A Sociopragmatic Study of the Strategies of Ostensible Invitations in Saudi Arabic

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Abstract:
The current study investigated the speech act of ostensible invitations in Saudi Arabic from a sociopragmatic perspective. It was conducted to examine whether Saudi Arabic speakers draw on the same strategies stipulated by Clark and Isaacs (1990) for extending ostensible invitations. Additionally, the study aimed at investigating whether there are Saudi-specific strategies for extending ostensible invitations. To this end, the study examined 37 recalled instances of ostensible invitations provided by Saudi Arabic speakers in the Central Region of Saudi Arabia, Riyadh. The corpus of the study was compiled through face-to-face and written interviews with 37 informants aged between 18 to 60. The collected data was analyzed on the basis of Clark and Isaacs’s seven strategies for establishing ostensible invitations. Results showed that Saudi Arabic speakers utilize the seven strategies proposed by Clark and Isaacs for extending ostensible invitations, yet with relative weight. The most frequently used strategies by Saudi Arabic speakers to issue ostensible invitations in the collected exchanges were the absence of persistence, which was detected in (86%) of the exchanges, and the absence of motivating the invitee, which was used in (73%) of the collected ostensible invitations. Those were followed in order of frequency by vague arrangements (59%), implausibility (49%), inappropriate cues (19%), solicitation (14%), and hedging (5%). In addition to Clark and Isaacs’s proposed strategies, the study found that three more strategies are employed by Saudi Arabic speakers to highlight the ostensibility of their invitations which are: using intensifying and empty swearing devices (e.g., ԁ'а'ор’о’’и, лаазем, wallah, etc.) (27%), extending the invitation in the form of a question (5%), and asking someone else to extend the invitation on behalf of the inviter (5%), the last of which seems to be peculiar to Saudi Arabic speakers.

A Sociopragmatic Study of the Strategies of Ostensible Invitations in Saudi Arabic

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Linguistics

By

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Dedication

To the lady whose love will eternally shine in my heart, my beloved mother;

To my forever champion and role model, my precious father;

To the man who encouraged me to fly toward my dreams and never clipped my wings, my dear husband;

To my soulmate, my little sister Sara;

To all of you, I wholeheartedly dedicate this work.
Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I thank Allah, the Almighty for all the grace and blessings He granted me. Praise be to Allah who bestowed on me the strength and patience to finish my research within a short time.

I would like to offer special thanks to my supervisor, Dr. Abdulrahman Alshabeb for his guidance and continuous help throughout the writing process.

My deepest appreciation and eternal gratitude are due to my parents for their warm, sincere supplications and the true, unconditional love with which they always shower me.

Words may not be sufficient to express my sincere and deepest gratitude to my husband Abdulmajeed for enlightening and helping me out in my study. His constant support, love, and understanding are what sustained me this far.

I am also greatly indebted to Dr. Saleem Abdel Hady whose assistance and cooperation helped me get over many of the difficulties that I encountered while writing this dissertation.
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Transcription System in the Study

The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbols of Arabic

Consonants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic Consonants</th>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ء</td>
<td>ء</td>
<td>Glottal plosive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ب</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>Voiced bilabial plosive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ت</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>Voiceless dental plosive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ث</td>
<td>θ</td>
<td>Voiceless inter-dental fricative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ج</td>
<td>dʒ</td>
<td>Voiced post-alveolar affricate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ح</td>
<td>dʒ</td>
<td>Voiced post-alveolar affricate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>خ</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>Voiceless pharyngeal fricative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>د</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>Voiceless velar fricative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ذ</td>
<td>ɾ</td>
<td>Voiced dental plosive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ر</td>
<td>ɾ</td>
<td>Alveolar trill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ز</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>Voiced alveolar fricative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>س</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>Voiceless alveolar fricative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ض</td>
<td>sˁ</td>
<td>Emphatic voiceless alveolar fricative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ظ</td>
<td>dˁ</td>
<td>Emphatic voiced alveolar plosive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Emphatic voiceless dental plosive
Emphatic voiced alveolar fricative
Voiced pharyngeal fricative
Voiced velar fricative
Voiceless labiodental fricative
Voiced uvular plosive
Voiceless velar plosive
Alveolar lateral
Bilabial nasal
Alveolar nasal
Voiceless glottal fricative
Voiced labialized approximant
Palatal approximant

