**Politeness Battles and Paying Bills in the Palestinian Society:
A Pragmatic Study**

معارك الكياسة والتهذب ودفع الفواتير في المجتمع الفلسطيني: دراسة مقامية

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Abstract

This qualitative study explores the politeness tendencies that result from attempts to pay bills in Palestinian Society. The significance of this paper rises from the fact that it attempts to highlight potential causes of pragmatic failure and breakdown that might occur in cross-cultural communication. Brown and Levinson's (1987) and Leech's (1983) models of linguistic politeness are considered as a theoretical framework of the study. Naturally occurring data were collected ethnographically from four situations. Analysis of data shows that paying for meals by Palestinians is rooted in maintaining face which is oriented toward a person's public image. In Palestinian Arabic, it is necessary to preserve the interlocutors' face. The one who pays the bill finds it more important to make his/her addressee feel wanted, and to be considerate of his/her wants and feelings than it is to be honest or direct. Therefore, politeness battles that occur when paying bills in Palestinian society have taken on the pragmatic functions of minimizing the benefit of the self and maximizing the benefit of the others. Such battles are manifestations that aim at expressing intimacy and connectedness. These pragmatic functions of such battles of politeness reflect the role of politeness in Palestinian society as a device utilized by Palestinians to mark, establish, or assert social relationships including connectedness, generosity and solidarity.

Keywords: Culture, Face, Hospitality, Politeness, Pragmatics.

ملخص

تقوم هذه الدراسة ببحث الميول الى التهذب والكياسة الناتجة عن محاولات دفع ثمن وجبات الطعام في المجتمع الفلسطيني. وتأتي أهمية هذه الدراسة كونها تسعى الى ابراز الاسباب المحتملة لفشل التواصل البراجماتي وسوء الفهم اثناء التواصل بين متحدثي اللغات المختلفة. وقد تم الاعتماد على كل من نظرية براون وليفنسون (1987) ونظرية ليتش (1983) للكياسة او التهذب اللغوي كاطار نظري للدراسة. لقد تم جمع البيانات من سياقاتها الحقيقية، وقد اظهر تحليل البيانات بان دفع ثمن وجبات الطعام من قبل الفلسطينيين يتم بطريقة تهدف الى حفظ ماء الوجه واعطاء صورة ايجابية عن المتحدث، حيث من الضروري في المجتمع الفلسطيني حفظ ماء الوجه لجميع المتحاورين. ان الشخص الذي يدفع الفاتورة يحاول ان يعطي المستمع شعورا بالرضى والقبول وذلك عن طريق الاهتمام بمشاعره وليس بالضرورة ان يكون ذلك بشكل مباشر. وبالتالي فان "معارك" الكياسة والتهذب عند دفع الفواتير في المجتمع الفلسطيني تهدف الى تقليل الفائدة الذاتية وزيادة فائدة الاخر. هذه المعارك تظهر بهدف التعبير عن التلاحم والترابط. كما ان الوظائف البراجماتية (المقامية) لمعارك التهذب تعكس الدور المهم للتهذب والكياسة في المجتمع الفلسطيني كوسيلة لتأكيد وتعزيز العلاقات الاجتماعية والكرم والترابط بين الناس.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الثقافة، الوجه، الضيافة، الكياسة، المقامية.

Introduction

Interrelations between participants are an area that is explored by pragmatics. In our everyday social interactions with other people, our ideas and thoughts expressed in words seem to flow naturally. The choice of linguistic expressions and strategies to convey certain communicative purposes is governed by social conventions and the individual's assessment of situations. This study holds the view that politeness when paying bills is a social activity that has a particular significance in social life. It may happen daily in most communities, or most cultures. Cultures have been shown to vary drastically in their interactional styles, leading to different preferences for modes of behaviors. Therefore, it is clear that any research that aims at highlighting and identifying cross-linguistic and cross-cultural influences on the use of various strategies in Palestinian society can be extensively beneficial to understand the culture of its speech community (cf. Eshreteh, 2015). Paying for meals reflects fundamental cultural values that may be specific to a speech community.

