



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

DISCOURSE AND POWER IN THE DAILY INTERACTIONS OF  
THE LEBANESE INTERNAL SECURITY FORCE

by

KRYSTEL ELIA FRANCIS

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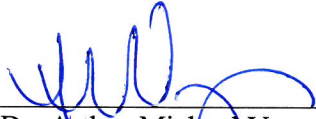
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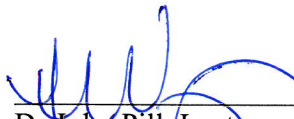
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## AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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The study examines politeness in the discourse of the Internal Security Force in Lebanon to look into how social distance, rank, setting and imposition will act as contextual influencers and drive the participants to go beyond what is required of them linguistically and, thus, be polite. It aims to investigate how politeness will be a marked excess from the politic behavior that is conventionalized as the expected way for communication by the institution and is based on rank. Moreover, the study targets to inspect address terms, directives, compliments, advice, criticism, and their replies, along with jokes, refusals and interruptions in the Lebanese dialect, which is the vernacular language because few studies target these specific acts (outside the ESL scope) in the Arab world. Therefore, culture is considered with its correlation to politeness since the latter carries distinct work in distinct cultures. I interviewed 42 personnel from various ranks to collect data on how they address each other and what form of directives, advice, and criticism they would use with their subordinate, peer and superior. I simultaneously conducted field observations for different settings as trainings and offices and of different contexts.

The results show that there is a polite code, the politic behavior, which is prescribed as the normative way of speaking in the institution, and there are informal communications among personnel of different ranks and low social distance. Social distance is shown to be the most influential factor, where it outweighed the rank-based polite code at times and drove those with more symbolic power (rank) to reproduce and challenge the politic behavior and set a different discourse type that could stand in opposition to the expected behavior. Thus, low social distance was the main contextual factor behind the reestablishment of the polite code and the enactment of politeness. Furthermore, the nature of the setting was shown at times to be more powerful than social distance, especially in strict and rigid types of settings as trainings where considerations of politeness were disregarded. The Lebanese culture, as other Arab cultures, was revealed to be less favorable of indirectness where refusals were direct. Compliments were considered as positive politeness strategies used to give encouragement, and they were generally cultural-specific because they invoked God. Finally, compliments were mostly accepted revealing that the Arab culture is unlike other collectivistic cultures that tend to evade or deflect compliments.

**Keywords:** Politeness, Power, Social distance, Rank, Setting, Imposition, Culture, Face, Directives, Compliments, Criticism, Advice, Refusals, Jokes, Interruptions

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Extension</b>
ISF	Internal Security Force
CO	Commissioned Officer
NCO	Non-commissioned Officer
FTA	Face-Threatening Act
T	Tu
V	Vous

## LIST OF TRANSLITERATIONS

Arabic	Transliteration
ء	'
ب	B
ت	T
ث	Th
ج	J
ح	h
خ	Kh
د	D
ذ	Dh
ر	R
ز	Z
س	S
ش	Sh
ص	s
ظ	d
ط	t
ظ	z
ع	'
غ	Gh
ف	F
ق	Q
ك	K
ل	L
م	M
ن	N
ه	H
و	W
ي	Y

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

Research on language use and speech acts in the Arab region is not that prevalent. Studies that look into specific speech acts as compliments (Farghal and Al-Khatib, 2001; Nelson et al. 1993) and refusals (Nelson et al. 2002a,b; El-Harake, 2005) in the Arab world have been gaining prominence, but the body of literature is still small in comparison to research on speech acts in the West. Moreover, fewer studies have investigated the effect of context and its factors on speech acts as directives, compliments, advice and criticism (El-Harake, 2005), and how meaning of words cannot be predicted semantically alone but requires pragmatic knowledge about the physical and social world (Peccei, 1999). Furthermore, studies on Arabic language have been mostly centralized on Modern standard Arabic or *fusha*, the language of the governments, media, religious and public speakers; while colloquial Arabic, the spoken Arabic dialect and the language of everyday interaction (Feghali, 1997), has taken a back seat, even though it is more utilized than the former.

Specifically, studies on military language and its speech acts are even fewer worldwide. Research on the US military language, for example, has focused on psychological and sociological as opposed to socio- and linguistic aspects. The chief reason is the difficulty to gain access to military institutions and observe their linguistic expressions (Halbe, 2011). In addition, research on the army language in the local context to my knowledge is rare. The main focus of this study, thus, is to examine the Internal Security Force (ISF) in Lebanon, which is a force hierarchally and structurally identical to that of the Lebanese

Army. It is concerned with internal affairs and internal peace-keeping; it is what is termed in North America and in other countries as the "Police". Address terms and speech acts as directives, compliments and their responses, along with advice and criticism, were examined semantically and pragmatically where the focus is on language in use, which extends beyond simply knowing the meaning of words to focus on the meaning of speaker's utterances (Peccei, 1999). These speech acts, which are not only words, but actions (Austin, 1975) are examined in the framework of Brown and Levinson' (1987) Politeness Theory or facework, where politeness is marked as attending to the needs of the *face* as a result of contextual factors as social distance, status and imposition. Therefore, politeness equals attending to the needs of the addressee, affected by the contextual factors, and it is regarded as doing more than what is required linguistically by the ISF's commissioned officers (CO) and non-commissioned officers (NCOs) (Watts, 2003).

#### **A. Dorothea Halbe's study**

This study takes as its point of departure Dorothea Halbe's (2011) study on politeness in the US Army. The specific focus was on how the rules of politeness, according to Brown and Levinson's (1987) Politeness Theory, are executed in the military in office situations and are compared to non-military workplaces. First, she conducted interviews and field observations to investigate the polite code and the rules of politeness that are prescribed by the institution. Then, she surveyed 42 personnel ranging from private to colonel. The study focused on address terms, directive speech acts (orders, commands, advice, and suggestions) and expressives (complaints and criticism) according to rank and formality of the situation among superiors, peers and subordinates. The main hypothesis was that in



office situations in the military, the social distance, relative power, and rank of the imposition play a role in the choice of directives.

The results of the study showed that there is a ritualized polite code that is used in formal situations, while there are informal and humorous interactions between workers of equal rank and in well-established long-working relations between different ranks. Office talk was observed to be focused and humorous. The scale of informality was larger the less social distance existed between interactants where power (rank) and social distance affected the choice of speech acts. Directness in directives showed that the bald on-record imperative is more frequent in the military than in other workplaces. Superiors maintained that they do not tolerate criticism from subordinates, and the majority of participants avoided this speech act. Relationships between peers were the most informal, with the greatest amount of positive politeness. Relationships with both superiors and subordinates were generally more formal with more negative politeness strategies.

Two types of leadership were identified as well. The first type is the "traditional" one where the high rank would give orders. The second type was the "contemporary" one which gives room for discussion of work issues or personal matter. Relationships, however, between COs and their first sergeants were often informal or relaxed, because the first sergeant is often the one with more expertise in technical fields. The CO is usually more experienced in managerial work and personnel organization. Superiors verbally encouraged their subordinates and occasionally used expletives to construct solidarity. Peers also praised each other and also employed friendly insults. One important finding was that the hierarchy of the setting in ritualized situations as physical training overcame considerations of politeness.

## **B. The Internal Security Force in Lebanon**

The ISF is highly hierarchal. On top of the hierarchy are the commissioned officers, then there are the non-commissioned officers and finally the gendarmes who come at the bottom of the structure. It is a close-knit network (Milroy, 1987) and a community of practice where its members share ways of talking, ways of doing things and practices (Lave & Wenger, 1991 in Eckert, 1996).

In Lebanon there are certain regulations to join the military school to become later on commissioned officers as commander, colonel, or general in the Lebanese Army, Internal Security Force, General Security, or National Security. There is a demanding requisite for a high-school diploma with an average of 12/20. Military students undergo three years of extensive training in the military school, and before graduation they decide which national sector they prefer to join as commissioned officers. In military school, they receive university-level language courses, military training and strategic thinking courses, among others. Specialized COs are officers who have received a university diploma (bachelor, masters, PhD) then joined the military school for a period of one year to become officers. The rank they are delegated to depends on their university degree, where every three years equals one star (for example, if an individual with 6 years of formal university education wishes to join the military, he/she will be directly ranked as a first lieutenant, i.e., CO with two stars).

Non-Commissioned officers (as sergeants and corporals) are officers who did not enter the military school. They usually undergo a certain type of training (for approximately 3 months) to become NCOs. They are usually the COs' second hand, and they work mostly in

data processing. They are given the chance to become COs if they enroll in a military course (if available), where they get the proper training to acquire the commission. At the bottom of the hierarchy are the gendarmes; they are not officers but they are part of the stratum and can rise in rank.

The ISF shares the hierarchal structure of the army, where rank defines the status that the personnel enjoy. If an officer is of a higher rank, he is considered superior to the personnel of lower rank, rendering the latter his subordinate. Two officers are peers when they are of the same rank and they have graduated together from the same league. If two officers are of the same rank, but one of them was promoted before (in a different league), he is directly regarded as a superior (he should be addressed with a salute); however, some regard each other as peers because they were together in military school and there is minimal, if any, age gap.

During the training, COs and NCOs acquire the military communication. They are taught military language that strongly emphasizes the power of rank; therefore, in all hierarchal military institutions, there exists a polite code (Halbe, 2011) that prescribes how language should be utilized to respect the rank. Officers are given a course on how to address and salute their superior. They are instructed how to stand in the presence of a superior, and how to email or take a phone call from a superior among others. They acquire the right way of talking and also what is judged as a breach of conduct with their superiors. The emphasis in military language is on how subordinates should communicate with their superior and not vice versa, and it does not focus on horizontal communication (peer to peer communication). Furthermore, the official language of the institution is the *fusha*, where orders, especially in training, are delivered in this formal language.

### **C. Purpose of the Study**

My study takes Halbe's investigation on how Brown and Levinson's contextual factors (social distance, rank and imposition) influence the degree of politeness in directives (orders and advice) and expressives (compliments and criticism), and their replies among superiors, peers and subordinates as a starting point. My study works with the idea that since the ISF is highly hierarchical, then there are rules and regulations that codify how personnel should behave (Halbe, 2011) and this behavior is regarded as Watts' "politic behavior", which is a behavior that internalized and judged to be suitable to the conditions of the organization (Watts, 2003, p. 144). It is a code of behavior that focuses on rank. This behavior is acquired by the ISF members as the suitable method of behavior; it is the way of doing and saying things appropriately that the members have acquired from earlier encounters. Thus, this politic behavior is the regulated polite code that centers on showing deference for rank, which is the structural power in the ISF. The conventions of the institution control the politic behavior. Terms that belong to the code do not denote politeness because they are part of the politic behavior, i.e., the term *sir* is not polite; it is part of the standardized politic behavior that makes this term required and expected for equilibrium. If the linguistic behavior is more than what is required of the participants, then there is politeness (Watts, 2003). The study argues that politeness, an excess of politic behavior, is the consequence of the contextual factors as social distance, imposition, rank and setting; while, impoliteness is the absence of the demanded behavior.

The study examines then different contexts that vary in the degree of formality to measure the effect of social distance, and how it can lead to an excess of politic behavior. It

starts with the established conclusion that an informal context is not only a context that involves equal ranks, but a context that enjoys low social distance between unequal ranks; formal context, however, is characterized by distant ranks with high social distance. Therefore, the degree of informality or formality of context is dependent on the degree of social distance. The study examines setting as well as a contextual factor that influences politeness, based on studies that have shown that the setting's nature affects politeness (Halbe, 2011; Vine, 2009; Ervin-Tripp, 1976). For example, physical training as a distinct setting than office work is regarded to be more formal, requiring more bald-on record utterances and stronger demand for directness (Halbe, 2011). Also, imposition and rank (status) are considered as highly important contextual factors that could impact the politic behavior (Brown and Levinson, 1987). Culture's relation to politeness is considered and taken into consideration because every culture has different methods for performing politeness and for understanding politeness (Watts, 2003); in other words, what is regarded as a polite request in one culture, could be regarded as an infringement in another. Therefore, the study analyzes the way the contextual factors result in a surplus of the politic behavior in directives, expressives, and their replies in a cultural frame. It briefly looks into refusals, jokes and interruptions as well.

This study is divided into five chapters. The second chapter, The Literature Review, is where I will be reporting mostly on theories about language, power and politeness to establish a proper theoretical framework for the research. I will also refer to studies from various cultures that have focused on distinct speech acts to examine the nature of these speech acts, and how culture could affect them. Chapter three, The Methodology, is the part in which I cover my main research design and questions. I will explain how I went about

collecting the data to cover the principal objectives of the study. In the third chapter, The Results, I analyze first the observation data, and then the interview data to examine any data discrepancies that might arise. The main focus in this chapter is to survey if the contextual factors will influence the main discourse type in the ISF and lead to politeness. In the final chapter, The Conclusion, I will cover the limitations of the research and propose suggestions for future research.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **A. Discourse and Power**

##### **1. *Discourse and Discourse Type***

Fairclough (1989) maintains that discourse is language use, a social practice; hence, it is socially determined and governed by social conditions. If discourse is a form of social practice then language becomes a part of society, a social practice that is conditioned by other non-linguistic parts of society. There is an association between language and society because language is a linguistic phenomenon that is social, since when people engage in speaking, reading or writing, they are determined socially by social conventions, which direct the linguistic phenomena. Language becomes ruled by social conditions, and as Bourdieu (1982) claims, linguistic theories have abandoned the social conditions underlying the structure of language (Thompson, 1991). These social conventions or conditions are the consequence of power relations and power struggle, and these conventions comprise common-sense assumptions that are specifically ideological assumptions. Therefore, common-sense assumptions, which are implicit in the conventions that people are not aware of, are ideologies. Power and ideologies are highly interconnected, where exercise of power in contemporary modern societies happens through ideology and through its prevalence in language. Language, thus, with its ideological character, has become an intermediate for social control and power because ideology is extensively found in language (Fairclough, 1989).

Fairclough (1989) explains that the conventions that govern discourse are termed "orders of discourse" (p.28). The order of discourse of a specific social institution structures discourses through assigning for each kind of situation a discourse type, and the individual in a certain social structure functions within the constraints of the types of discourses available. Society maintains an order of discourse that structures the orders of discourse of the social institutions, and these orders define the discourse types suitable for particular situations within each institution. Power's relation to these conventions is that those who control orders of discourse are those with power. The control that takes place over orders of discourse by institutional and societal power holders is the main aspect for the preservation of their power, and one portion of that control is ideological, providing a perfect integration of these orders of discourse. Thus, people draw upon discourses, unconsciously, without thinking about the ideological assumptions they embody, which serve to better strengthen the existing power relations. Discourse types which are considered to be commonsensical, have become naturalized, and this works to sustain unequal power relations (Fairclough, 1989).

Van Dijk (2008) maintains that power institutions as the government, the military, the media and the judiciary are connected to certain discourse genres or discourse types, along with their styles, topics and rhetoric. In these power institutions, there is the inevitable hierarchy manifested in status, rank and position; and these require different speech acts such as those signaling command and authority. Therefore, the army enjoys discourse types that are marked by rank and status and have become naturalized to the extent that members do not reflect on the assumptions behind them. Hence, on an institutional level, highly structured social institutions, as the army, legalize one discourse type as the dominant



discourse with several social situations demanding a particular dominant discourse type (Fairclough, 1989). Van Dijk (2008) maintains that symbolic power is the power that manipulates access and control of discourse. Symbolic power is a term coined by Bourdieu who explains that this is an implicit power that is recognized as legitimate because of its invisibility (Thompson, 1991). It is derived from other kinds of power. Politicians, for example, get access to public discourse because of their political power, and professors control classroom talk because of their knowledge power that grants them symbolic power. It is the symbolic elites who enjoy symbolic power and capital and get to set the agendas of discussion, affect topic selection, and control the amount of information exchanged (Van Dijk, 2008). Therefore, in the army (a rigidly structured institution with its standardized main discourse and particular discourse types) higher ranks can be considered to possess more symbolic power, where they get to manipulate the flow of the discourse and to set its type for distinct social situations.

## ***2. Power in Discourse***

Fairclough (1989) maintains that power in discourse takes place in uneven interactions between for example a doctor and the students. The doctor interrupts the student, limiting the latter's contribution and forcing the student to be precise and straight to the point: thus, power in discourse deals with how powerful members control and confine the contributions of the non-powerful participants. The constraints occur on three levels: the content, the relations (individuals enter social relations in a discourse), and the subjects (the subject positions being occupied). The doctor, who is the powerful participant, is allowed to give directive speech acts (orders and questions). In other words, the doctor may give orders and

ask as many questions as desired; whereas, the student does not enjoy such rights and is obliged to answer in agreement with the subordinate relation of student to doctor.

Fairclough (1989) maintains that it is not the doctor who is managing the student's contribution directly; rather, the restraints of the conventions of the discourse type are doing so. The doctor is indirectly controlling the student because it is the latter, the dominant participant, who decides which discourse type to draw upon, and once a discourse type has been chosen, its conventions pertain to all participants, even the powerful ones; however, these powerful participants have the luxury to treat the conventions more carelessly.

Likewise, Lakoff (1990) explains that rules of discourse work differently for the powerful. For the non-powerful, directness is dangerous because it involves responsibility both for an expression and for a getting an appropriate response to it. The powerful have less to fear the directness; they don't have to worry a lot about being impolite. Sometimes the powerful members use indirect ways, but the hazard of misunderstanding is not that high because individuals are willing to put a lot of effort in order to understand powerful people's utterance. Lakoff (1990) maintains that in a conversation, power is confirmed by holding the floor. The one, who has the floor the most and who is responsible for more topics than anyone else, is usually the most powerful. More often, people who come into a conversation with the most real-world power tend to display the signs of power within the conversation; they dominate floor and topic. Exceptions do exist, but one has to be aggressive to create one. For example, non-reciprocal power distinguishes classroom conversation from ordinary one. In the classroom, the teacher's questions are different than students' in function and in form. The teacher generally knows the answer to the question,

but the student is really asking for information. Should the teacher call someone to answer, that person is required to answer. The teacher selects and controls the topic as well as who gets to answer; the teacher has power supported by considerable real-world power (Lakoff, 1990).

Similarly, Van Dijk (2008) explains that in education, teachers control the events and distribute the speaking turns. They control who can have access to the discourse, where students are granted access only when invited to contribute to the talk, just as doctors control many parts of the conversations with their clients as setting topic and style. It is because of the social asymmetry between doctor and patient that doctors can interrupt patients much more than the reverse without need to give excuse for interruption; it is because of this asymmetry that teachers are expected to implement strategic control over students and their discursive contribution. Furthermore, it is because of the asymmetry between the army personnel that is marked by rank that those with higher ranks are expected to control the conversation, set the discourse type and define others' contributions.

Moreover, Fairclough (1989) explains that school is a social organization with its own order of discourse, discourse types and recognized social roles/subject positions. The discourse type of a classroom sets up subject positions for teachers and students, and it is by occupying these positions that one has to fulfill the discursive rights and requirements (what each is permitted or not allowed to express within that discourse type). Thus, a discourse type imposes restraints on the speakers in accordance to the conventions of this type. For example, the doctors can exercise power over the patients according to the conventions of the discourse type they have chosen, pressuring the latter into engaging in

specific subject positions and acting in a restricted conduct, while they themselves are obeying the conventions (Fairclough, 1989).

Austin's (1975) work on speech acts focuses on performative utterances, i.e., utterances that can be performed because the linguistic and the extra-linguistic act correlate and agree. For these utterances to be felicitous, they should be uttered by the suitable person as the situation demands. Hence, the effectiveness of these performative utterances is inseparable from the institution, which dictates that the conditions have to be met for the utterance to be doable. For example, an utterance said by a teacher to a student as "Leave the class" is felicitous or performative because the school institution grants the teacher the power to force a student to leave. This power that the teacher enjoys is supported by the institution; not anyone can kick a student out of the class. The institution assigns the speaker the power and authority required for the utterance to be performed. Austin's (1975) conditions of felicity are considered as the extra-linguistic act that give the utterance its *raison d'être*; then, these performative utterances need social conditions for their success. Thus, the authority which utterances have is an authority conferred upon language by factors external to it. The military institution grants those with higher rank the power for their utterance to be heard and to be felicitous; it is authority assigned to the personnel by the institution, and not vice versa. Austin (1975) maintains that the powerful person articulates this authority but does not create it; it is a part of the institution (Thompson, 1991).

Therefore, the ISF, as a highly stratified institution, has a standardized discourse type. The discourse type is marked by rank and status and has been naturalized and legalized as the main talking genre in the institution. Participants draw on this discourse directly without questioning its assumptions because it has become common-sense. Furthermore,

rank becomes the symbolic power in this institution; it is regarded as a legitimate power that is corroborated by the institutionalized conventions, which confer rank with authority. Those who enjoy symbolic power in the hierarchy get to set the discourse type suitable for the social interaction. Once a discourse type is set, its conventions and rules pertain to all participants who have to fulfill their subject positions accordingly.

### ***3. Habitus and Formality***

Bourdieu (1982) discusses, in his Theory of Practice, how speakers are capable of producing expressions that are a propos to the situation. This is because of the habitus, a set of dispositions which drive agents to operate and react in a certain manner that is not consciously synchronized or governed by any law. He maintains that because the body has become a repository of ingrained dispositions that certain actions, certain ways of behaving and responding, appear altogether natural. However, when individuals act, they do so in a social context or market, thus, behavior should not be regarded only as the result of the habitus, but the product of the association between the habitus and the social context. Linguistic utterances, a form of behavior, are the product as well of the connection between the linguistic habitus and the social context. The linguistic habitus is a sub-set of the dispositions which include the habitus. It is the sub-set of dispositions acquired in the path of learning to speak in specific contexts (e.g. family, school or peer group) (Thompson, 1991).