Arabic Vowels

A) Short Vowels

فتحة   a   Front, nearly half-open, low unrounded
ضمة   u   Back, nearly close, high rounded
كسرة   i   Front, open, high unrounded

B) Long Vowels

Long vowels are represented by the double vowels as in ii, aa, and uu.
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Abstract

The current study investigated the speech act of ostensible invitations in Saudi Arabic from a sociopragmatic perspective. It was conducted to examine whether Saudi Arabic speakers draw on the same strategies stipulated by Clark and Isaacs (1990) for extending ostensible invitations. Additionally, the study aimed at investigating whether there are Saudi-specific strategies for extending ostensible invitations. To this end, the study examined 37 recalled instances of ostensible invitations provided by Saudi Arabic speakers in the Central Region of Saudi Arabia, Riyadh. The corpus of the study was compiled through face-to-face and written interviews with 37 informants aged between 18 to 60. The collected data was analyzed on the basis of Clark and Isaacs’s seven strategies for establishing ostensible invitations. Results showed that Saudi Arabic speakers utilize the seven strategies proposed by Clark and Isaacs for extending ostensible invitations, yet with relative weight. The most frequently used strategies by Saudi Arabic speakers to issue ostensible invitations in the collected exchanges were absence of persistence, which was detected in (86%) of the exchanges, and absence of motivating the invitee, which was used in (73%) of the collected ostensible invitations. Those were followed in order of frequency by vague arrangements (59%), implausibility (49%), inappropriate cues (19%), solicitation (14%), hedging (5%). In addition to Clark and Isaacs’s proposed strategies, the study found that three more strategies are employed by Saudi Arabic speakers to highlight the ostensibility of their invitations which are: using intensifying and empty swearing devices (e.g., ذاروري, لاذم, wallah, etc.) (27%), extending the invitation in the form of a question (5%), and asking someone else to extend the invitation on behalf of the inviter (5%), the last of which seems to be peculiar to Saudi Arabic speakers.

Keywords: Ostensible invitations, Pretense, Sincerity, Saudi Arabic, Ostensibility.
مستخلص الدراسة

نالت هذه الدراسة بخصوص الاستراتيجيات المتبعة في تقديم الدعوات الظاهرة في المجتمع السعودي من منظور اجتماعي-تداولي. وقامت الدراسة بتقييم الدعوات الظاهرة، كما هدفت الباحثة إلى استكشاف الاستراتيجيات الخاصة بالمحتملين السعوديين.

و لتحقيق هذه الأهداف، أجريت الدراسة على 37 مثالًا من الدعوات الظاهرة التي قام بتقديمها من يمثلون عينة الدراسة من بين سكان منطقة الرياض. وقد تم جمع هذه الأمثلة عن طريق المقابلة المباشرة أو المكتوبة مع عينة تشمل 37 شخصًا تتراوح أعمارهم بين 18 إلى 60 عامًا. وقد تم تحليل البيانات بعد جمعها وفقًا للاستراتيجيات السبع التي وضعها كارك وأيزاكس. وقد خلصت الدراسة إلى عدة نتائج أهمها أن المتضمنين السعوديين يوظفون الاستراتيجيات السبع التي اقترحها كارك وأيزاكس (1990) لتقديم الدعوات الظاهرة.

وقد تختلف الاستراتيجيات المستخدمة في استرخاء عدد من الدعوات الظاهرة. وقد تراوح أعمارهم بين 18 إلى 60 عامًا. وقد تم تحليل البيانات بعد جمعها وفقًا للاستراتيجيات السبع التي وضعها كارك وأيزاكس. وقد خلصت الدراسة إلى عدة نتائج أهمها أن المتضمنين السعوديين يوظفون الاستراتيجيات السبع التي اقترحها كارك وأيزاكس (1990) لتقديم الدعوات الظاهرة.

