Kin Terms and Titles of Address as Relational Social Honorifics in Jordanian Arabic

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Abstract. The present paper explores the nature of Jordanian relational social honorifics with an eye to systematizing these honorifics and shedding light on the socio-pragmatic constraints governing their use. Relational honorifics in Jordanian Arabic are divided into two major classes: kin terms and titles of address. Both classes are argued to involve distant and affectionate honorifics. Whereas distant honorifics are exclusively employed among strangers, affectionate ones are mainly used among friends or relatives, and occasionally among strangers. The study demonstrates how elaborate and subtle the interaction between language and social coordinates is in Jordanian Arabic.

1. Introduction. Social honorifics are generally viewed as the encoding of social information in human interaction. Such information is manifest in the use of pronouns and titles of address. Fillmore (1975:76) states that social deixis (the use of social coordinates) concerns “that aspect of sentences which reflect or establish or are determined by certain realities of the social situation in which the speech act occurs.” More tersely, Levinson (1983.89) restricts social deixis to “those aspects of language structure that encode the social identities of participants (properly, incumbents of participant-roles), or the social relationship between them, or between one of them and persons and entities referred to.” Thus, speech may effectively reflect the social relation holding between interactants in a speech event.

Sociolinguistically, social honorifics have been viewed mainly in terms of power and solidarity. For instance, the choice between the first name John and the family name with a social honorific Mr. Brown when addressing or referring to the same individual is a matter of power and solidarity. That is, the more equal and intimate the speaker is to him, the more he would call him John and the less equal and more distant he is to him, the more he would call him Mr. Brown. Therefore, the choice between first name and honorificized family name operationally depends on the type of social relationship between the speaker and the addressee or referent. Notice that the power-solidarity parameter may change in light of presence or absence of referent. Speakers usually opt for more power and are less conservative about solidarity when referents are not present. Thus, argues Hudson (1980:128) “the linguistic signalling of power and solidarity can be seen as another instance of the way in
which a speaker locates himself in his social world when he speaks."

The power-solidarity relations may vary from one culture to another, thus furnishing room for language-specific, socially deictic phenomena. For example, the *tu* 'you (2SG)/*vous* 'you (2PL)' distinction in French and the *−ka* 'you (2SG)/*−kum* 'you (2PL)' distinction in standard Arabic have direct bearings on the power-solidarity parameter, that is, the use of the plural *vous* and *−kum* to address one individual conventionally implicates (Levinson 1983) power of the addressee, while the choice of *tu* and *−ka* mitigates the power of the addressee and, at the same time, promotes intimacy and solidarity between speaker and addressee; whereas, English does not exhibit such a distinction in its pronominal system. English, however, may utilize lexical resources to capture the said distinction; for example, the choice between *buddy* and *sir* in address fulfills, more or less, the same social function. Interestingly, some languages tilt toward power orientation, while others tilt toward solidarity orientation. Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that the context of situation is the major determinant of the degree of power or solidarity. Moreover, language users may exploit such social honorifics for communicative purposes by flouting one or more of the maxims of conversation (Grice 1975).1

There are two types of social honorifics: relational and absolute (Levinson 1983:90). The examples mentioned so far are all relational, i.e., they depend on the social relationship between interactants. As for absolute social honorifics, they are fixed forms reserved for authorized speakers and recipients. For example, in Arabic the use of the first-person plural pronoun *nahnu* 'we' by the king of Jordan in royal ordinances is an absolute honorific exclusively restricted to him as the only "authorized" speaker, while the utilization of titles of address (e.g., *Your Honor, His Majesty, Professor*, etc.) are absolute social honorifics requiring authorized recipients for whom these titles are reserved. Also, absolute social honorifics may be extended to cover an array of phenomena that are primarily utilized for social purposes such as greetings (e.g., *marḥaba* 'Hi!', *ṣabāḥ–il–xār* 'Good morning', etc.) and politeness markers (e.g., *lutfan* 'please', *iḏā samaḥt* 'if you don't mind', etc.) among others. Such social honorifics, it should be remarked, are non-authorized in nature, i.e., they do not require authorized speakers or recipients.

