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The Sociolinguistic Patterns of Native Arabic Speakers: Implications for Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language

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This article presents a brief descriptive analysis of speech acts in Arabic: forms of address, apologies, requests, expressions of gratitude, disagreement, greetings, refusals, partings, and telephone etiquette. A contrast with American speech acts is also presented in the process of description. The author gathered data by means of participant observation in daily situations and then analyzed them to disclose their usage and function. Results indicated that linguistic formulas of each speech act were determined by social distance, formality of the situation, age, level of education, and status of the participants. Moreover, the contrast between Arabic and English speech acts revealed that there are fundamental differences between the sociolinguistic patterns of Arabic and American native speakers, not only in verbal communication but also in nonverbal communication. The information dwells on the nature of communicative competence, first and second language learning and acquisition, and it is hoped that it will ease intercultural communication between Arabic and American native speakers.

The field of teaching Arabic as a foreign language (TAFL) or as a second language (TASL) is a new one, and it is growing rapidly in the United States, in Europe, and throughout the world. Learners of Arabic, particularly those who master it for specifically communicative purposes, need to be competent not only linguistically, but also socially. That is, they need to know how to use the language with its native speakers according to native social rules and cultural norms. Culture has a considerable impact not only on our values, beliefs, and social interactions, but also on how we view the world, what we consider important, what we attend to, and how we learn and interpret information (Philips, 1983; Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba, 1985; Huitt, 1988; Jacobs & Jacobs 1988; Jacobs, 1990; Rhodes, 1990).

To acquire a native or near-native command of the target language, the learner must attain a high competency in the three components of communication that Saville-Troike (1989) delineated. These are: (a) linguistic knowledge (e.g., verbal and nonverbal elements, syntax, and semantics), (b) interaction skills (e.g., rules of speech, discourse organization and processes, and norms of interaction and interpretation), and (c) cultural knowledge (e.g., social structure, values and beliefs, attitudes, and schemata). Foreign-language learners must gain cultural competence (i.e., the ability to function comfortably and successfully in cross-cultural settings and to interact harmoniously with people from other cultures that differ from their own). The research on effective cultural communication indicates that culturally competent individuals (a) cope effectively with the psychological and emotional stress of dealing with the unfamiliar, (b) quickly establish rapport with others, (c) sense other people's feelings, (d) communicate effectively with people from varying backgrounds, and (e) respond adequately to miscommunication (Giles, Coupland, Williams, & Leets, 1991). In addition, effective cross-cultural communication requires knowledge of nonverbal communication. Nonverbal cues set the stage for interpersonal communication (Barlund, 1968; Hall, 1973; Curt, 1976; LaFrance & Mayo, 1978) and "are critical components of participants' messages" (Bonivillain, 1993, p. 37).

The purpose of this article is to discuss some of the sociolinguistic patterns of Arabic speakers pertaining to forms of address, apologies, requests, expressions of gratitude, greetings, refusals, partings (leave-takings), disagreements and telephone etiquette. Such brief delineation of the aforementioned speech acts is intended to help non-native Arabic speakers avoid appearing impolite, unfriendly or boorish, as Thomas (1983, p. 96-97) pointed out in her comment on the linguistic pattern of foreign-language learners:

If a non native speaker appears to speak fluently (i.e., grammatically competent), a native speaker is likely to attribute his/her apparent impoliteness or unfriendliness not to any linguistic deficiency, but to boorishness or ill-will. While grammatical error may reveal a speaker to be a less than proficient language user, pragmatic failure reflects badly on him/her as a person.

Methodology

The author collected data as a participant in and as an observer of real-life situations (celebrations, meetings, social visits at homes, informal gatherings) among native Arabic speakers and analyzing written discourse in newspapers and letters. Every effort was made to collect data from as broad a range of occupational and educational backgrounds as possible. However, most of the data were collected from graduate students and professional people (e.g., university and college instructors, medical doctors, and business people). Moreover, the reader should note that the analyses of

speech acts presented here do not represent all speakers of the Arabic language. In particular, these speech acts represent the sociolinguistic pattern of Muslim educated Palestinian and Jordanian speech communities. Thus, the work reported here is the result of a naturalistic inquiry approach to data collection and analysis.

Conceptual Framework

Achieving comfortable and successful intercultural communication requires not only fluency in the target language, but also knowledge pertaining to the rules governing speech acts in the target culture. Landis, Brislin, and Hulgus (1985), Barna (1983), and Oberg (1986) found that anxiety caused by intercultural interaction is one of the barriers to the creation of comfortable and successful crosscultural communication. C. Stephan (1992), and the team of C. Stephan and W. Stephan (1985, 1989a, 1989b) hypothesized that anxiety in intergroup interactions is the result of four categories of feared negative consequences. These are: (a) negative psychological consequences (e.g., frustration or loss of control), (b) negative behavioral consequences (e.g., exploitation or verbal derogation), (c) negative evaluations by outgroup members (e.g., stereotyping or disdain), and (d) negative evaluations by in-group members (e.g., disapproval or rejection for having contact with the outgroup).

Moreover, intergroup anxiety is the result of three main variables. These are: (a) prior intergroup relations, (b) situational factors, and (c) prior intergroup cognitions. The amount and conditions of contact, status differences between group members, and attitudes of significant others towards the outgroup are some of the significant factors of prior intergroup relations. Some of the situational factors are degree of structure, type of interdependence and group composition, stereotyping and prejudice. Ethnocentrism and knowledge of the culture of the outgroup are some of the prior intergroup cognition factors (Stephan, 1992; Stephan & Stephan, 1985, 1989a, 1989b).

Ignorance of a group has been associated with negative, unsuccessful, and uncomfortable intergroup relations (Davidson & Thomson, 1980). Being aware of and familiar with the target culture is associated with positive, accurate, and comfortable social interactions (Berry, 1970; Brewer & Campbell, 1976). Ignorance or insufficient information about the target culture leads to stereotypes that occupy a significant role in intergroup interactions. Stereotypes against the target culture underlie expectations, and they influence perceptions, behaviors, and effective interactions with the native people of the target culture (Neuberg, 1989).

Some of Sociolinguistic Behavior of Native Arabic Speakers

Forms of Address

Forms of address are vital for foreign language learners who intend to socialize with and live among the native speakers of the target language. Commenting on the significance of forms of address, Philipsen and Huspeck (1985, p. 94) state that

Personal address is a sociolinguistic subject par excellence. In every language and society, every time one person speaks to another, there is created a host of options centering around whether and how persons will be addressed, named, and described. The choices speakers make in such situations, and their meanings to those who interpret them, are systematic, not random. Such systematic language behavior, whether of use or interpretation, is universal, although what elements comprise the personal address system and what rules govern its deployment, vary across contexts. And such variation in structure is, according to the extant empirical literature, correlated with social ends and social contexts of language use. From this view, personal address is a systematic, variable, and social phenomenon, and these features of it make it a sociolinguistic variable of fundamental importance.