Nelson et al (2002:53) stated that one of the reasons for studying communication in Arabic relates to "the misunderstanding of Arabs by many outside the Arab world".Consequently, there has been no single attempt to investigate the features of conventionalized speech events performed in the Palestinian society, more specifically, paying for meals in social interaction. Even though each situation has its own expressions that are required by interlocutors to perform certain speech acts, understanding and familiarization with Palestinian culture and the way Palestinians pay bills are also required to improve communication with speakers of Palestinian Arabic who have internalized the conventionalized or culture-specific speech events related to paying bills by different interlocutors in cross-cultural communication.

It is well-known that different languages construct messages andexpress feelings in different ways and each community has its own rules constraining speech behavior. For example, the hospitality and friendliness of the Palestinians sometimes influence them to issue utterances: "فش فايدة ...لازم الاكل على حسابي*I must pay for the meal. You have no other choice",* which are quite inappropriate in English speaking cultures.

In social communication, politeness is one of the aspects of culture which clearly influences the use of language.Brown and Levinson's (1987) and Leech's (1983) models of politeness will be adopted for the purpose of data analysis in this qualitative study.Cultures have different assessments of the importance of *face*. According to Rosenberg (2004:2), in "high-context cultures [1]", which include countries such as Korea, China, and Japan in Asia, Middle-eastern countries such as Palestine, Egypt and Iran", the concepts of *shame* and *honor* are important than in low-context societies such as "U.S. and Western countries".

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(1) Castillo and Eduardo. (2009) propose two different categories of context to categorize communication styles: low context where the message is direct, explicit and high context where the speech is indirect, subtle and understood because of social situation signs.

Face is also used metaphorically across cultures to stand for notions such as "respect, honor, status, reputation, credibility, competence, family/network connection, loyalty, trust, relational indebtedness and obligation issues" (Ting-Toomey & Kurogi 1998:190).

It could be also argued that the consequences of losing face in Palestinian culture, compared to those of its loss in Western cultures are attributed to different norms of social life. While in Western cultures the individual constitutes the core concept of the societal structure, in Arab countries the group, or collectivity, constitutes the basis. Nevertheless, in every society people fight or strive to project a good self-image in public and, accordingly, use face-saving procedures as much as necessary during an encounter. In fact, it is difficult to classify cultures as either collectivistic or individualistic; there are no absolutes.Collectivism and individualism exist in all cultures, but some cultures might bemore collectivistic or individualistic than others.

Material and Method

The data for analysis in this qualitative study were collected ethnographically from four real informal situations in which the researcher, as a participant, recorded the whole interactions that included situations of paying bills. The four interactions were recorded by the researcher after having meals or drinks in two different restaurants at Hebron city in Palestine. The researcher was accompanied by another colleague in two different situations. In the other two situations, the researcher was accompanied by groups of three or four; other friends were also present on the same table in the same restaurant.

In all four situations, the researcher attempted to gather reliable data for analysis. The data were spontaneous and naturally occurring intraconversational situations in environments of everyday communication between friends. The speech contributions of participants in both situations were in Arabic. Therefore, whenever we tried to collect the data, no attempt was made by us to inform the participants being involved in the interactions about our intention. The study aimed at

analyzing and revealing the different pragmatic functions of politeness battles when paying bills by Palestinians in informal situations.

In fact, the sample for this study is limited since all participants, instructors in the Faculty of Arts at Hebron University, were males who have the same socio-cultural status. No female was present in all situations. Sociological factors, including gender and social status were not considered since the study focuses on revealing certain cultural and pragmatic tendencies within a certain society rather than studying and revealing differences due to different sociological factors.Despite this study's limitations, the use of naturally occurring data is an advantage that bolsters the validity of the patterns identified and the conclusions drawn from these patterns.

Theoretical Background & Literature Review

In order not to put one's face in danger, every person has to think twice before uttering a word and ten times before carrying out an action. In some situations a person has to avoid some actions, even though carrying out these actions may make one feel good and fulfill one's ordinary expectations, in order not to create a clash between one's face wants and the face wants of his or her social circle. If it happens and one's face is lost through committing some anti-social actions or violating certain social rules, it is not easy to redeem face and make a fresh restart.

According to Farahat (2009:86), *Wajih* (*face*) in Palestinian culture functions as a deterrent, making people abide by the institutionalized and sanctioned code of politeness". At the same time, the significance of face in the Palestinian society prevents people from violating social rules and engaging in actions that might be considered as antithetical to the interests of the group.

