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Decoding Ostensible Communication: A Cross-Cultural Pragmatic Study

Saleem Abdelhady (iD)

Liberal Arts Department, American University of the Middle East, Egaila, Kuwait

ABSTRACT

This study looks at how people in high-context cultures use language to send messages that seem sincere but are not meant to be taken literally. It focuses on 120 real and remembered interactions to see how speakers handle these indirect and subtle forms of communication, known as "ostensible acts." The research uses both qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze the strategies people use and how they differ from those in other cultures. In high-context cultures, communication often relies on shared cultural knowledge and subtle signals, such as tone, body language, or context. These cues help people understand that certain statements, while appearing genuine, are meant to carry a hidden or playful meaning. For example, someone might offer help or make a promise that both parties know will not happen, but it is understood as polite or indirect communication. The study finds that these indirect strategies are a key part of communication in high-context settings. They help maintain relationships and avoid direct conflict. By comparing these patterns to those in low-context cultures, where messages are usually clearer and more direct, the findings provide valuable insights into how cultural norms shape communication styles and meanings.

Keywords: Pragmatics; Ostensible Invitations; Jordanian Arabic; Speech Acts; Communicative Acts

1. Introduction

Ostensible invitations—offers extended without a genuine intent to follow through—represent a subtle yet significant area in the study of pragmatics, particularly within the context of Jordanian Arabic. These invitations, while appearing sincere, are extended with an understanding between the inviter and invitee that they are not intended to be accepted. According to Isaacs and Clark ([1], p. 498), a critical element in crafting such invitations lies in signaling enough pretense for the invitee to perceive the lack of sincerity. The inviter must frame the invitation convincingly, hiding their actual intentions, while allowing the invitee to recognize its ostensible nature. A commonly cited example from Isaacs and Clark's work[1], referenced by Link ([2], p. 111), illustrates this interaction. In the example, Carol offers leftover food at 12:30 A.M. with a sense of formality, which her conversational partner intuitively perceives as insincere. This form of communication provides a window into the complex dynamics of implicit understanding and shared social awareness.

Understanding ostensible communicative acts requires attention to their nuanced characteristics, which set them apart from genuine speech acts. For a speech act to be categorized as ostensible, it must exhibit elements of pretense, shared awareness, cooperation, and ambiguity[1]. These elements ensure that the invitation, though spoken, is understood as merely symbolic, reflecting social obligations or politeness rather than a true desire for acceptance. The encoding and decoding of such invitations must be performed subtly, making ostensible invitations highly reliant on cultural context and shared assumptions. However, much of the research on ostensible invitations has focused on low-context cultures—environments where language serves as the primary medium of communication, and social expectations are clearly defined and explicit[3].

In high-context cultures like Jordanian society, communication relies more heavily on implicit cues and unspoken social norms[4, 5]. Abdel Hady[6] addresses this difference by studying ostensible invitations within Jordanian Arabic, revealing the multiplicity of pragmatic functions that these invitations serve in Jordanian culture. However, while his study explores the broader significance of these invitations, it does not delve into the specific methods by which Jordanians navigate the subtle processes of encoding and decoding these

interactions. In high-context cultures, such as Jordanian society, these processes are especially intricate, as individuals rely on shared cultural knowledge and non-verbal cues to signal and interpret the ostensible nature of invitations.

Recognizing this gap, the present study seeks to examine in depth the processes by which Jordanians create and interpret ostensible invitations. By exploring the subtle mechanisms that Jordanians use to encode and decode these communicative acts, the study aims to contribute to a broader understanding of how ostensible invitations function within high-context cultural frameworks. Moreover, this study sheds light on the broader contrasts between high- and low-context cultures, highlighting the distinctive pragmatic features and social conventions that shape interactions in Jordanian Arabic. Through a close analysis of these elements, this research offers new insights into the communicative strategies and cultural nuances underlying ostensible invitations, potentially advancing theoretical models of high-context communication.

2. Review of Related Literature

The topic of ostensible communication has been studied across multiple cultural and linguistic backgrounds[1, 2, 4, 5, 7–16]. Much of this research examines the strategies used in making invitations with ostensible intent, especially following the foundational work of Isaacs and Clark[1]. Additionally, some studies focus on evaluating how these strategies affect the perception of ostensible invitations[2, 13].

The first detailed examination of ostensible invitations in English is attributed to Wolfson[8], who categorizes invitations into two types: unambiguous and ambiguous. She argues that genuine invitations must specify both the time and place of the event and request a response from the invitee. Lacking these elements creates ambiguity. For example, "Do you want to eat a burger next week?" contains a clear request for a response, specified activity, and timeframe. Wolfson highlights that ambiguous invitations often have an indefinite time, do not require a response, and frequently include modal verbs such as "must" or "should." A statement like "Let's have lunch sometime" illustrates this type of ambiguous invitation. Isaacs and Clark[1] further analyze ostensible invitations as those where both the inviter and invitee under-

stand that the invitation is not meant seriously. Analyzing 142 sincere and insincere invitations, they identify seven tactics of ostensible invitations, including making the invitation unrealistic, using uncertain language, avoiding insistence, leaving arrangements vague, maintaining politeness without genuine intent, using non-verbal cues, and issuing the invitation only when prompted by the invitee.

Salmani-Nodoushan[9] examines ostensible invitations in both English and Farsi, applying Isaacs and Clark's framework to 1,350 invitations. He finds that ostensible invitations vary by age, gender, and social status, with younger, male, and higher-status individuals more likely to issue them. Link and Kreuz[15] investigate the strategies of ostensible speech acts through experiments, evaluating participants' ability to distinguish ostensible from genuine speech acts and their inclination to interpret ostensible acts as pretense. Their findings support Isaacs and Clark's strategies. In Chinese, ChaiSi[12] studies ostensible invitations in relation to social distance, using data from 232 face-to-face interviews. His findings suggest that the strategies depend on the relationship between inviter and invitee, with implausibility commonly used among familiar individuals, while other tactics apply to acquaintances or strangers.

Research on Jordanian Arabic, such as Al-Khatib[17], Abdel Hady[6], Abdelhady & Alkinj[4], and Abdelhady[5], explores how Jordanians extend and accept ostensible communicative acts, such as ostensible lies, ostensible refusals, and ostensible invitations. While Al-Khatib's study focuses on genuine invitations, Abdel Hady examines ostensible invitations, showing they serve various pragmatic functions, including face-saving or face-threatening roles. However, his study does not specify how Jordanians linguistically mark invitations as ostensible.

3. Methodology

This section outlines the methodology applied in conducting the research, including the problem and questions that guide the study, along with a detailed description of data collection and analytical methods.

3.1. Research Design

Ostensible invitations are a prevalent social practice in Jordanian culture, often serving as a means of managing social expectations and politeness. However, while Abdel Hady's[6] study identifies pragmatic functions associated with ostensible invitations, it does not explore the specific strategies used by Jordanians to obscure their true intentions when extending such invitations. Understanding these strategies is essential, as it can reveal the underlying cultural norms and values that influence how ostensible invitations are constructed within a society known for its hospitality. This study seeks to address the following questions:

1. Are the tactics proposed by Isaacs and Clark ([1], pp. 499–501) for staging ostensible invitations statistically significant in Jordanian Arabic?
2. How do Jordanians structure and stage their ostensible invitations?

3.2. Data Collection

The study's data consists of 120 invitation instances, split equally between genuine (60 instances) and ostensible (60 instances) invitations. Data were collected through participant observation and audio recordings within a variety of social settings in which invitations are commonly extended, including family gatherings, workplace events, and community meetings. By capturing real-life interactions, the data reflects the naturalistic usage of invitations in line with Jordanian social customs.

Each recorded invitation was transcribed, taking note of verbal elements as well as paralinguistic cues, such as pauses, intonation, and emphasis. This attention to nonverbal elements is critical for analyzing the nuanced pragmatic functions that underpin ostensible invitations. Each invitation instance was subsequently coded to capture features associated with ostensible invitations, as outlined by Isaacs and Clark[1]. These features include violations of preparatory conditions (e.g., when the inviter is aware the invitee cannot attend), solicitation of the invitation, insistence, vague arrangements, and hedging.

3.3. Data Analysis

The analysis combines quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of ostensible invitation tactics.