It should be noted that even absolute social honorifics may have a relational parameter. This relational parameter is highly affected by the power-solidarity scale. It is also relevant to the interactants' adherence to the Co-operative Principle (Grice 1975) and the Politeness Principle (Leech 1983), which are rightly assumed to underlie human conversational behavior.2 By way of illustration, an interactant may opt out of using an absolute social honorific like *His majesty* when making reference to a king or he may address a medical doctor by his first name, thus not using the addressee's absolute title of address *Doctor* for the purposes of showing more power, being less polite/respectful, exhibiting less co-operation, or all of these collectively. Nonetheless,
the social honorifics themselves will stay absolute in nature.

2. The present study. The present paper aims to examine relational social deixis in Jordanian Arabic. This form of deixis manifests itself primarily in a network of social honorifics that function to maintain and enrich human interaction at all levels. In most cases, Jordanian relational social honorifics drift from denotational signification, which involves an absolute parameter, such as kin terms and titles of address, toward connotational signification, which displays a relational parameter, such as using kin terms and titles of address non-denotationally (i.e., exclusively for social purposes). This drift constitutes a drastic shift from denotation to connotation, leaving indelible and irreversible imprints on human communication. Consequently, the awareness, if not the mastery, of relational social honorifics presents itself as an indispensable variable in our linguistic behavior.

Relational social honorifics in Jordanian Arabic comprise three categories: addressee honorifics, referent honorifics, and bystander honorifics. Of the three, the most elaborate and developed category is that of addressee honorifics. The reason behind this is quite obvious: people are most worried and sensitive about encoding social honorifics when the notion of face (Brown and Levinson 1987) is directly involved in the interaction in question, i.e., when facesaving strategies or what Goffman (1972) calls face-work is relevant to speaker and addressee. In the following pages, the discussion will be strictly confined to addressee honorifics, which can be divided into two major classes: kin terms and titles of address.

2.1. Kin terms. Kin terms are the most common relational social honorifics in Jordanian Arabic. Denotationally, kin terms are used to designate family relations among relatives (e.g., father–daughter, mother–son, brother–sister, etc.). Honorifically, however, kin terms are used connotationally to maintain and enrich social interaction among both related and unrelated participants. According to their function, kin honorifics can be divided into two groups: distant kin vocatives and affectionate kin vocatives.

Distant kin vocatives are social honorifics that are commonly utilized to promote solidarity in casual summons among strangers. In fact, the best way to get the attention of a stranger on the street is to use an honorific kin term. Among Jordanian adults, the most common kin terms in casual summoning among strangers are: ‘ax ‘brother’, ‘uxt ‘sister’, xāl ‘maternal uncle’, xālah ‘maternal aunt’, ‘am ‘paternal uncle’, ‘ammīh ‘paternal aunt’, and garābah ‘relative’. For example, consider the casual summons in (1) below, which are, more or less, pragmatically equivalent to 'Excuse me, sir/ma'am' in American English.
As can be seen, the utterances in (1) feature honorific kin terms as well as politeness formulas. This property turns out to be a common tendency of casual summons among Jordanian adults. Similarly, these kin terms may function as politeness-enhancers by interacting with politeness formulas in polite requests. Consider the utterances in (2) below.

(2a) ma'alaš  'intaṭir dagūgah yā 'ax
if possible wait minute VOC brother
'Will you please wait a minute?'

(2b) 'idda samaḥt-i ta't-ni 'ismik yā xālah
if allowed+you-FEM give-me name-your VOC maternal aunt
'Will you please give me your name?'

(2c) mumkin tug'ud yā garābah
possible sit+you VOC relative
'Will you please sit down?'

The utterances in (2) are doubly marked for politeness by using a politeness formula along with a social honorific. By the same token, the said kin terms may be employed to enhance Jordanian greetings relationally among strangers; that is, greetings as absolute social honorifics are reinforced by kin terms as relational social honorifics, as in the greetings given in (3) below.

(3a) kēf-ak yā 'ax
how-you VOC brother
'How are you?'