Ho (1976) stresses the reciprocity concerns for saving face during an encounter. According to Ho, the need to save face exerts a pressure on the individual to behave in line with the requirements necessary to maintain face in a particular culture. The actions carried out by one person will be under scrutiny and the more face he or she claims the

more pressure will be put on them in terms of the social visibility of his or her actions, and hence the constrains imposed on their action will be greater. The need to protect self's face and the other's face affects the line of the encounter. Therefore, to avoid losing face is an overriding concern in many cultures. Such reciprocity concerns dominate in Palestinian culture. The proverb *çămilannăskamătuħib ʔan tuçămal* (عامل الناس كما تُحبُ ان تُعامل), meaning "Do as you would be done by" encapsulates such concepts (Baalbaki&Baalbaki, 2003:32).

Sifianou and Tzanne (2010:662) confirm that "politeness is broad phenomena that involve verbal and/or non-verbal means of expression" that appear primarily at a societal level. They believe that what is impolite is not inherent in any specific behavior and does not depend only on the speaker's understanding or intention, but it is the result of negotiation between interlocutors and their evaluation of what goes on in interaction (ibid:663).Sifianou and Tzanne (2010:669) state that there is an overall consensus that politeness means consideration and respect toward others and to some extent "good manners." However, notions, such as *consideration* and *respect* may take a variety of forms and may be equated with keeping a certain social distance or expressing friendly concern for the well-being of others.

According to the observations mentioned above, impoliteness may result from someone who is not aware of the social or cultural accepted politeness behavior which is expected in a particular situation by others (Mills, 2005:268). Therefore, face may be lost as a result of one's inability to meet social expectations and also as a result of other people's failure to meet social expectations.

Lakoff (1979) refers to politeness as a device used in order to "reduce friction in personal interaction" (p:64). Lakoff (1975) claims that people use politeness principles (PP) to avoid confrontation in interpersonal interaction.The results of this current study are completely the opposite. Palestinians create politeness through friction, i.e. through battles of politeness when paying bill.

Leech (1983) states that there exists a set of maxims and sub-maxims that guide and constrain the conversation of rational people.Important to Leech's theory is his distinction between a speaker's illocutionary goals (what speech act(s) the speaker intends to be conveyed by the utterance) and the speaker's social goals (what position the speaker is taking on being truthful, polite, ironic, and the like). In fact, Leech (1983) proposes Politeness Principle (PP) to keep the balance of social necessity and the friendly relations in the situations in which the politeness acts as backup. According to Leech (1983:132) PP includes six maxims:

1. Tact Maxim (in impositives and commissives)
    (a) Minimize cost to other.   (b) maximize benefit to other.

2. Generosity Maxim (in impositives and commissives)
    (a) Minimize benefit to self.   (b) Maximize cost to self.

3. Approbation Maxim (in expressives and assertives)
    (a) Minimize dispraise to other.   (b) Maximize praise to other.

4. Modesty Maxim (in expressives and assertives)
    (a) Minimize praise to self   (b) Maximize dispraise of self.

5. Agreement Maxim (in assertives)
    (a) Minimize disagreement between self and other
    (b) Maximize agreement between self and other.

6. Sympathy Maxim (in assertives)
    (a) Minimize antipathy between self and other.
    (b) Maximize sympathy between self and other.

Leech's Principle of Politeness, which is adopted as a theoretical framework of the current study, can be stated as the following:

Other things being equal minimize the expression of beliefs which are unfavorable to the hearer and at the same time (but less important) maximize the expression of beliefs which are favorable to the hearer.

According to Leech, politeness is emphasized more on other than on self.Leech (2005: 9) states that politeness makes us behave in ways which our visitor from Mars would think irrational. According to Leech,

if both speakers maintained their determination to be as polite as the other, they would never reconcile their different 'polite meanings' (p, 10).

SalmaniNodoushan (2008, p. 257) confirms that the seminal work of Brown and Levinson (1978) on "politeness" and its relation to "face" resulted in an upsurge of interest in conversational analysis (See also Allan &SalmaniNodoushan, 2015; SalmaniNodoushan, 2016). According to SalmaniNodoushan (2012, p. 119), face "suggests that each and every speech act is issued as a result of the interplay between self's intention and his motivation, with intention being the ignition, and motivation the fuel."