In the quantitative analysis, the frequency of each coded feature was calculated to identify patterns in how ostensible

invitations are structured as compared to genuine invitations. Statistical tests, specifically the Chi-Square goodness-of-fit test and Correlation Analysis, were used to evaluate the significance and relative weight of each tactic. These statistical methods enabled the researcher to draw distinctions between the structuring of genuine and ostensible invitations in Jordanian culture.

The qualitative analysis involved selecting illustrative examples of invitation exchanges to highlight the pragmatic dynamics of each feature in context. Each example was transcribed, glossed, and translated to make the pragmatic functions clear[18]. Since multiple features might co-occur in a single conversation, each feature was analyzed independently to demonstrate its specific contribution to the overall invitation structure. This approach enabled an in-depth exploration of the interplay between different features and their collective role in shaping ostensible invitations.

The combined quantitative and qualitative analyses offer insights into the pragmatic strategies Jordanians use in extending ostensible invitations, contributing to a deeper understanding of this culturally specific communicative act.

4. Finding and Discussion

4.1. The Implausibility Strategy

Based on their common ground, Jordanians can make their invitations/offers implausible in two ways: (1) by extending invitations that they cannot provide due to their ability to host the invitee and/or (2) by extending invitations beyond the ability of the invitee to accept. According to our data, the implausibility strategy constituted 58.3% (70) of all invitations. The majority of violations were in ostensible invitations. In fact, 83.3% (50) of ostensible invitations violated one or more of the preparatory conditions, but these conditions were violated in only 33.3% (20) of genuine ones. See **Table 1** below:

Table 1. The distribution of the implausibility strategy.

		Strategy		Total
		Implausible	Plausible	
Type of Invitation	**Ostensible**	50 (83.3%)	10 (16.7%)	60 (100%)
	Genuine	20 (33.3%)	40 (66.7%)	60 (100%)
	Total	70 (58.3%)	50 (41.7%)	120 (100%)

The Chi-square goodness of fit test compares the frequency of the occurrence of the implausibility strategy (plausible versus implausible) for genuine and ostensible invitations. The analysis shows that the difference between ostensible and genuine invitations with regard to the employment of the implausibility strategy is significant (X^2 (1) = 30.857 < 0.05), so the null hypothesis is rejected; a significant difference between the two types of invitations is found. Thus, the implausibility can be predicted to be used as a moderate indicator of ostensibility in this culture, with a positive correlation between the two variables (r (120) = 0.507, $p < 0.01$). Yet, how does the implausibility strategy work in Jordanian ostensible invitations for the violation itself is not enough? To answer this question, the researcher covered this strategy under two criteria: one is related to the initiator, the one who invites/offers the other party, and the other is related to the receiver, the one to whom the invitation/offer is directed. The following discussion clarifies how this strategy works in this culture.

4.1.1. The Initiator Is Able to Host

Based on Isaacs and Clark ([1], p. 499), when extending an invitation, an inviter has to have the time and the place for hosting the invitee. That is, the invitation should appeal plausible for the invitee to really take place if accepted. However, in ostensible invitations, the inviter usually shows his willingness to host the invitee after grounding the fact that he is unable to host. This process of grounding is gradual and is built through the advancement of the discourse. The optimal result of it is that a preparatory condition is violated – the inviter is able to host.

Context: M[1] has guests at his house. He went to the supermarket to buy some coffee. M encounters S at the supermarket.// Social and Psychological World: S knows that M is terribly sick for they are friends, neighbors, and co-workers who meet occasionally; they live within the same area. M did not expect to meet S at the supermarket.// Persons: M is about thirty years old male; S is around the same age. H is the shopkeeper; he is an overhearer. //Time: the exchange takes place at eight o'clock P.M.

1) M: *ʃuː   X   kiːf-ak   ʔɪljuːm   ʔɪn-ʃaa-lla   tamaam.*
    what X   how-you   today   if-want-God   fine
    'X, how are you? I hope you are doing well.'

2) S: *ʔɪl-ħamdu lil-laa   mɪn ʔalla bɪ-xeir.*
    def-praise to-God   from God in-fine
    'Thanks God! I am fine'

3) M: *leiʃ   ʔɪl-juːm   mæ ʔɪjit   ʕala ʔɪʃ-ʃuɣul.*
    why   the-today not come to   the-work
    'why did you not come for work today?'

4) S: *w-alla   kun-it   taʕbæn ʃwai [pause] ʃalwazɪh btʕraf*
    by-God   was-I   tired   little   flue   know.you
    'I was sick. I had flue'

5) M: *ʔɪmbajjɪn ʕal-eik   w-allah   ʔɪʃtagtil-ak   ʔɪl-juːm*
    appears   on-you by-God missed-you   def-today
    'I can see that! I missed you today'

6) S: *ʔalla jɪxall-iːk [pause] w-alla law ma ɣɪnd-ɪ   ʔɪ ɴjuːʃ ʔɪl-juːm*
    God   keep-you   by-God if   no   there-I guests def-today
    ma baɹlaɣ mɪn ʔɪd-dar[pause]   dar   ʕamm-ɪ ʔɪdʒu: ʔɪljuːm
    not get.out from def-house   house unlce-my came.3pl def-today
    w ma fiː ħada ɣeir-ɪ bɪ-d-dar   ʃuː bɪdd-ɪ   ʔaʕmal [pause]
    and no in body but-me in-def-house what will-I   do.1sg
    ʔɪl-gahwɪh xælṣa [to the seller] b-alla   X kiːlu gahwah
    def-coffee   empty   by-God X kilo coffee
    'That's kind of you. You know! If I did not have guests today, I would not buy coffee by myself; I would stay at the house instead. But my uncle and his family visited us unexpectedly. So, I had to get some. X, could you give me one kilo of coffee, please?'

7) H: [give him the coffee]

8) S: *X bɪ-lla   ʕale-ik tidʒ-ɪ   w   tɪʃrab   fundʒan gahwɪh*
    X by-God on-you come-you and drink.2sg cup   coffee
    'come and have some coffee with us.'

9) M: *ʔalla   j-ɪsʕɪd-ak   marrah θanjɪh*
    God   prog-make.happy-you another second
    'That's kind of you! Thanks! In another chance, I will.'

10) S: *ja   radʒʊl gahwit X ma bɪttʕawwaɴ*

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[1]Participants whose roles are defined in context are referred to by capital letters. For example, participant 1 is referred to as M.

    hey man   coffee   X   no compensate
    'Come on, X's coffee is of a great taste.'

11) M: *laa ɣeir marra bas   tkun   ʔɪmʂaħʂɪħ*
      no except time   when are   healthy
      'No thanks. But when you get better, I'll.'

12) S: *ʕala raħt-ak*
      on   rest-your
      'As you like.'

The previously mentioned exchange grounds the fact that the speaker, S, is unable to host yet invites his friend, M, to his house. The exchange involves two domains. In domain one, S is inviting M to come and visit him in his house as indicated by the utterance *X bɪlla ʕaleik tijɪ wtɪʃrab funʤan gahwɪh* 'come and have some coffee with us'. The propositional content of the utterance indicates that the invitation extended is a genuine one. On hearing the words *bɪlla ʕaleik* 'by God', *tijɪ* 'come' and *tɪʃrab* 'drink', M should get the idea that S is asserting an invitation for, according to the principles of cognition, hearers of any linguistic form unintentionally process the explicit content of what they hear. In Jordanian culture, domain one is demanding; it requires the speaker to perform his role and leave the hearer to infer his intentions. Part of his performance, S insists on his proposal using various strategies such as the extensive use of swearing devices such as *bɪlla ʕaleik* 'by God' and extends his invitation in line 8 beyond social courtesy by emphasizing the idea that the coffee he bought is unforgettable.

However, speech acts should not be considered as thus for speakers may use the explicit linguistic form of utterances while they mean something else (cf. [19], p. 247). The speech act of invitations is not an exception, while S uses explicit forms to extend his invitation and M is expected to process them firsthand as thus, this should only be applied to domain one for domain two is different. To set the ground for domain two, we clarify three facts: S's goals and plans, S's ability to host M and S's acceptance of M's refusal. Let's begin tackling these points and their effect on processing the utterance mentioned in line 8, *X bɪlla ʕaleik tijɪ wtɪʃrab funʤan gahwɪh* 'come and have some coffee with us'.