In Arabic language and culture, forms of address are different from those used among native speakers of English and other languages. Such differences are due mainly to the different cultural and social rules each community lives and abides by. For instance, in addressing Arabic women, learners of Arabic as a foreign language must know that various forms are used, depending on the relationship, social distance, status, age, and the social context. These forms are illustrated in the following table.

TABLE 1
Forms of address for women

Form of address	Gloss	Used with	Style
<i>aanisah</i>	Ms.	Nonacquaintances	Formal
<i>saiyyddah</i>	Mrs.	Nonacquaintances	Formal
<i>ukht</i> (males to females)	Sister	Nonacquaintances	Formal
<i>ukkhtii</i> (female to female)	Sister	Nonacquaintances	Formal
First Name (e.g. Amal)	————	Friends and Acquaintances	Informal
<i>um</i> (e.g. um Anwar)	Mother of	Friends and Acquaintances	Informal
<i>khaalatii</i>	Aunt	One's mother's sister	Informal
<i>'amatii</i>	Aunt	One's father's sister	Informal
<i>'amatii</i>	Mother in law	One's husband's mother	Informal
<i>hajjah</i>	————	All interactions	Formal\Informal

The calling particle *yaa* must be used before every form of address. For instance, in addressing an old woman, one must say *yaa hajjah*. Another significant

point that non-native speakers must be aware of, is that it is not appropriate to call a married woman who has children by her first name. The form of address *yaa um* + the name of her oldest son must be used. If a woman has no sons, she can be called by her oldest daughter's name. But if she has no children, usually people call her by the name that she intends to name her first son. When in doubt, a speaker can address a female as *yaa ukht/ukhtii*, *yaa aanisah*, *yaa saiyydah*. It is more appropriate and respectful to use the address form *yaa ukht* or *yaa ukhtii* in such situations. However, in informal situations, close friends and family members might use the first name of a married friend or daughter. The same can be applied in addressing men, but using the masculine forms. The following forms are used in addressing men.

TABLE 2
Forms of address for men

Form of address	Gloss	Used with	Style
<i>saiyyid</i>	Mr.	Nonacquaintances	Formal
<i>akh\akhii</i>	Brother/My brother	Nonacquaintances	Formal
First name	————	Friends	Informal
<i>abuu</i> (e.g., <i>abuu Ahmed</i>)	Father of	Friends and Acquaintances	Formal/Informal
<i>khalii</i> + 1st Name	My uncle	One's mother's brother	Informal
<i>'amii</i> + 1st Name	My uncle	One's father's brother	Informal
<i>'ami</i>	Father-in-law	One's husband's father	Informal
<i>hajjii</i>	————	All interlocutors	Formal/Informal

It is worth mentioning that kinship terms (See Table 3) are used also as polite terms for nonrelatives.

TABLE 3
Kinship terms used with nonrelatives

Kinship term	Gloss
<i>ʿam</i>	uncle (father's brother)*
<i>ʿamah</i>	aunt (father's sister)*
<i>jad</i>	grandfather
<i>jadah</i>	grandmother
<i>ibn alʿam</i>	cousin (male)
<i>ibnat alʿam</i>	cousin (female)
<i>khaal</i>	uncle (mother's brother)*
<i>khaalah</i>	aunt (mother's sister)*

* Note: The only significance behind using these different terms is that the addressee is from the father or mother's family side.

Another aspect of address etiquette that must be taught to non-native speakers is how titles are used with names. In contrast to English, in Arabic the first name or both the first name and the second (middle) name are used with the specific title, which depends on the interlocutor's status and position. First and second names plus title are used in writing (e.g., letters and memos) and in the formal introduction of a speaker or a guest to other people. The following examples illustrate this usage:

1. *jalaalat almalik* Hussein bin Talal (*jalaalat almalik*: the majestic king)
2. *sumuw alamiir* Abdallah bin Abedalcaziz (*sumuw alamiir*: his highness)
3. *sumuw alamiirah* Hanan Alhussein (*sumuw alamiirah*: her highness)
4. *fakhaamat/siyyaadat alraiis* Ali Abdallah Saleh (*fakhaamat*: greatness) (*siyyaadat*: Mastery of)
5. *maʿaalii raiis alwuzaraaʿ* Zeid Alrifaaʿi (*maʿaalii*: highness)
6. *mudiir altarbiiyah waltalʿliim* Zahran Hasunah (*mudiir*: superintendent)
7. *mudiirat altarbiiyah waltalʿliim* Lamah Hashim Saleh (*mudiirat*: superintendent)
8. *alsheikh* Ahmad Yasin (*alsheikh*: the sheikh)
9. *alsheikhah* Zeinab Taha (*alsheikhah*: the sheikh)
10. *alimaam* Ahmed Saqir (*alimaam*: The person who leads the prayer)
11. *alkhateeb* Jamal ʿatiyah (*alkhateeb*: The person who delivers the Friday speech prayer)*

12. *alduktor* Anwar Hussein (*alduktor*: the doctor)
13. *alustaath* Sameh Saleh (*alustaath*: the teacher)
14. *almuʿalimah* Reem Hashim Saleh (*almuʿalimah* [feminine]: the teacher)
15. *ṭabiib* (No names are used with this title) (*ṭabiib*: medical doctor)
16. *ṭabiibah* (*ṭabiibah* [feminine] medical doctor)
17. *alḥakiim* (*alḥakiim*: medical doctor)
18. *ḥadrit alakh* Samir Al-Ghazali (*ḥadrit*: his honor)
19. *ḥadratikum* (your honor)

* Note: Each Friday at 12:30 p.m., there is a speech that lasts approximately 30 minutes before the second prayer.

From the above examples we notice that with almost all the titles, the first name and the family name are used. Sometimes the word *bin* "son of" is inserted between the first and the family name or the second (middle) name. Family names are never used alone to refer to any person. The titles *ṭabiib* and *ṭabiibah* refer to medical doctors, but native Arabic speakers rarely use these standard forms in their colloquial speech. Instead, they prefer to use the terms *alduktor* (referring to an M.D. or a Ph.D.) or *alḥakiim*, which is equivalent to *alduktor* (referring only to an M.D.) because they sound more prestigious, especially the former form. The last title, *ḥadrit*, is used before all the other titles at the beginning of formal written letters. Note these examples:

ḥadrit maʿaalii alwaziir ṭahir almasrii
(His honor and highness the minister Tahir Almasri.)

ḥadrit mudiir altarbiiyah waltalʿliim Ahmed Saleh
(His honor the superintendent Ahmed Saleh)

The plural form *ḥadratikum* is used when requesting someone's presence or a favor, even if there is only one addressee. Note the following examples (a wedding invitation and a request for help respectively):

natasharrafu bidʿwati ḥadratikum ilaa ḥoduur ḥaflat zafaaf waladaynaa . . .

(We have the honor of inviting you to attend the wedding of our son and daughter . . .)

narjuu min ḥadrtikum an tabthuluu fii maa wasʿikum limusaʿadat alʿakh . . .

(We beg that your honor do your best in helping the brother . . .)

The use of the plural is another way of showing respect.