Bourdieu explains that expressions are exposed to some kind of censorship which originates the market itself, but changes into self-censorship during the process of anticipation. Contexts, such as peer or friends gatherings, can be regarded as settings with

their own markets and forms of censorship. So the individuals who want to speak efficiently in these markets should agree to some extent to their demands and should engage their habitus to produce what is deemed as appropriate. So, when the linguistic exchange happens in a formal setting, the censorship placed upon the dominated speaker is high, where the latter is required to take on the most appropriate method of verbalization because the difference between the kinds of capital is larger; this restraint; however, disappears between individuals of equal capital (Thompson, 1991). Fairclough (1989) explains that formality, as a property of social situations, implements three types of constraints. First, formality puts restraints on content. Discourse in a formal place is subjected to constraints on topic and interactive rituals. Second, formality enforces constraints on subjects; the social identities of those fit to engage in subject positions in formal discourse are more severally delineated than usual. Third, formality constrains relations. Formal situations are defined by an orientation to and marking of position, status and face where power and social distance are explicit and, therefore, there is a greater need for politeness. Politeness is utilized upon recognition of differences of power and degrees of social distance. In formal discourses, high linguistic structuring takes place than in non-formal discourse. This is extra structuring, as the allocation of turns may be regulated by a specific manner (participants must speak in order of rank), or interactions have to move ahead according to a firm practice in a fixed chain. There could be even requirements that deal with tempo or loudness. Most importantly, there is likely to be general obligation for consistency of language forms. The vocabulary, for example, has to be chosen from a limited set that is kept for more formal events. All of these lead to a heightened self-consciousness (Fairclough, 1989).

Discourses, then, are to some extent euphemized because of the desire to speak appropriately and to generate expressions that meet the demands of the market; this is where the habitus functions. Discourse in the army ranges on a continuum from formal to informal (Halbe, 2011); thus, it is expected that different settings will show different degrees of formality and of euphemisms and monitoring, where the members will engage their internalized experience to produce what is appropriate for the ongoing interaction.

Likewise, Lakoff (1990) draws the distinction between ordinary discourse and formal discourse. Lakoff maintains that ordinary conversation is reciprocal, while most others are not. In a reciprocal discourse, participants have equal access to all possibilities of action and interpretation. Other discourse types are completely or partially non-reciprocal, where one participant holds the floor and controls both topic and participation, like in a classroom. Ordinary conversation is usually informal, that is, it assumes true interaction between individuals, so expressions of emotions, interruptions, repetitions, corrections, hesitation, fillers and silences will be favored. In other discourses, formality is the rule. In courtrooms, for instance, law and custom reduce direct interaction. Language is stylized and titles of address and reference replace names. In ordinary conversation, power allocation is egalitarian; each participant has equal access to the floor and equal right to bring up topics. Participants enter formal discourse with different amounts of real world power, authority and status, and these are translated into differences of permissible linguistic behavior. Moreover, formal discourse often makes use of rituals and other marks of non-spontaneity, and power goes along non-spontaneity and non-reciprocity and formality (Lakoff, 1990).

The habitus, then, which is a manner of being, a demeanor, and a set of dispositions to act in a certain way, produces linguistic utterances and bodily practices that are suitable for

the interaction. It becomes a repository of knowledge or structures, acquired from previous interactions that guide future interactions (Watts, 2003). ISF members internalize the standardized discourse type of the institution in their habitus. The main discourse type becomes a set of acceptable dispositions ingrained in their habitus through acquisition. The latter guides them in future interactions on how to interact in formal contexts and the degree of censorship required for a healthy equilibrium in non-reciprocal discourse. This standardized main discourse type is referred to in this study by ISF's politic behavior.

## **B. Watts' Politic Behavior**

Watts (2003) defines the behavior that is suitable and required as 'politic behavior', which is the (non)/linguistic behavior that is constructed by the interactants as suitable to the ongoing social interaction. Participants enter the social interaction with knowledge from previous interactions about what is the social behavior appropriate for the social situation. Their knowledge helps them to know the expected way to behave, i.e, the politic way to behave.

The ISF, like other institutions, has a prescribed politic behavior that is acquired and constantly judged as the appropriate way to behave in different types of social interactions. It is the main standardized dominant discourse that is 'normal' or 'acceptable'. It is ingrained in the ISF members' habitus through acquisition. For example, part of the politic behavior in a radio program is that the moderator greets the caller, and the caller returns the greetings. This knowledge or mode of behavior is part of the habitus, internalized from past experiences, and helps the individuals to perform correctly if phoning a radio program. Thus, this disposition has been internalized from previous interactions in the habitus, and it



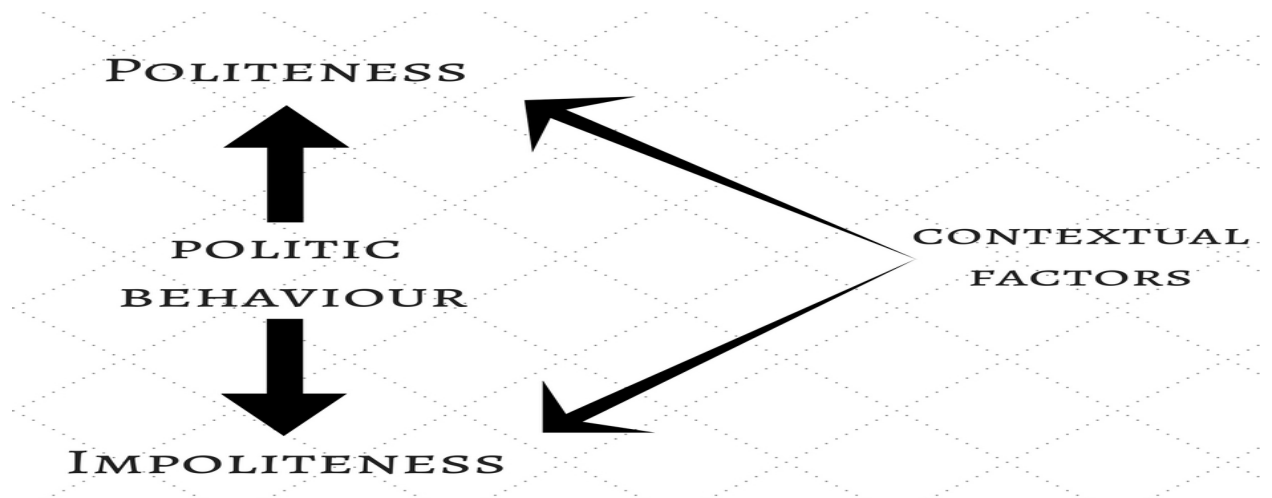
will be put to use in future interactions to produce the proper behavior. Likewise, part of the politic behavior of the ISF is for a subordinate to salute and greet his superior in a specific body posture and with limited types of greeting that is considered politic. This is politic behavior that is ascribed by the institution as required and expected, and it is the main discourse type. Furthermore, it is internalized, and it becomes part of the member's habitus that will guide the members in producing the acquired and normalized politic behavior (Watts, 2003).

Therefore, the ISF is a social field that has its own politic behavior internalized in its members' habitus. Polite behavior is an excess of politic behavior; politeness is equivalent to giving more than is required by the politic behavior of the ISF. A fall from expected politic behavior, however, is open to the interpretation of being impolite. This study examines how the contextual factors (rank, setting, social distance and imposition) will influence the regulated politic behavior in the ISF. It will examine how the weight of imposition, degree of familiarity, rank and type of setting will lead the personnel to go beyond what is required of the institutionalized politic behavior, and thus be polite, or to do less than what is required of the politic behavior and be impolite. For example, if a superior addresses his subordinate with the latter's rank, this is regarded as politic and expected; whereas, if a superior addresses his subordinate with *my son*, then that is considered more than what is conventionally demanded of him, and thus can be interpreted as polite, revealing the low social distance between the participants and the affection the superior has for his subordinate. Therefore, certain linguistic expressions, as downtowners, understatements and compliments, that are deemed as inherently polite are only polite when they are in excess. Their adequate presence for the ongoing interaction according to the

social constraints is politic and not polite; if they are in excess then the utterance is polite, and if they are absent, then the utterance is marked as impolite.

However, it is important to note that even though politic behavior has been prescribed by the ISF as the expected mode of behavior, those who have symbolic power can reproduce and challenge the politic behavior, making it appear as legitimate. In highly institutionalized forms of interactions as military interactions, part of the internalized modes of behavior is that certain powerful individuals have the *power over*, that is the power to be capable of determining the politic behavior characteristic of a social interaction (Watts, 2003). That is, those with symbolic power can challenge the politic behavior of the field and establish the behavior that is suitable for them. For example, part of the politic behavior of the ISF is to address a superior with *sir* or honorable+rank. If a superior allows his subordinate to address him by first name, then the superior is challenging the politic behavior regulated by the ISF. So, the superior could have established this discourse type between them because of the low social distance, where it acceptable for the subordinate to call his superior by first name. It can surely be said that the first name is less of what is expected and thus, considered as impolite according to ISF standardized politic behavior. Nevertheless, it is the discourse type between them that is set by the superior, who enjoys symbolic power, and can determine the suitable behavior in an ongoing interaction. Thus, while the first name is impolite according to the ISF's politic behavior, it is acceptable to the discourse type. Therefore, those who enjoy symbolic power can set a discourse type that is in sharp contrast to the established politic behavior; they can challenge the politic behavior. This study argues as well that the contextual factors, mainly social distance, could be behind the establishment of discourse types that might challenge the ISF's politic

behavior. Figure 1 below explains the direction of the behavior if affected by the contextual factors.



*Figure 1* The effect of contextual factors on the politic behavior

Nevertheless, being polite requires doing more than what is required and expected by the ISF's politic behavior. What is politeness? Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory explains that politeness is doing facework, which is attending to the hearer and speaker's faces or needs. They maintain that contextual factors, status, social distance and imposition influence what politeness strategy the interactants choose to express and maintain politeness. The interactants assess these contextual factors to adopt the most suitable politeness method. Hence, going above what is required from the ISF's politic behavior is regarded as doing politeness that is a consequence of the contextual factors.

### **C. Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory and Indirectness**

Brown and Levinson's (1978) and (1987) Politeness Theory has been the starting point for a body of empirical and theoretical research in fields as psycholinguistics and anthropology, among others (Kasper, 1990). The theory builds on Grice's (1975) conversational maxim that relies on the Cooperative Principle (CP) that argues for clarity and comprehension in discourse above all. The principle argues that the speaker should say what he/she has to say, when they have to say it and the way they have to. Intention of the speaker and non-explicit messages that have to be inferred by the speaker violates the principle that calls for transparency and cooperation between speaker and hearer. At the heart of the Politeness Theory, there is the need for efficient and rational talk, politeness does not constitute a deviation and irrationality as Grice (1975) maintains. Moreover, Brown and Levinson adopt Goffman's (1967) notion of *face*, which is a "public self-image that every member [of a society] wants to claim for himself" (Brown & Levinson, 1987 cited in Fraser, 1990, p. 228). Face is the equivalent of want that should not be threatened or lost during an interaction, but it should be saved. The interlocutor's face is dependent on others, and in order not to have his/her face threatened, he/she should not threaten the hearer. Thus, face becomes connected to emotions and feelings; feelings of embarrassment if face is lost and not attended to (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

Politeness becomes the action of protecting the face of others in an interaction; this is the association of politeness to face (Edwards & Bello, 2001). Brown and Levinson (1987) explain that the member has two faces, negative and positive face. The negative face is the want for the individual to have his freedom of actions unhindered. The positive face is the desire to be liked and have the individual's wants desired by others. Face is a dynamic feature; it can be lost or improved throughout the interaction, and it is of best interest to

save one's face and the face of the hearer. A main tenant in their theory is that most speech acts are Face-Threatening Acts (FTAs), and they should be reduced to avoid face loss.

There are acts that threaten the hearer's negative face as orders and threats. There are acts that threaten the hearer's positive face as complaining, criticizing, and disagreeing. There are acts that threaten the speaker's negative face as accepting a thanks or an offer. Finally, there are acts that threaten the speaker's positive face as apologizing or confessing. All these acts are face-threatening, and the primary focus is on reducing the threat to the hearer's face. Brown and Levinson (1987) posit several politeness strategies that reduce the threat of an FTA and that vary on the scale of indirectness.

First of all, the speaker can do an FTA either on or off-record. If on-record, the speaker can go either baldly without redress or the speaker can use redressive actions (as positive and negative politeness). An on-record act performed baldly without redressive action is the most-threatening and the most direct. However, if the speaker intends to do an on-record with redressive action, he/she has to opt either for positive or negative politeness to offset the possible face damage of an FTA. Positive politeness (as the expression of solidarity) is a redressive strategy that appeals to the hearer's positive face, for example: "Since we both want to..." (Fraser, 1990, p.230). It appeals to the hearer's desire to be liked and his wants to be desirable. Negative politeness is a redressive strategy which expresses the speaker's respect for the hearer's want for freedom. It appeals to the hearer's want not to be disturbed, for example: "If it wouldn't be too much trouble..." (Fraser, 1990, p.230). It is used when the speaker wants to express deference for the hearer; so, instead of the nicknames and slang language that are common with positive politeness, mitigation and indirectness are employed (Peccei, 1999). Off-record politeness, whereas, is the avoidance of unequivocal

impositions, and it can be used for reasons other than politeness as escaping an answer or playing with language. Finally, the last strategy is not to do an FTA at all (Fraser, 1990). Thus, acts are intrinsically threatening and politeness is a redressive action done to minimize the effects of FTAs (Yu, 2003).

Brown and Levinson (1987) explain that the speaker has to assess these three independent variables to know which strategy to adopt to avoid an FTA. The first variable is social distance (D); that is the degree of familiarity between the speaker (S) and the hearer (H). The second variable is the power of the speaker with respect to the hearer (P). The third and final variable is the ranking of the imposition (R); that is the right of the speaker to carry out the act and the extent to which the hearer accepts the imposition.

Brown and Levinson claim the weight (W) of the act and how much it poses as a threat to the hearer's face is calculated in this formula:

$$W_x = D(S, H) + P(H, S) + R_x \text{ (p.231)}$$

It is the value of the ( $W_x$ ) that will help the speaker in assessing which politeness strategy to adopt to save face, considering all three factors. These factors are not to be considered as stable between individuals, for example, power changes as new roles and responsibilities are assigned and specific circumstances can easily alter the degree of imposition. Hence, if the speaker wishes to avoid doing an FTA and to gain the hearer's cooperation, he/she must calculate the face threat ( $W_x$ ) and select the most appropriate politeness strategy to minimize face loss, without disregarding the need for clarity (Fraser, 1990). Finally, Brown and Levinson (1987) claim that their theory is universal, that is face (and its two wants) is universal, along with the strategies deployed (Yu, 2003).

Similarly to Brown and Levinson, Leech (1983) and Lakoff (1990) rank politeness on a scale of indirectness; the more a speech is indirect, the more it is polite (Hill et.al, 1986).

Leech (1983) regards politeness as the Tact Maxim, where the speaker minimizes the cost and maximizes the benefit to the other (Peccei, 1999). Lakoff (1990) maintains that indirectness can function as a form of politeness which minimizes the potential for disagreement. Thus, politeness strategies, as indirectness, are used to preserve at least the appearance of harmony and unity, and indirectness is performed in many ways and in different degrees. One type of indirectness and confrontation avoidance is speech act substitution/mitigation. Lakoff (1990) explains that giving a direct order implies a power affiliation where the speaker has both the right to give the order and the expectation that it will be carried out. She explains that orders have the most indirect equivalent since they are the most confrontational via questions or declaratives or imperative softened by *please*. Speech acts involve a confrontational risk, which is why one act is substituted by another at the expense of comprehension; asking a question is in general less troublesome than giving an order. Therefore, there are higher demands than clarity because being direct can infringe on manners; a direct order, for example, is not a moderate approach because it makes brutally clear that the speaker outranks the hearer and has the power to manage the actions of the hearer. That is why the speaker, who chooses a speech act that does not set up a severe power imbalance, will set up a smoother future interaction, saving the face of speaker and addressee. Indirectness usually works when both participants are at an approximately equal footing but there is no intimacy, so that both require protection and feel the need to protect each other. But in an intimate relationship, where participants have

surpassed these needs and fears, speakers use unmitigated imperatives and make less effort to mitigate the force of an utterance (Lakoff, 1990).

Fraser (1980) maintains that mitigation is used to soften the blow or the negative effects of speech acts that are unwelcome to the hearer. It is used to reduce the negativity of criticism or orders, and mitigation only takes place if the speaker wants to be polite. One important method, as Fraser claims, is for mitigation to be performed through indirect speech acts (indirectness), where a variety of directives can be performed by indirect means. Mitigated acts comprise a justification for an action on the part of the hearer, and they make the request more acceptable. One type of mitigation is disclaimers as "If I'm not wrong" or "Unless I misunderstood" (p.347). Another device is parenthetical verbs as *predict, conclude, guess, suppose*, for example, "This is the right road, I guess" (p.348). Moreover, there are adverbs as well that carry the same function as *presume, able, admittedly, certainly, probably, and possibly*. Furthermore, tag questions are important expressions used to soften the assertions, for example: "You were there, weren't you?" (p.349). Finally, hedges are linguistic utterances that serve to mitigate negative acts as *kind of, sort of, somewhat, or pretty much* (Fraser, 1980).

Holmes (1984) bases her stance on speech mitigation on Brown & Levinson's Politeness Theory and on Fraser's concept of mitigation. She explains that illocutionary acts can be either boosted or attenuated (mitigated). The most efficient way to interpret the meaning of attenuating and boosting the strength of speech acts is to observe how the modification changes speaker/hearer relationship; in other words, how it affects the solidarity or the social distance between both participants. Attenuation of a negative speech act is considered a strategy that supports the maintenance of the speaker/hearer relationship since



it reduces the social distance between the speaker and the hearer; this shows encouraging feelings towards the hearer, which should augment the solidarity between them. Therefore, boosting the force of a positive speech act can be construed as an expression of camaraderie. However, attenuating positive speech acts can increase the social distance between the interlocutors. Similarly, to boost a negative speech leads to increasing social distance and decreasing solidarity between the speaker and the hearer. The strategies for boosting and attenuating the illocutionary force of speech are what Brown and Levinson (1984) name as *accelerators* and *brakes*. Holmes (1984) mentions the main boosting devices as prosodic elements (pitch and volume), syntactic elements (as exclamations and interrogatives), speaker-oriented boosters (as style disjuncts or adjectives like *sure* or *certain*), hearer-oriented boosters (as *you know* or *you see*), content-oriented boosters (as *absolutely, completely, just, quite, totally, very*) and discursal devices (e.g. linking signals: *furthermore, besides* [Leech & Svartvik, 1975, p.137 in Holmes, 1984]).

Holmes (1984) claims that intonation, stress, volume and pitch can attenuate the illocutionary force of utterances as well, where a weak stress and a low volume can reduce illocutionary force in apt contexts (for example saying "Shut up" in a calm low voice is a way of saying the directive with significantly less force than if it were said with a high voice and a strong stress). Syntactic devices that reduce the force of the utterance, as Holmes explains, are the tag question and an assortment of double negatives. Lexical devices as disclaimers (Hewitt & Stokes 1975; Moore 1975; Eakins & Eakins 1978; Fraser 1980) and hedges (Lakoff, 1972) function as attenuating devices as well. According to Hubler (1983), hedges and understatements are indirect means that aim to make the utterance more comfortable for the hearer. Sentences with hedges or understatements are in

some sense softened and downtoned so that the hearer has less chances to negate its content (understatements are when predicates are negated e.g. "That's not bad" [p.759] or when predicates are weakened by grading adverbs e.g. "That's practically bad").

Under lexical devices, Holmes explains that there are speaker-oriented downtoners *as it seems to me, in my opinion*, and parenthetical forms such as *I gather, I guess, I suppose*. Hearer-oriented downtoners are the same as hearer-oriented boosters, but they assuage the force of speech acts with the proper intonation and context. Content-oriented downtoners involve epistemic modals such as *could, may* and *might*, as well as adverbials such as *possibly, probably* and *likely*. Finally, discoursal devices that attenuate the force of the speech work suggest that the content of the speech act is not of chief significance to the discourse (e.g. expressions: *by the way, incidentally*, and *that reminds me*). Furthermore, they mark a topic change and they are termed by Brown and Levinson as relevance hedges because they apologize for what the hearer may deem as a digression (Holmes, 1984).

Thus, Holmes uses Brown and Levinson's (1987) notion of how politeness and social distance are related by concluding that mitigating the force of negative speech acts and boosting positive ones are means of showing the speaker's positive attitude towards the hearer or a want to augment solidarity. Boosting negative speech acts and attenuating positive ones, however, are a mean to increase social distance between the speaker and the hearer.

This study adopts Brown and Levinson's politeness framework to examine first how the contextual factors will lead to excess politic behavior, i.e, politeness. Second, the study will examine how unnecessary mitigation and indirection or noticeably absent mitigation and indirection in the specific speech acts will mark politeness or impoliteness.

Nevertheless, cultural influence on politeness cannot be overlooked. A considerable body of literature has investigated how culture influences the enactment of politeness (Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998; Watts, 2003; GU, 1990) with the mitigation and indirectness it entails. Considering that this study is concerned with a Lebanese context, Arab's politeness and its linguistic facet is the main focus.