S's goals and plans are clear from the co-text. To unravel them, we should answer the following question: Why did S go to the shop? It is clear that he did not do so for inviting M to his house. In fact, S went to the shop to buy some coffee without even thinking of M being there at the shop. In short, S's primary goal is to buy some coffee. The inviter has explained that he is sick and that he already had guests, the reason that made him go by himself to buy the coffee. These two reasons have set the ground for anticipating that the speaker is not going to host anyone, which makes the invitee's existence at the inviter's house highly unlikely to occur.

Grounding such ideas – reasons to refuse the invitation a long time before issuing and insisting on invitations – through an exchange is what accounts for processing genuine-like invitations beyond domain one. In short, the invitation appeals as insincere. But since the violation is mutually recognized (line 6), the invitee has a reason to count the invitation as ostensible. This conclusion is generalized, as reported in 16% (8) of the ostensible invitations observed.

4.1.2. Legitimate Position to Offer Hospitality

When the initiator is not qualified to extend an invitation, the invitation is not taken seriously, but when it is mutually recognized, it is considered as ostensible. The example below illustrates the impact of this condition on taking what is extended seriously. Obviously, the invitation extended in line 19 could not be taken seriously for it is extended by a child and not confirmed by his father, yet it is not a lie. However, since it is not mutually recognized, it cannot be classified as ostensible for it is, as the researcher argues, composed of one domain.

Context: M goes to S apartment to fix a door; M and S are neighbors who occasionally meet since they live in the same building. M, S, and T are at the door as M is leaving after he drank coffee. // Psychological and

Social World: S did not confirm his child's invitation. // Persons: M is around 46, S is around 35 and T is around 10.

13) M: *haj heik ʔıl-bab dʒahız*
    this like the-door ready
    'the door is fixed.'

14) S: *alla jiʕʈi-k ʔıl-ʕafʃa dʒar [pause] ɣallabt-ak*
    Allah give-you def-health neighbor bother-you
    'Thanks a lot.'

15) M: *la wala jıhım-ak [pause] dajmıh* [while drinking coffee]
    no not worry-you everlasting
    'Come on! thanks for the coffee.'

16) S: *şaħħah*
    health
    'Welcome'

17) M: *j-alla bi-l-ʔıðın*
    by-God in-the-permission
    'Excuse me. I ought to leave now.'

18) S: *maʕ ʔıs-salamıh* [at the door]
    with def-safety
    'Goodbye'

19) T: *ʕammuh taʕal ʕınn-ah bukrah ʔıʃrab ʃay*
    uncle come to-us tomorrow drink tea
    'Come again and have some tea.'

20) M: *ʔın-ʃa-alla ʕammuh* [laughing]
    if-will- God uncle
    'God willing.'

By analogy, the researcher claims that any invitation that is extended by a third party, a person who is not the host, could hint ostensibility except when the third party has a direct message to deliver from the host. To restate, in Jordanian culture, people might extend invitations to invitations that they have been invited to without consulting the host. Strange as it is, yet under normal conditions, these invitations are rejected for the third-party inviter, as the researcher calls him, does not have the right to extend such invitations. Consider the following two intervened exchanges.

Context: M calls S to invite her to drink a cup of tea at her house. However, S is already occupied as she has been invited to breakfast by one of the neighbors three days before. The neighbor's invitation is extended after S's invitation; S invited a group of women, her neighbors for breakfast to celebrate her daughter's newly born baby on Monday at eleven o'clock at her house. M was invited to this breakfast, and she fulfilled the invitation. During the invitation, M met S's neighbors for the first time. M, however, was not invited by S's neighbor to breakfast as S's neighbor's invitation has been extended one day after S invitation to breakfast (the invitation to the neighbor's breakfast was extended in the next day where M was not present) // Social and Psychological World: S and M are acquaintances living in relatively distant places. Yet, S's and M's neighbors are strangers. // Message-form: the exchange is transmitted via telephone. // Persons: M is a 30 years old female, and S is 47 years old. // Time: the second call is about 10:30 A.M.

21) S: *marħaba kif-ık xaltu X*
      hi   how-you aunt X
     'X, how are you?'

22) M: *ʔahlein ħabibt-ı kif-ık ʔıntı w ʕam-ı abu X* [her husband]
     welcome love-my how-you you and uncle-my Abu X
      'Hi, how are you and your family?'

23) S: *ʔıl-ħamdu li-lla bı-xeir xaltu burkah ʕas-saʕah ʔıħdaʃ ʔıꭇ-ꭇuhur*
   def-thanks   to-Allah in-fine aunt tomorrow def-clock eleven def-noon
   ʔana ʕazmıh ʔıl-jaraat ʕınd-ı bı-d-dar ʕala lı-fTur fa ʕaʃan tıħsıb-ı ʔıħsab-ik w
   I   invite def-neighbors to-me in-the-house to   to-breakfast so because make-you plan-your   and
   tiji
   come
    'I'm fine. Thanks. Aunt, tomorrow, I invited my neighbors to breakfast. I
    called you to tell you that you are invited, too.'

24) [Omitted for brevity]

25) [Omitted for brevity]

26) M: *xaltu ʔkid raħ ʔadʒ-ı ʔıza ʔalla ʔaħjan-ah*
    ok   sure will come.1sg if   Allah make.alive-3sg
    'Ok! God willing I will come for sure.'

[Three days later, M calls S]

27) M: *ʔalluu kif-ık xaltu ʔım X*
     Hello how-you aunt mother X
    'Hello, how are you?'

28) S: *ʔahlein X kif-ak ʔıntı w kıf banat-ık*
   welcome X how-you you and how daughters-your
   'Hi, how are YOU, and how is your daughter?'

29) M: *ʔil-ħamdu lıl-lah* [pause] *xaltu ʔulıt laħali ʔiza ʔinn-ik faꭇıjah balkı ʔıdʒit-ı*
    the thanks for-Allah   aunt said myself if   that-you available possibly come-3sg
    tıʃrab-ı ʕınd-ı kasıt ʃay mın tıħıt ʔıdak-ı mıtıl ʔıllı ʔiʕmıltihum jum ʔıdʒ-dʒumʕah
    drink-3sg here-1sg glass tea from your hands-your like those make-you day the-Friday
    'Thanks God I am fine. If you are available, why don't you come to my
    house and have some tea with me like the tea we had at your house on
    Friday'

30) S: *ji ja xaltu w-alla ʔıl-jum ʕazmıt-nah ʔım X ʕala*
   oh hey aunt by-Allah def-today invited-us   mother X on
   lıʃrur ʔiʕriftii-ha ꭇaħ
   breakfast knew-her   right
   'Oh, sorry, Um X invited us to breakfast at her house. You know her, don't you?'

31) M: *ʔah ʔiʕrıft-ha sallamıt ʕleiha jum ʔıjit ʕındd-ik*
    yes know-her shake   her   day came to-you
    'Yes, I know her. I met her the day I came to your house.'

32) S: *xaltu ʔıtfaɒal-ı   ruħ-ı   maʕ-ay mafi ħadah ɣarib kul dʒarat-ı*
       aunt come-you.acc go-you.acc with-me no   one   strange all neighbors-my

   ʔıllı   kanu ʕınd-ı maʕzumat
   that   were to-me invited
   'Since you know all those who are invited to breakfast, why don't you come and
   have breakfast with us'

33) M: *tıslam-ı   xaltu   marra tanyıh ʔın-ʃaa-llah*
       thank-you aunt   time   another if-will-God.
       'That's kind of you. In another chance, I'll'

34) S: *taʕal-ı   ʃu   fi warak-ı*
       come-you what in behind-you
       'If you are not busy, come.'

35) M: *ʔıl-marra ʔıl-dʒay   ʔın-ʃaa-llah baħsıb ʔıħsabi w   badʒı* [Omitted for brevity]
       the-time the-next if-wil-God make   plan   and come
       'God willing, next time, I will make sure not to be busy and come.'