Learners of Arabic should be aware of the Arabic address system, and particularly of the pragmatic use of those address forms that are employed extensively in social situations (See Tables 1 and 2) to achieve smooth and effective communication. Not being aware of the appropriate use of such forms leads to miscommunication and to unintentional insults. Using the "no naming" strategy (Brown & Ford, 1961) common among native American English speakers does not work when dealing with Arabs; rather it compounds the problem because forms of address and names must be used to indicate status and respect for the interlocutors. Such signals are especially important when a person addresses someone of a higher status. Janicki (1985, p. 44) states on the negative attitudes that might result from misusing the address system in a particular culture,

A mishandling of the address system may be taken usually to generate negative attitude, but the dimension congenial, uncongenial is most likely to notify that reaction. If the foreigner is assigned a high estimate on that dimension, the native speaker's potentially negative attitude may turn into a positive one. If, however, the foreigner is assigned a low estimate on the dimension, then the attitudes takes on a negative value.

Apologies

In any society, linguistic formulas of apology, nonlinguistic means, or both serve to maintain what Goffman (1971) called "the public order." Speakers use such means to remedy potentially unpleasant social situations in order to maintain smooth social interaction. In studying this speech act in American English, Owen (1980) organized strategies for initiating a repair into three categories. These categories are (a) nonsubstantive (ritual) strategies, (b) semisubstantive strategies, and (c) substantive strategies. The ritual category includes asserting imbalance or showing deference, asserting that an offense has occurred, expressing an attitude toward an offense, and requesting the restoration of imbalance. Giving an account falls under the second category of semisubstantive strategy. Giving an account was put into an independent category because, as Wolfson (1990) found, native speakers of American English do not equate an account with an actual apology. The substantive category includes such nonlinguistic strategies as repairing the damage and providing compensation. "The extent to which either ritual or substantive remedies are considered appropriate in a particular case will depend on features of the offense and on cultural criteria" (Owen, 1980, p. 170).

In Arabic culture, even though an offended person is permitted to demand compensation or repair of the damage, that person is strongly encouraged to forgive and say *Allaah bi'awidnii*, "Allah (God) will compensate me for that," particularly if the damage is not severe and was caused inadvertently. In any event, the person who

caused the offense (regardless of its effect, personal damage, or property damage) must apologize and ask for forgiveness. The three main key words in linguistic formulas of apology in Arabic language are *aasif*, "Sorry"; *'afwan*, "I seek your forgiveness;" and *ma'thiratan*, "My apology." The exact form the apology takes depends on the severity of the offense, the social situation, and the social distance (low class, middle class, and higher class). The most important distinction is the severity of the offense:

1. The offense is minimal, such as touching a person inadvertently in a social setting (e.g., classroom or a meeting), or forgetting to fulfill a promise. In such situations the offender may say *aasif*, *'afwan*, *ma'thiratan*, *'tithaaraatii*, or *alma'thirah*, "Please accept my apology" without any elaboration. The words *'afwan* and *ma'thiratan* are most likely to be used among nonacquaintances and strangers in formal linguistic formulas such as the following:

<i>ma'thiratan yaa akhii</i>	My apology, my brother!
<i>ma'thiratan yaa ukhtii</i>	My apology, my sister!
or	
<i>aasif yaa akhii</i>	Sorry, my brother!
<i>aasif yaa ukhtii</i>	Sorry, my sister!

2. The offense is severe, such as hurting someone's feelings, embarrassing someone in front of a group of people, accusing someone falsely, or damaging property. In such social situations it is not enough to say, *aasif* or *'afwan*. The offender must add an elaboration and a facial expression connoting physical pain to show that the apology is sincere. Examples of linguistic formulas that can be used in such situations between friends and strangers alike are the following:

anaa muta?sif jidan [+ a sincere facial expression + detailed explanation]
(I am very sorry)

anaa muta?sif jidan wa?rjuu an tusaamiḥunii [+ a sincere facial expression + detailed explanation]
(I am very sorry and I beg your forgiveness)

min faḍlak iqbal/ yaa akhii iqbal 'tithaarii [+ a sincere facial expression + detailed explanation]
(Please accept/ please, my brother, accept my apology)

As the previous examples make clear, it is not enough to use only an expression of apology or an expression of responsibility; rather both are required in situations where severe offenses occur. In the case of property damage, the offender must offer to repair the damage or compensate for it.

Requests

Using such variables as rank, age, social status, and social distance, Ervin-Tripp (1976) classified the English directives into six categories: (a) needs statements, (b) imperatives, (c) embedded imperatives, (d) permission directives, (e) nonexplicit question directives, and (f) hints. By analyzing the forms of request in Arabic, one can find examples from each category identified above. However, in Arabic society, the speaking rules that cover people's social behavior are different from those used in an English-speaking community. The following are examples of requests that native Arabic speakers use in their daily lives:

Imperatives

This form of request is used among family members and close friends, for example:

ĩtini khamsuuna duulaaran. (a woman to her husband)

(Give me fifty dollars.)

Ta'aala allayla washar ʿindanaa (a person to his close friend)

(Come tonight and entertain with us.)

Embedded imperatives

Sometimes the phrase, *min fadlak*, "if you please", *alrrajaa?* or *arjuu*, "I beg you" is used with imperative forms directed to a person equal or lower in rank to make the request more polite. An example of this would be a dean at a university asking a division chair to reply to an applicant:

min faḍlak rud ʿalaa alductor ...wa?khhbirhu an yabʿatha lanaa

muahilaatu (high to low in rank)

(please respond to Doctor ... and tell him to send us his credentials)

arjuu min ḥadratikum almusaʿadah fii haathaa almawthuuʿ (equal in rank)

(I beg your honor for help in this matter)

Thus these forms of address indicate that plurals may be used to show respect. For instance, an individual from whom something is requested will be addressed as a group (*min ḥadratikum* instead of *min ḥadratika*, "he" or *min ḥadratiki*, "she" particularly in writing). The reason behind this usage is *min ḥadratik* seems so dry and less respectful than *min ḥadratikum*. In the following example in which a person addressing one of his acquaintances who witnessed someone beating his son, but did nothing to stop it:

uriidu min ḥadratika an laa tatadakhkhal, laqad kunta mawjuud hunaak ʿindamaa kaan yaḍribuhu.

(I want from you not to interfere, you were there while he was beating him.)

Permission requests

This type of request is used for asking permission to do something. The following are some examples of permission requests and who uses them with whom.

atasmahu lii yaa ustaath an athhaba waaghsil yaday (pupil to his teacher in the class)

(Could I have your permission to go and wash my hands?)

atasmahu lanaa yaa ustaath bi ahmad khamso daqaaiq.

(teacher to another teacher)

(Could we have your permission to take Ahmed for five minutes?)

tismah lii yaa abii an athhab maʿ aḥabii ilaa naablus limushaahadat almubaaraah (son to father)

(Could I have your permission to go to Nablus to watch the match?)

Other requests for permission, such as

mumkin astaʿmil alqalam

(May I use the pen?)

or

mumkin ilqalam daqiiqah

(May I have the pen for a minute?)

are used especially with nonacquaintances.

