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"Don't Mention It!": A Pragmatic Perspective of Thanking Responses by Native Speakers of Jordanian Arabic

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It is widely common to express thanking responses to thanks you receive for doing someone a favor. This study aims at studying thanking responses used by native speakers of Jordanian Arabic from a pragmatic perspective. The data of this study was collected through natural observation of the participants in real-life situations by the researcher and two other volunteers. A total number of 436 expressions were identified as thanking responses in the data, which were classified based on Chung's classification of thanking responses. The study reveals that acceptance is the most frequent type of thanking responses, followed by denial. On the other hand, non-verbal gestures and no response were the least common types among the participants. Reciprocity was the fourth most frequent type preceded by comments, which occupied the third place. As far as the length of the thanking response is concerned, the study shows that the participants used simple and combined types of responses. The study provides some recommendations for future research.

Keywords: thanking responses, native speakers, Jordanian Arabic

Introduction

It is not uncommon to express thanking for a favor or help you get from someone. It is also widely common to express responses to thanks you receive for doing someone a favor or helping him/her. Thanking and thanking responses are both universal speech acts (Aijmer, 1996; Bella, 2016; Coulmas, 1981; Schneider, 2005). They are the most frequently used speech acts in daily encounters in all languages and cultures (Bella, 2016). These two speech acts also express significant pragmatic functions that are vital to establishing and maintaining social relationships among interlocutors in communicative interactions (Eisenstein & Bodman, 1986; Jung, 1994; Bella, 2016). However, the strategies employed to express thanking and thanking responses differ across languages and cultures (Farenkia, 2012). These strategies even vary within the same language and cultural contexts due to variation in social status, age, gender, profession, region, etc. Even though they may be considered unimportant, their significance "lies on the interpersonal level of rapport and the expression of politeness" (Bella, 2016, p. 61).

A great body of research has focused on the study of thanking in different languages: Al Falasi (2007), Al Khateeb (2009), and Al-Momani, Jaradat, Al-Khawaldeh, and Bani-Khair (2017) in Arabic, Ohashi (2008) in Japanase, Cheng (2010) in English, Pablos-Ortega (2010) in Spanish, Farnia and Suleiman (2009) in Malaysian, Demir and Takkac (2016) in English and Italian, Schneider (2005) in English, and Yoosefvand and Rasekh (2014) in Paersian, among others. However, the study of thanking responses has received little attention from

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scholars compared to other speech acts, such as requests, compliments, apology, etc. (Jautz, 2008). Only few researchers have turned their attention to this particular topic. That is, there is lack of research on how native speakers respond to thanking in their languages. Arabic, of course, is no exception. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, there has been very little research on thanking responses in Arabic, in general, and no single study in Jordanian Arabic, in particular. Hence, the present study attempts to provide an investigation to fill in such a gap. The main objective of this study is to explore the strategies adopted in Jordanian Arabic to express responses to thanking in Jordanian community. This study is significant because it provides an empirical evidence on the strategies used by Jordanians to express their responses to thanking, a topic that has not been adequately discussed in Jordanian Arabic so far. This study can also serve as a reference for others concerned with cross-cultural realization of responses to thanking. In the following sections, the theoretical background of the study, a review of related literature, an outline of the methodology, and the results and discussion will be presented.

Background

The speech act of thanking may be described as a locutionary act a speaker performs based on a prior act by a hearer (Eisenstein & Bodman, 1986). By expressing thanking, a speaker expresses his appreciation to the hearer for performing a previous action the speaker benefited from. On the other hand, a response to thanking constitutes a reaction to a thanking act. It is an act whereby a speaker expresses appreciation and gratitude for the hearer's acknowledgement (Aijmer, 1996). Both thanking and responses to thanking form units of discourse known as an adjacency pair or simple interactional changes (Edmondson & House, 1981). Edmondson and House (1981) characterized thanking and responses to thanking as expressive speech acts that include: congratulating, apologizing, welcoming, complimenting, condoling, etc. An exchange of thanking particularly includes two interlocutors, namely, a thanker, producing the thanking, and a thankee, producing the thanking response (Schneider, 2005).

For example:

A: Thank you!

B: You're welcome.