36) S: *ʔın-ʃaa-llah xaltu*
       if-will-God aunt
       'God willing.'
[Goodbye Exchanges]

In the second part of this exchange, one of the felicity conditions is violated - the inviter is not in a legitimate position to offer hospitality. In fact, in line 32, S issues an invitation to a breakfast that she has been invited to by one of her neighbors. S extends the invitation beyond social courtesy as it is indicated by the utterance *mafi ħadah ɣarib kul dʒaratı ʔılı kanu ʕındı maʕzumat* 'since you know all those who are invited to breakfast, why don't you come and have breakfast with us', and even she insists upon the invitation in line 34. However, the fact that S is inviting M to an invitation that she does not have a full mastery of reveals that S is only pretending to extend a sincere invitation by employing two strategies that are typically associated with genuineness. This conclusion, in fact, supports Isaacs and Clark's ([1], p. 497) view in that S "would have wanted [M] to accept the invitation if the situation had been different."

To clarify this point, let's underpin the reason that made M accept the invitation given in line 23. The simple answer goes like this: 'the situation is different'. Even though the time, place, and type of invitation extended do not differ much from that in line 32, M accepts the invitation since M is invited directly from the host; S is in a legitimate position to offer hospitality. This rationalizes M's acceptance of the invitation. In fact, in Jordanian culture, it is not age as a sociolinguistic factor that affects the genuineness of invitations (in contrast with Naim[20]), but the violation of the preparatory condition - the inviter is in a legitimate position to offer hospitality. The researcher generalizes this conclusion to other cultures, as well.

4.1.3. The Offer Is Practically Feasible

The ostensibility of invitations is not limited to conditions that are associated with the conversants, but it can be extended to conditions that are associated with the offer itself. These kinds of posts trigger other people to comment on them. Through their comments, people may solicit invitations directly. This, in fact, may force the inviter to extend offers that "couldn't practically be provided" ([1], p. 499). In fact, the inviter may extend invitations on things that are already consumed. Consider the following example:

Context: M is hanging with his friends .M is hungry, yet he has money just enough to buy one sandwich, 60 piasters. M, T, and S are standing in front of a restaurant. // Psychological and Social World: S and T are M's close friends who study with each other at a secondary school. // Persons: All the interactants are around

eighteen years old males.

49) S: *w-alla ʃabab dʒuʕan bɪdd-i ʔaʃtar-i sandwɪʃih gaddeiʃ ħagha*
    by-God guys hungry want-1sg buy-1sg sandwich.sg how much
    'I am so hungry. I would like to buy a sandwich. How much does it cost?'

50) T: *sɪttin*
    sixty
    'Sixty piasters'

51) S: *ʔah ʔɪkwayyɪs heik bɪʂiru sɪtin* [counting the money]
    yes good like become sixty
    'Thanks God, I've barley got sixty piasters'

52) S: [hiding to the restaurant] *ʔadʒibɪl-ku maʔ-i ʃabæb* [on his expense]
                                    bring-3pl with-me guys
    'Do you want to get you some sandwiches?'

53) T and M: *la tɪslam kul ʔɪntah w ma ʕalei-k*
             no safe.you eat you and no upon-you.sg
    'No thanks, don't worry about us'

54) S: [he went back and opened the sandwich] *tukl-u*
                                              eat-you.pl
    'Do you want to eat?'

55) T and M: *ʂaħah*
             health
    'No, thanks'

Line 51 shows that S is practically unable to provide the offer presented in lines 52 and 54. In fact, as the context reveals, S has only sixty piasters, the price of one sandwich. Still, he offers to bring his friends sandwiches if they accept the offer or to eat his own sandwich as the utterance *tuklu* 'do you want to eat?' indicates. Of course, this does not make sense for one more sandwich, for instance, means another sixty piasters which the inviter cannot practically afford. This violates the preparatory condition – the offer is practically feasible. The violation is mutually recognized as can be inferred from lines 51 and 53. The mutually recognized violation leans the invitation towards ostensibility.

However, sometimes the recognition of the violation of this preparatory condition in Jordanian culture is not as easy as it might seem for it depends heavily on the notion of common ground. In Jordanian culture, the feasibility of the offer depends on the item itself. That is to say, based on their communal common ground, Jordanians are expected to reject an offer of a can of Pepsi that a person has bought for himself, yet it is also expected that they might accept the offer presented of a bottle of water. This puzzle can be accounted for as follows: if the object can be shared with others without giving the feeling of depreciation, the offer is feasible. Otherwise, it is not and should be counted as ostensible in normal situations.

4.1.4. The Receiver Is Able to Accept [2]

'The receiver is able to accept' is another preparatory condition if defective indicates that the invitation is insincere. According to Isaacs and Clark ([1], p. 499), when "A knew B either had other plans B would unlikely to break or didn't have the means to get to the event, [or when] A knew B would have little interest in coming", the invitations are counted as ostensible. Besides Isaacs and Clark's [1] sit-

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[2] The word 'receiver' in this study refers to the one to whom the invitation or offer is extended.

uations, the researcher argues that Jordanians might extend ostensible invitations when they knew (based on their personal diaries) that the ones to whom the invitation is extended cannot accept the invitation due to health, religious or cultural constraints. Thus, ostensible invitations are more likely to take place when S knew that M goes to work at a certain time in the morning and yet invites him to come in, S knew that M suffers from a certain disease such as diabetes and still invites him to drink/eat something sweet and so on and so forth. Consider the following exchange:

Context: M goes to his job at half-past seven. S knows that M is a teacher at UNRWA schools and leaves at this time. While M is leaving, S happened to be standing in front of his house. //Psychological and Social World: M and S are neighbors who occasionally meet since they live in the same building. S does not have a prior intention to invite M to his house. // Persons: S is a thirty-two-year old male. M is in his thirties. Message-form: the exchange is done through face-to-face interaction.

56) M: *ʔɪs-salam ʕalay-kum kif ħall-ak dʒar* [while walking]
    the-peace upon-you   how state-you neighbor
    'Peace be upon you. How are you, neighbor?'

57) S: *ʔɪl-ħamdu-li-lah ʔɪtfaᴅal dʒar*
    the-thank-to-God come.in neighbor
    'I'm fine thank you. Come in'

58) M: *tɪslam*
    be.ok
    'Thanks'

The situation in which neighbors have invited each other using expressions such as *ʔɪtfaᴅᴅal* 'come in', especially when met by chance, has become fairly extensive in the Jordanian society. The invitation inevitably is an ostensible one. However, what contributes to this conclusion: Is it because the invitation is not insisted upon or because the invitation violates the preparatory condition: the guest is able to accept?

The researcher gives primacy to the second option as insisting on this kind of invitation is highly unnatural. In fact, it is mutually known that these invitations are not to be taken seriously. Thus, if S insists on his invitation, the invitation will be interpreted as ironic for the moment is not appropriate for the invitee to accept the invitation. This conclusion does not contradict that of Isaacs and Clark ([1], p. 502) in which they claim that the "features aren't independent of each other". Yet, it finalizes their claim in that the violation of the preparatory condition (as in our case where the guest is unable to accept) might block the use of other features that are associated with genuineness – insisting on invitations, for example; insisting, in certain cases, might make pretense below sincerity level.

4.1.5. The Receiver Is Not Interested

The receiver is not always unable to accept the invitation. Yet, he may not have an interest in accepting the invitation/offer presented for certain reasons that might be associated with the presence of a third party that the invitee has no interest in being with. If the inviter knows such issues (based on his previous knowledge and beliefs) and extends invitations against the receivers' interests, the receiver should have a reason to suspect the genuineness of the invitation. Consider the following exchange:

Context: S and M have prearranged on the phone to go with each other to Al-Jam'ah Street in Irbid at six o'clock. S drives to M's house to pick him up. When reaching M's house, S finds M standing with another person, T, whom S is familiar with.// Social and Psychological World: S hates being with T as he considers T a tedious person for all T's topics and discussions are dull. S got surprised and annoyed when he saw M with

T. T mutually recognizes S's view of him and he also does not like being with S. S and M are intimates. T is a friend of M but acquainted with S.//Persons: S, M and T are around twenty nine year old males.

59) S*: y-alla   X bıdna ʔınruħ*
       By-Allah X want   go
       'X, let's go.'

60) M: *ʔıtlaʕ maʕna* [talking to T]
          come   with.us
       'Come with us.'

61) S: [remains silent]

62) T*: la ʔana bıddi   ʔaruħ* [he was about to leave]
          no I   want.1sg leave
       'No, I want to leave.'

63) S: *taʕal maʕna*
        come with.us
       'Come with us.'