Brown and Levinson (1987) propose that politeness is related to face work, which achieves the goal of social interaction in which the interlocutors try to maintain or enhance the face of each other. For Brown and Levinson (1978: 66), *face* means "something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction".*Face* is a favorable public image consisting of two different kinds of face wants, the desire to be unimpeded in one's actions, and the desire to be approved of (cf. Brown and Levinson, 1987).

Grundy (2000) defines politeness as "*the term we use to describe the extent to which actions, including the waythings are said, match addressees' perceptions of how they should be performed* (Grundy 2000, cited in Bloomer, Griffiths & Merrison 2005: 111). Holmes (1995) goes into more detail and states that *'politeness' will be used to refer to behaviour which actively expresses positive concern for others, as well as non-imposing distancing behaviour.* (Holmes 1995, cited in Bloomer, Griffiths & Merrison 2005: 112). Therefore, politeness can be shown in a variety of ways: linguistically, which is concerned with verbal communication; non-linguistically, which is concerned with other aspects of communication such as body language; or a variety of both.

The researcher's argument in this study is that there are no speech acts that are inherently polite. It is the context that determines whether

social behavior is polite or not. Utterances are not decontextualized, but they appear within discourse. According to Sarangi (2011:248), "this social behavior is on loan to the individual from society and is governed by certain legalized and endorsed societal rules". Sarangi (2011:252) states that

When in the presence of others, the individual is guided by a special set of rules which have been here called situational properties. Upon examination, these rules prove to govern the allocation of the individual's involvement within a situation, as expressed through a conventionalized idiom of behavioral clues.

Therefore, face is central to social interaction in that its presentation achieves some sort of social harmony. Hence, it is interactants' mutual responsibility to maintain face because the loss of face during an encounter may precipitate a breakdown, and sometimes lead to cases of impoliteness in the exchange.

Therefore, battles of politeness that occur when paying bills, as illustrated in the next section, may have to do with the value of generosity in the Palestinian society. Palestinians actually try to make their statements so decisive to avoid giving the impression of being reluctant or not serious in paying for meals at a restaurant. Hospitality is a value deeply rooted in traditional Palestinian customs of greeting the guest. Such battles can be considered as attempts to save face and maximize the benefit of others by being hospitable.

Discussion

Behaving appropriately as a person or simply being a generous person is an important expression of Palestinians. Such expressions are present in nearly all the Palestinian dialects. Such phrases mean that one should know how to be hospitable, behave or speak appropriately in interacting with others. This involves knowing how to be humble and knowing how to be generous on the appropriate occasion. One is expected to know how to respond in accordance with these Palestinian politeness concepts in interacting with others. When one follows these precepts, one will be praised as someone who knows how to behave as a

person in accordance with certain norms of politeness among Palestinians.

Paying for meals among Palestinians can sometimes lead to people 'competing' or 'fighting' with one another, sometimes quite violently, attempting to outdo each other by paying the bill. This is due to the principle of generosity which requires being generous to the other party and, thus, preventing him/her from spending money. On the other hand, there is also the Balance Principle mentioned in Gu (1990). According to this principle, when someone pays for you, you owe that person a return favor in the future (reciprocity). When one pays for a meal, he/she expect the other interlocutor to compete or fight to pay the bill whenever they meet again in the future. Therefore, another competition is expected to occur in the future between both interlocutors. For Palestinians, it might be 'ugly' or 'cheap', if they share the bill when paying for a meal.

Interlocutors sometimes express gratitude for others for troubling themselves and spending money in getting the food. Leech's (1983) generosity maxim states that to be generous, one ought to maximize the other's benefit and minimize the self's benefit. Therefore, it is good to abide by Leech's generosity maxim by indicating that the other interlocutor should not have paid for the bill.

When someone pays the bill and receives gratitude from others, the one who pays the bill conventionally downgrades the value of the bill and shows that he/she is humble.The one who pays the bill usually states that he/she is not generous enough. Therefore, even if someone tries to be generous, he/she still has to find a way to indicate that he/she is less than perfect.Example 1 below can be used for more illustration. Two colleagues had coffee together in a cafeteria. When it came to paying the bill, a fighting over paying the bill occurred between them, as illustrated below:

(1):

يوسف: خليها علي هالمرة.

Yousef: I'll pay this time.