#### **D. Culture and Facework**

Face and facework are universal because face is involved in all languages when different speech acts as compliments and orders are employed, but the manner of enacting face or facework is different from one culture to another (Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998). While politeness is a common feature of language, it is realized and executed differently in separate cultures; that is "facework" and how cultures enact politeness differ (Watts, 2003). Facework is culturally distinct and various cross-cultural studies have provided substantiation that individualism and collectivism (forms of facework) are pervasive in cultures. Individualism is where the members of a culture emphasize the *I* over the *we* that is they value their rights as individuals over the rights of others. However, collectivism reveals the inclination for a culture to highlight the *we* identity over the *I*, and the shared face over the self-face. Individualism is most prevalent in Northern and Western Europe while collectivism is a pattern pervasive in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, South and Central America among others. While Individualists tend to use more self-oriented face-saving strategies, collectivists tend to use more other-oriented face-saving and face-honoring strategies. Furthermore, individualists employ self-face independence preserving

interaction strategies and collectivists tend to use other-face non-impositional strategies (Kurogi 1996, 1997; Lindsley & Braithwaite 1996 in Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998).

Collectivistic and individualistic cultures can be segregated into high and low context cultures. The high- vs. low-context difference is reliant on the amount of information accessible in a communication (Kowner, 2002). Hall's (1976) model of high- vs. low-context cultures has been used in many cross-cultural studies. According to Hall, a high-context communication is where information is mostly internalized in the person, with little information that is coded and explicit. In opposition, in low-context communication, most of the information is explicit and said (Nelson et al. 2002b; El-Harake, 2005). Low-context communication is related to individualistic cultures who prefer personal goals over group ones, for example, North America and Europe value autonomy, competition, willpower and the pursuit of self-interests. High-context communication, however, is associated with collectivistic cultures that favor group goals over individual ones, where social responsibility and collaboration with other in-group members are strongly encouraged (El-Harake, 2005).

Ting-Toomey and Kurogi (1998) maintain that because individualistic cultures prioritize individual identity, they employ more self-face defending mechanisms as justifications and excuses to repair face loss than collectivists. Collectivists, however, would use self-effacing strategies to avoid face threats more than individualists. When it comes to compliments (support or honor to face), different cultures employ dissimilar facework strategies. When complimented or their face is enhanced, individualists will use self-face honoring strategies in acknowledging and accepting the compliment, and in competitive situations they will use self-enhancement face strategies to differentiate the self from others; while collectivists

would use self-effacement approach and in-group improvement facework as "The group did a great job". In conflict contexts, individualists tend to use more direct face-threatening styles, but collectivists will use face-saving ones that are indirect. Power distance is another feature of doing facework that should be considered. Hofstede (1991) explains that power distance is the degree to which the less powerful members of institutions recognize that power is distributed unequally. There is small power index value in countries as New Zealand, Austria, Israel and Ireland, while large power index value is prevalent in Arab countries, Malaysia, or Panama. In small power distance work situations, power is equally disseminated where subordinates anticipate to be referred to and the perfect boss is a resourceful democrat. In large power work situations, the power of an institution is centralized in the upper management levels. Subordinates expect to be told what to do and ordered, and the ideal boss is the caring autocrat. Furthermore, Hofstede (1991) explains that even though the USA scores on the low side of power distance, it is not extremely low because subordinates have medium-level dependence requirements (Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998).

People in small power distance cultures emphasize equivalent power and rights, symmetrical relationships and fair rewards and costs based on personal performance, while people in large power distance cultures tend to acknowledge uneven power distributions, hierarchical roles, asymmetrical associations and rewards and sanctions based on rank, role, status, age and gender. For small power distance cultures, protecting one's rights is reflective of self-face esteeming behaviors. For large power distance cultures, doing one's duties responsibly comprises fitting facework interaction. Individuals in small power distance cultures are concerned with horizontal facework that aims to reduce the deference

distance through informal communication, and it is expressed via personal power possessions as personal credibility and knowledge. In large power distance cultures, individuals are concerned with vertical facework interaction, i.e, boosting the respect-deference distance via formal interaction. High-status power personnel may use indirect conflict mechanisms such as hinting or indirect questioning to approach the conflict problem because they are of high status; they are assumed capable of affording care to the subordinates, and thus have a big face (Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998).

### **1. *Japanese and Chinese culture***

The Japanese culture, as the Chinese culture, is regarded as a collectivistic and high-context culture that stresses on status and hierarchy in communication. They are indirect and unequivocal because they fear to say exactly what is on their mind because that would be considered as impolite (El-Harake, 2005). They attend to other's face by being indirect and not argumentative (Niikura, 1999; Kim et al., 2001). Furthermore, they are less assertive than Westerners because the latter value individualism (Wierzbicka, 1991). Matsumoto (1988) criticizes Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) notion of negative face and its universal attributes. He maintains that the concept of having your territory protected from impingement is not universal to all cultures, especially for the Japanese culture. What is important to the Japanese is not to protect their own territory as in other European or American culture, but it is their relation with others in a group and other's acceptance of them. Thus, the Japanese need to know their position in relation to others and to recognize their dependence on the other; that is why it is a collectivistic culture. Many anthropological and sociological studies have investigated Japanese behavior and their little

emphasis on individuality. For example, Doi (1971, 1973) characterizes the Japanese behavior as *amae*, a feeling of infant towards their mother and a feeling of dependence and a desire to be loved and nurtured. Lebra (1976) introduced the term *bun* (meaning fraction or portion) to explain how the Japanese view themselves as part of a whole and do not adhere to the concept of individualism as other western societies (Matsumoto, 1988).

GU (1990) maintains that the Chinese culture is highly influenced by Confucianism<sup>1</sup>. What gives rise to politeness (*limao*) is in fact social hierarchy, and politeness helps maintain social hierarchy respectively. GU (1990) claims that Brown and Levinson's theory cannot account for Chinese politeness because of negative politeness as well. Negative face is not applicable to the Chinese context because inviting and offering are not considered as threatening to the addressee's negative face as in Brown and Levinson's context. In Japan, asking someone to care for another person is regarded as an honor, indicating that that person holds a higher position in society; this is enhancing the addressee's positive face and not threatening to one's freedom (Matsumoto, 1988). Furthermore, deference in Japanese is not acted by minimizing threat to face, but by exalting the addressee and the speaker humbling him/herself, for example a giver might say "This is nothing, but please accept it" (p.412). It is working on the assumption that the taker is of amazing taste that the gift will not do him/her justice. Nevertheless, if we take an example of deference in English given by Brown and Levinson as "It is not that much really, just a thing I liked and bought on my way home"; this would sound very rude to the Japanese because the speaker appears to

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<sup>1</sup> School of thought inspired by the Chinese philosopher Confucius (551 B.C-479 B.C). He wanted to restore politeness where one's speech had to be in accordance with one's status in social hierarchy (GU, 1990). For more on Confucianism see *The Religion of China* by Weber (1964) or GU (1990).

insinuate that the gift is not suitable for the addressee; there is no maximizing praise to the addressee by the speaker (Matsumoto, 1988).

GU (1990) takes Leech's Tact Maxim (minimize cost to other/maximize benefit to other) and Generosity Maxim (maximize cost to oneself/minimize benefit to oneself) and adds to them the Self-denigration (denigrate oneself and elevate the other) and the Address Maxim (addressing the hearer properly) as politeness strategies in the Chinese sphere. He explains that in China elevating oneself is considered as impolite; instead the speaker should elevate the other and denigrate him/herself (Self-denigration Maxim). Furthermore, during introductions, the Chinese tend to ask for the other's surname while the English introduce themselves directly via name. It is of paramount importance in China to address the other with the proper address (occupational titles, kinship terms) that identifies his/her social rank in the social hierarchy. Failure to do so will result in breach of politeness, breakdown of social order and loss of face. For the Chinese, the proper address name would be surname+given name, for the English it is the reverse. Moreover, the Chinese surname is a non-kin public term that can be used by outside strangers; whereas, the English surname is non-kin and private, while the first name is a non-kin public address term. In addition, the surname cannot be used as an address term (as in the Chinese context) without other titles (Address Maxim).

Furthermore, Chen (1993) explains that to an American self-denigration means self-humiliation, and that does damage to the speaker's face. In China, however, modesty is the best ingredient of self-image. Thus, the Chinese lower themselves when responding to compliments to enhance their face, with no concern for damaging their self-esteem.

Furthermore, both Asian cultures, according to Lakoff (1990), are considered as deference



cultures where there is danger of conflict in communication so the speaker is removed from the action. Deference politeness functions by debasing one or both interlocutors, and it is indecisive (it uses questions and hedges in profusion, but the questions are not really information-seeking). Hedges are other means of expressing deferential politeness because they dilute both what is intended and the speech act involved, and when sensitive topics arise, the deferential way is to resort to euphemism. Camaraderie culture works on that honesty and openness are good signs of courtesy. This politeness is rapidly taking over the culture of USA as the preferred form of politeness for both sexes. It involves symbols of trust and intimacy and indicates that the user means no harm, and confrontation should not be feared. In this system, openness and niceness are to be sought above all else; there is no holding back, no euphemism and no technical terms. It is antisocial to have a last name in public, and there is a lot of touching (Lakoff, 1990).

Even humor was found to be cross-culturally diverse and variant between high- and low-context cultures. Humor has been found to motivate subordinates, and thus, to augment their job satisfaction, which in turn can improve their performance (Cosser 1960; Barsoux 1993). It also aids to reduce status gaps between leaders and subordinates (Yukl 1989; Beck 1999). Schnurr and Chan (2009) focused on humor utilized by leaders towards their subordinates in Hong Kong (a high power-distance culture) and New Zealand (a low-power distance culture) workplaces. However, there were differences in the manner the humor was made use of and how their subordinates replied, which have their origins in cultural expectation of what is 'polite'. The leader in the New Zealand context used humor to portray himself as one of them; whereas, the leader from the Chinese context did not refrain from showing that he is the one in charge. Furthermore, when it came to replying to the

boss's humor, the subordinates in the New Zealand context would contribute to their boss's self-denigrating humor and would endorse it even further. The subordinates in the Chinese context did not participate in the humor, nor did they reply in laughter to their boss's self-denigrating humor because that would be deemed as inappropriate. The main reason behind the differences in both contexts is due to cultural norms. New Zealand is a low-power distance culture where it is only natural to downplay one's power and become one of the gang to prevent any individual from outshining others (Acheson, 2002). However, in the Chinese culture, self-denigration should not be met with further denigration, but with praise or else it would be regarded as impolite, for that reason the subordinates did not extend their boss's jokes or reply with laughter. Since the Chinese culture is deeply rooted in Confucianism, individuals in lower positions are anticipated to be respectful to those in higher occupations, and those in higher positions have the right and the responsibility to educate their subordinates how to perform correctly (Schnurr and Chan, 2009).

## ***2. The Arab World***

Nelson, Al Batal, and El Bakary (2002b) define the Arab culture, like the Japanese and the Chinese, as a high-context and collectivistic culture, where they prefer the insiders to the outsiders and assume that directness causes hurt and loss of face to the self and the other. In contrast to the Americans' self-reliant and individual-centered approach, the Arab world shows stronger loyalty to the extended family, and in-group goals take priority over individual needs (Nydell, 1987; Yousef, 1974). Moreover, the Arabs value collectivism, along with hospitality and honor, where the influence of Bedouin values remains strong, even though the majority of the populace inhabits villages or cities (Patai, 1983). Children

grow up with great emphasis on elder relationships, while American children are geared towards vertical relationships as peers than vertical ones (Yousef, 1974). *'ird* or honor determines one's face and image in society. To save face one should avoid shame (Mackey, 1987 in Feghali, 1997).

The American's style of communication has been defined as straight to the point and clear; this is regarded as 'Tough Talk', which stands in contrast to the Arabic approach, regarded as 'Sweet Talk' (Katriel, 1986). *Musayara* is considered a form of sweet talk because it signifies metaphorically accommodating to another' position or humoring the other. This form of sweet talk establishes harmony and prevents embarrassment or offense. It limits behavior to guard the social sphere from chaos that could be the result of expression (Katriel 1986). Status also has a major role in Arab relationships (Feghali, 1997) similar to that of the Japanese and the Chinese cultures, where a low-status person will employ *musayara* with a high-status person to uphold status and power distinctions between individuals of the same culture. Furthermore, Arabic is a language that seems to support circumlocution, where what is implied or not said is even more necessary than what is actually said because people dislike directness, since it could lead to embarrassment. However, even though it is a high-context collectivistic culture, one might assume that the Arab culture is similar to the Japanese and the Chinese, which support self-effacement and where an individual refrains from boasting about doing a good job (Ting-Toomey, 1999 in El-Harake, 2005). Instead, the Arab culture apparently motivates verbal self-enhancement which improves one's face and honor in some Arab cultures (El-Harake, 2005).

Nelson et al. (2002b) explain that indirectness and camouflaging one's intentions is at the core of the language. Studies on Arabic communication style have been heavily

influenced by Hall's (1976) model and, according to the model, Arab culture is considered to be high-context and less direct than the low-context American culture. In Arabic, directness is avoided. Candor that could cause embarrassment comes second to metaphor and circumlocution (Cohen, 1990). Katriel (1986) explains that *musayara* is a form of indirect talk that is found in every Arab, where those lower in the social ladder have to perform it to maintain harmonious social relations. Furthermore, studies have shown that status affects the degree used in refusals act (Beebe et al.1990; Hussein, 1995; Liao & Bresnahan, 1996) and in softening refusals through indirect methods (Al-Issa, 1998; Hussein, 1995 in Nelson et al. 2002b).

Politeness in Arabic, according to Shivtiel (n.d.), is a highly regarded attribute that is vital for everyday interactions, and polite language is using different expressions for diverse situations as dictated by the Arabic dictum: '*li kill maqām maqāl*' "For every situation there is an appropriate saying" (p.661). Shivtiel maintains that Arabic has its own phrases, idioms and honorifics and circumlocutions that denote politeness. Similar to other European languages, second person plural is used when addressing a dignitary or in official correspondence: '*arjū 'an takūnu...*' "I hope you [pl.]" (p.659). Moreover, plural is also used in first person instead of singular as a polite way to ask for something *yufriḥunā* "We would be happy". As for greetings, the most used polite formulas are *sayyidi/sayyidati* "Sir/Madam" or *ḥaḍrat* "Honorable". Among family members or close friends, cordial terms that show politeness and affection are prevalent as *ḥabībī* "My love", *rōḥī* "My soul" or '*azīzī*' "My dear". When it comes to requests, the most utilized polite forms are the following: *min faḍlik*, *ismaḥ lī*, *law samaḥt* or *tæ 'mil mæ 'rūf* "May I" or "Please", and the most frequent polite answer is *shukran* "Thank you" (p.659). Polite expressions expressing

intention to leave is *bi-xāṭirkum* or *'an 'izin* "With your permission" to which the common reply is *ma'a s-salāma* "In good health". Polite response to a request is usually *hādir* "At your service" (p.662). Politeness also involves a refine style that is used to avoid offense or direct criticism; this is achieved via circumlocution, antonyms, proverbs and euphemism. In the Arabic language, you (second case singular) is replaced by *ḥaḍirtæk* to mark a higher status and politeness (Shivtiel, n.d.). *Ḥaḍirtæk* is *ḍamīr 'al ṭaḍkhīm lil moukhaṭab* "Honorable you is a magnified address pronoun". Now while these expressions denote politeness in the Arabic language, they are considered part of the polite code that is registered in the ISF to be the expected behavior and the politic one. Therefore, they are registered as part of the standardized politic discourse. They do not denote politeness, unless they are in undue excess.

The same pronoun distinction in Arabic can found in the pronouns of address in certain European languages as French and Italian. Brown and Gilman (1972) explain that in French, the *tu* (T) was used for subordinates while the *vous* (V) was used for superiors. The V is considered as a mark of reverence that invaded the European speech historically as a term of address for those in power (in the state and the monarchy). The asymmetrical power relations existing back then, especially during the medieval period, prescribed that V and T were to be used non-reciprocally between unequal ranks. However, gradually an intimacy-distinction appeared where T started to designate intimacy, and remote V signaled formality. Those in power started encouraging their subordinates to address them with the T. However, as Brown and Gilman (1972) maintain, the right to commence the T among unequal members belongs to the member with more power, and this is considered as breaking the norm of power because the speaker is expressing equality with his

subordinate. Thus, members of equal or different ranks started to use the T-V distinction to signal camaraderie or distance. Moreover, pronouns are not the only forms of non-reciprocal address. There are proper names, titles, etc. that are apparent in the US and in other equalitarian societies. In the American family, there are "no discriminating pronouns but there are non-reciprocal norms of address" (Brown & Gilman, 1972, p.269). A father calls his son by his first name, but the latter will rarely call his dad by his name as well. The American ideology is a pervasive equalitarian mentality that aims to repress any suggestion of power asymmetry; those in power feel they are foolish to be called on by titles so they choose to be called on by their names instead. Furthermore, the absence of the T-form of address in modern English sets English apart from other European languages. The *you* is a social equalizer, and thus it can be a distance-builder. It cannot be considered as equivalent to the European V, and it cannot designate the intimacy of T; instead, it keeps everyone at distance. This is influenced by the ideology of the Anglo-Saxon culture that restricts body contact and keeps everyone at a psychological distance. Thus, the lack of the intimate T encourages and reflects the culturally-expected psychological distance (Wierzbicka, 1985).

### **E. Speech Act**

As previously explained, Austin (1975) maintains that for speech acts to be felicitous or successful, certain conditions have to be established or met (Thompson, 1991). These conditions help to assess whether the speech act was successful or not. Hence, these felicitous conditions evaluate the speech act. For example, for felicity conditions not to be violated and for a positive speech act evaluation, the utterance has to be made in a suitable

context so that the utterance is felicitous, as someone who has been conferred with power is giving an order (Sbisà, 2002).

Austin (1975) raises the distinction as well between locution and illocution in analyzing speech acts. The locution is the actual form of words and their semantic meaning; while illocution is what the speaker is doing with these utterances as commanding, offering, threatening or insulting. Different locutions can have the same illocutionary force; similarly, the same locution can have different illocutionary forces. For example, "Get me the milk", "Have you got the milk?" and "I could use the milk" are utterances that can be acts of requesting (illocution) even though they vary in locution. The utterance "It's cold in here" could be either a request to close the window or an offer to close it. Because utterances have different illocutionary force, they are doing more than just asserting; hence, they are contextualized (pp.43-44, Peccei, 1999).

In addition, Austin maintains that some utterances not only perform a speech act, but they simultaneously describe the speech act itself. He called them performative utterances because they contain a performative verb that clearly describes the intended speech act, for example, "I promise to pass by" or "I warn you, I have a knife". Because not every speech act can have a performative verb as *promise*, *admit*, or *apologize*, Searle (1991) proposed that speech acts should not be categorized based on performative verbs but on the affiliation between words and the world and who is accountable for making that relationship work. Each category has different illocutions, but the members of each group share a similar relationship of 'fit' between the world and the words. The first category is representatives where speakers reveal external reality by making their words fit the world as they assume it to be as *stating*, *describing* or *affirming*. Commissives are acts where the speaker commits

to a future act which will make the world fit their words as *threats, vows, offers* and *promises*. Expressives give room for expressions of feelings as *thanking, apologizing, congratulating* and *condoling* where the speaker makes his/her words fit his/her internal psychological world. Rogatives comprise *asking, querying* and *questioning* where the hearer rather than the speaker will make the words fit the world. Finally, directives speech acts are where the speaker directs the hearer to carry out a future act as a *command, a request, an order, a warning* or a *suggestion* that will make the world fit the speaker's words (Peccei, 1999).

Searle (1991) explains that speech acts can vary in directness as well. The indirect acts talk more to the hearer than direct acts because they go beyond what is said and demand deduction from the hearer (in El-Harake, 2005); while in direct speech acts, there is a direct connection between the linguistic structures and the work they are performing. Directives phrased as rogatives or asking for permission to make a request are more indirect than a direct imperative because in the former the speaker is making it less clear that the hearer has to comply (Peccei, 1999). This study has focused mainly on directives (orders and advice), expressives (compliments and criticism), and on their different locutions and illocutionary forces. It covers as well jokes, interruptions and refusals. It stresses on the speech acts' degree of directness and felicity conditions, and how they are affected by the contextual factors to mark politeness.

### **1. Directives**

Ervin-Tripp (1976) defines directives as requests and commands that are influenced by rank, familiarity and role. In her study, Ervin-Tripp (1976) investigated speech settings and



was able to isolate several types of directives scaled from most direct to the most indirect (need statement, imperatives, imbedded imperatives, permission directives, question directives, and hints). The need statements (e.g. "We need you to") occurred between individuals of different rank, where the superior would be the one expressing the need. Need statements imply obligation on the subordinate's part. Imperatives were the most common forms where words as *please* or attention-getters which signal a command, were directed to those with a lower rank. *Please* was found to be a softener that marks status or age difference. Imbedded imperatives, another type of directive, are modal interrogatives/directives beginning with a modal verb (can, could, will, would) and the command is embedded within the sentence where the subject of the clause is the addressee and the action is possible (e.g. "Can you open the door?"). However, imbedded imperatives were not employed towards those with higher rank because they are still imperatives; but instead question directives were employed (e.g. "Would you move the table?").

Permission directives (modal +beneficiary+have/verb+?) were heavily directed towards those upward in rank where there is shift in focus to beneficiary or recipient's activity and not to donor-addressee's. Modal verbs as *can* or *could* or *may* and their negatives are usually utilized for example, "May I have the book back?" Finally, hints served as inside jokes, strengthening solidarity. Hints require shared knowledge, for this reason they were very frequent in families and communal groups. Hence, bald directives as need statements, imperatives, as shown, were generally directed to those lower in rank and not vice versa. This reveals how power (authority) plays a role when it comes to the scale of indirectness of directives. In a study on office talk in a university by Gardner (1968), direct imperatives occurred only between those that were similar in rank and were familiar (small social

distance). That is, speakers with similar status and greater familiarity tend to use more direct imperatives, rather than imbedded imperatives. New recruits, for example, in the office were subjected to more elaborate requests, than the bold imperatives that are usually communicated among peers. However, as Gardner (1968) maintains, if a high-ranking personnel is present, imperatives among peers change into forms appropriate for the ear of the superior; even those with similar rank would address each other in a more indirect way; this is the effect of rank on directives, where rank plays a bigger role than solidarity forms. Familiarity, status and setting, then, played a major role when it comes to politeness in directives in his study. Moreover, his study revealed that imperatives were the natural directives among those who were familiar and equal in rank (Ervin-Tripp, 1976).