64) T: *la bıddi   ʔaruħ mıstaʕdʒıl*
         no want.1sg go   hurry
       'No thanks. I am in a hurry. I have to leave.'

65) S: *ṭayyıb xalin-ah ʔınʃuf-ak*
        ok   let-us   see-you
       'Ok! let's see you sometime.'

66) T: ʔın-ʃa-alla ʔın-ʃa-alla [T leaves]
         if-will-God if-will-God
        'God willing (twice)'

67) S: *law ʔınnu   ʔıdʒa ʃu   kunıt bıddi ʔasawwı fi-k   ja X* [talking to M]
        if   happened came what was want make   in-you oh X
       'I can't imagine what I would do with you if he came with us'

68) M: *y-alla   ħaṣal   xeir*
         by-God happened good
         'I know, but thanks God that he did not take it seriously'

In this exchange, three ostensible invitations are extended: M's invitation to T in line 60 and S's invitations to T in lines 63 and 65. M is an intimate friend with S; he shows a great amount of extensive personal common ground, including private information about S. He knows that S does not like T and that is apparent in his utterance*: yalla ħaṣal xeir* 'I know, but thanks God that he did not take it seriously' (line 68). Yet, he was obliged to invite T to spend time with them. Based on the physical and psychological context, it becomes clear that S's invitations in lines 63 and 65 are not intended to be taken seriously. S extends his invitations when he realized that T is giving excuses for not going with M as indicated in line 62 instead of extending it firsthand when he called M for leaving in line 59. Still, S also reveals his intentions to M explicitly that he was afraid that T takes M's invitations as genuine since they are friends. As a matter of fact, in such situations the violation is not associated with inability but rather with the lack of interest.

To round up, the researcher claims that the implausibility strategy finds its way in Jordanian culture in the form

of two branches; one is associated with the initiator, and the other is related to the receiver of such invitations. While the former branch includes aspects related to the initiator and the feasibility of the offer itself, the latter consistent with Isaacs and Clark[1] involves two twigs: one is related to the ability of the receiver, and the other is manifested in the lack of interest toward fulfilling the invitation offered. All of these branches and twigs work as connected with one trunk that supplies them with information obtained through roots anchored to the common ground of the interlocutors.

4.2. The Indefiniteness Strategy

Based on the violation of the preparatory conditions, Isaacs and Clark ([1], p. 501) set another strategy that has to do with the "logistics" of the extended invitations. They claim that to guarantee the fulfillment of an invitation, an inviter has to specify the time and place of the invitation, especially when undetermined by the "situation". Isaacs and Clark[1] argue that invitations should be clearly defined, or else they might be defective (cf. [1, 8, 21]).

> "*Sometime*" clearly is not sufficient to ensure that two people will be at the same place at the same time. If A offers no other arrangements,

B has some reason to believe the invitation is ostensible.

> ([1], p. 501)

According to our corpus, arrangements were made for 61 invitations: 35 (58.3%) ostensible and 26 (43.3%) for genuine ones. The reason for this deviation from the total number 120 is that offers (offers for objects) were not counted for they do not need to include arrangements. The arrangements for 71.4% of ostensible invitations were vague; they are only reported as "invitations that are yet to come" (cf.[1], p. 501), utilizing expressions such as *ʔɪ bga mur* 'come to visit sometime' and *xallina ʔɪnʃufak* 'let's see you sometime'[3].

Such invitations were heavily reported in telephone conversations and in the computer-mediated social network, Facebook. As explained before, these expressions can indicate ostensibility for they are not sufficient to ensure that the two people will be at the same place at the same time. Only a sparse number of vague ostensible invitations were reported in face-to-face conversations; they were reported as a way to ask the inviter for what Jordanians call *ħilwan* 'something sweet offered in happy occasions' and others. Consider the following table (**Table 2**) for clarification of the distribution of the indefiniteness strategy:

Table 2. The distribution of the indefiniteness strategy.

		Strategy		Total
		Vague Arrangements	**Specific Arrangements**	
Type of Invitation	**Ostensible**	25 (71.4%)	10 (28.6%)	35 (100%)
	Genuine	6 (23.1%)	20 (76.9%)	26 (100%)
Total		31 (50.8%)	30 (49.2%)	61 (100%)

To test whether this difference is significant or not in Jordanian Arabic, A Chi-square goodness of fit test was also calculated comparing the frequency of occurrence of the indefiniteness strategy (specific arrangements versus undetermined ones) for genuine and ostensible invitations. The test shows that the difference between ostensible and genuine invitations with regard to the employment of this strategy is

significant, (X^2 (1) = 13.954 < 0.05), so the null hypothesis with regard to the arrangements is rejected. Thus, indefiniteness can be used as a moderate indicator of ostensibility in this culture. In fact, it is found that there is a positive moderate correlation between specifying arrangements and ostensibility, (r (61) = 0.478, $p < 0.01$).

Back to our point, when the arrangements cannot be

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[3] According to Isaacs and Clark ([1], p. 498), the overlap between ambiguous invitation and ostensible invitations is dependent solely on the addressee. Thus, in this strategy, ostensible and ambiguous invitations are "ambiguous to the analyst" ([1], p. 498).

figured out through personal common ground when needed, the invitation must be an ostensible one; this case is only re-ported among strangers. To illustrate this violation, consider the following interaction.

Context: S goes to the Housing Bank for Trade and Finance to receive his subsidy. In the bank there were rows of people waiting to receive their subsidies. M is a custodian working at the bank. // Social and Psychological World: M sympathized with S after his request to overstep these people. M does not know S before and he will never meet him again. Yet, S looks like a person from a rural area. // Persons: S is fifty-six years old male. M is in his thirties.

69) S: *maʃʃin-i dabbɪr-ha w-alla   mistaʕdʒɪl*
     walk-me manage-it   by-Allah hurry
     'I am in a hurry. Could you be hurry a bit?'

70) M: *hat   hawit-ak*
     give   ID-your
     'Give me your ID'

71) S: [takes his ID]
72) M: *xalliin-ah bi-yuum   niksab-ak ʕ-al-ɣadah* [takes his ID and the money]
     let-us   in-a.day gain-you   on-the-lunch
     'Let's have lunch with each other sometime'

73) S: *ʔahlan   w   sahlan*
     welcome and easy
     'Welcome'

Even though the time of the invitation can be inferred from the semantic content of the word *ɣadah* 'lunch', this time is not enough for meeting as M hangs his invitation on an indefinite lunch time; *biyum* 'in a day' implies an indefinite day from the days of the year. The fact that M does not know S before suggests that the location of the dinner is not mutually recognized. Hypothetically speaking, if S took his mind to fulfill the invitation, he should first figure out when and where he has to go. This is what accounts for processing the invitation as ostensible. The table above shows that 28.6% (10) of ostensible invitations were made specific. These invitations were made specific by the context. Thus, there was no need for specifying arrangements for them.

However, it is also observed that arrangements were left vague for 23.1% (6) of genuine invitations. The researcher claims that the indefiniteness of these invitations is of a different function; the inviter may intentionally leave arrangements vague to avoid impediment over the invitee. Thus, when the invitee asks for a definite time for meeting, the inviter might respond using expressions such as *mafi*

waray ʔiʃʃi mata ma bɪddak mur mɪʃ fargah maʕɪ ʔana 'I am free all day long. Whenever you would like to come, you are welcome'. Thus, even though in such expressions the time is left undetermined, still, it provides the inviter a chance to avoid imposing an exact time on the invitee; it might be left as thus for politeness sake.

To sum up this part, the violation of preparatory conditions (the implausibility strategy and the indefiniteness strategy) can cancel the effect of strategies that are normally used in genuine invitations or block their use for its realization depends on context, unlike the other strategies (the forthcoming argument clarifies this assumption). In Jordanian culture, the use of the previously mentioned strategies: insisting, motivating, etc. along with the implausibility strategy, for example, is expected as long as the initiator aims to make pretense at sincerity level obvious. Based on the absence of the relative ranking of the tactics used in the invitation discourse, Isaacs and Clark's[1] classification cannot fully account for this conclusion for it is not obvious which tactic is more effective than the other to leaning invitations to-

ward ostensibility. This supports our claim that the violation of the preparatory conditions 'out ranks' the other strategies. By and large, the strength of this strategy, as the researcher claims, pours out from its association with context.