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الكلمات المفتاحية: الدعوات الظاهرة، الادعاء، الصدق، اللغة السعودية، الظاهرة.
Introduction

Study Background

Human interactions aim primarily to establish, reinforce, and keep positive interpersonal relationships with others to regulate their social lives. Additionally, humans convey their feelings and thoughts to others by making use of language. Trudgill (1995) suggested that language plays an extremely crucial role in building relationships among individuals. By virtue of the individual's membership in a certain community, people learn the necessary linguistic behaviors and skills that can guarantee normal social interaction (Valin, 2001; Yule, 1996). One of the linguistic behaviors that individuals widely employ is that of speech acts.

The seminal theory of speech acts has been introduced by Austin (1962). Since its emergence, the speech act theory has revolutionized the field of linguistics as many linguists from different cultures started to apply it to analyze how speech acts are utilized in various cultures, and to what extent they are influenced by the social norms of the society in which they are used (Altalhi, 2014). Speech acts include utterances that perform functions as complimenting, advising, thanking, requesting, inviting, etc.

According to Clark and Isaacs (1990), the traditional speech act theorists (e.g., Austin, 1975; Bach & Harnish, 1979; Searle, 1969) were primarily occupied with investigating genuine speech acts that they failed to tackle the category of ostensible speech acts. The term, ostensible speech acts, refers to a type of speech acts utilized for tacit reasons as the speaker’s intended meaning differs from what is actually said to accomplish an off-record purpose (Clark & Isaacs, 1990; Pinto, 2011); which leads to violation of the sincerity condition (Searle, 1969). Of late, “traditional approaches to speech acts have got weaker, while insincere or non-serious speech acts studies turn[ed] even stronger” (Al-Hindawi & Kadhim, 2017, p. 2).
Ostensible speech acts include invitations that are extended only ostensively and are not meant to be taken seriously by the hearer (Clark & Isaacs, 1990). These invitations are referred to by Clark and Isaacs (1990) as ostensible invitations. Ostensible invitations are confusing and opaque as their surface form is hardly distinguished from genuine invitations (Abdel Hady, 2013). Unlike genuine invitations, the acceptance of ostensible invitations might be considered a face-threatening act. Such invitations are common in the daily life of Saudi Arabic speakers, but they are not given their due attention in academic research.

The present study thoroughly investigated the strategies employed by Saudi Arabic speakers for extending ostensible invitations from a sociopragmatic perspective. After providing an adequate theoretical account concerning the speech act of ostensible invitations, data was collected through written and face-to-face interviews to achieve the study objectives and answer the questions raised in this study.

**Statement of the Problem**

Although the literature on genuine invitations and how they are realized cross-culturally is vast and satisfactorily rich (e.g., Al-Hamzi et al., 2020; Al-Khatib, 2006; Bella, 2009; Jabber, 2020; Mao, 1992; Wolfson, 1981), there is paucity of studies that tackle ostensible speech acts generally, and ostensible invitations particularly in the West and the East. Among these are studies conducted on ostensible invitations in English (i.e., Clark & Isaacs, 1990; Wolfson, 1981), Chinese (i.e., ChaiSi, 2009), Persian (i.e., Eslami, 2005; Salmani-Nodoushan, 2005), Moroccan Arabic (i.e., Naim, 2011), Jordanian Arabic (i.e., Abdel Hady, 2013), and Iraqi Arabic (i.e., Al-Hindawi & Kadhim, 2017). Regarding Saudi Arabic, the speech act of invitations has been studied as being of one layer, that is, genuine invitations (i.e., Alfalig, 2016). To the researcher’s best knowledge, the speech act of ostensible invitations in Saudi Arabic has not been studied before.
Speech acts in general are bound to cultural differences, and the speech act of ostensible invitations is no exception. Such differences may result in conversational failure or what is known as a cross-cultural pragmatic failure (Thomas, 1995). According to Thomas (1983), who introduced the notion of cross-cultural pragmatic failure, the term 'cross-cultural', is a brief way of describing not only interactions of natives with non-natives, but also any kind of communication between two people who do not share common linguistic or cultural backgrounds even though they live in the same region. Wolfson (1989) confirmed that since each speech community exhibits various rules for their speech behavior, non-native speakers are obliged to know such rules. Therefore, for those who are not familiar with the Saudi rules of speech behavior, the speech act of ostensible invitations may lead to conversational failure. Eslami (2005) described a similar problem when she recounted that:

