 43.9%. Commenters opted for this sub-strategy by tackling topics sensitive to the girls. Since females shared their photos to attract males, male commenters found themselves in a position that allows them to judge girls. It seems that Jordanian males believe that if a girl is not abiding by their cultural laws, they have the right to talk about private and even sensitive topics such as the girl's behavior or appearance.

شكلك بتخففي بالحجاب بدك تبطلي (7)

"It looks like you are easing up on hijab. Do you want to quit?"

In the above comment, the girl posted two pictures of herself. In the first one, she wears a full-covering hijab, while in the second she wears a turban that only covers her hair. The male commenter attacks her positive face by tackling this particular sensitive topic. In the Jordanian community and all Islamic conservative communities, the topic of wearing hijab is part of a girl's decency. The commenter disagrees with the girl's behavior (i.e., not wearing a full-covering hijab). Therefore, it is unusual for a random person, especially a male, to comment on this topic.

2. Using Secret or Obscure Language:

This is the second most used sub-strategy of positive impoliteness with a percentage of 36.5%. In this sub-strategy, commenters offer their opinions without being very direct and form their comments in a secret language with a hidden meaning. This sub-strategy was employed in two ways. In the first way, the commenters used secret codes or jargon words addressing the girl, as shown in 8:

الله يخليلنا قص المعده او الكيتو (8)

"All thanks go to sleeve gastrectomy or the Keto diet."

In the second way, the male commenter used secret or obscure language only understood between friends but not by the addressee, as shown in example (9):

لونه ازرق (9)

"Its color is blue."

Reply A:

له يا رجل اهم اشئ النفس

"Oh man, the most important thing is the soul."

This example implies that the male commenters are referring to the sexual organs of the girl using obscure language that can be understood by them only. It seems they are using 'blue' instead of 'Pink' or 'red', which is slang for vagina. Talking about such a sensitive topic by males is unacceptable and violates the values and ethics in Jordanian society. The commenters, therefore, used a secret code between each other to discuss such a topic. They are thus using a positive impoliteness strategy and attacking the girl's positive face.

3. Using Inappropriate Names or Identity:

This sub-strategy was less frequent, constituting 5.8% of the positive impoliteness sub-strategies. In this sub-strategy, commenters often use comical metaphoric comments as a way of expressing their opinions. They use inappropriate, but not derogatory, epithets:

كسرتي قلبي يا خالتو (10)

"You broke my heart, auntie."

In this comment, the commenter attacks the girl's positive face and insults her by using the inappropriate address term 'auntie'. It is inappropriate to address a young girl in Jordanian Arabic using such an address term.

4. Making Others Feel Uncomfortable:

Only 5 examples, corresponding to 4.6%, were identified, in which the commenter makes the girl feel uncomfortable by attacking her positive face.

هاظ الجروب بيت مباشر من عتا من الأردن (11)

“This group is live-streaming from Jordan.”

Reply A:

يا زلمه البنات اللي هون ما بنشوفهم بالحقيقة زي عمان ناعت قناة الاردن

“Man, we do not see these girls in reality, just like those on Amman channel.”

The commenters in example (11) make a type of small talk between each other about the girl in the photo without involving her in the conversation. In other words, the commenter and his friend are talking about the girl as if she were not reading their comments, which implies that she does not exist and consequently makes her feel uncomfortable. The commenter and his friend further attack the girl's positive face by indicating she is fake. They are skeptical about the existence of the girls in the group; the commenter's reply implies that the girls do not exist realistically. He compares the girls on the Jordanian TV channel 'Amman' to the girls on the group indicating that they are all unreal or fake.

It is worth noting that many commenters have written some English words in their comments using Arabic alphabet. For example, the last comment included the word 'الجروب' (group), which is English word. Integrating such English words into the Arabic comments can be considered as instances of code-switching (see Al-Daher, 2021) or borrowing (see Al-Dala'ien et al., 2022).