محمود: لا، لا. انا راح ادفع. (يخرج كل منهما محفظته وتبدأ المعركة)

Mahmoud: No. No.I'll pay. (*They got their purses out of their pockets and the dispute starts*).

يوسف: والله غير انا الي ادفع. (يمسك يد محمود بقوة ليمنعة من دفع الفاتورة)

Yousef: I swear by God. I will pay. *(He holds Mahmoud's palm firmly toprevent him from paying the bill).*

محمود: مستحيل. مستحيل.

Mahmoud: Impossible. Impossible.

They found themselves in an uncomfortable situation that nearly got them into dispute or battle that can be described as a wrestling match. However, the ones who do not pay the bill need to express pleasure for the treat and thank the one who pays in return.

It is worth mentioning, as can be noticed in example 1, that such utterances usually occur in Palestinian society. Leech (2005: 10), in his study of politeness in Chinese, states that similarutterances represent "battles for politeness". It is worth mentioning that such utterances occur in Palestinian Arabic as well. These battles can be resolved by negotiating with the other person's a politeness agreement so as to give one interlocutor the chance to pay the bill. One person will 'reluctantly' agree to leave first through the doorway before the other.

In this sense, it is obvious that insistence on paying the bill is an indication of affiliation, group identity, inclusion and connectedness in Palestinian society rather than a face-threatening act (FTA). In Brown and Levinson's model of politeness, acts of insistence or imposition are considered FTAs since they impede or limit speakers' freedom of choice.However, things are completely different in Palestinian society since insistence is a preferable act. Both the behavior of immediately giving others the chance to pay the bill and that of not trying continuously violate the Palestinian norm of interaction and disconfirm with Brown and Levinson's politeness framework which was built on Western criteria; therefore, inadvertences between it and politeness in

Eastern collectivistic societies are to be expected. Moreover, one can notice that such participation in such battles of politeness is considered "intrinsically polite" based on the concept of genuine desire for maximizing the benefit of the other, and it can be seen as a strong evidence of sincerity (Gu, 1990:242). In paying bills in the Palestinian society, damaging negative face (insistence) turns out to be a ritualized way to show politeness, not necessarily threatening each other's face.

Still, to look more determined to pay the bill, some Palestinians resort to swearing and using certain religious expressions. In example 2 below, a university professor in his forties is addressing a colleague after having tea together.

(2) A. والله غير انا احاسب   [I swear that I will pay the bill]

B:.بارك الله فيك. الدور علي [God bless you. It's my turn.]

It should be noted here that using such theo-pragmatic expressions in the context of paying bills may reflect the impact of Islamic culture on Palestinian people when they perform such act. Such religious expressions might put an end to such battles of politeness and create an impression that the message flows from heart to heart.

The above examples show that battles of politeness when paying bills in Palestinian society constitute a face respecting act rather than a face threatening act to interlocutors. That is because the one who pays commonly expresses appreciation for paying the bill no matter how personally he/she feels about the prospects of spending money in such occasions. Therefore, through insisting on paying the bill, the speaker shows respect to the hearer's positive face.

Palestinians believe that paying the bill is a matter of defending one's honor. When Palestinians argue over who should pay the bill in a restaurant, here Generosity competes with Agreement. Every interlocutor tries to show that he/she is generous by disagreeing with others over paying the bill. Unless there is a clear understanding that one person is being treated by the other, the generosity maxim motivates each of the two people having a meal to offer pay the bill. Although, in general,

arguments are not considered "polite" events, in this case the anti-disagreement motive is outweighed by being generous.

Therefore, certain cultural norms govern Palestinians' behavior when it comes to paying the bill. Palestinians usually treat each other to meals, while Westerns go Dutch. It's just good manners. Within this system, older pays for younger, men pay for women, asker pays for askee. Nevertheless, whenever someone offers to pay the bill, he/she tries to fight (physically if necessary) for the honor. When someone loses, he/she should pick up the tab next time.Different people are expected to pick up the dining tab during different occasions. For some birthdays, it's customary for the birthday person to pay for food, entertainment and cake while the guests bring gifts. When it comes to (heterosexual) dating in some Palestinian areas, the guy is expected to pay for everything, from the food to fun.

Palestinians sometimes tend to pay the bill secretly. *Secret payment* is best to use with acquaintances that one knows will argue for the bill or for business meals. It usually isn't necessary to use with friends unless one has a particularly determined friend who likes to pay every time.