A response to thanking is a reaction to an act (Bella, 2016). In Schneider's (2005) own words, a thanking response is "a reactive interactional move which follows a reactive move, as the act of thanking also refers back to something else" (p. 103). Therefore, thanking may be adopted by a person as a reaction to an act of compliment, offer, or forgiveness, etc. When a thanker utters an expression of thanking, he/she wants the thankee to realize that he/she is thankful to what the thankee has done (Jautz, 2008), thereby enhancing the thankee's positive face (Farenkia, 2012), and the thankee may react to the thanks to minimize the thanker's imposition or indebtedness, thereby protecting the face of the thankee. Thus, expressing thanking and thanking responses constitute a significant social function. According to Schneider (2015), a thanking response terminates the dialogical sequence in which it occurs independent of its length and complexity.

Although the primary objective of thanking is to minimize the indebtedness of the speaker (Bella, 2016; Schneider, 2015), it is difficult to respond to it in an appropriate way (Edmondson & House, 1981). Therefore, thanking and responses to thanking require both socio-cultural and pragmatic knowledge.

Ouafeo (2009) stated that "when a speaker thanks another one or when a thanker thanks a thankee, normally his or her thanks must be acknowledged and several expressions, also fixed or 'routinized', are used

for this purpose" (p. 544). For example, in order to express thanking, the speaker may use phrases like "thank you", "I appreciate it", etc., and in order to express a response to thanking, the hearer may use words and phrases like "welcome", "not at all", etc.

Different names have been giving to the speech act of response to thanking, such as "thanking responders" (Aijmer, 1996, p. 40; Ouafeo, 2009), "thanks responding" (Edmondson & House, 1981), "response to thanks" (Leech & Svartik, 1994, p. 173, cited in Schneider, 2005), "responding to thanks" (Schneider, 2005) "responding to gratitude" (Farenkia, 2012), "responses to thank you" (Jung, 1994), "thanks minimizer" (Schneider, 2005), and "minimize" (Edmondson & House, 1981, p. 148). Throughout this study, response to thanking and thanking responses will be used.

Furthermore, studies have revealed that every culture has its own unique rules with respect to producing various speech acts. That is, the production of speech acts is culture-specific. Thanking and responses to thanking have important social values in Jordanian Arabic. Therefore, failing to recognize a response to thanking violates the social norms in Jordanian community and may harm social relationships between interactants.

Literature Review

Expressing thanking and responses to thanking is strongly associated with linguistic politeness. The politeness theory that was introduced by Brown and Levinson (1987) has paved the way for a huge number of scholarly studies in politeness, such as complimenting, apology, thanking, etc. It constitutes a common framework for experimental speech studies in politeness in different languages and cultures. This theory revolves around the notion of "face" (negative face and positive face). Face is defined as "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 61). According to Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), cross-cultural studies showed that different societies have distinct principles of appropriateness. All human communities encompass politeness strategies; however, they are restricted by different socio-cultural values of these different groups.

A considerable body of research has been conducted on thanking over the two decades (Aijmer, 1996; Cheng, 2010; Clankie, 1993; Coulmas, 1981; Edmonson & House, 1981; Farnia & Suleiman, 2009; Jautz, 2008). Some of these studies investigated the strategies of thanking across cultures and within the same culture, and others focused on its functions. In the same fashion, a fair amount of research has tackled thanking in an Arab context (Al Khateeb, 2009; Al-Khawaldeh & Zegarac, 2013; Al-Momani et al., 2017; Morsi, 2010). However, the issue of responses to thanking has received little attention from both Arab and non-Arab scholars. There are few studies that have been done on responses to thanking (Al-Zubaidy, 2017; Bella, 2016; Farenkia, 2012; Ouafeo, 2009; Schneider, 2005).