(3b) maraḥaba yā xālah
hi VOC maternal aunt
'Hi!'

(3c) šabāh-il- xār yā garābah
morning-DEF-good VOC relative
'Good morning!'
Further, the above kin terms can be used as *command-mitigators* in commands, as illustrated by the utterances in (4) below.

(4a) ʼugʻud yā ʼax
sit VOC brother  
‘Sit down, will you?’

(4b) ʼišlaʾi barra yā xālah
go out VOC maternal aunt  
‘Get out of here, will you?’

(4c) ʼuskut yā garābah
be silent VOC relative  
‘Keep quiet, will you?’

Moreover, there are some distant kin honorifics that involve age-restrictions and sex-restrictions. For example, age-restrictions can be observed with children, who commonly address adult male strangers as ʻammōh ‘paternal uncle’ and use ʻammih ‘paternal aunt’ or xālah ‘maternal aunt’ when addressing adult female strangers, as in the two utterances in (5) below (in which children address an adult male and female stranger, respectively).

(5a) gadēš- is- sāʾah ʻammōh
how much- DEF- watch paternal uncle  
‘What time is it, please?’

(5b) wēn- il- mustaʃfa xālah
where-DEF- hospital maternal aunt  
‘Where is the hospital, please?’

In addition, children use distant kin honorifics that coincide with affectionate kin honorifics (see below). Adults may also use the same kin honorifics when casually summoning children on the street. This phenomenon may be due to the characteristically emotional relationship between children and adults in general, in which the utilization of affectionate kin honorifics would thus be licensed. The frequent dropping of the vocative marker yā in adult–child and child–adult interactions may be attributed to the emotional factor. For instance, consider the utterances in (6) below.

(6a) bʿid ʻan-il- bāb ʻammōh (adult–child)
keep off-DEF-door paternal uncle  
‘Keep off the door, please!’
(6b) ً b'id 'an-il- bāb yā 'amm (adult-child)
    keep off-DEF- door VOC paternal uncle
    'Keep off the door, please!'

(6c) ً b'id 'an-il-bāb yā 'amm (adult-adult)

(6d) ً b'id 'an-il-bāb 'ammōh (adult-adult)

Here, the anomaly of (6b) and (6d) is due to the violation of age-restrictions, that is, 'ammōh is licensed only in adult-child interactions among strangers, while 'amm is licensed only in adult-adult interactions.

Similarly, female youths, who opt for a distant social honorific invariably address adult strangers with 'ammōh instead of any other kin term. Again, this usage may point to the characteristic emotionality of female youths that carries over to communication with strangers. However, this emotionality signals sexual detachment by assuming roles (female youth vs. uncle) that are largely depleted of sexuality. The utterances in (7) and (8) below illustrate this phenomenon.6

(7a) nazzil-ni hōn 'ammōh (female youth-driver)
    drop-me here paternal uncle
    'Drop me here, please.'

(7b) ً nazzil-ni hōn 'ammōh (male youth-driver)

(7c) nazzil-ni hōn yā 'amm (male youth-driver)
    drop-me here VOC paternal uncle
    'Drop me here, please.'

(7d) ً nazzil-ni hōn yā 'amm (female youth-driver)

(8a) ً nazzil-ni hōn yā xāl (female youth-driver)
    drop-me here VOC maternal uncle
    'Drop me here, please.'

(8b) ً nazzil-ni hōn xālōh (female youth-driver)
    drop-me here maternal uncle
    'Drop me here, please.'

(8c) nazzil-ni hōn yā xāl (male youth-driver)

(8d) ً nazzil-ni hōn xālōh (male youth-driver)

The anomaly of (7b) is due to the fact that 'ammōh cannot be appropriately employed as a distant social honorific by male youths, whereas it can be by
female youths, hence the appropriateness of (7a). By contrast, 'amm can be utilized as a distant social honorific by males, but not by females, hence the inappropriateness of (7d). The appropriateness status of the utterances in (8a) and (8c) follows from sex-restriction (here xāl can be used as a distant social honorific by males only), unlike the situation in (8b) and (8d). In the latter cases, (8b) is anomalous because xālōh, despite its being affectionate in form (see below), is never used as a distant social honorific by female youths, whereas (8d) is anomalous because the formally affectionate kin term xālōh cannot be used as a distant honorific by male youths.