Over the years of my intercultural experiences in the United States and observation of other Iranian/American interactions, I have witnessed that Iranians sometimes take Americans’ genuine invitations as ostensible (not intended to be taken seriously) and therefore reject them, while Americans may take Iranian ostensible invitations as genuine and accept them. (p. 453)

As Thomas (1983) implied, such pragmatic failure may also occur between interlocutors who speak the same language, but have different dialects or cultural backgrounds. This pragmatic failure may result in a failure to recognize the differences between genuine and ostensible invitations, and hence, lead to unsuccessful or even inappropriate responses to ostensible invitations. To avoid such pragmatic failure in relation to ostensible invitations, more studies on the strategies used to establish ostensible invitations are needed to set the features and functions of genuine and ostensible invitations apart.
Purpose of the Study

The present study investigated the speech act of ostensible invitations in Saudi Arabic from a sociopragmatic perspective in an attempt to draw a distinction between genuine and ostensible invitations. Thus, the purpose of this study was two-fold. Firstly, it aimed at examining whether Saudi Arabic speakers employ the same strategies proposed by Clark and Isaacs (1990) for extending ostensible invitations. Secondly, it aimed at investigating whether there are Saudi-specific strategies for extending ostensible invitations.

Significance of the Study

The current study contributes to broadening the existing body of knowledge on how ostensible invitations function, and how they are established in different languages and cultures. Thus, this study can help to bridge the gap in the cross-cultural literature in the area of ostensible speech acts, and hence serves to provide perspectives on avoiding pragmatic failure in communication regarding the use of this type of acts.

Moreover, this study is beneficial for sociolinguists who are concerned with language use from a cultural point of view. Textbook designers can also benefit from this study by addressing the phenomenon of ostensible speech acts in general and ostensible invitations in particular in textbooks since they gain increasing importance as daily communicative acts.

Questions of the Study

To achieve the previously mentioned aims, this study intends to answer the following research questions:

1. How far do Saudi Arabic speakers draw on the same strategies suggested by Clark and Isaacs (1990) for extending ostensible invitations?

2. What additional Saudi-specific strategies are employed for extending ostensible invitations, if any exist?
Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

In this section, a review of the theories that are closely related to this study is provided and organized according to the focus area. The section starts with the broadest category, namely, the speech act theory, which is examined from Austin’s (1962) and Searle’s (1969) perspectives. Subsequently, the politeness theory is discussed with a particular focus on the concepts of face and face-threatening acts (FTAs). The subdivision that follows examines ostensible speech acts in general. Then, ostensible invitations are addressed in detail. The last section delineates the definition of the study terms.

Speech Act Theory

The speech act theory rigorously attempts to examine “the workings of language” (Mabaquiao, 2018, p. 1). It is a subfield of pragmatics that has attracted attention not only in pragmatics, but in sociolinguistics as well. The speech act theory established the concept that words are used to carry out actions and not solely to express propositions. This theory was primarily introduced by J. L. Austin in a number of lectures compiled in a book entitled How to do Things with Words. The theory was built upon the assumption that language is considered as a behavior that is governed by a set of rules (Searle, 1969).