One of the most important studies of responses to thanking is Schneider's (2005) in which he investigated thanks responders in American, Irish, and British English. Using discourse completion tasks (DCT) to collect data for his study, he found out that the three varieties of English are similar and different in terms of the following seven aspects: the interactional patterns in which the responses are employed, the realization of head moves and supportive moves, the types of response realizations and their variants, the frequencies of tokens belonging to these types, the speaker strategies, the modification patterns, and the situational distribution of tokens. As far as speaker strategies are concerned, Schneider's findings revealed that "minimizing the favour" (strategy A):

> Is much more important for speakers of English English than for speakers of Irish English or American English […].
> By contrast, the Irish and American informants employed the strategy "expressing appreciation of the addressee" (strategy
> C) much more frequently than speakers of English English. (Schneider, 2005, p. 129)

In her study of thanking responses among Egyptian living in New York, Morsi's revealed different strategies employed by the thankee to respond to thanking. Her strategies include: acceptance of the thanking, denial of the favor, commenting on the thanking with a compliment, and offering future help. Morsi (2010) found out that older people employ more blessings in their responses to thanking resulting in lengthy responses to which younger people reply with the same length to express politeness and respect to the elderly. Regarding gender, she found that females use longer responses than males do. Male-male interactions yielded shorter responses to thanking than female-female responses.

Studying Iraqi's responses to thanking, Al-Zubaidy (2017) reported the use of the following seven strategies: minimizing the debt, expressing pleasure, reciprocating, acknowledging the thanks, expressing intimacy, alerting, and other (reassuring, wishing, non-verbal communication, opting-out, and greeting). To express sincerity and politeness, Al-Zubaidy also pointed out that Iraqis use formulaic expressions like blessing.

Ouafeu (2009) who studied responses to thanking in Cameroon English indicated that the majority of his participants responded to thanking by using "yes". He also mentioned that the common formulaic expressions that seem to be common in different varieties of English, such as "not at all, don't mention it, you're welcome, no problem, and great pleasure", are not found in Cameroon English.

Farenkia (2012) pointed out that the following five thanking responses strategies were revealed in the speech of Canadian university students, namely, "minimizing the favor, expressing pleasure, expressing appreciation, returning thanks, and acknowledging the thanks". The most commonly used strategy in her data was "minimizing the favor", followed by "expressing appreciation". On the other hand, the least used strategy was "acknowledging the thanks". Positive and negative politeness strategies were distributed equally in her study. In accordance with American English, British English, and Irish English, the native Canadians seem to use the same strategies in Canadian English.

Bella's (2016) findings indicated that Greek native speakers and learners of Greek as a foreign language employed the following strategies when responding to thanking: "minimize thanks, acknowledge thanks, express pleasure, return thanks, and reject thanks, wish, and supportive moves". The findings seem to agree with the findings mentioned before and in the literature review.

The literature review shows that there are more similarities than differences with regards to responses to thanking across different languages and cultures. The present studies will show whether responses to thanking in Jordanian Arabic resemble those used in the languages investigated so far. The next section discusses the methods and procedures used in this study to select the participants, to collect the data, and to analyze it.

Methods and Procedures

Data Collection

Most research on thanking responses employed discourse completed task (DCT) as a tool of data collection (Schneider, 2005; Farenkia, 2012; Bella, 2016; Al-Zubaidy, 2017). DCT has been largely criticized for providing "only limited context with elicited responses" (Cheng, 2010, p. 258). This research adopted the ethnographic approach of Dell Hymes. This approach is a research method whereby researchers can observe

and communicate with the participants of the study in real-life situations. One of the main advantages of the ethnographic approach is the ability to obtain natural, detailed, and truthful views about the participants' attitudes and behaviors. Furthermore, observing the actual and spontaneous use of language in daily interactions is very significant and helpful in getting authentic data (Jung, 1994; Cheng, 2010).

The data collection process was carried out in the summer of 2017, specifically in the months of June and July. The researcher and two other trained student volunteers collected the data. One of the students is a male, 25 years old, and the other is a female, 22 years old. The volunteers were asked to record or write down any thanking responses they may observe or receive from the respondents (people interacting with them or with each other). They were also asked to get involved in interactions where they can express their thanks and gratitude to other interlocutors and record their responses as well as the situation in which it occurred. In addition, they were directed to stress their gratitude to other people, such as taxi drivers, colleagues, friends, strangers, librarians, professors, doctors, restaurant workers, shop owners, cashiers, guards, and any other person they may get into a conversation with. All the data were collected from natural everyday interactions which occurred between the researchers on one side and the respondents on the other side or were observed by them. The thanking response as well as the environment in which it was used was either recorded or written down in a notebook, which was always carried by the researchers. All the respondents were native speakers of Jordanian Arabic and all the conversations were carried out in Jordanian Arabic. They were from a wide spectrum of different age categories of men and women. Four hundred and seventy seven conversations took place between the data collectors and the respondents or were observed by them, some of which contained more than one thanking response.