Vine (2009) claims that features of social context as participants, status, social distance (familiarity) and purpose of interaction influence directives' frequency and form. However, the results of her study on office talk directives yielded surprising results. She examined two types of directives on the level of context (participants, social distance, and purpose of interaction) and on the level of discourse. The first was the imperative, which she claims is a direct forceful directive. The second was the interrogative (imbedded imperative), where modal interrogatives as *can* and *could* make the directive indirect and more polite because the addressee has a choice of refusal. When it came to purpose of the interaction, both forms of directives (the least and the most forceful) occurred the most in the same type of interaction (problem-solving and task-allocation); thus, the settings that had the largest number of imperatives contained as well the largest number of interrogatives, as opposed to other interactions. When it came to participants, status and social distance played a role in limiting the responses of the assistant that was less familiar

with their manager; the temporary executive assistant gave minimum responses to the manager, as opposed to the permanent assistant who contributed more to the discourse because of the familiarity between the manager and the permanent assistant. However, even though the social distance is larger between the temporary assistant and the manager, the former received more explicit directives than the permanent one (this is in sharp contrast to Gardner's (1968) study that showed that the less the social distance the more the imperative is explicit and direct). Vine (2009) explains that this is because the temporary assistant is new, and thus, the latter needs more clarity and understanding of the tasks assigned. This is on the contextual level. Vine examined as well the directives on the level of discourse. She explains that imperatives occurred profusely at the end of a long conversation-serving as a summary and in multiple-tasks discussions. Moreover, another situation where imperatives took place was when the required action was immediate; as in, it should happen now. These are called NOW imperatives, where politeness could be overlooked because of the urgency of the demand. Vine reveals that imperatives were not used when there was a high level of imposition (based on Brown and Levinson's predictions about the Imposition (R) variable); instead, interrogatives were used and especially with the interrogative modal *would*, which is highly associated with politeness. The manager also used hedges (*maybe, a little bit*) and *if* clauses, which reflect as well high levels of politeness, when the directive had a high level of imposition. This shows how directives with high impositions require more indirectness (politeness). Hence, this study showed that social distance and power did play a role in the use of directives.

a. Cross-cultural Perspective on Directives

Wierzbicka (1985) maintains that Anglo-Saxon cultures place high importance on the autonomy of the individual, and they do not tolerate interference in personal affairs. They place high value on respecting privacies. In English, there are heavy restrictions on the use of imperatives; instead, interrogative directives come in place as requests and offers. In other words, interrogatives in the English language are not merely for the purpose of information, but they function as requests and to ask for something. This feature is not prevalent in the Polish language. In the English language, interrogatives (e.g. "Could you turn off the light?") do not function as questions for information, but as requests. If translated literally into Polish, interrogatives do not serve as requests but more of a criticism (e.g. "Why are you not turning off the light?").

Thus, the interrogative form functions as a softened and polite directive in English, and not only for information-seeking. This construction is not present in the Polish language because interrogatives' scope is limited for information-seeking. Moreover, interrogative directives in the English language tend to convey the addressee's needs e.g. *would you like to*, and they can be compatible with anger and verbal abuse. In Polish, however, they are regarded as too formal, lacking in confidence, and they are incompatible with anger. It is worth considering that interrogative directives are utilized in English because there is a strong reluctance to use bare imperatives, for the reason that in the English culture everyone is entitled to their own feelings and opinions; if someone wants to influence another's person's actions, they must acknowledge the other's wishes and feelings. Query preparatory were as well rated to be most polite by English and Hebrew speakers in Blum-Kulka's (1987) study on requests. Hints were also favored by the English speakers, unlike their Hebrew peers who regarded hints as indirect requests that are very burdensome,

ruining pragmatic clarity, and therefore impolite. However, the Hebrew speaker did rate the query preparatory as most polite and used it frequently. Blum-Kulka (1987) maintains that *can you* questions have also ranked relatively high in scale of politeness by earlier studies (Fraser & Nolen, 1981; Clark & Schunk, 1980).

As shown, different cultures differ in what is regarded as a polite request. English speakers avoid making direct, forceful comments, questions and requests. Thus, they use hedges (expressions as *rather* or *sort of*), and English is fond of understatement and hedges. The Polish, however, overstate and do not understate. Their opinions are expressed directly and vigorously; while, in English, they are expressed tentatively (Wierzbicka, 1985). Furthermore, Hebrew speakers consider indirectness as requiring too much effort on behalf of the hearer; thus, they consider hints to be impolite, though most indirect, because they burden the hearer with interpretation (Blum-Kulka, 1987).

## **2. Compliments**

Compliments are considered as expressives where an utterance contains a positive evaluation by the speaker to the addressee (Liu in Al Falasi, 1997 in Behnam & Amizadeh, n.d.). They reveal what features are highly valued in a culture and what is esteemed (Wolfson 1981). They aim to increase the solidarity between the speaker and the addressee.

Holmes (1988) examines how compliments can be perceived as positive speech acts, employed in positive politeness or as face-threatening acts in a sample of middle-class New Zealanders of European descent. Holmes maintains that compliments, formulaic speech acts that are limited lexically and syntactically, conform to Brown and Levinson's (1978) classification as positive politeness strategies, which lessen the threat of the FTA by

attending to the positive face of the addressee and expressing similar wants. Thus, they decrease social distance between the hearer and the speaker, and they increase solidarity. Take for example the expression "Goodness! Aren't your roses beautiful!" (p.448); this expression is a positive speech act that counteracts any potential effect of an FTA. Nevertheless, Brown and Levinson (1978) maintain that compliments and their responses can function as FTAs too. That is, a compliment can be an impingement to the addressee's negative face (the want for freedom of action), and the response to it may harm the speaker's positive face (the need to have his/her wants desired by others). Why are compliments deemed sometimes as FTAs? Holmes explains that in some cultures a compliment implies that the speaker envies the addressee for a certain possession, and hence, they threaten the latter's negative face. In Holmes' data, men chose to attenuate or mitigate the force of the compliments, while women chose to strengthen its force; the reason behind that is that women perceive compliments as solidarity builders while men perceive them as FTAs. Furthermore, women showed that they compliment more on appearance, which is an expression of solidarity, and that confirms that they regard compliments as positive speech acts. Men, on the other hand, showed a greater tendency to compliment on possessions (which can be regarded as an FTA), and, thus, that reinforces the suggestion that they perceive compliments to be FTAs. Furthermore, when it came to the variable of status, 79% of compliments occurred between those of equal status, and specifically between friends in informal encounters. In addition, higher-status women were perceived to be more accessible to compliments than higher-status men, which further reveal that women regard them as positive speech acts that build solidarity and decrease social distance.

When it came to compliments responses, Holmes explains that New Zealanders are similar to Americans, in the sense that they accept the compliment instead of deflecting or rejecting it-as other "debt-sensitive cultures" (Brown & Levinson, 1978, p. 252). The data revealed that the greatest portion of New Zealanders accept the compliment, with no statistically significant sex-difference. However, looking at the other responses as evading/deflecting or rejecting, men showed higher reliability to deflect/evade the compliment than females which strengthens the hypothesis that men regard compliments as FTAs. Thus, working within the framework of Brown and Levinson, Holmes (1988) showed that compliments can be perceived as FTAs or positive politeness strategies.

A similar study by Wolfson (1983) on American data showed similar results to Holmes' (1986) anthropological study on New Zealanders when it came to topic. The largest portion of compliments that occurred in the American data was on appearance, as the New Zealander's data. Moreover, there is a large agreement between the New Zealander and American's norms concerning suitable topics of compliments. When it came to status, Wolfson (1983) states that the great bulk of compliments, which occurred between status unequals, was given by the person in the higher position; however, that was not the case in Holmes' study. She explains that:

...compliments upwards were as frequent as those downwards. Compliments upwards tended to occur when the participants knew each other reasonably well and the complimenter was often a mature, rather than a young, person. Compliments to someone of superior status seem to require some confidence on the part of the complimenter, presumably to counteract the possibility of a negative interpretation, such as that the complimenter is manipulating or flattering the addressee (p.497)

This shows how culture can affect the use of speech acts. Moreover, Holmes explains that setting affects the direction of compliments with certain contexts eliciting more

appearance-related compliments than others. When it comes to replying to compliments, Holmes claims that the recipient is torn between agreeing with the compliment and with minimizing self-praise. This is in accordance to Leech's (1983) Agreement and Modesty Maxim, where the former puts pressure on the recipient to agree while the latter pressures the recipient to reject it. This is line as well with Brown and Levinson's claim that compliments responses tend to involve self-denigration, which harms the respondent's positive face. While New Zealand culture and the American culture tend to agree with compliments, Holmes maintains that other cultures might vary in their responses, i.e., they might reject or evade.

Even though considerable studies have established that Arabic language is indirect and full of circumlocution (Zaharna, 1995; Katriel 1986) a body of literature on Arabic compliments and refusals has shown otherwise. Nelson, Al Batal, and El Bakary (1993) maintain that complimenting in Arabic has two features. First, there is a strong belief in the evil eye, which is an eye that can cause harm to a person or to his/her property (Maloney, 1976). To protect the other from the eye, one should invoke God when complimenting. Another feature of complimenting in Arabic is the act of offering the object of admiration to the complimenter that is rigidly held in Arab cultures (Almaney & Alwan, 1982). When Nelson et al. (1993) examined compliment types between the Egyptians and the Americans; they found similarities and differences alike between both cultures. First of all, Egyptian compliments were much longer than American ones, and they comprised more adjectives, metaphors and comparatives. Repetition of the same idea and series of adjectives were apparent in the Egyptian compliments. Arabic speakers use repetition to articulate their feelings; the more an object is admired, the more there is repetition (Shouby, 1951).



Second, some Egyptian compliments made reference to marriage or God, but no American compliment mentioned them. The weighty use of precoded set formulas in Arabic compliments has been discussed before (Wolfson, 1981). Third, both cultures exhibited syntactical similarity, with the majority of compliments being adjectival. Fourth, both groups praised heavily personal appearance (not natural attributes but results of deliberate effort). Fifth, there was a difference in frequency; Americans compliment more frequently than Egyptians; this may be due to the Arab's conviction in the evil eye, and that compliments may harm or bring bad luck. Finally, while these findings are consistent with other studies that showed that American compliment directly, they not totally consistent with other studies that suggest that Arabs communicate indirectly (Cohen, 1987; Katriel, 1986). The study concluded with data that shows that Egyptians compliment directly. While an indirect style relates to face-saving collectivistic mechanism for group harmony (Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988), the act of praising others helps in building solidarity, so that is why it can be direct (Nelson et al. 1993).

A study by Farghal and Al-khatib (2001) on how Jordanians respond to compliments revealed that the majority prefer to accept the compliment as their American peers, instead of downgrading it, indicating that compliments are regarded as harmonious speech acts that are integral to positive politeness rather than negative politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1978). Within the macro-function of accepting, the micro-functions used were *returning* the compliment, *offering*, *invoking*, then *confirmation*, *thanking* and *tagging*. Returning the compliment was the dominant response followed by offering and invoking. Feghali (1997) maintains that offering and invoking are quite specific with Arabs repeating pious formulas as *hamdulillah or ishkorallah* "Thanks be to God" (p.358). Invoking, in this study, was

more common among men than women, who preferred the micro-function confirmation instead. However, appreciation tokens (as thanking), that are pervasive in the English data were rare in Feghali's simple responses, especially in male-male communication. Instead, thanking was combined with other micro-functions in complex responses, and either served as a reinforcer: *'alla ihalli 'ayyamak! Jukran* "May God sweeten your days! Thank you" or as a base: *sukran! Haa2Ja min lugak* "thank you! This is out of your kindness". *Sukran*, thus, is not motive or expressive enough for male-male interaction so that it was used with other micro-functions. Farghal and Al-khatib (2001) conclude that the Leech's Agreement maxims dominated in the Jordanian speakers' responses, exhibiting similarity to English responses via agreement (see Chen, 1993; Holmes, 1988). Arabs, therefore, display directness in complimenting behavior, and they accept, instead of evading or rejecting the compliment as other high-context collectivistic cultures do.

### **3. Refusals**

Refusal in Arabic is another speech act that has been studied that contradicts established notions that Arabs are always indirect and equivocal in their expressions. Nelson, Al Batal, and El Bakary (2002a) investigated refusals between Egyptians and Americans because Egyptians are considered to be more status aware than the Americans, so more face-saving strategies would be employed considering that refusals are FTAs. Refusals are face-threatening to the speaker, hearer or both. When requesting for something, the speaker is threatening the hearer's freedom of action, and if the hearer refuses, he/she is threatening the speaker's face revealing that he/she does not care about the speaker's needs or wants. The study's results were in sharp contrast to earlier studies on Arabic refusals as Issa (1998)

or Hussein (1995), who concluded that their Arab subjects were more indirect in their refusals. Instead, Nelson et.al (2002a) showed that the Egyptian respondents used less total face-saving strategies when refusing than their American counterparts. This correlates to other studies that compared American refusal strategies to Japanese or Chinese ones and concluded with both Asian subjects being more direct and using fewer strategies than the American subjects (Saeki & O'keefe, 1994; Liao and Bresnahan, 1996). Nelson et al. (2002b) investigated as well refusals between Egyptian and American subjects from different statuses. The results revealed that both groups used similar strategies; however the American refusals were longer with more elaboration and repetition (features that characteristically belong to the Arabic language). Furthermore, while others studies on compliments (see Nelson, El Bakary, & Al Batal, 1993, 1995) show that Arabic compliments are longer and repetitive, or that the language is indirect (Cohen 1987, 1990; Feghali, 1997; Johnson & Johnson, 1975), the findings of this study revealed that the frequency of direct and indirect refusal strategies were the same between the Egyptian and the American participants (Nelson et al. 2002b).

## **F. Concluding Remarks**

This study's rationale is to establish that the ISF institution has a standardized and normalized politic behavior, which is the polite code that is imposed to be the norm. Therefore, it has a main discourse type, along with specific discourse types that pertain to different social situations. Certain discourse types set by those with higher rank may challenge the standardized politic behavior; nevertheless are a part of the accepted behavior among participants. An excess of politic behavior denotes politeness, and according to

theories (Brown and Levinson, 1978; Leech, 197) and studies (Ervin-Tripp, 1976; Vine, 2009), politeness is affected by contextual factors as social distance, setting, imposition and rank. Politeness in this context is described by an overdue indirectness and mitigation, i.e., indirectness that goes beyond the indirectness demanded by the politeness behavior. The level of familiarity and the rank among interactants, the weight of the imposition and the type of the setting are expected to influence the regulated politeness behavior and to manifest politeness.

The study surveys politeness in address terms, directives, advice, compliments and criticism. It considers the speech acts of jokes, refusals and interruptions as well. These speech acts are examined in light of the contextual factors and how these factors could shape politeness behavior and result in politeness. Nevertheless, politeness, which is defined as attending to the face's needs and desires, differs among cultures. While politeness is universal, how cultures perform politeness vary (Watts, 2003). Considering that this study takes as its initial point a research done in the American culture that is mostly considered a low-context individualistic culture, variation in what forms of speech acts are considered polite are expected to arise between the American culture and the high-context collectivistic Arab culture.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### **A. The Study**

The study takes as a point of departure Halbe's (2011) study on politeness in the U.S Army, and it attempts to look into the Lebanese Internal Security Force (ISF) for research on how rank, social distance, imposition and setting (contextual factors) affect politeness between personnel of similar and different ranks. Politeness is regarded as a marked behavior and an excess of what is expected linguistically from the subjects, while impoliteness is regarded as an absence of what is politic or expected by the conventions of the ISF. The targeted expressions are address terms and the speech acts: directives, compliments, and their responses, advice, and criticism. The study adopts Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory and Watts' politic behavior two different theoretical frameworks to examine if the contextual factors, as social distance, status, and imposition can affect the politic behavior that has been conventionalized and agreed upon by the ISF subjects. Therefore, Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory is corroborated by the underlying structure of Watts' Politic Behavior to investigate the following: if the following variables (status, social distance, imposition and setting) lead the ISF personnel to exceed the institutionalized and expected politic behavior, the personnel are marked as being 'polite'; whereas, if the participants do not fulfill what is linguistically expected of them, and thus politic, they are marked as 'impolite' unless the ISF's standardized politic behavior

has been reproduced and changed by the superior, who is affected by one of the contextual factors and has set a discourse type that normalizes certain behavior .

## **B. Research Questions**

The following are the study's main research questions:

How do social distance, rank, imposition and setting affect politeness in the terms of address?

How do social distance, rank, imposition and setting influence politeness in directives, their responses, compliments, advice, and criticism?

## **C. Research Design**

This study is descriptive focusing on linguistic patterns that manifest politeness and impoliteness and are affected by social distance, rank, imposition and setting. It employs a semi-structured interview that targets the questions and variables of both Halbe's (2011) questionnaire and interview. Field observations were conducted as well. The questions used in the interview (see appendix A) were adapted from the reported results of Halbe's (2011) study<sup>2</sup> (interview and questionnaire); however, they were modified to fit the Lebanese context when it came to address terms, directives, responses, advice, compliments and criticisms. Hence, the response options given by Halbe (2011) in her questionnaire were translated to colloquial Lebanese Arabic instead of Modern Standard Arabic since the former is identified as the natural oral communication medium, while the latter is the

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<sup>2</sup> The questionnaire and interview questions are not available, but the response options are found in the study's reported results.

standardized language for writing and trainings. So, the interview questions and response options were written in Vernacular Arabic, the spoken variety, and not in Modern Standard Arabic, the formal language, since the colloquial variety is the everyday language and the native language of the ISF personnel and the researcher (see Appendix B). Furthermore, the answer options were translated by a professional translator whose native language is Lebanese Arabic and is fluent in English in order to avoid discrepancies that could result from English to Arabic translation. The semi-structured interview comprises questions on address terms, directives and advice that are close-ended and questions on responses to directives, criticism and compliments that are open-ended. One of the reasons behind choosing the interview as the principal method for research was the directness it provides the interviewees with, where the interviewer can offer them clarity in case of confusion. The interview, thus, gives enhanced understanding of the subject to both the interviewer and the interviewee, and it adds to the method of analysis where interpretations are developed and tested out (Cruickshank, 2012).

I simultaneously conducted field observations to observe the ISF personnel in various settings as trainings, armor inspection or office work. Observations enable researchers to observe actions that participants were unable to share in interviews because that would be impolitic or impolite, and to view participants in situations that have been described in interviews, making the researchers aware of discrepancies in description provided by those participants (Marshall & Rossman, 1995 in Kawulich, 2005). Nevertheless, as Dewalt, Dewalt and Wayland (1998) claim, observation is conducted by a biased human being whose gender, ethnicity, class, and theoretical approach can shape observation and interpretation. The researcher needs to understand that his/ her prejudice can interfere with

an accurate interpretation of what is being observed. This is referred to as "Researcher Bias" and it is a qualitative research aspect that has led to the view that qualitative research is subjective rather than objective (Kuwalich, 2005). Second, observation, as Halbe (2011) maintains, carries the aspect of the observer's paradox where the participant becomes aware and conscious of his/her verbal and physical behavior. For this reason, the interviews have been selected and used to corroborate the observation data and my interpretations because since there were no field recordings, I could have been biased and partial in selecting what to consider and analyze. Moreover, the participants could have altered or retained speech acts due to my presence as an observant. Hence, the interview data functions as a complement for the field observation's data.

#### **D. Data Collection**

The field observation was carried out for eleven days in spring-summer 2017 at the Wissam Al Hassan Site. Two main types of settings were researched: trainings and offices of several ISF regiments. I observed two official ceremonial trainings, a morning briefing, three intervention trainings, escort training, four informal office meetings and three armor inspections. The reason why I chose to observe two types of settings, the trainings and offices, has its foundation in studies as Halbe's, who concluded that ritualized settings as trainings comprise more bold-on record imperatives than offices, or Vine's study that showed how purpose of interaction (setting), along with social distance and status, affect the use of directives in a workplace. Thus, my aim as an observer of distinct settings was to observe how the setting affected politeness in terms of address, directives, replies, compliments, advice and criticism. That is, I tried to research whether trainings



(intervention, escort, and ceremonial trainings) and offices (office work and armor inspection) as a contextual factor manifested distinct signs of politeness in the speech acts. Social distance, one of the three variables Brown and Levinson highly regard to shape politeness, was another variable that I examined. It was measured by the degree of familiarity between the ISF personnel. The context was considered familiar if it comprised low social distance and formal if it comprised high social distance. Office work and intervention trainings were marked as informal contexts because of the low social distance among its members. Armor inspection, morning briefing, ceremonial training and escort training were marked as formal contexts because of the high social distance among its members.

Moreover, rank was measured according to setting and social distance, where I attempted to focus on equal and different ranks in a multitude of situations that had various familiarity levels. For example, I came across several contexts where trainers had to train with a new trainer, or where a very-close knit unit had to receive outside members for armor inspection. This exhibited fluctuation in familiarity levels across different settings, and rank was analyzed accordingly. Therefore, formality and informality were measured on a gamut of low to high social distance and on a range of low to high rank. In other words, high social distance and higher ranks would mark the context as formal, and low social distance and lower ranks would denote an informal context. Furthermore, I was capable of examining peer gatherings (only NCOs) and superior-subordinate exchanges and of examining how equal and dissimilar ranks made use of the speech acts. It is important to note that the observations spanned for approximately 5 to 6 hours per day depending on the availability of participants, where I took field notes since there were no recordings.