Due to the fact that ostensible invitations are extended yet with the intention not to be taken seriously, speakers might choose to indicate the difference between the extended invitation and their real intentions through showing lack of commitment to the invitation extended. Based on Isaacs and Clark[1], four strategies might be employed for this purpose: lack of motivations, lack of insisting, the presence of hedging devices and the presence of inappropriate cues. These strategies were tested. Yet, the researcher widened their scope to capture Jordanian ostensible invitations.

4.3. The Motivation Strategy

As noticed by Isaacs and Clark[1], inviters should give reasons why the invitee should accept the invitation through using expressions that make the invitation more attractive. In the Jordanian culture, expressions such as *ʔırıħla mıʃ ħılwah mın dunak* 'it is not going to be a good trip without you', *ʔıða ma bıttılaʕ maʕana bınılɣı ʔıTTalʕah kulha* 'if you did not go with us, we would cancel the whole arrangements',

ʔınta waħad mın ʔılʕalıh wma bıdak ʕazumıh 'you are one of us' and expressions showing reprimands such as *ʃu ʔıħna mıʃ gad ʔılmagaam yaʕni* 'do we not meet your expectations?', *bazʕal mınnak ʔıða ma bıtıjı ʕındı ʕalʕazumıh* 'I will take it as a negative point on our relation', *ʔıtðkkarha bas wamınʃuf min raħ ʔıruħ maʕak* 'we will see who is going to fulfill your invitations in the future' and the like, are extensively used to motivate invitations beyond social courtesy in this way. However, in Jordanian culture, two factors might affect the motivation strategy: the lack of use of attractive expressions and the use of expressions that make invitations less attractive. Thus, it is in this section where we evaluated the impact of both types of expressions in Jordanian ostensible invitations under the rubric of the motivation strategy.

Accordingly, only 48.3% (58) of invitations were not motivated beyond social courtesy. The lack of motivation was found in only 70.0 % of ostensible invitations compared with 33.3% of genuine ones (See **Table 3** below). Yet, not all of these invitations lacked motivation beyond social courtesy; compared with genuine invitations, five ostensible invitations were also minimized. This difference calls attention for none of the genuine invitations were reported to be minimized.

Table 3. The distribution of the motivation strategy.

		Strategy		Total
		Does Not Motivate	Motivates	
Type of Invitation	**Ostensible**	42 (70.0%)	18 (30.0%)	60 (100.0%)
	Genuine	20 (33.3%)	40 (66.7%)	60 (100.0%)
Total		52 (43.3%)	68 (56.7%)	120 (100.0%)

The Chi-square goodness of fit test comparing the frequency of the occurrence of the motivation strategy (motivated invitations versus not motivated invitations) for genuine and ostensible invitations shows that the difference is significant, (X^2 (1) = 16.151 < 0.05). However, it is weak predicator for ostensibility, (r (120) = 0.367, p < 0.01). This could be attributed to the fact that that motivating invitations beyond social courtesy in Jordanian culture is part and parcel of making pretense at its sincerity level. Yet, in certain cases, ostensible invitations ought not to be motivated since doing so, as the researcher argues, might turn invitations into

ironies and sarcasm.

In Jordanian culture, it is noticed that when the invitee does not collude or pretend not to recognize the pretense behind the invitation, the inviter may explicitly minimize his invitation through deploying expressions related to his lack of awareness of what is going to be served for the invitee. These expressions include: *ʔıllı bıkun maudʒud bınukıl mınnuh* 'you are invited to eat whatever we have', *ħawaɒır* 'fast food and others. To clarify how Jordanians minimize their ostensible invitations, consider the following interaction.

Context: M and his co-workers are in S's car. S is the driver of the car. S and the others are passengers whom M delivers from and to their houses. S reaches his house and is about to leave. // Social and Psychological World: S knows that M has to deliver the other three passengers to their houses. M knows that S is a stingy person. S and M are acquaintances even though they teach at the same school. // Persons: S is about thirty-five year old Arabic teacher. M is a twenty-nine old computer teacher.

74) S: *ṭayyıb hassa ʔıtfaḍal-u   ʕa-leina ʕ-al-ɣadah*
        ok   now come.in-you on-our   on-the-lunch
        'Come and have lunch with us'

75) M: *leiʃ ʃu   ṭabxin*
        why what cooked
        'What have you cooked for lunch?'

76) S: *ma baʕraf ʔıllı bıkun mauʤud bınukıl mınnuh*
        not know that be   exist   eat.3pl form.it
        'I do not know! you are invited to eat whatever we have'

77) M: *la ħabib-i   ma hi maħsubıħ ʔa-leinah w-amaħsubıħ xalli-ha ʕala*
        no love-my not it counted   on-us   and-counted let-it   on
        ʔıʃı   mıħrız ʔaħsan
        thing valuable better
        'No thanks, I'd rather prefer to be invited on a determined lunch, so let it be to some other time'

78) S: *ʕala raħt-ak*
        on   rest-your
        As you like'

In this exchange, the inviter does not only evade using motivating expressions that would make the invitation attractive for the invitee, but he minimizes the offer he presents in line 76 as indicated by the utterance *ʔıllı bıkun mauʤud bınukıl mınnuh* 'you are invited to eat whatever we have'. This utterance does not inform M directly that he should decline the invitation. Yet, it tells him indirectly that the invitation is an ostensible one and should be rejected. It should be noticed that this kind of invitations is restricted in use for acquaintances who do like to highlight the stinginess of each other.

4.4. The Persistence Strategy

The persistence strategy has been proved to be a good indicator of ostensibility in many low context cultures (cf.[1, 15]) and high context ones (cf.[10, 11]). It is only Eslami[11] who shows that persistence could not be a strong indicator of ostensibility, albeit a significant one. In Jordanian culture, persistence takes place in two ways: using swearing devices and extending the invitational discourse beyond single structures. Therefore, it was of a great need to measure not only the invitational discourse of ostensible invitations as done by Isaacs and Clark[1] but also the number of swearing devices the initiator uses to reinforce his invitation.

Likewise, the statistical analysis below shows that the persistence strategy emerges as a major factor influencing the genuineness of invitations in Jordanian Arabic when they are rejected. **Table 4** shows a difference in the use of this strategy between ostensible and genuine invitations. Out of 36 rejected genuine invitations, speakers persist upon 69.4% of the time; whereas in rejected ostensible invitation, speakers persist upon 18.2%. The difference of persisting between the two types of invitations is 51.2%. However, with regard to the lack of persistence, ostensible invitations lacked persistence in 81.8% whereas 30.6% of genuine invitations did. This means that there is a tendency toward avoiding persistence in ostensible invitations in this community.

Table 4. The distribution of the persistence strategy.

		Strategy		Total
		Does Not Persist	Persist	
Type of Invitation	**Ostensible**	45 (81.8%)	10 (18.2%)	55 (100%)
	Genuine	11 (30.6%)	25 (69.4%)	36 (100%)
Total		56 (61.5%)	35 (38.5%)	91 (100.0%)

The difference between ostensible and genuine invitations with regard to the employment of the persistence strategy was found significant, (X^2 (1) = 24.158 < 0.05), so the null hypothesis with regard to the persistence strategy is rejected. This means that the lack of persistence can be used as a moderate indicator of ostensibility in this culture, (r (91) = 0.515, p < 0.01).

In Jordanian culture, issuing invitations is a complex process that passes through procedures, the first of which is that the invitee appeals to suspect the sincerity of the invitation extended for he considers it as a compliment ([22], p. 231). Thus, it is expected that invitations, by and large, to be declined at first hand. If the inviter is serious in his proposal, he should reinforce his invitation/offer using many strategies such as repetition (consistent with [1, 10] and others) and swearing.

The fact that genuine invitations should be realized as the discourse topic- either through the repetitive instantiations or through being themselves the main topic of the discourse (cf. [23]) makes Jordanians refrain from insisting upon their ostensible invitations beyond bipartite structures. Thus, in the example provided in the previous strategy, the invitation goes as follows: S invites; M asks for more details; S minimizes the offer; M refuses; S accepts his refusal. After M's refusal, S accepts his excuse using the word ʕala raħtak 'As you like'; this single structure invitation blocks the way for any potential acceptance. The researcher argues that extensive insisting might turn what they meant to be taken firsthand as ostensible into genuine and thus make the risk of acceptance higher.