Data Analysis

A total number of 436 expressions were identified as thanking responses in the data. All expressions found in languages other than Arabic were excluded since the focus of the study is on Jordanian Arabic. Nine examples in which English was used to express thanking responses were excluded. Therefore, the analysis of the present study was based on 427 instances of thanking responses. Each thanking response was coded into a semantic unit, which is a minimal and fully complete semantic data capable of standing alone by itself, and thus, fulfilling a communicative function (Cheng, 2010). The data of this research were transcribed and analyzed. Then, the data were classified based on Jung's (1994) classification of thanking responses. In his classification, Jung (1994, p. 11) categorized thanking responses into the following six types:

Type 1: Acceptance: You're (very) welcome, Sure, O.K., My pleasure, Mhmm

Type 2: Denial: No problem, Not at all, Don't mention it

Type 3: Reciprocity: Thank You

Type 4: Comments: Detailed description

Type 5: Non-verbal gestures: A smile, a nod, etc.

Type 6: No response

The following sections present the results and the discussion of the data analysis.

Results

The main purpose of the present study is to explore the use of thanking responses in Jordanian Arabic. Table 1 presents the frequency and percentage of the six types as found in the data.

Table 1

Frequency and Percentage of Types of Thanking Responses

No.	Type of thanking response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Acceptance	291	68%
2	Denial	72	17%
3	Comments	30	8%
4	Reciprocity	25	5%
5	Non-verbal gestures	5	1%
6	No response	4	1%
	Total	427	100%

Table 1 shows that acceptance is the most frequent type of thanking responses at 68% and that denial is the second most common type at 17%. That is, acceptance and denial are the most preferred thanking responses strategies by the participants of the study. They both accounted for 85% of the overall responses. On the other hand, non-verbal gestures and no response were the least common types among the participants at 1% each. Reciprocity was the fourth most frequent type at 5% preceded by comments, which occupied the third place at 8%.

In terms of the response length, the data revealed that the participants used two types of responses: a simple response, containing only one move, such as عفوا *ᶜafwan* (welcome), or a complex response, containing more than one move, such as ولا يهمك بسيطه يازلمه *wala yihmak, baseeTah yazalmih* (do not worry; it is nothing, man), or عن جد شكرا. الله يخليك. مش عارفه كيف اشكرك *?allah yixaleek. mish ᶜarfih keef ashkurak.ᶜan jad shukran*. The speakers in the second type combine two strategies or more for a thanking response depending on the following factors: the relationship between the interlocutors, the size of the favor offered, the emotional status of the thankee, the sincerity of the thankee, and how busy the thankee is. The data analysis revealed that 61% of the responses were of the first type whereas 39% of the responses were of the latter.

Discussion

According to Jung (1994), in the speech act of thanking, the thankee is expected to respond to the politeness of the thanker. Native speakers of Jordanian Arabic use various strategies to respond to thanking based on the type of favor they usually receive thanking for. Following is a discussion of the types of strategies used to respond to thanking supported with examples. The Arabic examples are given in bold; their transliteration is shown in italics; and their translations are provided between brackets.

Acceptance

It has been noticed that the majority of the thanking responses in this study belong to the category of acceptance. One of the main observations in this study is the high frequency of this category. The responders mainly used the two linguistic expressions عفوا *ᶜafwan* and العفو *ᶜailfw* (you are welcome) abundantly. This particular response was highly used regardless of the relationship between the interactants. This may indicate that accepting thanking is one of the polite social markers in Jordanian Arabic. A thanking turn will most often elicit a thanking response. Let us consider the following example:

Context 1: On the way to class, a young student A saw another young student B looking for something she dropped. A helped B finds it.

A: لئيتها. امسكي

la?E:tha. ?imsiky.

(I found it. Here you go.)

B: شكرا جزيلا

shukran jazI:lan.

(Thank you very much.)

A: عفوا جزيلا

ᶜafwan jazI:lan!