5. Utilizing Profane Words, Abusive, Taboos, or Swears:

This sub-strategy was found in only 4 instances, which corresponds to 3.7% of the positive impoliteness sub-strategies. The low frequency of this sub-strategy can be attributed to the fact that it is pretty rude and unacceptable for a male to use such words in the presence of females. In the following comment, the commenter uses a taboo word to criticize the girl's mentality:

(12) عقلك خرا

“Your mind is rubbish.”

6. Calling Others Ridicule or Derogatory Names:

This sub-strategy was employed in only 3 comments, where commenters gave the girls derogatory names as a way of ridiculing them:

(13) السحاقيات كلهم هون

“All Lesbians are here.”

In this comment, the male commenter attacks the girl's face by stating that all the group members are lesbian. This offensive term contradicts the social and moral values in Jordanian society. The commenter is thus attacking the girl's positive face by degradation.

7. Discriminating From Others:

In such cases, the male commenters refuse to associate themselves with the girls or share common ground with them. Only 2 examples were categorized under this sub-strategy.

(14) التغيير اللي الله يحرمانا منه

“The change that may God deprive us of.”

In the above comment, the commenter discriminates himself from the girl by expressing his disapproval of the change in her appearance, meaning that he refuses to share common ground with her behavior.

8. Not Showing Kindness, Sympathy, and Caring:

Only one example of this sub-strategy was found in the data, in which the commenter did not show any sympathy with all group members, whether males or females. In this sole comment, the male commenter did not show any care about the group members stating they need to be burned:

(15) هاظ الجروب بده حرق بالي فيه الله يجبرنا

“This group, with all its members, needs to be burned. May Allah save us.”

(c). Sarcasm or Mock Impoliteness

As shown in Table 2, this strategy constituted 7.2% of Culpeper's impoliteness strategies. In this strategy, commenters use jokes or sarcasm to offend the girls; the commenters make fun of the girls' physical appearance, outer shape, makeup or cosmetics through polite terms. Commenters mostly use a phrase that appears to be employing a politeness strategy on the surface, but it turns out that they are using this phrase insincerely.

(16) يسعدلي خشومك

“Impressed by your nose.”

In this comment, the male commenter attacks the girl's face by means of sarcasm. Although the commenter appears as if he is flirting with the girl's nose politely, he actually makes fun of her nose. This phrase is used in Jordanian Arabic to mock someone implicitly through apparently polite terms. Thus, the phrase in this context can be interpreted as an attack on the girl's face by employing sarcastic impoliteness. Resorting to this strategy by male commenters might be to alleviate criticism and avoid personal insults that breach ethical and social boundaries.

(d). Bald-on-Record Impoliteness

Bald-on-record impoliteness is achieved when the male commenters are direct and explicit in their comments without any mitigations. In this strategy, commenters attack the girls' faces directly and concisely. As shown in Table 2, examples of this strategy were much less than other impoliteness strategies (only 4 examples corresponding to 1.4%). This might be because commenters try to avoid confrontations with girls in order not to find themselves held responsible in front of the law and to avoid any potential trouble with the girls' relatives.

كنتوا بتخزوا ولسا بتخزوا (17)

"You used to be disgusting, and you are still disgusting."

In this comment, the male commenter makes use of bald-on-record impoliteness and attacks the girl's face by deliberately and directly describing her and her sisters as being disgusting. There is a clear and direct form of impoliteness in his comment.

B. Overlapping Impoliteness Strategies

It was found that impoliteness strategies sometimes overlap with each other and a clear boundary between them cannot be easily made (see Culpeper et al., 2003; Bousfield, 2008; Mirhosseini et al., 2017). This might be due to the multi-functionality of some comments and to the fact that distinguishing different functions depends on the commenter's intention which is sometimes vague. Overlapping impoliteness strategies manifested in 12 comments in our study, which corresponds to 2.6% of the overall comments.

الفلر عامل عماليه (18)

"The filler is doing its work."