If someone says he/she has to "go to the bathroom" near the end of the meal, Palestinians usually try to make sure he/she is not sneaking over to pay the bill.About a month ago, the researcher found himself in an uncomfortable situation that nearly got him into a wrestling match with two other friends. He was meeting two friends who have just arrived from Nablus to visit Hebron. The researcher suggested that they go out to a relatively expensive restaurant (it was three of them altogether). As they ordered, the researcher kept insisting that they load on more appetizers and drinks. When the bill came, one of his friends, a businessman, had gone to the bathroom, and they gazed upon it in horror: it was nearly 400 Shekels.I raced up to the counter waving my wallet. "*Can I pay?!*" I cried desperately.The waiter looked at me like a deer in headlines, and then sprang into action. I waited around for a minute, and then I spotted my friend pulling out two notes of 200.

(3)

"*No!*" I said. "*Let me!*" أنا: لا، خليها علي

"*I've got it*," he said, handing the notes to the waiter. صديقي: عندي. (ناول النقود للنادل)

"*No, I should treat you,*" I said, shaking the elbow of the waiter and trying to hand him my money. انا: لا. لازم اكرمك. (انا حركت كوع النادل وحاولت اعطاءه النقود)

"It's my pleasure!" he roared, pushing my notes away.

صديقي: هذا من دواعي سروري. (ابعد نقودي من امامه)

Therefore, the battle ended. I went back to the table defeated, shrugging, humiliated and wondering if I'd done the right thing.This is where it gets embarrassing. In the Palestinian context, it is necessary to put in enough fight to be polite, but not so much that one draws the attention of the whole restaurant. Non-verbal communication is sometimes needed. It's best only to get physical (shoving and grabbing hands) with friends. I protested verbally and even gesticulated wildly with my friend. I tried to find a place in his clothing I could shove the cash. I tried shoving the money in one of his pockets or sneaking it into his belongings.

Therefore, fighting over paying the bill for meals is something some of us are guilty of. If we're the stereotypical Palestinians eating with other stereotypical Palestinians, coming out on tops to pay for a meal is often a big battle, sort of a sport in itself.In Palestinian culture (and other Islamic cultures), offering to pay the bill at the end of a meal out is regarded as polite. This goes for family and business-related dining affairs, and no matter the occasion, bill fights are usually amusing.Sometimes, it's a pride and a face-saving act that drives the stereotypical Palestinian to insist on picking up the dining tab. Nowadays, money is a marker of success along the traditional Palestinian train of thought: the more one can afford to spend, the more one can impress. Paying for a meal, the typical Palestinian

person flaunts his/her privileged status, coming across as "looking good" and worthy.

Generosity is giving more than one can and losing the bill battle isn't all embarrassment in front of the typical Palestinian crowd. Post-fight, there tends to be pats on the backs and a mutual agreement that at least everyone tried. Throughout this camaraderic moment, even the winner swallows his/her pride.

Consequently, some Palestinians of Arab heritage might fight for the bill because they fancy one-upmanship but more importantly, gifting. The opportunity to pay the restaurant bill is a means to leverage connections, a means to remember a relationship. Sometimes the older, baby-boomer Palestinian generation wrestles to grab the bill because they feel a duty to provide and pay for food, making sure others have enough to eat. In Palestinian culture, the hierarchical family structure sees elders and breadwinners receiving the largest degree of reverence, the ones who can afford to support everyone else. Getting the bill in the Palestinian society is an act of love and sacrifice; money is often painstakingly earned, and so then is putting food on the table.

Therefore, attitudes, these days, are changing towards paying the bill among the younger generation of Palestinians. Younger Palestinians find it acceptable to split the bill when their dining companions have spent more than them. Going Dutch, splitting the bill or paying for the one dish you ordered happens a lot. Perhaps Palestinians are assimilated into Western culture; perhaps they respect each other as equals, or perhaps it's simply a personal choice. In fact, paying the bill is considered by some younger Palestinians as an act of selflessness.

Therefore, how Palestinians feel when someone pays for the meals depends on the occasion. It depends on where they are, who they're with and how they feel about that person. Sometimes they pay the bill because they can or because they want to. Sometimes they simply want others to have a treat, a deserved treat. Paying the restaurant bill

is more than just a sport. This tradition is mostly instilled in Palestinian roots as Arabs. Such battles signify generosity and being kind and even respectful.