(You are very welcome!)

It can be noticed that the use of the intensifier "very" in both the thanking and thanking responses. This may be an indication that the thanker greatly appreciates what the thankee did, who wanted to respond with the same warmth or sincerity, which may function as a boaster for the situation (Jung, 1994). However, the expression عفوا جزيلا *ᶜafwan jazI:lan* is not commonly used in Jordanian Arabic except as a joke or informally between close friends. The data in this study also revealed the use of double intensifiers, such as كثير كثير *ktheert ktheer* (very very much).

Denial

The data showed that this category is the second most frequent strategies used by the participants in this study. This category is given different labels in the previous literature, such as "minimizing the debt" (Coulmas, 1981; Aijmer, 1996), "denial of the favor" (Schneider, 2005), or "denial (Jung, 1994). The participants try to downplay the importance of the favor they did to the thanker by using expressions, such as مافي داعي للشكر *mafi daᶜi lalshukur* (don't mention it), ولا يهمك *wala yihmak* (don't worry), ماعملت شي *maᶜmilit shi* (I did nothing), or لاتشكرني *latushkrni* (don't thank me). This a strategy used by a thankee to "minimize the thanks". It is a face saving act used to put less pressure on the thanker (Bella, 2016; Farenkia, 2012). This category may be used by the responder to "humble himself or herself by denying that he/she favored the beneficiary" (Jung, 1994, p. 13). Consider the following example:

Context 2: Student A lends student B (apparently her friend) some money to buy a book from the bookstore. The next day B brings the money to A.

B: شكرا كتير حبيبتي لانك اعطيتيني الفلوس.

Shukran kteer ḫabibty la?innik aᶜt'E:tI:ni lilfluus.

(Thank you so much darling for giving me the money.)

A: ماعملت شي ياغبيه. احنا ليش اخوات؟

Maᶜmilt shi ya ghabiyih. ?iḫna lE:sh ?ixwa:t?

(I did nothing, stupid. Why are we sisters?)

A in this example tries to make B feel what was done is nothing of importance. It is something normal among friends. B attempts to save A's face by denying the favor or the debt in that she intends to save her the embarrassment and underplay the benefit (Edmondson & House, 1981). In order to make the interaction less threatening to the face of A, B tries to reduce the debt. The use of the expression "darling" by B and the expression "why are we sisters?" by A indicates that the relationship between the two interlocutors is very close,

and by denying thanking, A expresses her feeling that there are no favors between best friends. This close relationship is also expressed by the employment of the word "stupid" by A, which is used here to show endearment.

Comments

This category comes as the third most frequent type of thanking responses used by the participants. According to Jung (1994), this category involves a "detailed description or account of the event appreciated or previous expression of gratitude" (p. 15). In this category, expressions of thanking responses, such as بالخدمه *bilxidmih* (at you service), هذا واجبنا *haðtha wajibna* (This our duty), ماعملت غير واجبي *mac: milt ghE:r wajby* (I did nothing but my duty), انا ليش موجود هون *?ana lE:sh mawjood hoon* (why am I here), are used. Consider the following example:

Context 3: A professor at the graduate school trying to apply for a conference trip outside the country. Having finished filling out the required forms, he hands them to the clerk in the office and warmly thanks her for her help.

Professor: اشكرك جدا لمساعدتك وللطفك
?ashkurik jidan limusaᶜdtik wu luTfik
(I thank you so much for your help and kindness.)

Clerk: اهلين فيك. احنا مبسوطين كثير انه بنقدر نساعد.واجبنا يادكتور.
?hlE:n fI:k. ?ihna mabSu:t'I:n kthI:r ?innuh bnigdar insaaᶜid. Wajibna yadakto:r
(You are welcome. We are very happy to be able to help. This is our duty.)

In this example, the clerk used a combined strategy by first denying the gratitude using "no need to thank me", and then she continued by explaining her reasons for doing so by giving a detailed comment expressing her happiness to provide the service and help by saying, "We are very happy to be able to help. This is our duty.". The use of the first plural pronoun implies that the clerk is trying to humble the favor and expresses politeness to the professor because of the distant relationship between both of them. The clerk also expresses her pleasure to serve the professor. This particular category may overlap with "expressing pleasure" category presented by other researchers (Aijmer, 1996; Al-Zubaidy, 2013; Bella, 2016). This may be a polite strategy used by the clerk to point out that this is her duty and that she does not deserve to be thanked for it. The use of comments enhances positive politeness (Frenkia, 2012) and shows reverence to the other interlocutor. It is also used to better maintain relationships.