The comment above shows that multiple functions can be realized by the same linguistic form. The impoliteness strategy employed in this comment to attack the girl's face may indicate both positive and negative impoliteness. Specifically, it can be said that the commenter is employing a positive impoliteness strategy demonstrated by searching for disagreement with the change in the girl's appearance. The commenter attacks the girl's face by searching for disagreement with her appearance change, meaning that her beauty is artificial and unnatural because of cosmetic products like filler. Simultaneously, it can be said that the commenter is employing negative impoliteness since he condescends to the girl by treating her as an object that does much work to enhance her beauty. He attacks the girl's face by condescending or scorning her appearance.

C. Impoliteness Strategies not Mentioned in Culpeper's (1996) Model

The data analysis also revealed that Jordanian male commenters employed some impoliteness strategies that are not mentioned in Culpeper's (1996) model 123 times, which corresponds to 26.2% of the overall strategies. These new strategies are shown in Table 5 and are taken up in the subsequent subsections.

TABLE 5
IMPOLITENESS STRATEGIES NOT MENTIONED IN CULPEPER'S MODEL

Strategy	Number of comments	Percentage
Third-party implicit impoliteness	66	53.7%
Supplications	50	40.6%
Negative interjections	7	5.7%
Total	123	100%

(a). Third-Party Implicit Impoliteness

The data analysis revealed that males used an implicit impoliteness strategy to attack the girl's face as a third-party accessible referent. This happens when a male commenter disputes with another male regarding the latter's opinion about a girl. Specifically, when one male comments politely on a girl's photo, and another male replies to the former's positive comment with a profane utterance, the latter male is technically attacking the former's face directly as a second party and is simultaneously addressing a condescending impolite attack to the girl's face as a third party since she also has access to this comment on Facebook. It can thus be said that the realization of this third-party implicit impoliteness strategy is attributed to the presence of multiple opinions about the girl within the comment and the accompanying replies. This strategy is new in the sense that it is not mentioned in Culpeper's (1996) model. It occurred 66 times in our data, which corresponds to 53.7% of the other impoliteness strategies.

بحبك (19)

"I love you."

Reply A:

ولك سليمان بحبك القرد ما انت شايف

"Oh, Suliman! To hell with you. Can't you see?"

The example above shows that the commenter expresses his positive attitude toward the girl frankly stating that he loves her. However, another male replies to the first male's comment by using a profane word, hence condescending the first commenter's comment and attacking his face directly. By this reply, he is also simultaneously condescending to the girl indirectly by using a negative impoliteness strategy. Thus, he attacks both the male's face as a second party and the girl's face as a third party.

(b). *Supplications*

The data analysis revealed that male commenters employed supplications, which are realized by religious expressions (cf. Bader & Obeidat, 2020), to express impoliteness in 40.6% of the overall other new strategies. This strategy is a new impoliteness strategy in the sense that it is not mentioned in Culpeper's model. This strategy indeed asserts the effect of religious values on Jordanian society. Commenters utilized a range of Islamic terminology to criticize girls. They utilized supplications to criticize girls, attack their face and express their disapproval of the girls' negative behavior or look by saying, for example, 'لا حول ولا قوة الا بالله' (lit., There is no power or strength except by Allah), as shown below:

(20) لا حول ولا قوة الا بالله ليش هيك عاملين بحالكم

"There is no power or strength except by Allah, why are you acting like that!"

The Islamic term 'لا حول ولا قوة الا بالله' (lit., There is no power or strength except by Allah) is used by people in Islamic culture in certain contexts to express disapproval or annoyance with something or somebody. The context of the above comment is a photo of a girl's two sisters standing next to her. The male commenter uses this Islamic supplication to express his annoyance with the girls' looks and to introduce the positive impoliteness sub-strategy (i.e., searching for disagreement about something with them).

(c). *Negative Interjections*

The analysis also revealed that males used negative interjection phrases to express their feelings and reactions in 7 comments, which corresponds to 5.7% of the other new impoliteness strategies. The following is an illustrative example:

(21) يع

"Eww!/ yuck!"