Palestinians feel that it's very necessary to stick with these roots, because although the world (especially western part) has always been more about practicality, it has now become a little too practical.Palestinians know that paying bills or picking tabs does not dictate our human values necessarily but it does make up a small part of it.

It is highly likely that people in Palestinian society tend to offer a lot of such good-wishes to others upon paying the bill, because of their positive effect on the addressee. So, an appropriate use of them can be seen as a polite strategy through which the addresser attempts to arouse a positive feeling in the hearer. It should be noted here that religion was also found to play a role in the process. A considerable number of religious expressions given in the form of good-wishes were found to be used heavily in the collected data. For example, more than 7 good-wishes were found to include the name of ?aLLahin examples 4 and 5 below:

(4) الله يبارك فيك [God bless you.]

The datahas also revealed that Palestinian people tend to use swearing- by God-as a means for intensifying the effect of their utterances.

(5)بالله عليك [By God.]

The above utterances are usually used between intimates so as to strengthen the positive perlocutionary force on the recipient.

Stressing common membership is another effective strategy through which Palestinians attempt to heighten the perlocutionary effect of the act of paying the bill. People in Palestinian society opt for employing a number of such expressions. Using in-group identity markers such as in example (6):

(6)فيش فرق بيننا، انا وانت واحد

[We are close friends. There is no any social distance between us.]

Upon hearing this, the addressee may communicatively receive the message by implicating that he is so important to the addresser. This implicature is brought about on the part of the addressee by making use of the generosity maxim (Leech, 1983) from a Palestinian point of view, where paying for the meal may result in maximizing the expression of benefit to self and minimizing the expression of cost to self (p, 132).

According Brown & Levinson's (1987) model, fights upon paying the bills in the Palestinian society might be potential FTAs. That is, there is a risk that the hearer may not wish to participate in such battles where invitations can be face threatening to both speaker's and hearer's face. It is clear that Palestinians give preference to the generosity maxim while Westerners do so to the agreement maxim (cf. Leech, 1983).

Example 7 below illustrates an attemptbysomeone to belittle the act of paying the bill, which could be insulting. Belittling the act of paying the bill saves or enhances the face of the one who fails to pay the bill.

(7) مش مستاهلة. مش قيمتك. [It is nothing. You worth more than that]

 In fact, minimization the value of the bill is expressed in a way that shows that the one who paid the bill did not make much effort in being hospitable to the guest. However, what is said might not represent the actual value of the act. He just pretends that he/she is not giving much care for his/her guest. In other words, minimizing an act has the function of alleviating the face threat of accepting it. Leech (1983) stresses that some utterances or speech acts are intrinsically either polite or impolite, but Watts (2003) was against such dichotomy.This discussion refutes Leech's (1983) argument and again supports Watts' (2003) rejection of dichotomizing utterances as either polite or impolite. No utterance is inherently polite or impolite in itself. Interpretations of politeness take the ongoing context into consideration.

To sum up, in the Palestinian context, when two friends have a meal together in a restaurant, they should show a kind of competition regarding who is going to pay. Both of them should insist on paying. A

situation like this does not commonly occur in America or the West. Hospitality is deeply embedded in Palestine. Palestinians place strong emphasis on morality, duty and courtesy and it is based onhierarchy and respect for group inclusion and affiliation.

Conclusion

Taking care of interpersonal relations is important in Palestinian culture. Managing interpersonal relations is often viewed in pragmatics as how human beings successfully use language, verbal and nonverbal, to avoid face threats, and maintain and build good relationships between speakers and hearers. In this study, Palestinians showed a preference to build common ground through social talk based on communal concerns rather than personal concerns.

If someone is dining out, the inviter usually pays for the meal. It is considered polite–even protocol–to make an effort to pay, but expect strong resistance. This is why in many Palestinian restaurants, it is a common sight to see two people arguing loudly after a mealfor the right to pay. It is expected for the guest to offer to pay for the meal multiple times, but ultimately allow the host to do so. This can be a long and drawn out process. To a cultural outsider, such battles of politeness upon paying for bills in the Palestinian society may appear imposing and hypocritical, that is, they involve fake fights and fake or fabricated polite tendencies. This, however, is far from how participants (and cultural insiders) perceive the transaction.

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