A common thanking response used by native speakers of Jordanian Arabic that is related to the category of comments is the use of wishing to the thanker. It was common in the data of this study. Jordanian thankees wish thankers best of luck, wellbeing, and happiness. For example,

Context 4: A customer at a sweets shop paying for the sweets he has just bought. After he gave the cashier the money and the cashier gave him his change back.

Customer: شكرا جزيلا.
shukran jazI:lan.
(Thank you very much.)

Cashier: ‏صحتين وعافيه.‏

      ṣaḥah wu ᶜafyih.

      (May Allah grant health and well-being!)

This expression is widely used in Jordanian Arabic, especially when someone thanks another for food purchasing, such as fruits, vegetables, sweets, etc. The thankee wishes that the food the thanker bought will bring him happiness and health.

Reciprocity

The data revealed that this category is the fourth common type of thanking responses. In this category, the expression ‏شكرا لك‏or‏شكرا‏ (thank you) is used by the thankee to reciprocate the expression "thank you" by the thanker. Therefore, the thankee uses the same strategy back with the thanker. It is mainly a strategy used by the thankee to reduce the indebtness (Jung, 1994; Ohashi, 2008). This strategy is used most when the thanking expression is short and simple and when the favor done is relatively small. Sometimes it is used to reciprocate a favor that is done by both the thanker and the thankee. The following example illustrates this strategy.

Context 5: A teacher offers thanking to a student helping him carry a projector and some wires from the classroom to the teacher's office. The teacher hands the student his exam paper, which he did not receive from the teacher in the previous class because he was absent.

Teacher:‏حطهم عالكرسي وراك‏

      ḥut'hum ᶜ:alkursi wara:k

      (Leave them on the chair behind you.)

Student: ‏ماشي دكتور‏

      mashi dakto:r.

      (Ok! Doctor) (He puts it them in the right place.)

Teacher: ‏شكرا يارعد‏

      shukran ya raᶜid

      (Thank you, Raad.) (Then the teacher hands the student his exam paper.)

Student: ‏شكرا الك دكتور‏

      shukran ?ilak dakto:r

      (Thanks to you Dr.)

In this example, the relationship between the teacher and the students may have required the use of this strategy. The student opted to reciprocate the thanking expression maybe because he felt obliged to return the same expression of gratitude to his teacher. It seems that the both interlocutors have shared and exchanged the benefit of a past act (Jung, 1994). Therefore, both interlocutors feel appreciative for the favor each one of them received from the other. The first "thank you" by the teacher implies "thank you for helping me carry the projector and the wires", and the "thank you" expression by the student implies "thank you for giving me my exam paper". This act seems more of expressing appreciation to each other rather than responding to thanks.

It is noteworthy to say that the length of the response is associated with the size of the favor offered. The bigger the size of the favor is, the longer the response is, and the smaller the size of the favor is, the shorter the thanking response is.

Non-verbal Gestures

This category was the second least frequently used type of thanking responses. It was found in only five situations (1%) in the data. In this category, the thankee uses some paralinguistic features, such as facial expressions to respond to the thanking expressions. Therefore, the thankee may use a smile, a nod, a humming sound, etc.

Context 6: A customer (in his 20s) is trying to pay an electric bill at a post office branch. Three other customers and the researcher were waiting in line. The clerk at the post office (a man in his 50s) gives him back the change with a receipt. The customer thanks him and leaves.

The Customer: شكرا. يعطيك العافيه

shukran. Yi^ct'I:k il^cafiyih

(Thank you. May God endow you with health!)

The clerk: Smiles and says nothing to the customer (as he turns to the other customer in line and asks him what he likes)

In this specific situation, the clerk finds it sufficient to smile to the customer as a response to his thanking expression even though the thanking expression was long and sincere either because he was busy or he felt that a smile would be enough.