Moreover, invitations in Jordanian culture could involve an extensive use of empty swearing and insisting devices that have lost their pragmatic force during the discourse. According to our sample, speakers, more often than not, swear upon invitations that clearly violate a preparatory condition that is mutually recognized between the speakers, or they might use less committing swearing devices such as ʔamaanih [4] 'Lit. trustworthiness'. Thus, in the example provided under the Implausibility Strategy Section, the researcher managed to prove how speakers initially overlook the force of the utterance bılla ʕaleik 'By Allah' and instead focus on the violation of the preparatory condition –the initiator is unable to host - for considering the invitation as ostensible rather than genuine. Hence, in genuine invitations speakers would re-highlight the force of the utterance through using expressions as ħalafit 'I have sworn' or reminding the hearer of the consequences of not fulfilling their Qasam (fasting three consecutive days).

However, based on his data, the researcher believes that persistence on ostensible invitations is not random. He believes that speakers would persist on their ostensible invitations in their attempt to maintain equity – "maximize their outcomes: their benefits minus their costs" ([21], p. 290) - provided that there is a violation in one or more of the preparatory conditions mentioned in the previous section. That is, if a speaker felt that the cost is higher than his benefit, he would insist on his invitation so that he would psychologically feel that the cost is reduced at the benefit level as in the case of expressing thanking and gratitude when partings. Otherwise, persistence is not observed nor reported to occur.

4.5. Using Equivocal and Hedged Utterances

Equivocal ostensible invitations commonly use language that can be interpreted in multiple ways [24–26]. This fact is clearly demonstrated when extending ostensible invitations/offers in Jordanian culture. Contradictions, for ex-

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[4]Amaanih entails honoring and fulfilling commitments in promises and trusts on the part of the initiator. The researcher argues that Jordanians resort to this form of weak insisting in their ostensible invitations for it only entails commitment.

ample, highlight the fact that the speaker is not fully committed to what he is offering yet without stating that directly. This kind of speech is not deceptive, nor uncooperative, because the addressees' wishes are not revealed. As noticed by Brown and Levinson ([27], p. 221), a contradictory statement encourages the hearer to make inferences to conceal the contradictory propositions. These inferences fulfill the purpose of ostensible invitations in rather a short way through making "the off-record purpose [of the invitation] mutually understood" and showing the fact that "pretense is intended to be recognized" ([1], p. 498). Our data reveals the use of the following and similar expressions:

1) *bɪd-na   nɪʈlaʕ bɪtħɪb tijɪ   walla ʔɪtʋall-ak hun*
   want-we go   like come or   stay-you here
   'We are going to hang around. Do you like to come? Or do you prefer to stay here?'

2) *baʕd-ak   bɪdd-ak   ʔɪl-maṣari walla baʈʈalɪt*
   still-you want-you the-money or   change.mind
   'do you still want your money? Or do you prefer not to have them now?'

3) *bɪdd-ak   tijɪ   walla dɪrast-ak   ʔawla*
   want-you come or   study-your better
   'do you like to come? or do you prefer to stay here for study?'

Such contradictions call the hearer to think about the unstated message - the speaker is issuing the invitation/offer only ostensibly. More often than not, the hearer colludes with the pretense and takes the intended option.

To equivocate their invitations, speakers should modify the illocutionary force of their invitations. In fact, invitations illocutionary force is modified as suspended by hedging the utterance. Suspending the illocutionary force of invitations aims to show the hearer that the invitation is extended at the sincerity level. Still, it coats the invitation with lack of commitment at the same time. The analysis given for our data has focused on hedges that are used to "change the relationship between propositional content and the speaker by implicating a level of uncertainty with respect to speaker's commitment" ([28], p. 19). Based on our data, different forms of hedges are often used in ostensible invitations. These are the possibility marker *ʔiða* 'if' when used along with an adverbial-clause hedge, the particles *ʈayyɪb* 'well' and *bɪtħɪb* 'like', and the dubitative particles *ʔɪħtɪmal* 'probably' *bɪdʒuz* ' maybe', *ma bʕraf* 'I am not sure' and others. The following are some illustrative examples:

a) *ʔɪða bɪtħɪb tijɪ   taʕal bas ʔana bagul law ʔɪtʋall-ak ʕɪnd X ʔaħsan*
   if   like come come but I   say   if   stay-you with X better
   'If you want to come, I don't mind but I think if you stay with X it might be better'

b) *ʔɪða ʔɪs-sjara mɪʃ ful ʔɪʈlaʕ maʕ-na*
   if   the-car   not full come with-us
   'If the car is not full, come with us'

c) *ʔɪða bɪdd-ak   taʕal bas bɪdʒuz ʔɪtʋal-ak   gaʕid laħal-ak   ʕaadi*
   if   like-you   come but might remain-you setting alone-you   ok
   'If you want to come, I never mind but it might happen that you would stay alone'

e) *ʈayjɪb ʔɪtfaʋal fut*
   well   come   enter
   'Well, come in'

f) *bɪdd-ak   tɪjɪ   taʕal bas ma baʕraf ʔɪħtɪmal yijɪ   X maʕa-na*
   like-you   come come but not know   probably come X with-us

'If you want to come, it is ok, but X might come too'

Out of 120 invitations, 65 (54.2%) invitations were hedged or equivocated. The statistical analysis shows that the use of hedged utterances in ostensible invitations exceeds that of genuine ones. 68.3% of ostensible invitations included one or more of hedging devices, whereas 40% of genuine invitations did with a 28.3% difference. The fact that hedges can fulfill other functions as well, they can be used for reasons related to 'face' (cf. [27], p. 146; [2, 11, 15]), highlights the reason behind using these devices in genuine invitations. This seemingly contradictory view shows the usefulness of this strategy in ostensible invitations; it helps presenting the ostensibility in rather a very polite way.

Table 5. The distribution of hedged and equivocated utterances.

Type of Invitation		Strategy		Total
		Does Not Hedge or Equivocate	Hedges or Equivocates	
	Ostensible	19 (31.7%)	41 (68.3%)	60 (100%)
	Genuine	36 (60%)	24 (40%)	60 (100%)
Total		55 (45.8%)	65 (54.2%)	120 (100%)

The Chi Square goodness of fit test shows that the difference is significant and could predict ostensibility, (X^2 (1) = 9.701 < 0.05) in this culture. The null hypothesis is rejected for a significant difference between ostensible and genuine invitations with regard to the employment of hedging devices throughout the discourse is yet found with a weak positive correlation between the two variables, (r (120) = 0.284, $p < 0.01$).

To get a full view of how hedging transforms invitations into ostensible ones, we should clarify how it suspends the felicity conditions of these invitations. In fact, any suspending of the presumption of the addressee's ability to fulfill the invitation/offer presented paves the way for the speaker to extend his invitation ostensibly on secure ground. Yet, the question remains how the inviter is able to do that; as the speaker might extend his intentions clearly that he does not really want the invitee to accept the offer presented, he also can withdraw easily as he is not fully committed to what he says. Consider the following exchange for clarification:

Context: S is invited to his friend's wedding party; S is used to taking his young brother, M, with him as he wants to make his brother more sociable. However, his friend's party is taking place late at night. Thus, he does not want his brother this time to go with him as his friend's house is in another city, yet he can't tell him so for this would subjugate him.// Social and Psychological World: S treats his brother in a very sensitive way for his brother is an introvert. M has heard S telling his father that he is not going to take him this time. // Persons: S is twenty-three years male; M is about ten years and N is their father who knows S's intentions. The relationship of S and M is very intimate.// Message-form: the exchange is done through face-to-face interaction.

79) S: y-alla   ʔana rayıħ [at the door]
      by-Allah I   go
      'Ok, I am leaving now'

80) M: *wein   rayıħ*
        where going
        'Where are you going?'