The comment above shows that males can express their negative feelings through interjections. The Arabic form 'يع' (Eww!/Yuck!) is an expression of disgust and disapproval. Using such a form, the male commenter is expressing disgust about the girl's appearance. The commenter used this interjection to convey an exaggerated feeling suggesting that seeing the girl has caused him disgust, indicating his irritation and mockery at the girl's appearance.

D. *Ambiguous (Im)Politeness*

The analysis revealed that some utterances (#17 = 3.6%) were used by male commenters ambiguously in the sense that they can have dual opposite functions: They can be interpreted by the addressed girl either as polite or impolite instantaneously. It is worth indicating here that this strategy is not precedented in the sense that it has never been mentioned in any previous (im)politeness model.

Since such utterances can have polite or impolite interpretation and since they can be understood differently by girls, they can evoke varied reactions. It seems that male commenters used such utterances to defend their own faces and themselves in case of being misunderstood. Put differently, male commenters chose to be vague as a kind of self-defense. Furthermore, achieving a balance between commenters' interests and masculinity might be another reason for resorting to this strategy. Using such vague terms, male commenters can express their interest in girls while preserving their power and masculinity, hence power and masculinity play a role in the use of (im)politeness (see Mills, 2003; Mirhosseini et al., 2017). These utterances were mostly realized through explosive expressions (like bomb, bullet, sparkle) and exclamatory expressions. Such expressions may have different connotations according to the context, culture, and individual's background knowledge. This asserts that individuals in the same community may interpret expressions differently. The judgment of what is polite or impolite varies according to the speaker and hearer's understanding of an expression (Kienpointner, 1997; Mills, 2005; Culpeper, 2010).

(22) طلقة

"Bullet"

The above comment demonstrates that this expression has dual opposite functions. The addressee may think that the male commenter is flirting with her using positive politeness, meaning that she is beautiful (i.e., describing her as a bullet metaphorically to refer to her fitness). Conversely, other girls may consider this expression an inappropriate identity marker (i.e., harmful bullet). Thus, this expression can be thought of as positive impoliteness.

(23) ياخي مش بني ادمه

"Brother, she is not human!"

The comment above involves an exclamatory expression that can have dual opposite functions. The male commenter's intention is ambiguous. It can be said that he is amazed by her outstanding beauty as if she were an angel; therefore, he is protecting her face using positive politeness. By contrast, this expression can have a scolding, humiliating function connoting that she is thought of as non-human (i.e., a beast); thus, he is attacking her face using negative impoliteness.

E. *Adversative (Im)Politeness*

Another unprecedented strategy revealed in our data is the adversative (im)politeness whereby commenters employed more than one opposing strategy in the same comment. More specifically, this strategy means that the commenters combine impoliteness with politeness strategies in the same comment; they, for example, start their comment with impoliteness then shift to politeness, or vice versa. This strategy was identified 26 times in our data,

which corresponds to 5.5% of the overall number of strategies. The following two examples illustrate the two possible realizations of the adversative (im)politeness: (i) the comment starts with impoliteness and then shifts to politeness, or (ii) the comment starts with politeness and switches to impoliteness.

شبه انسه منشن بكارتون سالي بس للامانه انتي كثير حلوه (24)

“You look like Miss Mention in Sally’s cartoon, but, honestly, you are so beautiful.”

This example demonstrates how the male commenter used two opposing strategies in the same comment. He started with impoliteness strategy, namely, connecting others with negative things explicitly (which is a negative impoliteness strategy), and immediately shifted to politeness strategy, namely, bald-on-record politeness. The commenter explicitly connected the girl with negative things by saying that she looks like a cartoon character; then, he shifted directly to describe her as a very beautiful girl.

بعطيكي 9 من 10 اللي ناقصك هو انا (25)

“I give you 9 out of 10; what is missing in you is me.”

The commenter in this comment starts with a positive politeness strategy flirting with the girl and behaving as if he is interested in her beauty, which he graded 9 out of 10. Then, he immediately shifts to a negative impoliteness strategy (i.e., invading her space) by saying openly that what is missing in this girl is having him as a man, an unwelcomed proposal in Jordanian society.