Nonexplicit question requests

Such requests are used among equals and non-equals in rank.

hal ʿindaka maaniʿ ithaa ghayrnaa almawʿid ilaa yawm

alithnawn alsaaʿah altaasira ṣabaahan? (student to instructor, non-equals in rank)

(Would you mind if we change the date to Monday at 9:00am?)

hal tazuuranii ghadan? (friend to friend, equals in rank)

(Will you visit me tomorrow?)

Using *hal* at the beginning of a request as in the expression *hal 'inndaka maani'* occurs in spoken Modern Standard Arabic and in writing only. In Jordanian colloquial Arabic the expression *'indak mani'* is used instead.

Such requests are not used frequently by native Arabic speakers in comparison to native English speakers, who use this strategy extensively in their written and spoken discourse. Moreover, native English speakers sometimes use nonexplicit question requests as complaints, which are misunderstood by native Arabic speakers as simple requests for information rather than as complaints plus requests, for example:

S: Is this sandwich salted?

H: I don't think so.

Here the speaker (native American English speaker) is complaining to her husband (nonnative American English speaker) that he forgot to salt the sandwich. The husband, however, understands her question as a request for information rather than as a complaint that he should have salted the sandwiches plus a request to pass or bring the salt. Another significant strategy used by native speakers of English is the question format *Can you close the door?* or *Could you close the door?* as a polite request to close the door rather than a question of ability, as the surface meaning implies. This strategy is sometimes used in Arabic as well. An equivalent request would be *mumkin itsakir ilbaab* or *bitiqdar itsakir ilbaab*. The question *mumkin itsakir ilbaab?* does not in any way, on the surface or the deep level, imply a question of ability, whereas the question *bitiqdar itsakar ilbaab?* on the surface implies a question of ability, but on the deep level does not.

Hints

This type of request is used among close friends and family members, and sometimes with nonacquaintances, particularly, those whose presence in a situation is not welcomed or desired. For instance:

fii alwaqt alhaadir u'aanii min daaiqah maaliyah.
(At the present time, I am having financial problems.)

This statement made in the presence of a friend or a family member in the course of a discussion of financial issues, implies the speaker's need to borrow some money.

Other hints are aimed at ridding oneself of guests. A host may yawn and say, *anaa ta'baan wamurhaq jidan* (I am tired and very exhausted) hinting for the person(s) to leave. Another tactic is to offer the coffee early in the visit. In Arabic culture the coffee is always served at the end of the visit; thus offering the coffee early constitutes a hint to leave. Hosts may hint that they would like their guests to leave by not being actively involved in the conversation, acting oddly with family members, and making tired or sleepy facial expressions asking guests to leave. Examples of hints used by guests as a sign that they are ready to leave are yawning and stretching, asking for the

coffee, putting on the shoes, the jacket or the sweater, leaning toward the door and leaning forward. Breaking eye contact, which American native speakers use as a sign of leave-taking (Knapp et al, 1973), does not exist in the nonverbal behavior of Arabic native speakers. Americans learning Arabic and teachers of Arabic must at least be aware of this nonverbal behavior.

The Expression of Gratitude

Expression of gratitude in Arabic culture is a necessary sign of politeness and appreciation. A number of expressions are available, but each one is used in a different social situation. The following are some expressions of gratitude that native Arabic speakers use in their daily life interactions:

1. *shukran* (Thank you): Used formally and informally in all situations.
2. *shukran jaziiilan* (Thank you so much): Used formally and informally in situations where the gift, favor or service requires a special effort.
3. *mercii* (Thank you): Borrowed from French used only by women in formal and informal situations.
4. *baaraka allaahu fiika* (May Allah [God] Bless you): Used formally and informally instead of the above three expressions, especially by religious people.
5. *jazaaka allaahu khayran* (May Allah [God] reward you): Used formally and informally in all situations, particularly by religious people.
6. *Allaah ikhali iwlaadak* (May Allah protect and retain your children): Especially used by women in informal and formal situations.
7. *inshaa Allaah bilafraah* (By Allah's permission, always on happy occasions)
inshaa Allaah bitakharujak (By Allah's permission, on your graduation)
inshaa Allah waallah mi'dikum alsqabii (By Allah's permission, when Allah grants you a son)
inshaa Allah bi'irsak or inshaa Allah bifarhitii fiik (By Allah's permission, on the occasion of your wedding)
inshaa Allah wamaḥalukum 'aamir (By Allah's permission, while your house is full of happy occasions)
8. *akala ta'aamukum alabraar, waaftara 'indakum alṣaaimuun, waṣalat 'alaykum almalaaiakah, wathakarukum Allaahu fiiman 'indah* (May only the pious and fasting people eat your food, may the angels pray for you, and may Allah mention you amongst those who are in his presence). This is used only after eating at somebody's house. It is always used by religious people.

Using *hal* at the beginning of a request as in the expression *hal 'inddaka maani'* occurs in spoken Modern Standard Arabic and in writing only. In Jordanian colloquial Arabic the expression *'indak mani'* is used instead.

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fii alwaqt alhaadir u'aanii min daaiqah maaliyah.
(At the present time, I am having financial problems.)

This statement made in the presence of a friend or a family member in the course of a discussion of financial issues, implies the speaker's need to borrow some money.

Other hints are aimed at ridding oneself of guests. A host may yawn and say, *anaa ta'baan wamurhaq jidan* (I am tired and very exhausted) hinting for the person(s) to leave. Another tactic is to offer the coffee early in the visit. In Arabic culture the coffee is always served at the end of the visit; thus offering the coffee early constitutes a hint to leave. Hosts may hint that they would like their guests to leave by not being actively involved in the conversation, acting oddly with family members, and making tired or sleepy facial expressions asking guests to leave. Examples of hints used by guests as a sign that they are ready to leave are yawning and stretching, asking for the

coffee, putting on the shoes, the jacket or the sweater, leaning toward the door and leaning forward. Breaking eye contact, which American native speakers use as a sign of leave-taking (Knapp et al, 1973), does not exist in the nonverbal behavior of Arabic native speakers. Americans learning Arabic and teachers of Arabic must at least be aware of this nonverbal behavior.