Austin (1962) argued that not all sentences are used to describe the state of affairs as some sentences are uttered to perform actions, e.g., to marry, to declare war, to thank, to divorce, etc. He referred to such utterances as “performative utterances” or “performatives” for short. The existence of performatives was further emphasized by Lewis (1993) who argued that "language is essentially pragmatic in character – situational, contextualized and purposive – not intended to be but to do” (p. 59).

In his lectures, Austin (1962) suggested that three various acts can be performed simultaneously when a speaker issues an utterance. He classified these acts into three levels:
locutionary act (the meaning of the statement itself), illocutionary act (the speaker’s intended meaning i.e., the act presented by the explicit performative verb), and perlocutionary act (the act that follows as a consequence of saying something) (Austin, 1962). Clark (1996) indicated that the illocutionary act is the act through which the speaker has the hearer get his intended meaning. The hearer’s recognition of this intended meaning is called the illocutionary effect. Abdel Hady (2013) summed up the aforementioned acts as: locutionary acts are simply speech acts that have been uttered, illocutionary acts are the real actions that are performed by the utterance, and perlocutionary acts are the effects brought about on the receiver by uttering the speech act.

Austin (1962) tentatively divided illocutionary acts into five classes in the last lesson of his book *How to do Things with Words*. As a starting point, Austin (1962) used five explicit performative verbs which are as follows:

1) Verdictives: this class includes the acts that are used to judge something, such as assessing, diagnosing, etc.

2) Exercitives: these acts are employed to exercise rights or influence, such as voting, warning, advising, etc.

3) Commissives: as the name implies, these are acts that commit the speaker to doing something, such as promising, threatening, agreeing, etc.

4) Expositives: this class includes the acts related to how we employ our words to fit into an argument, such as denying, affirming, answering, etc.

5) Behabitives: this class includes the acts that have to do with social behavior, such as apologizing, cursing, condoling, etc.

Searle (1969) developed and extended Austin’s work on the speech act theory. Searle (1969) stated that “the unit of linguistic communication is not, as has generally been supposed, the symbol, word, or sentence, [...] but rather the production or issuance of the symbol or word
or sentence in the performance of the speech act” (p. 16). Searle (1976) classified performatives into five categories:

1) Assertives: the act is said to be assertive when the speaker has the hearer believe his utterance is true, such as concluding, asserting, etc.

2) Directives: the act is said to be directive when the speaker attempts to get the hearer to do something, such as asking, commanding, ordering, inviting, etc.

3) Commissives: these are the acts through which the speaker commits himself to performing a future action, such as promising, swearing, pledging, etc.

4) Declaratives: the act is said to be declarative when the speaker brings about a change in the state of affairs by making an utterance, such as declaring war.

5) Expressives: these are the acts through which the speaker expresses his/her feelings towards the hearer, such as appreciating, thanking, apologizing, etc.

The speech act of invitations is a commissive act that intends to “commit the speaker to some future course of action” (Searle, 1976, p. 14). Simultaneously, invitations are directive as well in the sense that they direct the invitee to do something, that is, to accept the invitation. Thus, Hancher (1979) referred to the speech act of invitation as a “commissive directive” act (p. 13).

Austin (1962) stated that although performatives cannot be judged as true or false, they may fail and go wrong. In this regard, Liberman (2001) stated that for a sentence to be correctly performed, it should not only be grammatical, but also felicitous. Based on this assumption, Austin (1962) put forth three conditions that must be fulfilled for a performative verb to be felicitous and achieve its purpose. He referred to these conditions as felicity conditions. These felicity conditions were as summed up as follows:

A. (1) There must be a conventional procedure having a conventional effect.
(2) The circumstances and persons must be appropriate, as specified in the procedure.

B. The procedure must be executed (1) correctly and (2) completely.

C. Often (1) the persons must have the requisite thoughts, feelings, and intentions, as specified in the procedure, and (2) if consequent conduct is specified, then the relevant parties must so do. (Austin, 1962, as cited in Abdulla, 2011, p. 4)

The violations of conditions A and B are referred to as misfires which occur when the proposed action is not performed (Austin, 1962). On the other hand, the violation of condition C is known as abuse since the intended action is performed but insincerely.