Mixing both impoliteness and politeness strategies can be accounted for in different ways. For example, it is possible that males do not want to express their opinions of girls’ beauty directly as this might connote that they are harassing them. So, it can be said that males start their comments with negative impoliteness by making jokes, for example, to build a bridge with the girls before directly describing their beauty. Furthermore, males might want to be humorous to attract girls’ attention. Perhaps males try to infuse a touch of fun in their comments by sarcastically using impoliteness first, for instance, then they shift to showing interest in girls without putting them under pressure. Finally, the switch between politeness and impoliteness might also be used to ease social pressure; male commenters may desire to express their admiration for girls, but they may simultaneously feel pressured to conform to social norms.

V. CONCLUSION

We set out this study to investigate Jordanian males’ comments that were posted on females’ images on Facebook in order to identify the impoliteness strategies that Jordanian males use in online communication. The data analysis drew on Culpeper’s (1996) impoliteness theory. The socio-cultural factors influencing the selection of impoliteness behavior in males’ comments and responses were also highlighted.

The findings of this study revealed that Jordanian commenters employed all Culpeper’s (1996) impoliteness strategies except the withholding impoliteness strategy. The most often used strategy was the negative impoliteness, followed by positive impoliteness. Both sarcasm impoliteness and bald-on-record impoliteness strategies were also used, but to a much lesser degree. It was also found that making a clear boundary between the different impoliteness strategies is not easy; more than one impoliteness strategy can be realized by the same expression. More importantly, the study revealed that Jordanian male commenters employed additional impoliteness strategies not found in Culpeper’s impoliteness model: third-party implicit impoliteness, supplications, and negative interjections. It was thus concluded that Culpeper’s (1996) model of impoliteness cannot be generalized to all languages and cultures.

Furthermore, the data analysis revealed that some expressions were ambiguous as they can be interpreted differently by different individuals, yielding the first unprecedented (im)politeness strategy: ambiguous (im)politeness. The results also showed that males employed more than one opposing strategy in the same comment hence producing a second unprecedented (im)politeness strategy: adversative (im)politeness.

Several factors were found to affect Jordanian males’ impoliteness. The mode of communication (i.e., online communication) and social norms are among these factors. The high frequency of impoliteness strategies in the data, for example, can be traced back to the mode of communication which allows males to express their opinions freely away from the prevailing social norms in the Jordanian community. The commenters on Facebook can be direct and can thus express their opinions without being bound by the boundaries and norms imposed by the society in face-to-face communication.

Individuals’ background knowledge as well as religion are other influential factors when it comes to (im)politeness. Evidence in support of the role of girls’ background knowledge in determining the (im)politeness comes from their different interpretations of some ambiguous expressions used by male commenters. For example, girls regarded certain linguistic expressions equally polite and impolite since such expressions can have literal and figurative meanings. More importantly, using such vague terms, male commenters can express their interest in girls while preserving their power and masculinity, hence power and masculinity are other factors affecting the use of (im)politeness (see Mills, 2003; Mirhosseini et al., 2017). Finally, the use of Islamic religious terms to criticize girls (i.e., supplications) by Jordanian commenters asserts the effect of religious values on the Jordanian society in general and on its (im)politeness behavior in particular.

The significance of this study is both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, the study provides additional reference to the field of pragmatics since it presents additional (im)politeness strategies related to the gender factor in online

communication. Practically, the findings of the study identify impoliteness strategies in a way that fits Jordanian culture to avoid communication breakdowns between interactants, which in turn will lead to successful communication.

However, the data of this study included only 32 posts for females' photos collected from two closed Jordanian Facebook groups, which makes the generalization of its finding difficult. It is thus highly recommended that this study be replicated with a larger sample to further validate its findings. It is also recommended that impoliteness strategies adopted by females toward males' physical appearance be investigated to have a better understanding of the role of gender in using impoliteness in online context. Future studies could also tackle impoliteness strategies used in face-to-face interaction between male and female interlocutors in Jordan to compare their behavior in different communication modes.

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