The Expression of Gratitude

Expression of gratitude in Arabic culture is a necessary sign of politeness and appreciation. A number of expressions are available, but each one is used in a different social situation. The following are some expressions of gratitude that native Arabic speakers use in their daily life interactions:

1. *shukran* (Thank you): Used formally and informally in all situations.
2. *shukran jaziiilan* (Thank you so much): Used formally and informally in situations where the gift, favor or service requires a special effort.
3. *mercii* (Thank you): Borrowed from French used only by women in formal and informal situations.
4. *baaraka allaahu fiika* (May Allah [God] Bless you): Used formally and informally instead of the above three expressions, especially by religious people.
5. *jazaaka allaahu khayran* (May Allah [God] reward you): Used formally and informally in all situations, particularly by religious people.
6. *Allaah ikhalii iwlaadak* (May Allah protect and retain your children): Especially used by women in informal and formal situations.
7. *inshaa Allaah bila'fraah* (By Allah's permission, always on happy occasions)
inshaa Allaah bitakharujak (By Allah's permission, on your graduation)
inshaa Allah waallah mi'dikum alshabii (By Allah's permission, when Allah grants you a son)
inshaa Allah bi'irsak or inshaa Allah bifarhittii fiik (By Allah's permission, on the occasion of your wedding)
inshaa Allah wamaḥalukum 'aamir (By Allah's permission, while your house is full of happy occasions)
8. *akala ta'aamukum alabraar, waaftara 'indakum alsaaimun, waṣalat 'alaykum almalaikah, wathakarukum Allaahu fiiman 'indah* (May only the pious and fasting people eat your food, may the angels pray for you, and may Allah mention you amongst those who are in his presence). This is used only after eating at somebody's house. It is always used by religious people.

Although the above list is not an exhaustive one, it contains some of the most common forms of expressing gratitude. Students of Arabic as a foreign language are not required to learn all these expressions. However, they should learn Nos. 1, 2, and 5 because many people use them.

It is worth mentioning here that native Arabic speakers, often respond to expressions of gratitude by saying *haathaa min waajibna* (It's our duty). Such a response is used to express good manners, respect, and closeness of the relationship between the participants.

Greetings

In Arabic culture, the greeting is an essential element of people's daily lives. They are commanded to greet others and to answer a greeting with a better one. "When a courteous greeting is offered you, meet it with a greeting still more courteous or at least of equal courtesy." (*Holy Quran*, Chapter IV, Verse 86). Muslims are encouraged strongly to greet each other. A person is required to greet other people as long as they can hear him/her within a reasonable distance. No greeting is required if other people are visible, but out of earshot. However, a person might wave the right hand to greet people, especially acquaintances, too distant to hear a verbal greeting. The passing, walking person offers the greeting to those who are sitting. The following story illustrates this point interestingly.

But the story is told of a British agent in Crete during World War II. He spoke fluent Greek and dressed like a Greek who was once sitting beside a road as an old woman approached. Cherete 'hello' he called out, but she walked on toward him and said in a low voice "God bless you, my son, and take you safe back to your native land." At length he figured out how she had penetrated his disguise: he had violated an unspoken rule that the moving person utters the first greeting (Applegate, 1975, p. 278).

Also, in Arabic culture seated people must stand up if the greeter has stopped to shake their hands. It is impolite and disrespectful to shake people's hands while sitting.

The most frequent Islamic greeting appropriate anytime and anywhere is *alsalaamu 'alaykum* "Peace be with you." The response is *wā'alaykum alsalaam* or *wā'alaykum alsalaamu warahmatu Allahi wabarakaatuh*, "And peace be with you also," or "And peace be with you also and Allah's mercy and blessings." This greeting can be used anytime during the day, regardless of the relationship between the interlocutors. It can be also used to initiate a conversation.

In addition to the "Peace be with you" greeting, there are other expressions that learners of Arabic can use at different times during the day. These are (a) *ṣabaahu al-khayr*, "Good morning," (b) *masaa'u al-khayr*, "Good evening," and (c) *marhaba*, "Hi." *Marhaba* is used anytime, with acquaintances and nonacquaintances. It is found

more in the sociolinguistic behavior of people who are not very religious. It does not exist in Islamic culture and some scholars argue it is not appropriate at all. (d) *Allah yir'ṭiik al'aafiyah*, "May Allah protect your health" is another greeting expression that is widely used by Arabic speakers. This linguistic formula is used only when someone is passing by a another person who is working on something. The correct reply is *Allaah yir'aafiyik*, "May Allah protect your health, too." It is noteworthy here that some people use this greeting as an expression of gratitude, particularly for something that required physical and/or mental efforts.

Refusals

The speech act of refusal is a very sensitive issue for Arabs. In Arabic culture a person is strongly encouraged to comply with a request for help; to accept an invitation to a party or dinner or an offer of food, drink, or a gift; and to provide requested suggestions pertaining to a specific subject, if possible. If a person cannot comply, the appropriate linguistic refusal formula depends on the relative status of the interlocutors and on their social relationship. Analyses of the strategies for refusing used by native Arabic speakers revealed two categories: direct and indirect. Examples of direct refusals, which are used with intimates and status equals only are the following:

laa (no)
laa astatiif (I cannot.)
mish faadi (I am occupied.)

The interesting point here is that such refusing strategies are not used with strangers. In contrast, native speakers of American English have been found (Beebe et al, 1985) to say "no" or "I refuse" not only to intimates and status equals but also to strangers. If Arabs are asked something by a stranger they will help if they can, send him/her to somebody who can help, or they will say *anaa aasif jidan laa arif*, "I am very sorry, I do not know." Native speakers learning Arabic must be aware of this fact; otherwise their linguistic behavior will be interpreted as rude and uncharitable.

The other category of refusing strategies, indirect refusals are used with acquaintances of equal status and with close friends of unequal status. Note the following strategy: an expression that indicates a strong desire to comply, inability to comply and an explanation.

atamanaa law astatiif, 'indii moḥaadarah fii thaalika almasaa? (I wish I could, [but] I have a class that evening).

yaa rayt, anaa mashghuul jidan, inshaa Allaah fii almara alqaadimah (I wish so [i.e., to do it], [but] I am very busy, by Allah's permission next time.)

Similarly native speakers of American English were found using in sequence an expression of positive opinion, an expression of regret or an excuse, and a reason or an explanation (Beebe et al, 1985). The only difference between American and Arab refusals is that Arab people use this strategy not only with acquaintances of equal status but also with acquaintances of unequal status. According to Beebe et al., (1985) other indirect strategies used by Americans that are also utilized by Arabic speakers, include: an alternative statement (*atamanaa law hakaytlii min qabl*, "If you had asked me before"), a statement of principle (*anaa laa ataf aamal ma' aṣḥaabii bilfuluus*, "I do not do business with friends"), an unspecified or indefinite reply (*inshaa Allaah sau?ḥaawil*, "By Allah's permission I will try"), verbal or nonverbal avoidance such as silence or a change of topic.

Partings

Strategies for ending a conversation or a meeting in Arabic culture vary with the status of the participants and the relationship between them. Whether the meeting is formal or informal no one may leave without letting the participants know. Leaving without taking leave is considered ill-mannered, disrespectful and indicative of a flawed personality. Regardless of status differences, if the participants have a close relationship, leave-taking strategies are informal. Note the following strategies:

1. *anaa laazim amshi, inshaa Allaah araakum ghadan*
(I have to go, by Allah's permission I will see you tomorrow)
2. *tuṣbihuuna ʿalaa khayr*
(I hope you wake up in the morning [only used at night] and everything is fine.)
3. *astawdiʿukum Allaahu alathii laa taḍiʿu wadaaʿuh*
(I leave you with the trust of Allah, whose trust has never been betrayed)
4. *naraakum inshaa Allaah ghadan, alusbuuʿ alqaadim, . . .*
(See you, Allah willing, tomorrow, next week, . . .)