No Response

The data revealed that no response is the least frequently used strategy in Jordanian Arabic. This type of thanking response is very uncommon in Jordanian Arabic since politeness is so much appreciated by Jordanians. It would be considered rude not respond to a thanking expressions. However, there may be some factors that make the thankee ignore or not respond to the expression of thanking, such as emotional state, absent minding, being in a hurry, being busy with something like talking on the phone.

Context 7: A young lady (around 18 years old) is buying a pizza pie from a pizza store. The man behind the counter (in his 40s), having wrapped it up, gives it to her with a smile and keeps talking to another customer. The young lady grabs it from him, thanks him, and leaves.

The young lady: يسلموا ايديك عموه.

yislamu ?idE:k ^camo:h

(Thank you, Uncle.)

The Pizza man: No response. (The young lady keeps walking out.)

The word "uncle" is widely used by Jordanians when talking to strangers, who are usually older than them. It is used as a sign of respect since one does not know the name of the other party involved in the conversation. In this example, the pizza man may have felt that the smile was enough to respond for the thanking expression "thank you, uncle", especially that the other interlocutor was way younger than him, or maybe because he was busy with another customer, who was ordering some pizza. The no response was elicited maybe because the pizza man understood the thanking expression as a "leave taking" that does not require a response often.

Conclusion

This study aimed to explore the strategies used to respond to thanking expressions by native speakers of Jordanian Arabic. This study, based on Jung's (1994) classification of thanking responses, revealed that native speakers of Jordanian Arabic use the following types of thanking responses: acceptance, denial, reciprocity,

non-verbal gestures, and no response. Acceptance was the most frequently used strategy followed by denial as the second most used one. This finding goes in line with the findings of Al-Zubaidy (2017), Jung (1994), Schneider (2005), and Farenkia (2012). On the other hand, non-verbal gestures and no response were the least frequently employed strategies. This is consistent with the finding of Jung (1994). This study showed that native speakers of Jordanians Arabic do not differ much in the strategies they use to express thanking responses from native speakers of Canadian, American, and British English as pointed out in the literature.

Furthermore, it was revealed that thanking responses, just like thanking expressions, may be employed to maintain and strengthen relationships and to enhance conversations among interlocutors. The study also showed that the length of the thanking response used by native Jordanians mainly depend on the size of the favor, the relationship between the interlocutors, and the sincerity of the thankee. For example, a longer thanking response was used as a response for a sincere thanking expression and big favors offered. In other words, the more sincere the thanking expression is, the longer and more sincere the response to thanking becomes.

Drawing a generalization about the effect of the relationship between the interlocutors, their ages, their genders, their social status, their occupations, and their professions on the choice of the thanking responses was difficult because this study was limited to the strategies used in Jordanian Arabic in general. Therefore, future research may be allocated to address these issues.

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Appendix

List of Spoken Jordanian Arabic Phonemes

ʔ	voiceless glottal stop	ء
b	voiced bilabial stop	ب
t	voiceless dental stop	ت
th.	voiceless inter-dental fricative	ث
j	voiced palatal affricate	ج
h̲	voiceless pharyngeal fricative	ح
X	voiceless velar fricative	خ
d	voiced dental stop	د
ð	voiced inter-dental fricative	ذ
r	alveolar tap	ر
z	voiced dental fricative	ز
s	voiceless dental fricative	س
sh	voiceless palatal fricative	ش
ʧ	voiced palatal fricative	تش
s̲	voiceless fricative alveolar	ص
tʼ	stop emphatic voiceless	ط
dhʼ	voiced fricative emphatic	ظ
đ	voiced emphatic stop	ض
c	voiced pharyngeal fricative	ع
gh	voiced velar fricative	غ
f	voiceless labio-dental fricative	ف
g	voiced velar stop	ق
k	voiceless velar stop	ك
l	alveolar lateral	ل
m	bilabial nasal stop	م
n	alveolar nasal stop	ن
h	voiceless glottal fricative	ه
w	approximant velar	و
y	palatal semi-vowel	ي

Short Vowels

A	high front
I	low back
U	high back
E	mid front
O	mid back

Long Vowels

I:	high front
A:	low back
U:	high back
E:	mid front
O:	mid back