Furthermore, only one regiment was observed more than once, and that was the regiment where I observed its participants in three informal office meetings and in all of the armor inspections with all the participants present: the first lieutenant and the three NCOs. The rest of the contexts observed varied across regiments, participants' availability and setting type.

As for the interviews, I administered the interview to 42 ISF personnel of different units and different ranks. 21 Commissioned officers were interviewed (3 colonels, 2 lieutenant colonels, 3 commandant majors, 4 captains, 5 first lieutenants and 4 lieutenants). 21 non-commissioned officers were interviewed as well (6 gendarmes, 3 corporals, 4 sergeants, 3 major sergeants, 2 adjutants, 1 Chief adjutant, 1 aspirant and 1 chief aspirant). The main motive behind selecting NCOs and COs of different ranks is to attempt to have as many ranks as possible participating in this study so that the consequence of rank on linguistic expressions can be better examined. The interview was structured to investigate the extent of agency that rank, social distance and setting had on politeness in the targeted linguistic speech acts. The questions examined the degree of formality between superior, peer and subordinate and whether it varied between different settings. Moreover, one question examined whether a higher rank can alter the degree of in/formality between peers, i.e., can change the informal context into a formal one. Furthermore, the interview looks into how the participants address each other and what types of directives they would give those of lower, equal and higher rank. This aims to research if address terms and directives are affected by social distance and rank. Furthermore, the interview questions assess how the participants would respond to a directive given by personnel of dis/similar ranks, and if they would give compliment, advice and even criticize those of lower, equal and higher

rank. Again, this looks into the authority that rank, setting and social distance can have over address, directives, advice, criticism, compliments, and response.

### **E. Data Analysis**

The study relies on descriptive statistics to numerically describe the data collected. I examined whether the terms chosen are polite by adopting the notion that politeness is above what is required from the participants. What is 'politic' or expected is analyzed as conventionalized by the institution as the suitable way of exchanging talk. While, what is regarded as 'impolite' is less than what is required by the conventions of the ISF institution. The contextual factors are considered as influencers behind the reproduction of politic behavior and the establishment of a discourse type between superior and subordinate that might set norms that challenge the politic behavior. The interview's data is compared to that of the observation to examine whether they correlate or whether discrepancies arise between what is reported and what is observed.

Address terms were examined between subjects who are of equal and different ranks. Certain address terms that exceed the required denote high familiarity, while other terms denote informality within the structure of politic behavior and politeness. As for directives, the degree of politeness when it came to requests and orders depended on the degree of mitigation and indirectness. The observation and the interview's questions followed Ervin-Tripp's (1976) and Blum-Kulka (1987)'s model that regard query preparatory (can) or interrogative directives to be less direct than the need statement or the imperative that is usually given to lower ranks. A direct imperative or a need statement would be regarded as suitable from a higher rank officer to a lower rank officer. However, if the higher rank

officer used instead of an imperative an interrogative/query preparatory then that would be marked as polite. Whereas, if a lower rank officer were to give an imperative or the need statement to a higher rank officer then that would be marked as impolite and less of what is deemed as the necessary linguistic behavior. Therefore, direction of the directives was considered (that is rank) with the extent of familiarity among the personnel and the setting because context can shape the use and selection of directives. When it came to advice, the response options given in the interview do not vary in indirectness according to Halbe (2011), but the act of advising in itself is rank sensitive, that is, subordinates are not expected to advice. Thus, advice was inspected in terms of whether the subject would or would not advice in light of rank and social distance. As for criticism, another rank-sensitive variable, the act of criticizing was analyzed in terms of direction, from which rank to another. The degree of in/directness employed was considered in light of social distance and setting; the more a criticism is softened by hedges, disclaimers, parenthetical verbs, downtoners and other linguistic devices by a higher officer, the more it is considered as indirect, and thus, polite. Paralinguistic features as intonation, pitch, stress and volume were considered as well because prosodic elements can mitigate or boost an expression. As for compliments (along with solidarity makers and jokes), they were analyzed as well in terms of direction, familiarity and setting because these contextual elements can affect the possibility of expressing a joke or a solidarity marker. Therefore, the more a speech act is unnecessarily mitigated or phrased indirectly, the more it is rendered as polite affected by one of the contextual factors at the moment.

## **F. Limitations to the Study's Generalizability**

This is a small scale qualitative exploratory study that examines the use of politeness in a specific site utilized by the Lebanese Internal Security Force for work. It does not make any general claims about the ISF since it surveyed one site with its accessible regiments. Moreover, even though there has been a boost in female officers joining the ISF, I decided to exclude them from the study sample to avoid tackling gender and power, which is a vast research topic on its own. Therefore, only male participants have been considered. Finally, it is important to consider that there were no CO peers observed, only NCO peers were observed. The nature of the settings, the personnel distribution and the office structures limited such interactions to be observed; therefore, no field study could be made about CO peers even though they reported verbally on how they usually interact linguistically in the interview.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS

The results of the study are analyzed where the interview's information are compared to the observation data to investigate if they correlate. The research questions tackle how social distance, setting, imposition and rank influence address terms, directives (orders and advice), expressives (criticism and compliments), and their replies among ISF personnel of equal and unequal ranks. It looks into how the contextual variables influence the politic behavior institutionalized by the military institution and conventionalized among its members. When the contextual variables lead the subjects to express more than what is required of them, the subjects are marked as being polite. When the contextual variables lead the subjects to express less than what is required of them, they are marked as being impolite. Hence, politeness and impoliteness are marked behavior that is either an excess or an absence of the required politic behavior. In order to measure the social distance variable, the study examined informal contexts (the office work and intervention trainings) that are defined by low social distance to compare them to the formal contexts (armor inspection, ceremonial training and morning briefing) to investigate the effect of familiarity on address and the speech acts. The study reports as well on other speech acts that came across the researcher as refusals, jokes and interruptions.

#### **A. Address Terms**

##### **1. *Observation Data***

The institutionalized politic address expected from subordinates to their superiors is *sæyyidi* "Sir" or rank preceded by *ḥadrit* "Honorable" as *ḥadrit 'il 'æmīd* "Honorable general". Upon greetings, the expected greeting is *'ihtirāme* or *'ihtirāmēte sæyyidi* "My respect or respects sir". Furthermore, the pronoun employed with the superior is *ḥadirtæk* "You" (formal).

#### a. Informal Contexts

In informal office work, two units were observed. The COs are very familiar with the NCOs. They are units that consist of a head CO and a lower CO, second-in command. The second-in command CO heads an office with several NCOs that carry on daily work, thus, the social distance among participants is minimal. NCOs are generally addressed in these contexts by their first names from their COs. One first lieutenant even addressed his NCO by *ḥæbībi* "My dear", a very cordial term, and he explained that this is because they are a very tight Special Forces unit where they face hazardous situations that draw them closer together regardless of rank differences. They even have nicknames for each other as 'tiger' or 'eagle'. COs are generally addressed by their NCOs as *sīdnæ* "Our sir", and upon greetings *'ihtirāme* "My respect" or *'ihtirāme sīdnæ* "My respect sir". One first lieutenant is heavily addressed by his two NCOs as *m'ælme* "My teacher"; however, they did not address the CO in that term in front of outside NCOs, and instead used *sīdnæ*. Very high COs address lower COs, whom they share the floor with and are familiar with, by rank and rank+last name and they are addressed either by or *sīdnæ* or *ḥadrit* +rank "Honorable+rank". Nevertheless, COs who are close in rank with lower COs, report to address the lower CO using first name instead of rank. One first lieutenant called his

lieutenant *baṭāl* "Champ" because he considers him a peer and they work out together; and he said if there were higher COs present, or if they were in a formal context, he cannot address him that way; instead, he would address him with his rank. This reflects the effect of rank and formality of context on address terms. However, when asked if they would greet or address their peer differently in the presence of a superior, 14 COs (67%) and 13 NCOs (62%) explained that they would not, with more than half of them expressing that the content not the address would change. The rest of the subjects explained they would address their peer formally out of respect for the superior. There are no conventionalized rules that dictate that in the presence of a higher rank, first names or nicknames with a peer should be replaced with more formal terms as rank or rank+last name. Perhaps subjects consider that rules of formality between subordinate and superior apply to peers in the presence of a higher rank. After all, the fact that both groups (those who said they would change the address in the presence of a superior and those who said they wouldn't) explained that the content of the talk should change, shows that higher rank symbolizes formality in some way. The rules of peer communication, unfortunately, are not that well delineated in the ISF and should be considered for further study.

Another first lieutenant addressed his lieutenant by the pet name 'Zouzou', which is a nickname for Joseph. NCOs, who share offices and are of similar and different ranks, address each other by first name mostly, sometimes via rank, and there was even *ḥæbībi* used a couple of times among them. It is important here to reiterate and emphasize that while COs address their NCOs mostly by first name; it is not the same case always for their subordinate COs. In the observation, very high COs addressed their subordinate COs via rank or rank+last name, instead of the first name that was more common among COs of



closer rank. This could be explained as the effect of rank; in other words, if there is a large gap between ranks, the personnel appear to be more formal, perhaps to mind the rank difference and the status or symbolic prestige it carries. Another reason could be the influence of social distance because usually COs as first lieutenants and lieutenants share trainings and offices; this could draw them closer where the age gap is minimal in comparison to higher COs. Furthermore, adjacent ranks usually go through military school together and the proximity of the age could make formality rules less strict.

Intervention trainings, a different setting, showed major similitude to office work in addresses. Each training included a head CO, a first lieutenant, with a lieutenant (second-in-command), along with several NCOs of different ranks who were familiar with each other and had trained together before. Therefore, this setting comprised low social distance. The COs were addressed by *sīdnæ*, and the NCOs were addressed as well mostly by their first names; there were a few occasions of last name calling. *Yæ 'ibni* "My son" and *yæ hæbībi* "My dear" were highly used to NCOs by the training COs in this context. Some were called on humorously by certain characteristics as *ṭabbūsh* "Chubby". One NCO was even addressed twice by *yæ se 'dēn* "You Monkey" because he is extremely active. This setting, though is different in nature than office work and is regarded as more rigid, displays likeness to office work in address in terms of flexibility and nicknames where it implies that familiarity among the subjects is stronger than the structuralized character of the setting.

#### b. Formal Context

Armor inspection is a procedure where various NCOs visit a specific unit to get their armor inspected. The unit observed is the same one observed for two informal office works; therefore it is the same setting as above. It is a very close unit where there is a head CO, the first lieutenant, along with his NCOs, and they receive outside NCOs for armor inspection and registration. The social distance factor in this context is generally high because the outside NCOs, even if they have previously been inspected by the same unit, still are not very familiar with the unit's members. The CO is greeted by the visiting NCOs with either *'ih̄tirāme s̄eyyidi/s̄īdnæ* "My respect sir" or with *'ih̄tiramēte* "My respects"; while, the outside NCOs are addressed by rank or rank+last name; there were very few instances where they were called upon by last name. It is important to note that *s̄eyyidi* was not used by the NCOs who are part of the unit to address their CO, but it was very common when outside NCOs addressed the head CO during inspection. While *s̄eyyidi* is required as the politic address to superiors, *s̄īdnæ* is used more frequently with superiors who are very familiar with their subordinates.

In the ceremonial trainings, there was a plethora of COs and NCOs present. The context was generally formal because there was a significant variance in ranks and the trainings were for the official ceremony for the ISF's 156th inauguration. The COs (even COs that work closely with the commander) were addressed by the general commander and the second-in command general in front of the company with rank+last name. Higher COs were referred to as *s̄īdnæ* or with *h̄adrit* +rank.

### c. Pronouns

When it came to pronouns used for address, *ḥaḍirtæk* "You"(formal) in place of *'intæ* "You"(informal) was commonly used to address COs by NCOs. Lexically, both referential pronouns are distinct, and pragmatically *ḥaḍirtæk* marks reverence for someone higher in stature or rank while, *'intæ* does not. There was an incident where a sergeant, who was getting his armor inspected, was corrected by an adjutant in the CO's team for saying to the first lieutenant *'intæ* instead of *ḥaḍirtæk*; nevertheless, one NCO, who is part of the unit, did address his CO with *'intæ* on various occasions. Moreover, NCOs who were sharing the same office, even if different ranks, addressed each other by *'intæ*. One CO reported that COs of same or close rank use *'intæ*, but COs who are familiar with each other and are of distant unequal ranks say *ḥaḍirtæk*; this manifests the powerful impact of rank where even members of low social distance but far-off ranks maintain more formal address terms and pronouns. The effect of social distance in this context (CO with CO) seems weaker than rank, however, it is still active and powerful in different contexts.

## **2. Interview Data**

In the interview, when asked how they address their superior, peers and subordinates, the COs and NCOs showed significant similarities between them as two distinct groups and correlation to the observation data. As shown in tables 1 and 2, 12 NCOs (57%) and 16 COs (76%) greet their superior with *'iḥtirāmi+ sīdnæ /sæyyidi*. 19 NCOs (90.5%) and 17 COs (81%) address their peer with first name; while 14 NCOs (67%) and 12 COs (57%) address their subordinate with first name.

CO	Superior	Peer	Subordinate
Greeting			
Greeting+rank			
Greeting+Last name			
Greeting+sīdnæ/sæyyidi	1		
Greeting+rank+last name			
Rank+last name		1	
Rank		2	6
Sīdnæ	1		
'ih̄tirāmi	3		
'ih̄tirāmi+sīdnæ/sæyyidi	16		
'ih̄tirāmi+rank			
Last name		1	3
First name		17	12
Other			

Table 1 Address terms used by ISF COs

NCO	Superior	Peer	Subordinate
Greeting			
Greeting+rank			
Greeting+Last name			
Greeting+sīdnæ/sæyyidi			
Greeting+rank+last name			
Rank+last name		2	3
Rank			
Sīdnæ			
'ih̄tirāmi	9		
'ih̄tirāmi+sīdnæ/sæyyidi	12		
'ih̄tirāmi+rank			
Last name			
First name		19	14
Other			

Table 2 Address terms used by ISF NCOs

This correlates with the observation data that shows that NCOs and COs address their subordinates and peers usually with first name and their superior with *sīdnæ/sæyyidi*.

Moreover, 4 COs (19%) and 3 NCOs (14%) who chose *ih̄tirāmi sæyyidi/sīdnæ* for superior

expressed that *sæyyidi* is more formal than *sīdnæ*; it is used with officers with higher social distance. This explains why *sæyyidi* is more frequent in armor inspection because the participants are not familiar with each other, so the context becomes more formal demanding the conventions of formality and the linguistic conventions of the ISF to be met. Since *sæyyidi* is the conventionalized and institutionalized politic behavior, it is used to signal formality. It has grown, apparently, to signal high social distance between the subordinate and the superior, while *sīdnæ* could signify a more intimate relation between unequal ranks. It could be said that *sīdnæ* has been naturalized and turned politic among members of the ISF to signal familiarity. This illustrates how politic behavior has been reproduced and challenged by the social distance factor where personnel of different ranks have naturalized the term *sīdnæ* that is not prescribed by the politic behavior without it being considered as face-threatening or face-losing terms, i.e, impolite. Furthermore, another linguistic dimension can be brought to light considering that the conventionalized *sæyyidi* is in *fusha* while *sīdnæ* is in *ammiyah*. The institution's code, as explained earlier, is in *fusha*; however, the fact that the majority of participants prefer *ammiyah* expressions to convey familiarity reveals that there are reasons behind the alternation between both languages and the establishment of familiar expressions in the everyday dialect which call for further study (for more on problems of diglossia in Arabic refer to Al-Kahtany, 1997 and Zughoul, 1980).

Furthermore, 9 NCOs (43%) and 3 COs (14%) explained that they prefer to address a peer or a subordinate by rank or rank+last name if they do not know that person well (high social distance) that is, if they are in a formal relationship. 2 of the 12 (9.5%) expressed that they would go instead for first names or even pet names if they are very close (low social

distance). This correlates to the observation data on two levels. First, first name was highly used among peers and to subordinates who share offices and are familiar; therefore, first name could imply familiarity and intimacy because as Lakoff (1990) explains formal talk replaces names with titles; therefore, informal talk applies names instead. In addition, first names suggest camaraderie in cultures that advocate openness. Second, the close-knit Special Force unit's personnel, who are very close, share nicknames as 'tiger' and pet names. The COs' usage of the cordial terms *ḥæbībi* "My dear" and *'ibni* "My son" can signify the intent to build solidarity with their NCOs because as Shivitiel (n.d) maintains that *ḥæbībi* in the Arabic language is a term that shows politeness and affection. It exceeds what is required of the COs in address with their subordinates. In addition, 2 NCOs addressed their superior with *m'ælme* "My teacher/mentor"; this is open to the interpretation to be polite because they are implying that the CO does not only outrank them, but is wiser or more knowledgeable. Thus, the nicknames names and the cordial terms can be regarded as polite and a positive politeness strategy that aims to construct a bond and to decrease social distance. The expression of solidarity is a positive politeness redressive strategy that appeals to the hearer's positive face (Brown & Levinson, 1987). COs are not expected or required to build solidarity with their subordinates nor are the subordinates required to. The fact that affectionate terms and nicknames are produced reciprocally between unequal ranks shows that the contextual term, social distance, has influenced the politic behavior and resulted in terms that are open to be interpreted as polite and as solidarity markers.

Therefore, these solidarity markers occurred between those who are familiar with each other, signaling the strong effect of social distance on address. Thus, rank or rank+last

name could indicate a formal relationship among peers and subordinates and a high social distance. This is further supported by the data from the armor inspection where outside NCOs were addressed by rank or rank+last name by the head CO instead of the first name address that is common with his NCOs. As for the effect of setting on address, intervention trainings showed considerable similarity to office work, where there were cordial terms and nicknames in both settings that enjoyed low social distance among its members. Even though trainings are expected to be more firm, this setting showed great flexibility in address terms because it even included funny name-calling. This reflects that the nature of the setting was not more considerable than social distance.

As mentioned in the beginning, 14 COs (67%) and 13 NCOs (62%) explained that they would not address their peer differently if a higher rank is present (formal context). However, the fact that the lieutenant mentioned that he cannot address his lieutenant by *baṭāl* "Champ" in a formal context, and instead he has to use rank; or that the NCOs did not call their CO *m'ælme* "My teacher" in front of outside NCOs show the effect of context and its degree of formality on address among the ISF personnel and calls for further study to discern the disparity between the observation and interview data.

As for the *'intæ* "You" (informal) and *ḥaḍirtæk* "You" (formal), it can be said that they hold the same difference as *tu* and *vous* in other European languages, where the *tu* and *vous* were non-reciprocal between personnel of unequal status; the *vous* would be used to those of higher class as a mark of respect for those in power, and the *tu* was used for those who are lower in rank (Brown and Gilman, 1972). This is evident when the outside NCO was corrected for saying *'intæ* to the CO as opposed to the expected *ḥaḍirtæk*. Thus, *ḥaḍirtæk* is

the politic pronoun used for those higher in rank and *'intæ* seems to be less than what is required in this context, and hence, it is deemed as impolite.

Nevertheless, one NCO who was very intimate with his CO addressed him several times with *'intæ* instead of the expected *ḥadirtæk*. This is considered to be impolite and unexpected by the ISF's politic behavior. Subordinates should not refer to their superiors by *'intæ*; it is a violation to the ISF's linguistic conventions. However, the NCO's utilization of *'intæ* was not regarded as impolite by the CO nor was it corrected because the CO has permitted this term to be used with him. This could be due to the low social distance between both subjects that the CO has challenged the politic behavior and established a discourse type that allows for this term to be used with him by his familiar NCOs. This is an indicator of how the politic behavior was reproduced as a result of one of the contextual factors. Consequently, the pronoun *'intæ* does not imply impoliteness in this discourse type, but an impoliteness to the politic behavior; unlike the above-described formal context, where the term denoted impoliteness because the high social distance between the CO and the NCO did not establish a discourse type that rendered this term as acceptable.

## **B. Directives**

The politic and conventionalized forms of directives in the ISF are the bold imperatives and the need statements. On the scale of directness, they are the most direct and explicit (Ervin-Tripp, 1976). Superiors are not expected to mitigate their directives; this is what is termed as a *'æmir 'æskari* "Military order". A military order is an institutionalized directive that is established as the appropriate form and the politic behavior superiors utilize with their subordinates.



## 1. *Observation Data*

### a. Informal Context

In office work, where the units are very well acquainted with each other, directives varied. With their own NCOs, the COs usually vacillated between imperatives, need statements, softened imperatives (please+imperative) and imbedded imperatives (interrogative), depending on the level of imposition and on the degree of familiarity. Nevertheless, the main form of directives used by COs with their NCOs was the imperative:

- (1) (a) *jīb* "Get"
- (b) *hfāz* "Memorize"
- (c) *shūf* "Check"
- (d) *ḡine* "Give me"
- (e) *tæ 'æ* "Come"
- (f) *mōl* "Do"
- (j) *ṭlā '* "Leave"

The need statement *bædde* "I need" was heavily utilized as well by the COs with their subordinates:

- (2) (a) *bædde tshifle* "I need you to check"
- (b) *bædde tjible* "I need you to get for me"
- (c) *bædde ṭhoṭ* "I need you to put"
- (d) *bædde tiḡkī* "I need you to talk to him"

The information questions formulated by the COs were direct as well:

(3) (a) *shu 'ællæk?* "What did he say?"

(b) *'intæ hkīt?* "Did you talk?"

(c) *'ijæ?* "Has he come?"