Affectionate kin vocatives are social honorifics that are employed to enhance intimacy among relatives and acquaintances. Jordanian Arabic features several of these, e.g., yammah 'mother', yābah 'father', jiddōh 'grandfather', jiddih 'grandmother', xālōh 'maternal uncle', xālah 'maternal aunt', 'ammōh 'paternal uncle', 'ammih 'paternal aunt', xayyōh 'brother', xayyih 'sister', yabni 'my son', and yabinti 'my daughter'. Except for the last four examples, all these affectionate kin terms are used in two distinct ways.

First, parents, grandparents, uncles, and aunts may use their own designated absolute honorifics in addressing their respective descendants, thus reversing the denotational signification for the purpose of showing affection. For instance, Jordanian mothers usually address their sons and daughters as yammah 'mother' instead of yabni 'my son' or yabinti 'my daughter' for various purposes in interaction (e.g., summons, requests, questions, etc.), as in the utterances in (9) below.

(9a) 'aṭi-ni may yammah (mother-child)
give-me water mother
'Give me water, son/daughter!'

(9b) wēn 'abū-k yammah (mother-son)
where father-your mother
'Where's your father, son?'

(9c) 'ugu'd-i yammah (mother-daughter)
sit-FEM mother
'Sit down, daughter!'

Second, all affectionate kin terms may be used honorifically among acquaintances and relatives to show affection or closeeness. For instance, an old woman may appropriately address a child or youth as yammah 'mother' (when addressing a male or female) or yabni 'my son' (when addressing a male) or yabinti 'my daughter' (when addressing a female). By the same token, a female youth may address an acquaintance or a distant relative as xayyōh 'brother' to express closeeness. This phenomenon can be illustrated by the two utterances in (10) below.
(10a) (old woman–boy/male youth)
\[\text{\textit{w}}\text{\textendash}\text{i\textit{mm-ak ya jiddih}}\]
where mother-your VOC grandmother
'Where's your mother, sonny?'

(10b) (old man/woman–girl/female youth)
\[\text{\textit{a'ti\text{-ni kursi ya\textendash}bint-i}}\]
give-me chair VOC-daughter-my
'Give me a chair, sweetie!'

Affectionate kin terms may also be employed to extend not only metaphorical reversal of denotational signification as in (10) above, but also metaphorical preservation of denotational signification, as in (11) below.

(11a) \[\text{\textit{s}"u ti\text{\textendash}rab \text{\textit{amm}"o}}\text{\textit{h}}\]
what drink+you paternal uncle
'What would you like to drink, sir?'

(11b) \[\text{\textit{w}}\text{\textendash}\text{i\textit{yih jidd}"o}\text{\textit{h}}\]
where going grandfather
'Where are you going, sir?'

2.2. Titles of address. Titles of address are commonly used as absolute honorifics requiring both authorized speakers and recipients; for example, \textit{dukt}"or 'doctor' is an absolute social honorific whose appropriate use in Jordanian Arabic requires that the addressee be either a medical doctor or a person who has a Ph.D. If this condition is not met, the utilization of the said honorific will be infelicitous. However, there are several titles of address that can be used both absolutely and relationally, thus qualifying for relational social honorifics in addition to their status as absolute social honorifics. For example, \textit{hajji} is a title of address reserved as an absolute social honorific for a man who has gone on pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia, while it is used relationally as a social honorific in addressing any old man, whether he be a pilgrim or not.

As relational social honorifics, titles of address can be divided into two classes: distant titles of address and affectionate titles of address. On the one hand, distant titles of address are used to promote solidarity in interaction for different purposes (e.g., summons, greetings, questions, requests, etc.) among strangers. Of these, we frequently encounter 'ust"o \textit{teacher}, \textit{hajji} (i) \textit{male pilgrim}, \textit{hajji} (i) \textit{female pilgrim}, 'abu-\textit{s}\textendash\textit{sabab} 'father of youths', and \textit{s}"a\textit{tir} 'smart', as illustrated by the utterances in (12) below.