Those staying behind respond by saying, *mac alsalaamah*, "Peace will be your companion." But the response to *tuṣbihuuna ʿalaa khayr*, is *waantum min ahlu*, "and you too." But the statement *ma' alsalaamah* is always used, even if other responses are required, in which case it follows the required expression. An interesting point here is that some of these statements are marked. That is, they are used almost exclusively by practicing Muslims. An example of this is statement number three above.

In addition to the aforementioned verbal strategies, there are other nonverbal behaviors used as signs of asking people to leave, in particular. Such strategies are discussed on pages 76 and 77 under the subtitle *Hints*.

Disagreement

Strategies for disapproving an action or a deed in Arabic culture vary depending on the persons involved, the social distance between them, their status, their ages, and the subject of disagreement. Among intimates, direct disapproval is expressed in most cases, for example:

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| <i>anaa ghayr muwaafiqh</i> | (I do not agree.) |
| <i>anaa laa atafiqu ma' aka fii haathaa</i> | (I do not agree with you on this.) |
| <i>anaa akhtalifu ma' aka fi haathaa</i> | (I disagree with you on this.) |

In addition to such declarative expressions, imperatives are also used to express disagreement, particularly with those the speaker has authority over, such as children, and a teacher with his/her students. An example of this would be a teacher saying to a student who was found writing on the board during a break: *imsah allawḥ wathhab waintathirni fii maktabii*, "Clean the board and go and wait for me in my office." Interrogatives are sometimes used to express disagreement. An example of this would be *maathaa ta'mal hunaa*, "What are you doing here?" as one person said to his close friend when he found him playing when he should have been studying for his final exam.

Disagreement with close friends and family members might be expressed using a proverb. For instance, note this remark made by a father to his son, who was laughing in the presence of a group of friends in the middle of a conversation: *iddihik min duun sabab qilit adab*, "Laughter without (a) cause is a sign of impoliteness." Using such statements with anyone but intimates will create major difficulty between the interlocutors. The age of the person to whom such statement is addressed is very significant even if he/she is a son or daughter. In brief this proverb and other similar insulting ones are used with children in family settings or by teachers with their pupils in the classroom; only rarely, are they uttered in public to adults.

Disagreement with adults in family settings, in public discussions, and in formal business meetings sometimes takes nonverbal form. Such disapproval is expressed by staring at the speaker with a facial expression indicating disagreement or anger, or sometimes by leaving the room or the meeting while the person is speaking. The latter is used only among family members and in informal meetings with friends and acquaintances. Such behavior is not considered polite, but still takes place. A word of caution is needed here regarding looking at people while they are talking, because native English speakers interpret this as a sign of interest, approval, and respect for the speaker. In Arabic culture, such behavior occurs only when something is going wrong in the discussion. Native English speakers should keep this in mind while dealing with native Arabic speakers.

Telephone Etiquette

The organization of discourse in speech acts such as telephone calls is covered by social rules for a proper beginning, middle, and end. "Violations of such rules . . . [which] vary so much from one culture to another . . . and misperceptions on the part of nonnative speakers who operate under different cultural assumptions and attitudes are likely to result in severe cross-cultural misunderstandings" (Schmidt, 1988, p. 64). To shed some light on the discourse sequence of Arabic telephone calls, the following example is provided:

- Caller: (Dials and the telephone rings.)
 Answerer: *aloo* (Hello)
 Caller: *alsalaamu ʿalaykum* (Peace be with you)
 Answerer: *wʿalaykum alsalaam, ahlayn, min? Anwar, ahlan yaa Anwar keifhaalak, inshaa Allah mabsuut*, (Peace be with you too, who? Anwar, you are welcome Anwar How are you, I hope you're happy, by Allah's will)
 Caller: *alhamdulillah* (Thank God)
 Answerer: *kayf shihatak* (How is your health?)
 Caller: *alhamdulillah* (Thank God)
 Answerer: *kayf haal zawjatak wabintak, inshaa Allah bikhayr*. (How are your wife and daughter? I hope they are well by God's will.)
 Caller: *alhamdulillah* (Thank God).
kayf haalkum intum, insha Allaah mabsuḍiin. (How are you, by God's will I hope you are all well.)
 Answerer: *alhamdulillah, kuluna bikhayr* (Thank God, all of us are well.)
 Caller: *ʿami abuu bashaar mawjuud?* (Is my uncle Abu Bashar there?)
 Answerer: *yaa, lahtah ishway* (Yes, just a moment.)
 Answerer: *allo* (Hello)
 Caller: *kayf alhaal yaa ʿami, inshaa Allaah mabsuut waṣihatak bikhayr*. (How are you? I hope you are fine and your health is good by God's will.)
 Answerer: *alhamdulillah* (Thank God). (the talk goes for 1-3 minutes)
 Caller: Starts the subject for which he/she called, the talk continues until they finish the topic.

After discussing the topic, the interlocutors start using what Marcus and Slansky (1994) call "softening" statements indicating their intention of ending the telephone conversation. The call ends in most cases by using the expression "*maʿ alsalaamah*."

By comparing this telephone call with an American one, we can detect the following differences that cause misunderstanding and irritation. First, American callers identify themselves to the answerer (e.g., "This is professor Robert Fenske calling from ASU . . ."). In contrast, in Arabic telephone calls neither the caller nor the answerer identifies him/herself. Rather, each must try to guess the other's identity. Only

if they fail, do they identify themselves. Second, sometimes Americans ask to speak with someone other than the answerer even though they know the answerer and might be a close friend or relative (e.g., "May I speak to Cindy, please!"). To a Middle Easterner, such behavior is considered not only strange but also offensive, rude, and disrespectful. Moreover, the answerer interprets this to mean that there is something wrong between him/her and the caller that he/she is not aware of.

Moreover, Americans dealing with Arab people should be aware that women, especially young unmarried ones, refuse to identify themselves if they have been asked to by male callers. This occurs in particular when the caller is a stranger who has identified himself. Usually women identify themselves by saying *anaa ibnatuhu*, *anaa ukhtuhu*, or *anaa zawjatuhu*, "I am his daughter," "I am his sister," or "I am his wife," respectively. Under no circumstances will a young female tell a caller her name. But married women will identify themselves as, for instance, *um Ahmed* or *zawjat ʿamar* ("The mother of Ahmed," or "Ammar's wife" respectively). Admittedly, such behavior seems strange and is discomforting to American males calling Arab residences. However, it is simply one of the cultural differences Americans must be aware of in dealing with others.

Pedagogical Implications

Based on the foregoing discussion of the speech acts in Arabic language, a number of pedagogical implications can be inferred for language learners, language instructors, and curricula developers:

1. Textbook writers must include cross-cultural content in their books. In cases where such information is not included in the text, teachers can find information about the unwritten rules of speech acts in books designed specifically for international trade and marketing communication. Examples of such books are Dulekk and Fielden (1990) and Murphy and Hilderbrandt (1991).
2. Experienced teachers who have considerable experience in the native language culture and the target language culture must be hired wherever possible. Such teachers are capable of personalizing the material and adding to it based on their firsthand experience.
3. Mass media is an interesting and wonderful instrument that can provide students with a variety of linguistic and nonlinguistic features. For example, television programs and films are a good source of input for the unwritten rules of speech acts. Moreover, teachers and students can videotape interviews with people from the target culture and present them in the classroom for observing and scrutinizing the linguistic and nonlinguistic behavior of the native speakers of the target language.