What was surprising is that in this context, unlike formal contexts, the COs imbedded or softened their imperatives (softened imperatives) if the imposition was high. Examples of high imposition would be when the CO would request for something after he has already requested for another service, or when the CO wanted the NCO to do something while the latter was engaged with another task. On certain occasions, the COs softened the imperative with a "Please" or with its Arabic counterpart *'mol mæ 'rūf* "please"+imperative:

(4) (a) *plīz sækkir lbēb ba 'dæk* "Please close the door after you"

(b) *'mol mæ 'rūf 'æyyiṭlo* "Please call him"

(c) {first name}, *'mol mæ 'rūf jible niscafē mæ 'æk* "{First name}, please get me some Nescafe with you"

These utterances are considered in Arabic as a *ṭalabāt mulāṭafa* "Softened requests" by the *'mol mæ 'rūf* "Please". Another form highly used by the COs to lessen the force of a direct imperative when the imposition was high was the interrogative directive. They imbedded the directive in an interrogative form, where the subject of the clause is also an addressee, and the action is possible at the time of the utterance. Interrogative directive is regarded to be less direct than the imperative or the need statement but it still maintains a directive intent (Vine, 2009; Ervin-Tripp, 1976). In Arabic, it is a *jomlæ ṭalabīyyā tæḥmil 'il 'æmir fī ṭayyātiḥæ* "It is a request that carries an order in its folds". Therefore, it is an indirect expression that imbeds a directive, and it is introduced by modal verbs can/could/will/would (Ervin-Tripp, 1976):

(5) (a) *bti 'dær t 'æyyitlu?* "Can you call him?"

(b) *fik tshefle wæyno?* "Could you check where he is?"

(c) *bitshefle wēn 'il mælæf?* "Can you see where the file is?"

(d) *bti 'dær tihkīle ye?* "Can/could you talk to him on my behalf?"

(e) *fik tdello 'æ mæktæb {name}?* "Could you show him to {name}'s office?"

The most common form of directives given from the NCOs to their officers, when they had to request for a service, was the permission directive: modal+beneficiary+have/verb+? While structurally it resembles the interrogative directive, in this directive there is a shift of focus to the beneficiary or recipient's activity, rather than the donor-addressee's activity (Ervin-Tripp, 1976).

(6) (a) *sīdnæ bæ 'd 'iznæk fīnæ nfil?* "Sir, after your permission, can we leave?"

(b) *bil 'izin minnæak sīdnæ bi 'dær 'ib 'ætæ?* "After your permission sir, may I send it?"

(c) *bæ 'd 'iznæk fīne 'ekhoḍ 'il wær 'æ?* "After your permission, may I take the paper?"

Permission directives are considered more indirect than other directives because they give the hearer the chance not to comply (Peccei, 1999). Furthermore, there were a few occasions where the NCOs used interrogatives with their superior:

(7) (a) *sīdnæ bṭa 'īne 'il 'ælæm?* "Sir, would you hand me the pen?"

(b) *fik sīdnæ tehsibæ?* "Can you calculate it sir?"

(c) *fik tihkī sīdnæ?* "Can you talk to him sir?"

While the majority did not use imperatives and the need statements with their COs, one NCO did give his CO a couple of direct imperatives:

(8) (a) *sīdnæ de 'ello* "Sir, call him"

(b) *sīdnæ se 'idne bil kætībe* "Sir, help me with the writing"

This is unexpected because subordinates are not linguistically permitted to give an imperative to their superiors. As for information questions, their questions were generally direct with *sīdnæ* signaling rank disparity, for example: *sīdnæ 'il bæŕ 'iyye wēn?* "Sir, where is the telegraph?" The NCOs in these familiar units, even though they were of various ranks, they used imperatives, softened imperatives or the need statement with each other. There were many examples found for interrogatives, but there were no permission directives even if the addressee was of a higher rank. Rank, among NCOs, does not appear to affect the degree of directness of directives.

(9) (a) *tæ 'æ* "Come" (imperative)

(b) *bædde tihkī læ* {first name} "I need you to talk to {first name}" (need statement)

(c) *'fīne 'il kibbæyse* "Give me the stapler" (imperative)

(d) *'mol mæ 'ruf jible mæn 'ūshe* "Please get me a mankoushe" (imperative softened by "please")

(e) *fīk tkhalliṣ?* "Could you finish up?" (interrogative directive)

(f) *khæyye wælæw 'illo y'æjjil* "Brother, please tell him to hurry up" (imperative softened by please)

Therefore, they utilized with each other different types of locution that have the same illocutionary force of requesting (Peccei, 1999).

In the intervention trainings, again bold imperatives were the norm from COs who were training their NCOs. The first lieutenant even gave their right hand lieutenants bold imperatives with direct questions. The prosodic elements in this context are more discernible because directives were usually delivered in a high pitch and a fast tempo:

(10) (a) *smæ* ' "Listen"

- (b) *zihle* "Move"
- (c) *'ærrib* "Get close"
- (d) *rækzo* "Focus"
- (e) *'ūm* "Get up"
- (f) *mæhællak* "Stay in your place"
- (g) *mshī* "Walk"
- (h) *bælæ hæki* "Stop talking"
- (i) *'intu 'ærbo sma 'o* "Come and listen"
- (j) *jīb l slēh* "Get the armor"

If the NCOs had to inquire after something that was unclear they utilized the formula *sīdnæ*+direct question. Though this context is marked by informality, there were no noted imbedded or softened imperatives even though weight of imposition varied.

#### b. Formal Context

When it came to armor inspection, the significant difference in directives from the office work context was the consistency of direct imperatives used by the CO to the outside NCOs, regardless of the degree of imposition.

- (9) (a) *nṭōr* "Wait"
- (b) *'mōl* "Do"
- (c) *khællīk* "Stay"
- (d) *rūh* "Go"
- (e) *nṭurnæ barra* "Wait for us outside"

Thus, there was no mitigation of directives that was apparent to the observer. The questions addressed to the outside NCOs were direct and unmitigated as well, mainly inquiring after their name and number as *'ismæk?* "Your name?" or *ræ'mæk?* "Your number?"

The official ceremonial trainings followed a similar pattern to intervention trainings, with COs of various ranks training lower COs for the ceremony, and the standard was bold imperative regardless of imposition. For example, one general who had previously requested the first lieutenant to go back to the line several times simply kept on restating the bold imperative without mitigating it: *mulēzim rjæ' læ wæra* "Lieutenant, go back". As for the escort training, where the social distance was high because the trainer (an NCO) is not familiar with the other trainees (NCOs), direct imperatives were used especially when giving guidelines as to posture, hand position, leg movement or to ask for someone to stand up. There were a few softened imperatives as well:

(11) (a) *zīh shwe* "Move a bit"

(b) *'ælle 'īdæk* "Lift you arm"

(c) *btæ'mol mæ'rūf bit'ūm?* "Could you please get up?"

## **2. Interview Data**

As shown in tables 3 and 4, 9 COs (43%) and 10 NCOs (48%) explained that they would choose other than the imperative/ imperative+ please/ I need you to/ can you do to give a directive for their superior. The options given varied but they are all different forms of permission directives that start with expressions that, as Shvitiel (n.d) claims, denote politeness: *min bæ'd 'iznæk*, *'izæ bæ'd 'æmræk* "After your permission", *'izæ btæ'mol mæ'rūf*, *izæ fi mæjēl sīdnæ* "If I may", *'izæ btesmæh̄ ḥaḍirtæk* "If you would allow" + can

we/can I (modal interrogative). *We* was used several times in place of *I* because *inclusive we* shows greater desire not to impose (Halbe, 2011). In addition, the second preferred directive towards superiors is the query preparatory (14% COs and 19% NCOs), which is an indirect directive. This data corroborates the observation data which reflects that subordinates prefer indirect requests as permission directives towards those higher in rank than other direct expressions.

<b>CO</b>	<b>Superior</b>	<b>Peer</b>	<b>Subordinate</b>
Imperative		4	11
Imperative+please	1	12	7
I need you to			
Can you do	3	2	1
Other	9	3	2

*Table 3* Directives used by COs

<b>NCO</b>	<b>Superior</b>	<b>Peer</b>	<b>Subordinate</b>
Imperative		7	3
Imperative+please	3	7	8
I need you to	2	1	2
Can you do	4	3	3
Other	10	3	1

*Table 4* Directives used by NCOs

When it came to giving peers a directive, NCOs and COs appear to favor the imperative+please and then the imperative. Even though the imperatives' force is attenuated by "please", the utterance still carries a "command to do" in its content. Furthermore, the preference for imperatives with peers in this context over other indirect directives is supported by other studies that have established imperatives to occur only between those that were similar in rank and were familiar (Gardner, 1968). So, participants who are

considered as peers share a similar status and greater familiarity than others, and they tend to use imperatives with each other.

With subordinates, 11 COs (52%) prefer the imperative and 7 COs (33%) prefer the imperative+please; while 8 NCOs (38%) prefer the imperative+please and 3 NCOs (14%) prefer either the imperative or the query preparatory. The interview data supports the observation data when it comes to imperatives and the softened imperatives being preferred with subordinates and between peers; however, the need statement, which was heavily utilized towards subordinates by COs and NCOs was not announced in the interview to be used with subordinates by the CO subjects. This could be a case of under-reporting that tends to occur in interviews and, thus, requires further investigation (Trudgill, 1972).

What was surprising as well in these obtained interview data was that 2 NCOs (9.5%) would use the need statement with their superior, and 3 NCOs (14%) and 1 CO (5%) would use imperative+please with their superior, considering that they are regarded as imperatives and are more direct than interrogatives or permission directives. This is supported by the fact that 2 NCOs (9.5%) and 8 COs (38%) stated that directives cannot be given to superiors and refrained from answering, and 19 (45%) in total chose to give more elaborate and indirect answers (permission directives) than the ones offered. Imperatives or the need statement towards superiors are considered in the ISF as impolitic and, thus, impolite. They are not expected to be used with superiors, and orders are regarded as face-threatening acts that lead to face loss and harm to the hearer's negative face (Brown and Levinson, 1978). Nevertheless, there was the case, mentioned above, of one NCO giving imperatives to his CO as *sīdnæ se 'idne bil kætībe* "Sir, help me with the writing". Giving a directive to a superior is open to be interpreted as impolite and it is less than what is required according



to the politic behavior. Nevertheless, since the CO did not rectify or punish him, it could be said that because of the minimal social distance between the CO and the NCO, that the CO has established a discourse type, where the directive is accepted and not regarded as impolite. Therefore, the directive is regarded as impolite to the conventional politic behavior, but not to the discourse type that is set by the CO and that is a consequence of the low social distance.

For superiors, the expected and politic linguistic behavior is to give clear imperatives to subordinates and it shows with the majority of COs and NCOs reporting to use the imperative or the softened imperative with their subordinates. However, that does not apply to all contexts all the time. As it shows from the observations, in the informal office work, there was a plethora of mitigated directives (as modal interrogatives) from COs to their NCOs where there was a low social distance and a high imposition, which was not the case in armor inspection where direct imperatives were constantly utilized with NCOs of higher social distance. This shows the consequence of social distance and imposition on directives; the lower the social distance and the higher the imposition, the more the directive is mitigated. Nevertheless, the fact that the superiors are mitigating their directives based on social distance and imposition is open to interpretation as them being polite. They are doing more than what is required by them linguistically; this mitigation and indirectness then could be the result of certain contextual factors and this could be regarded as politeness.

Moreover, the effect of the nature of the setting on politic behavior is discernible. When it came to intervention training, even though the personnel are familiar with each other and have trained numerous times, direct imperatives were constantly utilized regardless of the low social distance. This could be due to the fact that trainings are expected to be more

direct and louder than office work because they are spacious, timely and require physical effort. Furthermore, as Holmes (1984) maintains, pitch and volume can attenuate or strengthen the illocutionary force of a speech act. In this setting, the paralinguistic elements serve to boost the imperatives. The same goes for escort training, which is described with high social distance, and there was no mitigation of directives regardless of imposition and social distance. This shows that the character of the training as a distinct setting demands that directives be delivered directly and loudly, regardless of other contextual factors as social distance.

### **3. Replies to Directives**

When directives are given, they should be followed and not questioned to revere the rank. In informal contexts, however, as Halbe (2011) explains, personnel can ask questions and bring up ideas of their own. The most common and prevalent responses in this study were *hāḍīr/ sīdnæ* "As you wish/sir" and *to 'mor/sīdnæ* "After your command/sir". The institutionalized and the most familiar answer to a yes/no answer is *næ 'æm/ sīdnæ* "Yes/sir" (formal yes). Some NCOs did reply several times with *'eh* "Yes" (the Ammiya version of *næ 'æm*) or *'eh sīdnæ* "Yes sir" to their CO at certain occasions, but that was exclusive to the close-knit units that were observed (informal office work, intervention training), that is, outside NCOs barely replied to the head CO with *'eh*. They replied with *næ 'æm sīdnæ*, as did the COs with higher COs during ceremonial trainings. *Næ 'æm* is regarded as the politic response among ISF personnel, especially between superiors and subordinates; however, saying *'eh* can be regarded as impolitic and impolite among unequal ranks, but because of the low social distance among the NCO and his CO, it is accepted. Again, the CO could

have reproduced the politic behavior by setting a discourse type where the term is not regarded as impolite due to the intimate relation he shares with his NCO.

COs rarely used *næ'æm* in their units; instead *'eh* appeared to be more common when discoursing with their NCOs; thus, *'eh* can seem to signal familiarity among members. Among each other, NCOs replied to their peer's directive mostly with *'eh* "Yes" and *mēshe* "Alright", which are regarded as casual informal replies. On one occasion, an NCO told his peer to hand him the tissues, his peer replied with *fī mæjēl titrekne eshtighel?* "Can you let me work?" This was responded to by laughter and an "Okay" from the addresser. This reveals that among peers there is high tolerance for casual responses and room for direct rebuffs and insults. As for CO peers, they were not observed to explore how they give out directives to each other and the responses that would follow.

In the interview, a staggering 19 NCOs (90.5%) and 16 COs (76%) explained that they would reply to their superior with *bī'æmræk sīdnæ* "After your command sir", while the rest said to prefer *bte'mor, ḥāḍir* "As you wish" or *mæfhūm* "Understood". This correlates to the observation data. With peers, 16 (76%) in total (8 COs and 8 NCOs) said they would use *tikræm* "Sure" while 9 (43%) in total (4 COs and 5 NCOs) prefer "Okay". 2 COs (9.5%) and 1 NCO (5%) expressed that they would reply to their peer with *fīk 'æne, n'ibir min hon*, or *ḥill* that are different variations of "Buzz off". This coincides with the tissue incident that shows that there is room for friendly insults among peers without it being regarded as impolite, since it is shared among peers who are familiar with each other.

As for replying to directives given by their subordinate, 17 COs (81%) and 10 NCOs (48%) said that it is not possible. 1 CO (5%) explained that it is impractical for a subordinate to give a directive to his superior according to military language. However, 11

NCOs (52%) and 4 COs (19%) said they would reply with *tikræm* or "Okay" to a subordinate's directive. 1 CO (5%) explained that this is regarded as tolerance, that is to receive a directive from a subordinate and to reply to it politely. However, if a subordinate were to give a superior a directive that would be less of what is expected, and thus it is regarded as impolite and as an FTA. It threatens the negative face of the hearer and causes the speaker to lose face. Furthermore, the fact that 11 NCOs (52%) and 4 COs (19%) reported that they would receive a directive from a subordinate without linguistic objection is considered as in excess of what is required of them, and thus polite. This explains why the CO did not protest to his NCO giving him clear directives as *sīdnæ di'ello* "Sir, call him". He could be expressing tolerance towards his subordinate, and this could be the discourse norm supported by the low social distance between the two. Therefore, the contextual factor, social distance, could be behind the challenging and reproduction of the ISF's politic behavior with a discourse type that is in sharp contrast to the politic behavior.

## **C. Compliments**

### **1. *Observation Data***

While the polite code that is conventionalized in the ISF dictates that subordinates should be polite with their superiors, there is no dictum that prescribes that superiors should compliment their subordinates or vice versa, nor there is a rule for peers to praise each other.

#### **a. Informal Context**

The compliments in the office work were given after completing an assigned job and were generally invoking God. The NCOs would usually ask the COs if they required anything further and the COs usually expressed that nothing further was needed by either saying *Alla mæ'æk* "God be with you" or *ya 'ṭik l'āfyē* "God give you health". At the end of the interventions, the head COs usually thanked everyone's effort by saying either "Bravo" or *ya 'ṭikun l'āfyē* "God give you health". *Ya 'ṭiq 'l'āfē*, a ritualized code that makes use of God, was heavily used by superiors to their subordinates and not the other way around (it would be impolitic for a subordinate to say it to a superior). As for NCOs, they gave their superior compliments after the latter approved their specific requests as *m'ælme Alla ykhalīna yēk* "Master, God keep you" or *Alla yiḥfazak* "God save you".

#### b. Formal Context

In the morning briefing, the commander thanked and complimented the entire COs and the NCOs for their effort on consecutive missions by saying repeatedly *bhænnīkom* "I congratulate you". The ceremonial training exhibited similitude to intervention trainings with the head COs usually complimenting the subordinates' effort with "Bravo" or *ya 'ṭikun l'āfyē* "God give you health". Armor inspection exhibited no difference in complimenting behavior to office work. The CO and the NCO did not compliment distinctively according to familiarity of context. Therefore, considering that compliments were frequent in distinct settings and contexts that varied in familiarity, social distance and setting were not marked variables in this speech act.

However, direction was measured with the majority of compliments being initiated by superiors, mainly referencing God. The subordinates used more elaborate pre-ritualized

codes that invoke God as well as *Allah ykhaellik* or *Alla yiḥmīk* "God keep you". Thus, this data shows that the participants make use of pre-coded ritualized expressions as other Arabic speakers (Wolfson, 1983), and they reconfirm the tendency for Arabs to make reference to Allah (Nelson et al. 2002a,b); and this further confirms that invocation is culture-specific, pertaining to Arab-Islamic heritage, and resultant from invasive everyday religious expressions used by Arabs (in Farghal and Al-Khatib, 2001)

## **2. Interview Data**

In the interview, 9 COs (43%) and 12 NCOs (57%) explained that they would compliment their superior, peers and subordinates to give out encouragement and because it is an appreciation for good work. 14 COs and 14 NCOs (67%) explained that they would compliment their subordinate. The most common expressions reported to be used with superiors were:

(12) (a) *Allah yṭawwil be 'omræk* "God give you longevity"

(b) *Alla yiḥfaḏak* "God save you"

(c) *Allah ykhalīlna yēk* "God keep you"

(d) *Allah y'æwwīk* "God give you strength"

With regards to peers and subordinates, *ya 'īq 'l 'āfe* "God give you health" and "Bravo" were reported to be common.

6 COs (28.5%) and 4 NCOs (19%) explained that they would not give praise because the personnel are doing their assigned job "work is work", out of which 2 COs (9.5%) explained that there is no room for *mujemæle* "Flattery", only respect. 5 COs (24%) and 2

NCOs (9.5%) said that they would not praise their superior, but they would praise their peer and subordinate.

The interview data supports the direction of compliments established in the observation data since 14 COs and 14 NCOs (67%) explained that they would praise their subordinate. Therefore, the direction of the compliments was mostly downward with superiors initiating the compliments to their subordinates more than the reverse. This is in line with Wolfson's (1983) study where the majority of compliments directed to those with lower status. Wolfson (1984) explains that those in higher positions compliment more to encourage the desired behavior, and it is a positive reinforcement. Thus, praise or compliments can be marked as an appreciation of good work. The social distance and the setting do not show any significance on compliments and their responses for this speech act. Compliments were given whether there was high or low familiarity (compliments were given to subordinates regardless whether in armor inspection or in office work), or whether they were in training or in office work. In other words, superiors tended to wish the subordinates good health whether they were familiar with them or not, and subordinates would either reply by thanking and/or invoking.

The fact that 57% of the interviewees expressed that they would compliment those lower in rank to support good work, and the fact that 50% of the interviewees mentioned that they would compliment all personnel makes these compliments open to be interpreted as polite. Superiors are not required to praise, nor are the subordinates or the peers demanded to; this is reinforced by the 6 COs (28.5%) and 4 NCOs (19%) who explained that they do not compliment anyone. Apparently, compliments could be considered a type of flattery or *museyara*, and the latter do not desire to sweet talk as Arabs are accustomed to doing

(Katriel, 1986). Therefore, while the subjects explained that the main factor behind giving compliments is to give out encouragement, the cultural influence of sweet-talking should be considered.

### ***3. Replies to Compliments***

Brown and Levinson (1978) classify compliments as positive politeness strategies that decrease the threat of the FTA by minding the positive face of the addressee and his wants. Thus, they reduce social distance between the hearer and the speaker, and they boost solidarity. However, in certain cultures, compliments are considered as face threatening because they express the desire to have the object and the possession of the hearer, and therefore, they threaten the hearer's negative face (to have his freedom unimpeded by others). In the obtained data, the compliments were generally expressions of gratitude and praise of effort and skill. Hence, they were anointing to the addressee's positive face and expressing similar interests. There were no compliments towards the object the addressee has, so it is safe to assume that compliments in this context were positive politeness strategies. Furthermore, since there are no requirements to compliment, this speech act is regarded as polite in this context. As for compliments' responses, Brown and Levinson (1978) explain that they too are FTAs as in debt-sensitive cultures where the addressee has to offer the object of desire (in case the compliment was about a possession), and thus be regarded as incurring a heavy debt; or where they have to reject or deflect the compliment. The responders in the data accepted the compliment, as in other studies on Arabs (see Farghal and Al-Khatib, 2001), thus showing that compliments are not regarded as threatening in this context but a positive politeness strategy (Brown and Levinson, 1978),



and that the Arab culture motivates verbal self-enhancement which improves one's face and honor (El-Harake, 2005). Therefore, unlike other collectivistic cultures, Arabs display tendencies to acknowledge and accept compliments as self-enhancement strategies that differentiate the self from the other (Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998).