(12a) \[\text{\textit{i"o sa\text{\textendash}ha}}\text{\textit{t ya ust}"o}\]
if allowed+you VOC teacher
'Excuse me, sir!'
(12b) \textit{kēf-ak} \textit{yā-bu-š-śabāb} (youth–youth)
how-you VOC-father-DEF-youths
'How are you, fellow?'

(12c) \textit{wēn rayhih} \textit{yā ḥajjih} (adult–old woman)
where going VOC pilgrim (FEM)
'Where are you going, lady?'

(12d) \textit{ma‘alaš ‘ihda ya šāṭir} (adult–child)
possible be quiet VOC smart
'Will you keep quiet, sonny?'

In the utterances above, (12a) functions as a formal casual summon, while (12b) functions as an informal greeting. The formality parameter is often governed by extralinguistic factors; for example, the uttering of (12a) is usually triggered by the fact that the addressee is well-dressed and assumes an air of importance, thus deserving the title 'ūstād ‘teacher’ instead of informal honorifics such as xāl ‘paternal uncle’ or ‘ax ‘brother’ as a social honorific. In (12c), the presence of the social honorific ḥajjih makes the utterance a polite question. Finally, the use of the honorific šāṭir in (12d) adds to the existing politeness of the request.

On the other hand, affectionate titles of address are social honorifics that may be utilized to promote solidarity among acquaintances or strangers. Originally, such titles of address are absolute honorifics indicative of high emotionality among intimates, as in the case of interaction between lovers or a mother and child. However, absolute honorifics of this sort have now acquired a relational parameter, since male and female Jordanians may use them among themselves for various interactive purposes. Among these honorifics, one often hears rūḥi ‘my soul’, ḥabībī ‘my beloved’, ‘umrī ‘my age’, ḥayātī ‘my life’, ḥubbī ‘my love’, ‘yūnī ‘my eyes’, etc., as seen in (13) below.

(13a) \textit{inta’ir šway ya ḥabīb-i} (male adult–male adult)
wait (MASC) little VOC beloved-my
'Wait a minute, love!'

(13b) \textit{ujurt-ak} ya ‘yūn-i} (male adult–male adult)
fare-your (MASC) VOC eyes-my
'Your fare, love!'

(13c) \textit{ṣū badd-ik} ya ‘umr-i} (female adult–female adult)
what want-you (FEM) VOC age-my
'What do you want, love?'

The utterances in (13) above usually function as a polite request, a reminder, and a polite question, respectively. For instance, (13b) may be uttered by a
bus conductor to an absent-minded passenger, thus effectively reminding him to pay the fare. Interestingly, these Jordanian honorifics are usually too affectionate to employ in casual summons. Most Jordanians would consider (14) below infelicitous as a casual summon.

(14) ? ma'alaš ya ḥabībī/'yūni/'umri
   possible VOC my beloved/my eyes/my age
   'Excuse me, love!'

In casual summons, Jordanians commonly employ distant kin terms or distant titles of address rather than affectionate ones as social honorifics (cf. (1) and (12) above).

Note that the above-mentioned Jordanian social honorifics may correspond to such analogous affectionate honorifics in English as love, honey, sugar, darling, etc., when these English honorifics are used relationally. However, sex-restrictions on such honorifics in English and Jordanian Arabic are different. While adult Jordanians may only use affectionate honorifics with the same sex, (e.g., among males), adult English speakers often use these honorifics appropriately across opposite sexes, (e.g., adult males addressing adult females). This discrepancy is cultural, since it principally emanates from sexuality awareness in the two cultures. While verbal explicitness in sex-related terms like love and honey is usually tolerated, if not encouraged, in the American and British cultures among adult speakers of the opposite sex and condemned among speakers of the same sex, Arabic terms of this sort are condemned among adult speakers of the opposite sex and tolerated among speakers of the same sex. The Jordanian utterances and their English renderings in (15) below bear witness to this phenomenon.