Searle (1969) contributed to Austin’s felicity conditions by suggesting the following rules that have to be satisfied for an utterance to be sincere and felicitous:

1. Propositional content condition: this condition requires the participants to understand language.

2. Preparatory condition: the speaker must have authority over the hearer, and the circumstances of the speech act must be appropriate so that the speech act will be performed successfully.

3. Sincerity condition: to maintain this condition, the speech act must be performed sincerely and genuinely. That is to say, when a person makes a promise, he/she must sincerely intend to keep that promise.

4. Essential condition: this condition has to do with the speaker’s intention to have the hearer act upon the proposed act.

**Politeness Theory**

Brown and Levinson (1987) initiated the politeness theory in sociolinguistics based on their observation of daily interactions among people. They noticed that people sometimes express their thoughts, feelings, attitudes, etc. directly. In other situations, however, people
were observed to beat around the bush and depart towards indirectness (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Goldsmith & Normand, 2014). Brown and Levinson (1987) concluded that people resort to indirectness to appear more polite. Despite its universality, the concept of politeness is highly controversial in the sense that what is considered polite in one culture may be quite impolite in another depending on the social norms and expectations of that culture (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

Through politeness theory, Brown and Levinson (1987) attempted to account for significant elements that have been neglected in the speech act theory. The notion of “face,” for instance, was introduced by Goffman (1955) and expanded by Brown and Levinson (1987) who considered it as the foundation on which they built their politeness theory. The notion of “face” was defined by Brown and Levinson (1987) as “the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself/ herself” (p. 61).

Furthermore, Brown and Levinson (1987) added to the face theory by suggesting that every individual has two faces: a negative face and a positive face. The positive face refers to the individual’s desire to be appreciated, approved, and accepted by others, whereas the negative face indicates the individual’s desire to proceed unimpeded or to be free from imposition (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

Brown and Levinson (1987) confirmed that each adult communicator bears in mind two concepts while interacting with others: first, that the "face … is emotionally invested and can be lost, maintained or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction” (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 61); second, that he needs “the ability to weigh up different means to an end and choose the best means that satisfies the desired goal” (p.65). Thus, the participants in social interaction are always aware of both the negative and positive aspects of face.
Like any other communication behavior, the behavior of extending ostensible invitations is governed by politeness. Lakoff (1973), Leech (1983) and Brown and Levinson (1987) developed politeness theories in which politeness is seen as a tool that prevents clashes. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), politeness strategies “make possible communication between aggressive parties” (p.1). In the same vein, Conejos and Macarro (1998) pointed out that it is through the use of such politeness strategies that speakers are able to communicate their essential messages and their intention to be polite while so doing; as such, “they reduce the face loss that might result from the interaction” (p.174).

Since the politeness theory is built upon speech act theory, Brown and Levinson (1987) asserted that there are certain speech acts that threaten negative and/or positive faces by their nature. These acts are known as face-threatening acts (FTAs). In an attempt to maintain the face claimed by interactants, there are certain strategies that can be utilized to minimize the threat which are known as face-saving strategies. These strategies include positive and negative politeness, bald on record strategy, and off-record strategy (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

Moreover, Brown and Levinson (1987) explained that the choice of one of the aforementioned strategies over the other depends primarily on how threatening the speech act is. To determine the weightiness of the FTAs, three social variables should be calculated which are the social distance among the interlocutors, the social power of the interlocutors, and the rank of imposition of the act (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