In addition, the most common responses to the compliments were returning the compliment via invocation and thanking (similar to Jordanian students' response behavior in Farghal & Al-Khatib, 2001). The replies to the subordinates' compliments were mainly accepting it by thanking, as replying with *shukraen* "Thank you" or its French counterpart "Merci"; a code-switching phenomenon prevalent in Arabic societies, and an effect of colonial occupation (Feghali, 1997; Bentahila, 1983). However, subordinates mainly accepted the compliment by thanking and/or invoking through using precoded ritualistic phrases referencing God. Therefore, superiors replied to the compliment by thanking and not invocation; however, subordinates accepted it by either thanking and/or invoking. The fact that subordinates, unlike the superiors, felt the need to invoke after thanking, even though it is not required of them, implies that perhaps only thanking does not express enough gratitude for a compliment given by a higher rank. While, they could have simply accepted it by thanking, some of the subordinates manifested marked politeness by invoking and going beyond what is expected. Peer to peer compliment was not observed.

## **D. Advice**

### **1. *Observation Data***

Advice is a directive speech act (Halbe, 2011) that demands a higher status or high wisdom and expertise on the level of the addresser. In the military language, subordinates

are not expected to advice or give a suggestion to their superior, but to draw his attention (*læfit næzær*) in case of any mistake or error that was overlooked. They would usually start the phrase with *Sīdnæ fī mæjēel 'il fitlak næzæræk?* "Sir, may I draw your attention". Superiors are expected to advice their subordinates since they are in a higher position and have received more training in military work.

a. Informal Context

The observation data when it comes to advice is scarce. It was only found in the office work in two circumstances. Therefore, I cannot draw a comparison between this informal context and the armor inspection, or between the office work and the trainings as distinct settings. On one occasion, the head CO advised his NCO to go further with the paper work by saying *bonṣahak tghayyiræ* "I advise you or I recommend you to change it". This is regarded as a direct advice, delivered by high personnel concerning ISF duties. Moreover, an NCO advised his CO by *sīdnæ 'æhsæn læ {first name} yæ 'melæ* "Sir, it is better for {first name} to do it". The NCO advised his CO directly on who is the best man for the job, and the CO did not object.

**2. Interview Data**

Tables 5 and 4 show the preferred advice used by COs and NCOs, with the majority of participants giving other options than the ones offered when it came to advising a superior.

CO	Superior	Peer	Subordinate
I recommend you do	1	13	16

It is in your best interest to	2	3	3
If you want the mission to succeed you have to	1		
Other	10	3	3

Table 5 Advice used by COs

<b>NCO</b>	<b>Superior</b>	<b>Peer</b>	<b>Subordinate</b>
I recommend you do	2	14	13
It is in your best interest to		4	2
If you want the mission to succeed you have to	2	2	2
Other	4		

Table 6 Advice used by NCOs

Halbe (2011) claims that the response options do not vary in directness, but their use depends on rank. In her data, one CO explained that "it is in your best interest to" would not be accepted from a subordinate.

When asked if they would advise their superior, 7 COs (33%) and 13 NCOs (62%) said that they would not advise their superior, but they would draw their attention instead. This reveals that to draw the superior's attention is pragmatically and semantically regarded different than giving advice. Therefore, they refrained from giving an answer. 10 COs (48%) and 4 NCOs (19%) explained that they would advise their superior but not with the options given. They gave other options as:

(13) (a) *sīdnæ, 'izæ momkin 'iktīræh?* "Sir, may I give a suggestion?" (suggestion)

(b) *sīdnæ læw btismæh 'iktīræh* "Sir, if I may suggest" (suggestion)

(c) *'intæ 'ædræ bæs 'ænæ be ræ 'ye* "You would know better, but in my opinion"

(advice phrased as opinion)

- (d) *'æncæ be ræ 'ye sīdnæ* "Sir, in my opinion" (advice phrased as opinion)
- (e) *'æna bfaððil* "I prefer" (opinion)
- (f) *shō ræ 'yæc sīdnæ....?* "What do you think sir of ..?" (asking for opinion)
- (g) *sīdnæ naʃīhæ minne* "Sir, my advice" (advice)
- (h) *sīdnæ kermel mæslæhtæk* "Sir, for your own good you should" (advice)
- (i) *hēk 'ænsæb...* "It is better to..." (advice)
- (j) *næsihte...* "My advice is to..." (advice)

Some of the options given are examples of suggestion, which even though is less forceful and authoritative as advice, is still considered to be rank-sensitive. *sīdnæ, 'izæ momkin 'iktīræh* "sir, may I give a suggestion?" and *sīdnæ læw btismæh 'iktīræh* "Sir, if I may suggest" come in the form of permission questions as to whether the subordinate can suggest something or not; this can be considered as an indirect suggestion. The advice *'æncæ be ræ 'ye sīdnæ* "Sir, in my opinion" occurred four times (28%). It is an opinion that carries the implication of advice: an indirect advice. The expression *'intæ 'ædræ bæc 'æncæ be ræ 'ye* "You would know better but in my opinion" is another opinion that implies advice where the speaker elevates the COs judgment and denigrates his own; it can be explained in GU's (1990) self-denigration maxim, which is a positive politeness strategy, that praises the hearer at the speaker' expense to show politeness. Other statements as *shō ræ 'yæc sīdnæ..?* "What do you think sir of ..?" ask for the superior's opinion and advice instead of giving one.

These options either express permission to give a suggestion or imply advice through opinion. They are indirectly phrased into suggestions or opinions to avoid directness in advice since this speech act is not expected from a subordinate in the ISF. Nevertheless,

within the options given, there were directly-phrased advices as *næsīhte* "My advice is to" or *sīdnæ naṣīhæ minne* "Sir, my advice". Subordinates are not supposed to advise their superior; it would be considered as threatening the superior's good judgment. Thus, these advice are considered as a violation to the politic behavior, and context is required for this speech act because the subjects, while answering, could have drawn on established discourse type with their COs (where it could be the norm to advise their superior). Therefore, while it could be said that *sīdnæ 'æhsæn læ {first name} yæ 'melæ* "Sir, it is better for {first name} to do it" from the observation data is impolite according to the ISF's politic behavior, it might be the discourse norm agreed upon by both members and set by the superior. Hence, it might be because of low social distance that the speech act was not considered as impolite and part of the discourse type.

With peers, 13 COs (62%) and 14 NCOs (67%) chose "I recommend you do"; and 16 COs (76%) and 13 NCOs (62%) chose the former expression for their subordinates as well. Thus, with peers and subordinates, this form of advice is preferred. The observation data shows some relevance to the interview data on two occasions. First, the superior advised his subordinate with "I recommend you do"; this is supported by the interview where 76% of COs showed preference for saying "I recommend you do" to their subordinates. Since this expression is scarcely used with superiors and is found more between peers and towards subordinates, it might be regarded to be more direct than the other response options and less apt to be used with higher ranks. Moreover, the fact that 10 COs (48%) and 4 NCOs (19%) gave other options that varied in directness, raises the question of whether the response options are satisfactory for the local context. Peer advice and advice in trainings were not observed.

## **E. Criticism**

### **1. *Observation Data***

Superiors can directly criticize their subordinates with no amends. If subordinates criticize their superior, it is considered a violation to the politic code that is conventionalized in the organization and, thus, it is deemed as impolite and face-threatening.

#### a. Formal Context

When it came to office work and armor inspection (that comprise opposite levels of social distance), the criticism speech act was distinctive between the two contexts. Several direct unmitigated criticisms were issued from the CO to the NCO in the armor inspection that reprimanded either aspect of their physical or linguistic behavior. Armor inspection involves checking the serial number on the armor, and the NCOs usually have to expose the armor to the CO in his office with the muzzle turned away from the CO. On many occasions, the armor would be directed towards the CO or the NCOs would have failed to produce the proper documents. The latter reprimanded and criticized them directly with a serious tone:

(14) (1) *bæddæk tokhlæs minne?* "Do you want to get rid of me?" (question implying criticism)

(2) *hæydæ hēk mæ byinhəʔ* "This is not placed in this way" (criticism)

(3) *bromo læ tēne mæyle* "Turn it the other way around" (directive implying criticism)

(4) *le mænnæk mnəʔfo?* "Why haven't you cleaned it?" (question implying criticism)

(5) *bitjīb 'il wrā ' mæ 'æk min hællæ' w rāyih* "From now on, you get the papers with you" (directive implying criticism)

(6) *shīlo min hon* "Remove (the gun) from here" (directive implying criticism)

(7) *lē 'ēmīl fī hēk?* "Why have you done this to (the gun)?" (question implying criticism)

The CO criticized the NCOs directly during inspection. The interrogatives and directives in this context do not function as requests, but as criticism (Wierzbicka, 1985). These criticism require shared knowledge between the CO and the NCO about how to handle armor during inspection in order for the NCOs to draw the appropriate implicature behind the COs criticism, and they are different types of locutions that have one illocutionary force, to criticize (Peccei, 1999).

Furthermore, the CO criticized them for linguistic errors. When one NCO asked the CO if the colonel (the CO in charge of the entire floor) was present, he was corrected for saying "Sir, is the colonel here?" instead of the "Honorable colonel" by the CO: *ḥadrit 'il mou 'æddæm* "Honorable colonel". The politic behavior would be to refer to higher ranks with "honorable" not only with rank. This is considered as impoliteness because it does not meet what is required by the politic behavior. However, it is important to highlight that the NCOs, in this office, referred to the colonel on certain occasions without "Honorable" and they were not corrected by the CO. The reason the CO refrained from reprimanding them could be the low social distance between the CO and his NCOs that he has allowed for that kind of discourse, which otherwise could have been a failure of conduct. Therefore, as shown, superiors can criticize subordinates freely whether directly or indirectly, and they

do not need to be considerate of their feelings. However, it is not the case for subordinates because they cannot show disapproval of their superior's behavior.

There was one noted criticism delivered upward in rank by an outsider NCO who criticized the CO's eyesight because he asked about the former's signature place twice: *shō bēk sīdnæ mæ 'æm ti'shæ* "What is wrong sir? Can't you see?" The CO then firmly replied *hki be 'ædæb* "Be polite". The NCO directly apologized *'æfwæn sæyyidī* "Forgive me, sir". The CO's reply clearly articulates that the NCO's criticism was an infringement to the ISF's politic behavior; it was considered as impolite. The CO has not established a discourse type between both participants that gives room for mild criticism or criticism at all. Therefore, the NCO's criticism was not accepted and it was deemed to be rude according to the CO and to the conventionalized behavior.

#### b. Informal Context

The effect of social distance on criticism is clearly apparent when a comparison to armor inspection with office work is held. When discussing how to amend his outfit for the ceremony, the CO was making a statement that his NCO did not comprehend, so he kept on asking the CO to repeat the statement. Agitated the CO said in a soft tone: *yæ (first name) yæ hæbībe tæ 'æbitne 'ænxæ w 'æm 'idlæk!* "{First name}, my dear, I have exhausted myself by repeating to you!" Clearly, the CO has labored himself by repeating to the subordinate that he grew restless and criticized the NCO's slow comprehension. However, the fact that he kept on reiterating and softened the criticism with "My dear" shows that not only was he mitigating the criticism because of the intimate relationship he shares with his NCO, but he



is doing more than what is asked from him. Hence, the CO gave an indirect criticism to possibly reduce the threat of the criticism on the NCO's face using politeness.

On a different occasion, the CO told his NCO: *kæwnæk mæ 'æm tæ 'mol shī shifle shu le plat du jour* "Since you are free, check today's special". The NCO replied: *yæ sīdna ṭab te 'bēn le bæḷīd hek?* "Sir, I am tired, why are you so sluggish?" The CO then replied non-verbally by picking up the phone to call and ask about today's special. The fact that the NCO criticized directly the CO's lethargic behavior, and the latter did not object to it, shows acceptance on his part. It can be said that the CO's acceptance is non-verbal (Farghal & Al-Khatib, 2001). Nevertheless, the NCO's criticism is a breach of politic code, but in this informal context, it was not regarded to be impolite. The reason could be because of the discourse type the CO has established due to the low social distance between both subjects.

Again, the same CO, when the NCO brought him the wrong file, he criticized him saying: *hæydæ mish huwwe, jible hæydæk w shrāb 'æhwe 'æhsæn mæ næymæk hōn 'illæyle w tjin khæṭībtæk* "That is not the file. Get me that one and drink coffee or else you will sleep here tonight, and your fiancé will lose it". This criticism, though is a warning for a penalty, is indirect. It was delivered in a very light tone, and the fact that the CO referenced the NCO's fiancé and her manners shows that he is friendly with the NCO. The NCO's reply, moreover, further confirms the close relationship between them because he accepted the criticism by laughingly adding to it: *bitsīr tde 'llæk sīdnæ* "She will then call you sir". This is a good example of how criticism is affected by familiarity among those of unequal ranks. For the armor inspection, criticisms were delivered directly in a harsh tone and the most common response to them was *ḥadir* "As you wish" or *'æfwæn* "Excuse me".

However, in the office work, criticisms were delivered in a soft tone and mitigated by cordial terms and reference to personal subjects. Furthermore, in office work, criticisms were bidirectional, revealing the tolerance exhibited by the high ranks and the value of social distance. The responses to the criticism further reveal acceptance and support to the intimate relationship. Therefore, the fact that the COs rendered their criticism indirect to lessen the threat of the act on their NCOs is more than what is expected of them; this is regarded as politeness affected by social distance. In addition, the fact that subordinates were able to criticize their superior and it was handled positively shows that it was not considered as impolite but an element of the discourse type established by the superior and that reproduces the politic behavior in a specific interaction. The nature of the training setting did not display any difference to the office work setting; criticism was delivered humorously as well in the trainings, for example, one CO criticized his NCOs hyper-active nature by referring to him by *yæ se 'dēn* "You monkey" as mentioned before.

## ***2. Interview Data***

15 COs (71.4%) and 10 NCOs (48%) said they would not criticize their superior, they would draw their attention instead, while 18 COs (86%) and 14 (67%) NCOs said that they would criticize peer and subordinate. This shows the influence of rank on criticism where those with higher rank cannot be criticized. Criticizing those of higher rank is impolitic and is threatening to the hearer's face and can cause loss to the speaker's face and get him penalized; whereas, criticizing peer and subordinate is assumed to be regular. 6 COs (28.5%) and 7 NCOs (33%) said that they would criticize their superior with 10 (48%) of them explaining they would do so indirectly. 14 COs (67%) and 7 NCOs (33%) said they

would criticize their peer and subordinate directly and 7 NCOs (33%) said they would criticize them indirectly. Criticizing the superior, whether directly or indirectly, is a breach of conduct. The fact that 10 (48%) of them prefer to do so indirectly might imply that they are aware that doing so is a defiance to the politic behavior, so they have to mitigate it; or that they share a close bond with their superior (low social distance) that the latter has allowed them room for mild criticism. Furthermore, what is surprising is that 3 Cos (14%) explained that they would criticize their superior directly. Considering that criticisms, as orders, are a face-threatening act, the COs could be drawing on earlier experiences where they were not reprimanded for criticizing their superior, so they might feel it is constantly overlooked. Low social distance might again be an explanation for this behavior.

Regardless, criticizing those higher in rank deserves a penalty. Furthermore, there were many observed occasions for peer criticism as the aforementioned tissue incident or other paper-related issues. They were direct and the responses were either negations or acceptance.

## ***F. Refusal***

### ***1. Observation Data***

Military language dictates that directives from superiors cannot be rejected or defied at the expense of a punishment. The politic behavior stipulates that directives from an upper rank are to be obeyed and superiors are expected to reject directly, with no mitigation.

Refusals in the observation were limited.

#### **a. Informal Context**

In Office work, the CO refused several suggestions or statements given by his NCOs directly. This is expected behavior. One time the CO refused the NCO's plea for leaving earlier saying *mæ'le khallik hæbibi* "It's okay, stay dear". This is marked as polite because it is an indirect refusal mitigated by the cordial term *hæbibi* "My dear" that signals low social distance between the subjects. On another occasion, the CO asked his NCO to get him lunch, the NCO directly refused the order saying: *læ' sīdnæ, 'ēkher mærræ mæ 'ækæltō* "No sir, last time you did not eat it". This is a direct refusal to which the CO replied by restating the directive with an urgent tone: *tlā' jībo* "Go get it". The NCO then complied with the order. The fact that the subordinate directly refused his CO's order is considered a challenge to the latter's authority. According to ISF's politic behavior, this is considered as impoliteness. When the superior simply restated the order without reprimanding the NCO, he revealed that he did not regard the refusal to be impolite. The low social distance between them could be the reason why the superior decided to 'look the other way'. NCO peers rejected each other directly as well as expected, mostly with *læ'* "No".

#### b. Formal Context

In the armor inspection, the CO refused several proposals directly with no mitigation. There were generally no refusals issued by subordinates, only one case was observed. One event involved an NCO rejecting the CO's order to go to see another CO for his papers. The NCO replied with *læ' mæ bhibbo sīdnæ* "No, I do not love him sir". The CO then, with a threatening tone, replied with *'æfwan?* "Excuse me?" as if he was double-checking that his order was defied and implying to the NCO that he has the chance to rectify himself. The

NCO then simply repaired the situation by stating *ḥadir* "As you wish". The NCO has clearly and directly rejected an order from an upper rank; this is impoliteness. Furthermore, the CO's intolerance to the NCO's refusal could be justified by the high social distance between them; furthermore, the fact that the NCO attempted to amend the condition conveys that he referred back to the shared knowledge between the subjects of the appropriate ISF behavior and the implicature behind the COs "Excuse me?" Thus, the NCO's reply in this formal context implied impoliteness to the CO because it is not the established discourse type between them. Nevertheless, though the data for the speech act is few, the refusals were direct, either by superiors or by subordinates. This further corroborates studies that revealed that Arabs are direct in their refusals and make use of few face-saving strategies to lessen the threat of this FTA (see Nelson et al. 2002a). Refusals in trainings were not observed to determine if the nature of setting affects this directive.

### **G. Jokes**

When it comes to ISF's politic behavior, subordinates should not joke about their superior. Jokes were very frequent at the intervention trainings between the NCOs and their CO. The CO would engage in calling them funny names that pertain to some of their characteristics as *yæ se 'dēn* "You monkey" and they would reply by either saying *merci sīdnæ* "Thank you sir" or by laughing. In the office work as well, the CO joked with his NCOs on several occasions. On one occasion, for example, he joked about an NCO's very tall height: *kīf 'il tæ 'is 'indæk?* "How is the weather?" and the NCO (adjutant) replied: *shifte shu sæ 'il sīdnæ? byitsē 'æl ktīr bæs mæ fi mitlo* "Do you see how mean is our sir? He jokes a lot but is irreplaceable". Therefore, jokes upward in rank were acceptable and not

judged as impolite by the superior. On another occasion, they were engaged on talking about the female-male relationships. One NCO told his CO: *sīdnæ byikfe yshūfo `il banēt njūmæk byijo rækid* "Sir, it is enough for girls to see your stars to come running", and the CO replied in laughter: *læ wlo mish hæł`æd* "No, come on". NCOs, of similar and different ranks, even joked among each other on numerous occasions with the recipients of the jokes displaying amiability. Thus, both COs and NCOs would accept the joke and even add to it. This is exclusive to office work and trainings (informal context) because they are defined with low social distance among different ranks. There were no jokes noted in armor inspection and ceremonial trainings that are characterized by higher social distance (formal context).

The data reveals that jokes among personnel who are of different ranks but low small distance is accepted and regarded as politic. Furthermore, the fact that the personnel of different ranks are accepting of jokes that could be at times considered as an infringement, and thus impolite, shows the importance of the low social distance, where the subjects reacted positively to the joke and accepted it. The direction of the jokes was mainly from superior to subordinate. This carries certain implications. First, it would be impolitic for a subordinate to initiate a joke with his superior, unless the latter established space for that and wishes to reduce status gaps between him and his subordinates, i.e, unless the superior set a discourse type that gives room for jokes upward in rank (Yukl 1989; Beck 1999). Second, some of the jokes, especially in the training, carried criticism towards the pace and the behavior of the subordinates, but they were delivered in a humorous way; they could be using humor to lessen the threat of negative speech acts as criticism (Schnurr and Chan, 2009). Humor has been considered as a positive politeness strategy that motivates

subordinates (Cosier 1960; Barsoux 1993), and it minimizes status gaps between leaders and subordinates (Yukl 1989; Beck 1999).

## **H. Interruption**

In the ISF conventionalized linguistic code, superiors can interrupt their subordinates without asking for permission. In informal office work, in armor inspection and in the trainings, the NCOs were interrupted by their head COs without linguistic amends and directly. The COs interrupted their NCO many times some of which were signaled by *smæ* 'Listen' as an attention-getter. On the other hand, when the NCOs had to interrupt the COs to re-explain or to make a subject clearer, they had to be indirect and ask for permission as:

(15) (1) *'izæ btismæh sīdnæ* "After your permission sir"

(2) *mæ twēkhizne sīdnæ* "Forgive me sir"

(3) *bæ'd 'iznæk sīdnæ* "After your permission sir"

Thus, when in need to interrupt, the NCOs had to be linguistically indirect by asking for permission, while the COs directly interrupted them with no amends. This indirectness is politic and cannot be perceived as politeness because subordinates are not expected to interrupt their superiors, and if they had to, asking for permission is mandatory, if they want to remain in line of the expected behavior. Furthermore, the directness conveyed by the superiors is politic as well because they are not required to be indirect for interrupting those lower in rank. The COs have the discourse power, backed up by the military institution, to set the topic, to control the turns, and to interrupt when needed because of the asymmetrical power ascribed to each as doctor and teacher (Lakoff, 1990; Van Dijk, 2008). In the observation data, there was no marked interruptive behavior by superiors or

subordinates to note, nor was there a conspicuous effect of setting or social distance on that speech act. Furthermore, peer interruptive behavior was not observed.