(15a) (adult male–adult female)
   ? 'intaḏrī-ni lahḏah ya ḥabīb-i
   wait(FEM)-me moment VOC beloved(FEM)-my
   'Wait a moment for me, love.'

(15b) (adult male–adult male)
   'intaḏrī-ni lahḏah ya ḥabīb-i
   wait(MASC)-me moment VOC beloved(MASC)-my
   ? 'Wait a moment for me, love?'

The anomaly of the Jordanian utterance in (15a) is an immediate consequence of utilizing an affectionate social honorific relationally among Jordanian adults of the opposite sex, while the anomaly of the English rendering of (15b) is due to the employment of an affectionate social honorific relationally among adult English speakers of the same sex.
While sex-restrictions on the use of affectionate honorifics relationally are a determining factor for their appropriateness in adult–adult interaction, they are completely neutralized in adult–child interaction in both Arabic and English, because affection is a characteristic feature of this kind of communication. Note the appropriateness of the utterances in (16) below.

(16a) (adult female–child male)

\[\text{\textit{xu}ūd hay-it-tuffāhah ya ḥabīb-i}\]

'Take this DEF-apple VOC beloved (MASC)-my

(16b) (adult female–child female)

What's your name, honey?

Further, teknonyms, or formulas such as 'abu + proper name (e.g., 'abu-mhammad 'father of Mohammed') or 'um + proper name (e.g., 'um-imhammad 'mother of Mohammed'), are widely used titles of address in Jordanian Arabic. As an absolute social honorific, it is commonly used in addressing married people as a practical alternative to their absolute titles of address, such as duktōr 'doctor', bāša 'Pasha', 'ustād 'teacher', etc. Opting out of these designated titles of address in favor of the said formula usually enhances the social atmosphere and effectively marginalizes the formality parameter among inter-actants. Interestingly, these formulas may sometimes be used relationally in addressing male bachelors by filling in the empty slot after 'abu with either the addressee's second name (father's name) or family name. When I (Farghal) was single, for example, some colleagues at Yarmouk University used to address me as 'abu-‘ali 'father of Ali' or 'abu-farghal 'father of Farghal', after my father's name and family name, respectively, instead of by my designated title of address, i.e., duktōr.

The 'abu/’um-formula described above is highly productive as a relational social honorific. Verbal interaction among Jordanians may trigger social honorifics like 'abu-l-karam 'father of generosity', 'abu-l-ma‘rifāh 'father of knowledge', 'umm-i-l-‘anāgah 'mother of elegance', 'umm-i-dīg 'mother of taste', etc. The instantiation of such social honorifics is relational rather than absolute in nature. For instance, a host’s apologies for not being hospitable enough to an unexpected guest who is an acquaintance may be met with embarrassment by an utterance similar to that in (17) below.

(17) lah ya rījāl ‘intih ‘abu-’l-karam

no VOC man you father-DEF-generosity

'Don’t you worry! You’ve been very hospitable.'

Finally, Jordanian Arabic features some absolute social honorifics that are sometimes used relationally in a flippant or ironical manner among relatives
or friends. Most of these designate military or civil statuses and are of Turkish origin, e.g., Pasha, used these days as a title of address for serving and retired army generals; bēk, a title of address for a range of military ranks (e.g., captain) or civil positions (e.g., judge); and 'afandi, a title of address for lower ranks of military officers (e.g., lieutenant). Clearly, the relational use of these titles flippantly or ironically flouts the maxim of quality (Grice 1975), thus exploiting them for communicative purposes. The frequent exploiting of these titles relationally renders them inappropriate in casual communication among strangers. For example, compare the utterances of (18) and (19) below.

(18a) zamān mā șuṣn-āk ya bāša (friend–friend)  
    long time no see-you VOC Pasha  
    'Long time no see, big fellow!'  

(18b) yallah ʿal-ạfaṭr ya bēk (mother–son)  
    come to-breakfast VOC ṭ?  
    'Breakfast is ready, sir!'  