4. Students must be encouraged to think about and compare their linguistic behavior with the linguistic behavior of the target language group. Discussion of the similarities and differences between the two cultures will be very fruitful and interesting.
5. Language instructors must not teach the unwritten rules of speech in an "ethnocentric manner." In other words, they should be very careful not to suggest that any particular culture's rules of speech are right or wrong. Increasing awareness of similarities and differences for optimal communication should be the goal of language learning and training.
6. Language learners and language teachers alike must be aware of stereotypes based on a few observations of target language sociolinguistic behavior. For instance, some might say Arabs are "too physical;" a more objective and accurate statement would be that close friendship between Arabs requires less space and more touching than friendships between Americans. A stereotype that Arabs hold about Americans is that they are not generous in offering a lot of food when inviting an Arab to dinner; a more objective statement would be that they are economical and try not to waste food by cooking more than the diners are likely to want.
7. Pointing out and discussing those speech acts that are likely to annoy and baffle Arabic speakers on the one hand and those that annoy and baffle English speakers on the other—is a good way to make students aware and tolerant of the other people's way of speaking and interacting. Examples of what annoys and baffles Arabs about Americans are: the lack of religious expressions (such as by "God's will," "God forbid") in their speech; saying "oh" or "wow" when they see something exceptionally beautiful or good; using the interlocutor as an example when speaking about undesired things (e.g., an American said to an Arab while passing by a cemetery, "That is where they put you when you are dead"); using intimate expressions such "Honey," or "My love" in the presence of other people; and saying something that is completely different from what is in their minds or hearts. Examples of what annoys and baffles Americans about Arabs are the constant reference to God in their speech (e.g., "Thank God," "by God's will"); asking inappropriate personal questions such as "How old are you?" or "How much money do you make?"; and making comments on people or things (e.g., "Why are you very fat? Do not eat," advised an Arab his American female friend.).
8. "Teachers should develop a student's metapragmatic ability" (Thomas, 1983, p. 98). That is, they should equip the student with the skills necessary to analyze language use consciously. Such metapragmatic ability might be achieved by discussing language use in the light of the parameters proposed by Van Dijk (1977, p221): (a) positions (e.g., roles or status), (b) properties (e.g., sex or age), (c) relations, (d) functions (e.g., father, waitress, or judge).

9. "[It is] advisable for the teacher to explicitly point out to the learner that politeness and other speech acts are an integral part of the foreign culture system, and should be neither used nor interpreted by reference to the learner's native system. More effective teaching of the behavioral component may minimize native cultural interference and prevent impolite, ineffective, or otherwise inappropriate behavior on the part of the learner" (House & Kasper, 1981, p.184).
10. Teachers in particular, but also learners, should be aware of the difference between pragmalinguistic failure and sociopragmatic failure. That is, they should know "the first is language specific and it should be possible for the teacher to correct it quite straightforwardly. The second is in part culture-specific, a reflection of the student's system of values and beliefs, and not be corrected but only pointed out and discussed" (Thomas, 1983, p.109).
11. Instructors should strongly encourage their students to have a direct and meaningful experience with the surrounding local community of the target language. Personal experiences with the people of the target culture can lead to a better understanding of the students' own culture through comparison and contrast with the target culture. Additionally, intercultural experiences help reduce the anxiety in unfamiliar cross-cultural encounters. The reduced anxiety boosts self-confidence, increases cultural competency, and improves cross-cultural communication.
12. Instructors and learners should be aware that "cultural competency entails personal and interpersonal skills. Among the personal skills are: (a) the capacity to become aware of one's own cultural perspective and interpersonal behavior, and (b) the ability to interpret cultural exchanges accurately. Interpersonal skills include withholding judgement until one knows others better and understands their culture and skillful interpretations of cross-cultural nonverbal communication" (Chisholm, 1994, p. 60).

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Reviews

Discourse (1989, 1992). By Guy Cook. Teacher Education Series. Christopher Candlin and Henry Widdowson, Eds. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

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Discourse (now in its third printing) reflects a growing trend on the part of teacher training programs to consider in language analysis oral exchanges and written texts that are longer than sounds, words, and sentences. Cook begins by defining discourse as natural language in use, pointing out that knowledge of discourse form and function is crucial to the communicative success of the nonnative speaker. Having established a rationale for teacher learner concern with discourse, Cook organizes the ensuing discussion around three sections: (1) a survey of theories of discourse, (2) a demonstration of the workings of discourse in language learning and teaching, and (3) an exploration of the ways in which teachers can use both theoretical and classroom-centered approaches. Within this framework, teachers first work with background information on discourse (a theoretical approach), then observe how discourse operates within the presentation, practice, and content of the language learning setting (a pedagogical approach), and finally selectively adjust their classroom practices according to their heightened awareness of discourse style and function (an action-oriented approach). Each section includes multiple tasks that highlight the issues presented in the text.

In section one (pp. 3-75), Cook first contrasts Chomsky's work with the work of Hymes and Halliday, reiterating the learner's need for the study of "language in use." After unpacking such cohesive devices as consistency in verb form, parallelism, etc., Cook proceeds to the pragmatic considerations of speech act analysis, reiterating that knowledge of linguistic form alone is insufficient for communicative competence. Cook next contrasts the work of Sinclair and Coulthard with the work of Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson—showing how the former have uncovered a ranked structure within lessons, while the latter have uncovered both linguistic and non-linguistic mechanisms of turn-taking. Finally, Cook treats discourse as dialogue by examining the information structure of selected segments and, in a helpful review of the literature on schemata (pp. 70-74), by discussing how language users cognitively organize incoming chunks of language to comprehend and retain them.

Sections two and three (pp. 79-155) provide teachers with useful exercises through which they can discern the underlying motives of language teaching texts while helping their students become more effective receivers and senders of discourse in the target language. In section two, Cook initially contrasts bottom-up with top-down approaches to handling text and emphasizes the importance for learners of knowing as much as possible about their audience. He next deals with the "parts" and functions of

spoken and written discourse types while inviting teachers to reflect on the interplay of discourse type and topic in tasks based on segments from ESL/EFL textbooks. Finally, he addresses the teaching of conversational skills from a discourse analytic perspective, demonstrating how teachers can do consciousness-raising work with their learners on linguistic devices operating at the discourse level. Section three presents tasks for teachers and learners that apply the information of sections one and two. These tasks effectively engage teachers and learners in reflection on and application of the discourse concepts addressed earlier in the text.