### **I. Types of Relationships among Ranks**

17 COs (90.5%) and 18 NCOs (86%) explain that their relationship with their superior is formal. 4 COs (19%) and 3 NCOs (14%) explained that it is informal with some participants claiming that it is brotherly, or that it relies on how much they are familiar with the superior. As for peer, 14 COs (67%) and 11 NCOs (52%) explained they enjoy a casual relation with their peers; while 8 (38%) in total explained that it depends on which peer. With subordinates, 10 COs (48%) and 7 NCOs (33%) said it was formal with 2 COs (9.5%) explaining that this is the military way of things; 7 COs (33%) and 10 NCOs (48%) said informal and 3 COs (14%) said it depends.

Therefore, the interview data reveals that the working relation between superiors and their subordinates is generally formal where the majority (90.5% of COs and 86% of NCOs) expressed that their relationship with their superior is formal and 10 COs (48%) articulated that their relationship with subordinates is formal; however, this was not confirmed by the observation data. In units where the members are very familiar with each other, the subjects of unequal ranks exhibited intimate informal relationships. NCOs were very informal with their CO and vice versa. Furthermore, these close relationships affected the politic behavior and the discourse type. This could be explained by the fact that questionnaires sometimes show what people they think they do not what they actually do, so they might under- or over-report (Trudgill, 1972 in Halbe, 2011); or, they could have felt that that would be the proper thing to say to comply with the military style of relationships



and the type of formal leadership encouraged. For peers, the general observed atmosphere of informality corroborates the interview data.

### **J. Relevance to Halbe's Study**

The results of Halbe's (2011) interview reveal certain similarities to this study. First, both studies establish that there is a polite code that prescribes the structure of social situations and there are informal work relationships between equal and unequal ranks in informal settings as the office work and intervention trainings. While her study focused on one battalion, mine covered different regiments. The results of her interview showed that, even though trainings are the most formal with ritualized bold-on record directives issued without redress (as the politic behavior suitable for this social practice), there was still room for jocular abuse. This is similar to the intervention trainings observed in the ISF, where there was opportunity for jokes. Directives in trainings, however, were not mitigated as opposed to office work, even though they both share low social distance. It is because trainings are required to be carried out formally and without mitigation. Nevertheless, as in Halbe's (2011) study, there were jokes in trainings that were considered as suitable.

The COs and the NCOs in both studies show preference for informal relationship with their peer. The COs, in her interview, showed bias for informal relationships with subordinates and superiors, like the results of my observation data only. Furthermore, NCOs in her study, showed preference for formal relationship with superior and subordinate; while in my context, NCOs exhibited a penchant for formal relationship with their superior and an informal one with their subordinate.

In both studies, subordinates and peers are encouraged with expressions that cannot be used reciprocally with a superior (e.g. *ya 'īq 'l 'āfe* "God give you health"), and peers give out friendly insults. In her study, CO peers are usually greeted by first names, superiors with *sir* and subordinates by rank/ rank+last name. NCOs address peers by rank/rank+last name, superiors by *sir* and subordinates by rank/rank+last name as well. In my study, COs and NCOs prefer to address their peer with first name, superior with *sīdnæ* and the subordinate with first name and rank/rank+last name as second. The first name address seems to be the norm among peers and the *sir/sīdnæ* for superiors in both studies; but the majority in my study prefer the first name for subordinates as well, then followed by rank/rank+last name. The fact that in my study, subjects prefer to use the first name with their subordinates as well (unlike their American counterparts) is perplexing considering that USA is considered as a camaraderie culture, where openness is prevalent and first name is a non-kin public address term (Lakoff, 1990; GU, 1990).

Furthermore, Halbe's subjects pointed out that peers can address each other by their first name in private, but not in front of company or other military personnel; they would have to switch to a more formal address. This does not match up to my study, where a significant number of interviewees expressed that they do not change the address form in the presence of a higher rank, but the content.

For directives, the COs and NCOs in Halbe's study generally preferred using the query preparatory (deemed most polite) with their superior and peer, and then the imperative mitigated by please. In my study, CO and NCOs prefer with their superiors as well the query preparatory, after options they gave that were examples of permission questions. With their peers, my subjects are more direct and they chose the imperative and the

imperative+please. In Halbe's study, the subjects are more direct with their subordinates. Thus, the subjects in Halbe's study prefer indirectness with their peers and directness with their subordinates, while the subjects in this study are more direct with their peers but less direct with their subordinates. This could be justified by the fact that collectivistic cultures are more geared on reducing distance in vertical relations than horizontal ones as in individualistic cultures (Ting-Tommey & Kurogi, 1998).

Furthermore, almost all COs in her study stated that they do not like to be requested with the need statement by peers, and many stated that they would not bear an imperative or an imperative + please from subordinates. In my study, some subjects expressed that they would reply to peers' directives with different variations of *buzz off* because they do not tolerate a directive from their peer, while 17 COs (81%) and 10 NCOs (48%) said that it is not possible for a subordinate to give those higher in rank a directive.

When it came to advice, Halbe's COs and NCOs prefer *I recommend you* most with superiors and subordinates, but with peers *it is in your best interest to* is preferred. COs feel very comfortable in advising their superior over the success of the mission. To talk about the best interest is very frequent with peers, and NCOs showed confidence in advising their superiors because they are experts in the technical field (Halbe, 2011). However, in my study, 7 COs (33%) and 12 NCOs (57%) said that they would not advise their superior. Advising superiors in my context is regarded as a breach of conduct. While those who reported to advise their superior, suggested many indirect means as interrogatives or opinion. Furthermore, the majority of my subjects chose the *I recommend you do* to their peers and subordinates, as opposed to the subjects in the other study who use it with superiors and subordinates. It could be due to the fact that *I recommend you do* is more

direct in Arabic, and thus more forceful and inappropriate to superiors. Furthermore, the act of advising those higher in rank seems not to be tabooed in Halbe's study as opposed to mine.

In Halbe's study, criticism among peers was informal through jokes. Superiors are given the criticism in the most reverential method, either in the form of asking questions or permission to ask, but also more directly as in *I don't think it's a good idea; I understand, but* (Halbe, 2011, p.332). The most frequent answer for NCOs (junior sergeants/soldiers) was that they do not criticize and wish to avoid the FTA. In addition, superiors could support their subordinates to say what is on their mind, but generally speaking, criticisms are uncommon (Halbe, 2011). In my study, COs and NCOs prefer not to criticize their superior, and out of those who would criticize their superiors, they would do so indirectly as they would ask for permission (as in Halbe's study); however, direct criticisms were also found from a subordinate to a superior; it could be due to the fact that the superior encourages such behavior from personnel he is close to.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION

This study has aimed to answer the research questions on how the contextual factors can affect the institutionalized politic behavior and result in politeness. The study has established that there is a polite code, based on rank, and familiarity has shown to outweigh that code on certain occasions. Consequently, the strong effect of high familiarity between the participants influences the subject with more symbolic power to reproduce and challenge the politic behavior and to set a discourse type that might be in contrast to the politic behavior. Therefore, what might be considered as impolite according to the politic behavior might be regarded as acceptable according to the discourse type set between the participants of unequal rank.

When it came to the first research question, which aims to examine address and politeness in the ISF, familiarity was proven to be an influential factor. In informal contexts, peers and subordinates are usually referred to with first name; while in formal contexts, rank or rank+last name is more utilized. First name, then, reflects camaraderie, while rank denotes formality. When it comes to superior and subordinate address terms, the institutionalized term is *sæyyidi* that is approved as the correct address term for a superior. However, it becomes clear from the data that *sæyyidi* denotes unfamiliarity with the superior, while *sīdnæ* designates the opposite. This is how the politic behavior has been reproduced and challenged so that *sīdnæ* is regarded as accepted in close-knit units. Moreover, the informal contexts marked the presence of cordial terms upward and

downward in rank, but formal contexts lacked any of these terms. One discrepancy that was found was the issue of the presence of a superior among peers. If a superior is present, some participants explained that they would not address their peer differently but the content would change; while the observation data showed otherwise. The issue even affected superior-subordinate address terms where certain expressions were not used in front of outsiders. I believe this issue should be researched further to better outline the frame of politic behavior, especially among peers.

When it came to directives, the most prevalent directives in both contexts and settings were the institutionalized imperative and the need statements. Directives were mitigated only in the office work when there was a high imposition. The formal contexts revealed no mitigation of directives on the part of the superior regardless of imposition. It is argued that in the office work, the superiors mitigated their directives and that lead to politeness. Superiors are not forced by the politic behavior to imbed their directives; they are doing more than what is required of them. The low social distance has influenced the superiors to challenge the politic behavior, resulting in politeness. For this speech act, the setting did play a prominent role because there was no mitigation of directives regardless of the low social distance among its members. It could be said that the nature of the setting is strictly rigid with more prominent paralinguistic features that its nature overrules considerations of politeness. The politic behavior was further challenged when an NCO gave his CO direct imperatives that are considered as impolite and a violation to the politic behavior's rules, but they were accepted according to the established discourse type. Furthermore, between peers, there was clear room for friendly insults and direct directives in both data. One unexpected result in the interview data was when 67% of the subjects explained that they

would take a directive from a subordinate. Now, while it was revealed earlier that it could be part of the established discourse type, this significant number begs the question of whether the politic behavior's power is prevalent enough for it to be continuously challenged by those who are forced to obey it.

As for the effect of contextual factors on compliments, social distance and setting were not apparently the factors that influenced the politic behavior. Compliments were issued in both contexts and settings regardless of the level of social distance or type of setting. The direction, however, was established to be mostly downward, where directives were issued by those who enjoy more symbolic power as a mean of encouragement. Thus, rank's effect was evident with the direction of this speech being mostly from high ranks to lower ones. Compliments in this study are regarded to be a positive-politeness strategy that is, they denote politeness and the intention to build solidarity with the speaker because there is no linguistic rule that dictates for compliments to be issued in any direction. However, the fact that 17% of the subjects explained that they would not praise their superior because they do not wish to flatter denotes that compliments are considered a type of sweet-talking since Arabs like to sweet talk (katriel, 1986; Feghali, 1997). Nevertheless, compliments, as a speech act, are not that well-outlined in the ISF, and they require further research to identify the specific factors, other than to give support, for their initiation. The type of compliments, however, was established. The compliments were mostly culturally-distinct, with the majority of them invoking-God, a culture-specific aspect that pertains to Arab-Islamic heritage (Farghal and Al-Khatib, 2001). Moreover, the respondents in the data accepted the compliment, instead of deflecting/evading (Farghal and Al-Khatib, 2001), thus

showing that compliments are not regarded as threatening in this context, but a positive politeness strategy (Brown and Levinson, 1978).

48% of the participants maintained that they would not advise their superior, but they would draw his attention instead. This establishes that advice is a speech act that is prescribed to be issued from a higher rank and that advising your superior is impolite according to the politic behavior. However, during data collection there was noted advice issued upward in rank in an informal context, and it was not regarded as impolite by the superior. The reason could be because of the low social between the superior and the subordinate that the low social distance between the two has lead the superior to reproduce the politic behavior and set a discourse type where an upward- advice is accepted. Nevertheless, an advice from a subordinate is regarded as impolite according to the ISF's politic behavior.

When it came to criticism, the social distance factor appeared to be the main motivator behind the superior's mitigation of the criticisms, and thus to be polite. In the formal context, the CO issued direct criticisms as expected; he did not mitigate his criticism. Furthermore, his strict reply to an NCO's criticism about his eyesight reveals that he considered it as face-threatening; it is not part of the discourse type established between both participants, and it is clearly an impoliteness to the politic behavior. However, in the informal context, the low social distance apparently is the source behind two things. First, the COs mitigated their criticism with their NCOs, making them less direct and more cordial; this is more than what is required of them, and thus, are polite. Second, the CO accepted criticism from his NCO and did not judge to be as impolite, according to the discourse type normalized by him. Thus, even though criticism upward in direction is



always considered impoliteness in terms of the politic behavior, the low social distance between the participants in the informal context has lead to the establishment of a discourse type that allows for such behavior. Refusals followed a similar pattern to criticism. They were usually direct in the informal context, but at times were mitigated. In the formal context, a refusal upward in rank was considered as a challenge to the CO's face and authority; however, in the informal context, refusals upward in rank were not considered as challenging. Again, this is due to the influence of social distance on politic behavior. Considering that the refusals that were observed were direct in structure, it can be said that Arabs do not constantly prefer circumlocution over directness (Nelson et al. 2002 a, b). Jokes were another speech act that appears to be influenced by social distance and formality of the context. Jokes were only observed in two informal contexts, trainings and office work. Even jokes issued by those lower in rank about the superior were accepted and not deemed as impolite. Finally, there was no marked politeness with interruptions.

When it came to the types of relationships established in the ISF, there was a discrepancy in the data between the observation and the interview data when it came to superior-subordinate relationship. The majority of participants maintain that they have a formal relationship with their superior; while the observation data showed that relationships between superior and subordinate were generally informal. This could be explained that participants consider that their relationship should be formal with their superior as is expected of them. This, however, demands research to investigate the reasons behind the ISF's perception that relationships with superior should be formal. Relationships between peers in both data collections proved to be informal as expected. Moreover, the study showed similarity to Halbe's study where peer relationship were mostly informal with

friendly insults, and trainings were more ritualized with less consideration for politeness, but there was still room for jokes. Furthermore, her study showed subjects are more geared towards horizontal relationships as an individualistic culture, where mitigation was more present among peers. My study, however, showed mitigation to be more vertically oriented.

### **A. Limitations and Future Research**

The study's scope is limited to the ISF site that was observed, and it does not make any generalization about the subjects observed or about the Lebanese culture. This study has attempted to examine Arabic communication and the Arab's use of speech acts in a Lebanese hierarchal institution because little is known about both. Therefore, the study has attempted to look into how the Arab culture enacts politeness. Certain issues could be considered for future research. The change of an ISF informal context to a formal one with the presence of a higher rank and its effect on content and address should be further examined. Furthermore, most studies on Arabic speech acts have focused on refusals (Nelson et al. 2002a, b) and compliments (Nelson et al. 1993; Farghal and Al-khatib, 2001). Future research could consider directives, advice and criticism (outside of the ESL scope) in a cross-cultural framework to better understand how the Arab culture and politeness correlate and the effect of contextual factors on politeness. Furthermore, the linguistic codes for the ISF's politic behavior are not that well-outlined, and they deserve more research to better outline them. Finally, gender's correlation to power was not examined in this study and could be a good foundation for future studies in the Arab world.

One of the main methodological limitations to the study is that the participants were aware of the researcher's presence and, thus, they could have been vigilant about what to

say or what to do. This is termed as 'observer's paradox' (Labov, 1972), which could be the main reason behind why their language was censored at time, i.e., swearing and other-sensitive topics were not said or discussed. Another major methodological limitation is that no recordings were allowed. Recordings usually substantiate the notes taken because they are in a sense more comprehensive. The fact that there were no recordings could influence the reliability of the data collected. In addition, there are certain phrases and information that have been excluded from the analysis of the study by law to protect the privacy of the subjects and the concerned institution. This again could prove to be an obstacle to achieve a full representation of the concerned subjects. Finally, gestures were not considered in this study, even though they usually accompany linguistic expressions in military institutions.

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## Appendix A

Interview

Rank:.....

1-How would you describe your relationship with your Superiors? Peers? Subordinates? Is it different in training than in other encounters? Explain

.....  
.....

2-Do you greet your peer differently in the company of a superior? Why?

.....  
.....

3-How do you greet your superior?

- Greeting
- Greeting+rank
- Greeting+sir
- Greeting+ last name
- Greeting+rank+last name
- Rank+last name
- Rank
- Sir
- Respect
- Respect +sir
- Respect+rank
- Last name
- First name
- Other:.....

4-How do you greet your peer?

- Greeting
- Greeting+rank
- Greeting+sir
- Greeting+ last name
- Greeting+rank+last name
- Rank+last name
- Rank
- Sir
- Respect
- Respect+sir
- Respect+rank
- Last name

- First name
- Other:.....

5-How do you greet your subordinate?

- Greeting
- Greeting+rank
- Greeting+sir
- Greeting+ last name
- Greeting+rank+last name
- Rank+last name
- Rank
- Sir
- Respect
- Respect+sir
- Respect+rank
- Last name
- First name
- Other:.....

6- Which type of directive would you use with your superior?

- Imperative
- Imperative+Please
- I need you to
- Can you do
- Other:.....

7- Which type of directive would you use with your peer?

- Imperative
- Imperative+Please
- I need you to
- Can you do
- Other:-----

8- Which type of directive would you use with your subordinate?

- Imperative
- Imperative+Please
- I need you to
- Can you do
- Other:.....

9-How would you respond to a directive given from your superior?Peer?Subordinate?Explain.

.....  
.....

10- Would you advise your superior? If yes, how would you phrase it?

- I recommend you do
- It is in your best interest to do
- If you want the mission to succeed you should do
- None (provide other option).....

11- Would you advise your peer? If yes, how would you phrase it?

- I recommend you do
- It is in your best interest to do
- If you want the mission to succeed you should do
- None (provide other option).....

12- Would you advise your subordinate? If yes, how would you phrase it?

- I recommend you do
- It is in your best interest to do
- If you want the mission to succeed you should do
- None (provide other option).....

13- Would you advise or give a suggestion to your superior? Peer? Subordinate? If yes, how would you phrase it? Explain

.....

.....

14- Would you criticize your superior? Peer? Subordinate? If yes, how would you phrase it? Explain

.....

.....

15- How is your relationship with your right-hand NCO? Explain.[only for COs]

.....

.....

16- Do you praise your superiors? Peers? Subordinates? How and explain your answer.

.....

.....



## Appendix B

### مقابلة

الرتبة:

1- كيف بتوصف علاقتك مع رؤساءك؟ مع زملائك من نفس الرتبة؟ مع الأدنى رتبة منك؟ هل هي مختلفة أثناء التمارين؟ اشرح

.....  
.....  
.....

2- هل بتسلم على زملائك في العمل بطريقة مختلفة أمام مدرائك؟ لماذا؟

.....  
.....  
.....

3- كيف بتلقي التحية على مدرائك؟

- التحية
- التحية+الرتبة
- التحية+الشهرة
- التحية+سيدنا-سيدي
- التحية+الرتبة+الشهرة
- الرتبة+الشهرة
- الرتبة
- سيدنا
- احترامي
- احترامي+سيدنا-سيدي
- احترامي+رتبة
- الشهرة
- الأسم
- آخر

4- كيف بتلقي التحية على زملائك من نفس الرتبة؟

- التحية
- التحية+الرتبة
- التحية+الشهرة
- التحية+سيدنا-سيدي
- التحية+الرتبة+الشهرة
- الرتبة+الشهرة
- الرتبة
- سيدنا
- احترامي
- احترامي+سيدنا-سيدي
- احترامي+رتبة
- الشهرة
- الأسم
- آخر

5- كيف بتلقي التحية على الأدنى منك رتبة؟

- التحية
- التحية+الرتبة
- التحية+الشهرة
- التحية+سيدنا-سيدي
- التحية+الرتبة+الشهرة
- الرتبة+الشهرة
- الرتبة
- سيدنا
- احترامي
- احترامي+سيدنا-سيدي
- احترامي+رتبة
- الشهرة
- الأسم
- آخر

6- أي نوع من التعليمات ممكن تستعملها مع رؤسائك؟

- أمر
- أمر+ من فضلك

- أنا بدي منك تعمل-أنا بحاجة
- فيك تعمل
- -آخر

7- إي نوع من التعليمات ممكن تستعملها مع زملاءك من نفس الرتبة؟

-أمر

-أمر+ من فضلك

-أنا بدي منك تعمل -أنا بحاجة

-فيك تعمل

-آخر

8- أي نوع من التعليمات ممكن تستعملها مع الأدنى رتبة منك؟

-أمر

-أمر+ من فضلك

-أنا بدي منك تعمل -أنا بحاجة

-فيك تعمل

-آخر

9- كيف بتجاوب على تعليمات معطاة من رئيسك؟ زميلك؟ أدنى منك رتبة؟ اشرح

.....  
 .....

10- هل من الممكن أن تنصح رئيسك؟ إذا نعم كيف بتصوغ الجملة؟

- انا بنصحك
- من مصلحتك إنك
- إذا بديك تتجج المهمة يجب عليك
- و لا إجابة سابقة (إحتمالات أخرى)

11- هل من الممكن أن تنصح زميلك؟ إذا نعم كيف بتصوغ الجملة؟

-أنا بنصحك

-من مصلحتك إنك

-إذا بدك تنجح المهمة يجب عليك

-و لا إجابة سابقة (إحتمالات أخرى)

12 -هل من الممكن أن تتصح الأادنى منك رتبة؟ إذا نعم كيف بتصوغ الجملة؟

-انا بنصحك

-من مصلحتك إنك

-إذا بدك تنجح المهمة يجب عليك

-و لا إجابة سابقة (إحتمالات أخرى)

13- هل من الممكن أن تعطي نصيحة أو إقتراح لرئيسك؟ زميلك؟ أو الأادنى منك رتبة؟ إذا نعم كيف بتصوغ الجملة؟ اشرح

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.....

14- هل من الممكن أن تنتقد رئيسك؟ زميلك؟ أو الأادنى منك رتبة؟ إذا نعم كيف بتصوغ الجملة؟ اشرح

.....

15-كيف علاقتك مع يدك المنى؟ اشرح

.....

16-هل تثني الأعلى منك؟ زميلك؟ الأادنى منك؟ كيف و اشرح

.....