(19a) ? maʕalaš ya bāša (stranger–stranger)  
    possible VOC Pasha  
    'Excuse me, sir!'  

(19b) ? tfaddal ʿijlis ya bēk (waiter–customer)  
    please sit VOC ?  
    'Will you please sit down?'  

While (18a) and (18b) pragmatically succeed as flippancies or ironies among friends or relatives, (19a) and (19b) prove to be infelicitious among strangers.

3. Conclusion. The present paper counts as a preliminary attempt to examine the nature of relational social honorifics in Jordan with an eye to systematizing these honorifics in Jordanian Arabic and shedding light on the pragmatic constraints governing their use. Jordanian honorifics have been divided into two major classes: kin terms and titles of address. Each of these classes has been elaborately argued to feature both distant and affectionate honorifics. While distant honorifics are used exclusively among strangers, affectionate ones are mostly utilized among friends or relatives, and sometimes among strangers. The use of both types of honorifics has been demonstrated to involve age and sex restrictions.

The paper has clearly demonstrated how rich Jordanian Arabic is in relational social honorifics. In fact, any grammar of Jordanian Arabic will be deemed deficient if it does not take account of the elaborate and subtle interaction between language and social coordinates. Most likely, Jordanian Arabic’s richness in relational honorifics carries over to other varieties of Arabic, thus...
demonstrating the necessity of further research in this area.

Finally, the paper sends a clear message to syllabus writers of Arabic as a foreign language. As a matter of fact, one cannot imagine a language learner acquiring a workable competence in Jordanian Arabic and Arabic in general without possessing a reasonable awareness of social honorifics, especially relational ones, as they are more opaque to second language learners. This being the case, the present study may function as a sign-post in this direction.

Notes

Abbreviations. The following grammatical abbreviations are used: DEF = definite; FEM = feminine; MASC = masculine; PL = plural; SG = singular; VOC = vocative.

1. In this paper social honorifics are assumed to perform their ordinary semantic and/or pragmatic imports. For example, the utilization of the social honorific sir is taken to conventionally implicate that the addressee is of a higher social status. However, this scheme is broken when the speaker exploits one or more of the maxims of conversation for communicative purposes, as when a father addresses his son as "sir" for ironical purposes, thus flouting the maxim of quality (that is, the father is not speaking the truth, which is an essential condition on the maxim of quality when he addresses his son as "sir," for the son is higher in social status than the father). For more on this, see Grice (1975) and Levinson (1983), among others.

2. The Co-operative Principle is a general principle that consists of four maxims of conversation: the maxims of quality, quantity, manner, and relation. It is assumed to underlie human conversational behavior either by the interactants' observation of one or more of conversational maxims—which gives rise to Standard Conversational Implicatures—or by the flouting of one or more of these maxims—which results in Particularized Conversational Implicatures. (For more on Implicature Theory, see Grice 1975 and Levinson 1983.) The Politeness Principle is also proposed as a general principle and is meant to supplement and cut across the conversational maxims of the Co-operative Principle by highlighting the pervasive nature of politeness in human conversation.

3. For an elaborate data-base account of terms of address in general, see Parkinson (1985) and Braun (1988).

4. For Bahraini Arabic data, see Holes (1986) and for Kuwaiti Arabic data, see Yassin (1978).

5. The notion of face is a key factor to understanding the speaker's intentions and subsequently the lexical correlates in his or her utterances. Face wants, whether they be positive or negative, involve watching one's language, among other things, and are meant to facilitate, smoothen, and refine interaction.

6. It should be noted here that middle-aged women in Jordan would relationally utilize zayyōh 'brother' instead of ‘ammōh 'paternal uncle' as a distant social honorific in cases such as (7) and (8). Similar to ‘ammōh, zayyōh is largely depleted of sexuality.

7. These affectionate kin terms may also be employed among strangers to signal social roles and emotionality; for instance, an old woman may address a youth on the street as yammah 'mother' to assume a mother-child relationship, thus effectively conveying more affection.

8. In dialects of American English, however, affectionate honorifics such as "hon," "honey," and "love" can be used among adult females, i.e., across the same sex.
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