81) S: *ʕɪnd ʂaħɪb ʔɪlɪ*
     to   friend mine
     'To see a friend of mine'

82) M: *bɪddɪ ʔaruħ maʕ-ak*
      I   go   with-you
     'I want to go with you'

83) S: *ʔɪðaa bɪdd-ak* tijɪ maʕay taʕal *bas ʔɪħtɪmal* ma ʔɪtlagɪ
      if   need- come with-me come but probably no find
      wlad gadd-ak tilʕab maʕ-hum wɪt-ᴅall-ak gaʕɪd laħal-ak
      boys   age-yours play with-them and stay sitting alone
     'If you want to come, it is ok. But you might find nobody to play with so you would stay alone'

84) N: *xalaʂ ja X xallɪk   hun balaʃ tɪzhag hunak*
      ok   oh X remain-you here no   bored there
     'See! You might feel bored there. It is better to stay here'

85) M: *maʃɪ xalaʂ   ruħ ʔɪntah*
      ok   as.you.like go   you
     'Ok, go by yourself'

In this exchange, S uses two hedging devices: the use of the possibility marker *ʔɪða* 'if' and the dubitative particle *ʔɪħtɪmal* 'probably. In doing so, S suspends the felicity condition on assertion and gives M a reason to believe that S does not really want him to attend the event. Still, S's utterance in line 83 does not preclude to M's feeling that S likes or approves his presence. Yet, S's commitment to what he is offering is reduced in a very polite way. Hypothetically speaking, if M happens to confront S with the fact that he does not want M to go with him, S can easily dodge as his utterance implies his uncertainty of the reason given- M will find no one of his age to play with him there; this, in fact, only suspends the felicity condition which can be retained when needed - S's utterance provides him with a chance to elude his real intentions as he can simply claim that he did not say/mean so. In fact, hedging the utterance, in this way, is veneering. It decreases commitment to the level that both the speaker and the hearer realize the intended message. Still, it keeps the sincerity level of the utterance at its level of genuineness.

4.6. The Soliciting Strategy

Even though the soliciting strategy is part and parcel of the signaling view mentioned in the previous section, its method of signaling is different. That is, while initiators can utilize contextual signals to show lack of commitment, they also can utilize linguistic signals that happen to occur through their conversations (cf. Clark[21], p. 188). This strategy takes place when S signals to M linguistically that S should extend an invitation to M by requesting the invitation either directly or indirectly. As thus, following the framework of Isaacs and Clark[1], the researcher discusses this strategy in a separate section.

Across cultures, the soliciting strategy has been proved to be a good indicator of ostensibility[1, 10, 11, 15]. It is only Eslami[11] who showed that this strategy could not be a reliable indicator of ostensibility, albeit a significant one. Accordingly, the researcher tested the impact of this strategy on Jordanian ostensible invitations. Both ostensible and genuine invitations are noticed to be solicited. In fact, 43.3% of ostensible invitations were requested directly using expressions such as *3iznaah fiiha* (can I take it), *wʔɪħna ma ʔɪlna gahwɪh* 'What about us? Where is our coffee?', etc., or indirectly by anticipating what S should have done as a kind of a mild reprimand *leiʃ ʔɪmɣallɪb ħalak* 'why did you bother yourself?'. Yet, these expressions, as explained before, were mutually recognized not to be taken seriously at a very high level. However, only 15% of genuine invitations were requested. Yet, requests in both kinds of invitations were observed among intimates only.

Table 6. The distribution of the soliciting strategy.

		Strategy		Total
		Does Not Solicit	Solicited	
Type of Invitation	Ostensible	34	26	60
		56.7%	43.3%	100.0%
	Genuine	51	9	60
		85.0%	15.0%	100.0%
Total		85	35	120
		70.8%	29.2%	100.0%

The Chi goodness of fit test indicates that the difference is statistically significant (X^2 (1) = 11.657 < 0.05). And, it is a weak one (r (120) = 0.312, p < 0.01). This means that when invitations are extended after being solicited, they have a good chance to be ostensible ones.

Requesting an invitation is face-threatening in Jordanian culture and is considered an impediment. Yet, as he demonstrated before, intentions are assumed to be mutually recognized among intimates. Mutually recognized intentions make intimates free of such obligations and thus request invitations directly.

5. Conclusions

This study examined the application of Isaacs and Clark's[1] seven tactics for ostensible invitations within Jordanian culture, finding that these strategies do operate with distinct variations in strength. Specifically, the Implausibility Strategy shows a strong correlation with ostensibility, while other tactics, such as Using Equivocal and Hedged Utterances, exhibit weaker correlations. The study highlights that linguistic features are most pronounced when the strategy relies heavily on context, but when dependent on explicit linguistic elements, the correlation with ostensibility diminishes. Statistical analysis confirms that ostensible and genuine invitations in Jordanian culture display distinct distribution patterns. However, Jordanians may incorporate features typical of genuine invitations, such as insistence or swearing, to add complexity to ostensible invitations, blurring the distinction between the two types.

Future studies could expand on these findings by examining a larger and more diverse sample to strengthen the representativeness of the data. Moreover, comparative studies between high- and low-context cultures could provide further insight into the adaptation of ostensibility strategies across different cultural contexts. It would also be beneficial to develop frameworks that account for cultural specificity within high-context cultures, which may allow for a deeper understanding of the subtleties and unique markers of ostensible invitations in Jordanian Arabic and similar linguistic communities.

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Conflicts of Interest

There is no conflict of interest.

Appendix A

Sheet of Data Analysis

Invitation Index

Conversation Number: _____

Sincerity of the Invitation (____): [5] Genuine - Ostensible

Function of the Invitation: _____

Other: _____

<div style="border:1px solid">

Speakers' Profile

Gender:
Age:
Degree of Acquaintedness:
Relation:
Other:
</div>

Characteristic Features of the Invitation (Isaacs and Clark 1990)

1- Making the Invitation Implausible   Yes   No[6]_____

2- Soliciting the Invitation   Yes   No   _____

3- Motivating the Invitation   Yes   No   _____

4- Persisting upon the Invitation   Yes   No   _____

5- Clear Arrangements   Yes   No   _____

6- Hedging the Invitation: Yes   No   _____

Other Suggested Indicators for JA Ostensible Invitations

1- Invitation Distribution within Discourse (Discourse Topic)   Yes   No

2- Minimizing the Offer   Yes   No

3- Equivocal Statements   Yes   No

4- Contextual Signals   Yes   No

5- Swearing Devices   Yes   No

Appendix B

Number of Occurrence of the Characteristic Features in Ostensible and Genuine Invitations in Jordanian Arabic

	Feature/Invitation	Totals		Percentages	
		Ostensible	Genuine	Ostensible	Genuine
1	**Implausibility Strategy**	50	20	83.3%	33.4%
A	A Can't Provide	33	0	66%	%0
*	The Inviter is Able to Host	8	0	16%	%0
*	Legitimate Position to Offer Hospitality	10	0	20%	%0
*	The Offer is Practically Feasible	15	0	30%	%0

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[4]Based on the defining properties and the six-point likert-scale

[5]No = 0, Yes = 1 (the actual sheets are done using Excel 2013, so they might differ slightly, but not much, from the one presented here).

B	B Can't Come	17	20	34%	100%
*	B is Able to Accept	3	12	6%	60%
*	B Doesn't Have Interest	14	8	28%	40%
	The Invitation is Plausible	10	40	16.6%	66.6%
2	Making Arrangements	39	32	65%	53.3%
	A Leaves Arrangement Vague	25	3	41.6%	5%
	A Makes Arrangement Specific	14	29	23.3%	48.3%
3	**B Solicits Invitation/Offer**	26	9	43.3%	15%
A	By Context	1	7	1.6%	11.7%
B	Indirectly	5	2	8.3%	3.3%
C	Directly	20	0	33.3%	0%
	B Doesn't Solicit Invitation	34	51	56.6%	85%
4	**The Motivating Strategy**	42	20	70%	33.3%
A	A Doesn't Motivate Invitation	37	20	61.7%	33.3%
B	A Minimize the Offer Presented	5	0	8.3%	0%
	A Motivates Invitation	18	40	30%	66.7%
5	**A Hedges/Equivocates Invitation**	41	36	68.3%	60%
	A Doesn't Hedge Invitation	19	24	31.7%	40%
7	**B Hesitates or Refuses**	55	36	91.6%	60%
	A Doesn't Persist	45	11	81.8%	30.5%
	A Does Persist	10	25	18.1%	69.4%
8	**Invitation is the Discourse Topic**	15	40	25%	66.6%
	Invitation is a Marginal Subtopic	45	20	75%	33.4%

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