Cook's work, presented largely in a conversational tone, is very accessible to teachers and provides an excellent overview of the field of discourse analysis without bogging down in excessive jargon and particular perspectives. Teachers hungry for a user-friendly theoretical overview of discourse analysis will relish section one, while those interested in applying a discourse analytic approach to language-teaching contexts will find sections two and three invaluable. The latter, useful as they are, could have been even further strengthened by including more tasks aimed directly at learners, such as the engaging train-story riddle at the end of section two. Readers will find their use of the text additionally facilitated by a detailed table of contents, a glossary of terms, and an extensive index.

Only one major area of omission emerges. Teachers will find little information on the discourse-styles of non-western cultures (beyond a cursory mention on p. 98) and on the ways in which teachers and learners might work together to accommodate each other's discourse styles, should they deem it desirable to do so—the kinds of insights yielded by the work of Scollon and Scollon (1981), and Tharp and Gallimore (1988). Thus, while Cook's book helps teachers to understand discourse and discourse analysis better in terms of teaching tasks and texts, it only implicitly addresses the issue of teacher-learner mismatch in discourse style (Kumaravadivelu, 1991) and gives short shrift to tasks in which learners might investigate the discourse styles of their classrooms and social circles as well as of their texts and exercises. In sum. What the book does, it does well; it simply stops one section short.

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Introducing Language Awareness (1995). By Leo Van Lier. Penguin English Applied Linguistics Series. Ronald Carter and David Nunan, Eds. London: Penguin. Pp. 161.

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This textbook is a part of a series of guides to four basic language skills—grammar, discourse analysis, standard English, and classroom interaction. These guides aim to help teachers and trainees keep abreast of applied linguistics and its relevance to common problems of teaching.

Leo Van Lier writes that the aim of his guide is to raise awareness of language use which he defines as “a person's sensitivity and conscious awareness of language and its role in human life” (p. xi). The term *language awareness* is relatively new. It was created in Great Britain in response to dissatisfaction with teaching by a group of educators who called for “awareness of language” or “knowledge about language” in the curriculum. Editors of a journal *Language Awareness* elaborate further: “it rose mistily from the consciousness-raising movements of the seventies, and was tidied up and documented in the eighties. The nineties should broaden it out and fatten it up” (p. 1). It is noteworthy that Leo Van Lier's understanding of language awareness goes beyond the scope of a classroom. It also “includes an awareness of power and control through language and of the intricate relationship between language and culture” (p. xi).

Van Lier designed *Introducing Language Awareness* as a reference and a workbook. Throughout this textbook the author acquaints readers with key works in applied linguistics and designs for them a variety of activities. In many instances the author addresses the reader directly. Thus, an activity on building blocks of language he starts with, “I invite you to list all the units or ‘pieces’ of language you can think of...” He skillfully draws examples from such mundane occurrences as car repair or a bike ride.

In “*Language Awareness: What, When and Why*,” Van Lier differentiates between focal and subsidiary awareness. He alerts readers to situations in which language is an intricate part of a problem. According to the author, such problems can be solved by focusing directly on the language. This approach is reminiscent of ideas expressed by S. I. Hayakawa in *Language in Thought and Action*.

In the chapter on “Building Blocks of Language” Van Lier attempts to identify elements of “recipe” knowledge for a language user. To him language, “is like a window which we only notice when it gets dirty. However, unlike a window which may be kept spotlessly clean just with a rag and some cleaning liquid, language seems to have inherent blemishes and weak spots which we continually have to work to overcome and patch up” (p. 12).

In the next chapter, “Context and Interpretation,” Van Lier discusses linguistic, interactional, and social contexts of language use. He guides the readers through the layers of discourse and then comparing it to using an onion, he illustrates

that meaning cannot be identified by focusing on a single layer. He concludes that the meaning of language is to a large extent determined by its use in actual context. The dependence of language on context was originally discovered by Bronislaw Malinowski, the anthropologist, who realized that despite the fact that he knew vocabulary and grammar of the Trobriand Islanders, he still could not communicate with them. Thus Malinowski concluded that to converse with the islanders, he needed to get involved in their experience. In volume two of *Coral Gardens and Their Magic* (1935, p. 11), he wrote "not even a sentence can be regarded as a full linguistic datum. To us, the real linguistic fact is the full utterance within its context of situation."

In the chapter on "Simmering Pots of Meaning" Van Lier introduces such concepts as connotation, collocation and predictability, metaphor, and transparency. He points out that many concepts can be expressed on a continuum from nice, through normal, to rude. In the same chapter he presents the table of continua of convention and creativity which divide the field into four textual areas. For each area he identifies several types of communication. Such a table could be very useful to a curriculum developer or a language teacher.

In the chapter on "Correctness" Van Lier discusses grammatical tolerance, differences between spoken and written language, and dialects. The author points out to the shallowness of the correct versus incorrect mindset and describes his "grammar stick" which indicates "shades of acceptability in context" (p. 83). Van Lier writes that spoken language, especially conversation, deserves more attention in foreign language instruction. The author reminds teachers that students need frequent and consistent practice in spoken language.

Van Lier states that language awareness plays a crucial role in educational settings. He writes, "If we want to educate, we need to know our language inside out, and play it with virtuosity and authenticity" (p. 100). Following a review of activities analyzing bits of language in isolation, he encourages educators to develop innovative language-awareness projects. Van Lier encourages them to focus on a crucial element of language in education—classroom interaction. Subsequently he presents a few samples of classroom talk which make readers aware of the use of target and native languages in the classroom. Next Van Lier complains that zealous educators in their race to conform to a multitude of standards, produce boring and unwieldy textbooks.

In the final chapter, "Critical Language Issues," Van Lier first reviews the contemporary literature and then proceeds to discuss the relationship between language and power. Through a variety of authentic examples, Van Lier demonstrates that frequently people use language to manipulate actions and thoughts of others. He guides readers to detect samples containing such language. This reviewer, for example, found an article on county staff reports (*Herald*, 15 June 95) which demonstrates a tense relationship between language and power.

After the meeting, Johnsen said she is increasingly irritated by staff reports using "language that is obfuscating rather than clarifying." She suggested that some departments "may have the assumption that we're just going to approve the recommendation, sort of rubber-stamp it, no matter what it says, and I object to that." (p. 4C).

Van Lier's attitude towards bilingualism is positive. He states that "...every child has the right to speak, maintain and develop his or her mother tongue... Further he believes that... "an equitable educational sector has the duty to support this right actively" (p. 128). In *Language Awareness in the Classroom* (1991, p. 11), Carl James and Peter Garrett broaden up the issue of bilingual education by pointing out that, "there is some danger either of patronizing the children of some minority cultures or of exploiting them to the advantage of their native language (NL) English mainstream culture peers." Since bilingualism is a mushrooming issue especially in California schools where minorities of all backgrounds are becoming a majority, *multilingual* instead of *bilingual* would be a more equitable, accurate term.

In summary, readers of *Applied Language Learning* will find *Introducing Language Awareness* a welcome addition. Step by step, it reveals crucial elements of language by addressing directly concerns of foreign language teachers. Finally, the book reflects the views expressed in it: it is succinct, open, and convincing.