**Ostensible Speech Acts**

Clark and Isaacs (1990) were the first to address the category of ostensible speech acts which was neglected by traditional speech act theorists (i.e., Austin, 1962; Bach & Harnish, 1979; Searle, 1976). According to Clark and Isaacs (1990), ostensible speech acts are insincere, genuine-like speech acts that are not meant to be taken seriously. Salmani-
Nodusshan (2006) defined ostensible speech acts as utterances that resemble genuine speech acts (e.g., compliment, invitation, promise, etc.) in form, but are issued to convey unstated purposes. In such speech acts, the sincerity condition, which is essential for the speech act to be felicitous, is pretended. The property of pretense is what primarily, but not solely, sets genuine and ostensible speech acts apart as speakers issue non-serious speech acts “coated with a layer of genuinity” (Abdel Hady, 2013, p. 21). Unlike genuine speech acts, ostensible speech acts are often utilized to convey off-record purposes to save the face of the interlocutors (Clark & Isaacs, 1990; Gibbs, 2000).

**Defining Properties of Ostensible Speech Acts.** According to Clark and Isaacs (1990), there are five defining properties that distinguish ostensible speech acts from genuine ones. The umbrella property under which the remainder of the properties is included is “pretense” (Clark and Isaacs, 1990). The five defining properties of ostensible speech acts as proposed by Clark and Isaacs (1990) and recapped by Link and Kreuz (2005) are:

1) Pretense: the speaker pretends to issue a genuine speech act. It is noteworthy that the pretense should be a joint pretense in the sense that the addressee is engaged in the pretense as well.

2) Mutual recognition: not only the speaker but also the addressee should recognize that the issued speech act is pretended and ostensible.

3) Collusion: after recognizing that the issued speech act is ostensible, the addressee cooperates with the speaker’s pretense by reacting appropriately.

4) Ambivalence: this property is better clarified by the question, “Do you really mean it?” to which the speaker cannot answer either “yes” or “no” because he/ she is neither sincere nor lying.

5) Off-record purpose: in ostensible speech acts, the speaker’s main purpose is tacit. This off-record purpose makes the ostensible speech acts open to plausible
interpretations so that the speaker would not be held accountable for the issued speech act.

It can be inferred that some of the aforementioned properties are related to the speaker while others are related to the hearer. Thus, Al-Hindawi and Kadhim (2017) proposed that ostenible speech acts, including ostenible invitations, can be classified into stages according to the “chronological order of their defining properties” (Al-Hindawi & Kadhim, 2017, p. 9) (See Appendix 3). The first stage is called the “Issuance Stage” where the speaker pretends to extend an invitation ostensibly to be mutually recognized by the speaker and the hearer. In the following stage, referred to as the “Collusive Stage,” the hearer cooperates and colludes with the speaker by understanding the ostensibility of the extended invitation and the ambivalence of the speaker. That is to say, the hearer avoids asking the speaker whether the invitation is genuinely meant or not. The third stage, called the “Recognition Stage,” is where the message is interpreted, and the off-record purpose is accomplished (Al-Hindawi & Kadhim, 2017, p. 9).

Ostensible Invitations

To understand ostenible invitations and set them apart from genuine invitations, a glimpse of the latter type should be provided first. Genuine invitations are normally preceded by what is known as preinvitations (Atkinson & Drew, 1979; Levinson, 1983; Yule, 1996) or leads (Wolfson, 1989). The function of these preinvitations or leads is to build the ground prior to extending the invitation. To illustrate, questions like “What are you going to do tonight?” and “Are you busy Thursday night?” are used as leads or preinvitations since they are usually followed by an invitation (Clark & Isaacs, 1990). These preinvitations or leads rarely precede ostenible invitations. Even if they occur with ostenible invitations, preinvitations are utilized to “establish unfavorable conditions” (Salmani-Nodoushan, 1995, p. 41).
Wolfson (1989) subdivided invitations into two types: ambiguous and unambiguous. Additionally, Wolfson confirmed that unambiguous invitations have three essential aspects which are: a reference to time, a mention of the location where the event is going to take place, and more importantly a request for response. In opposition, ambiguous invitations leave the aforementioned essentials vague. That is to say, “time is always indefinite, a response is not required and a modal auxiliary like "must", "should" or "have" is always used” (Al-Hindawi & Khadim, 2017, p. 9).

Clark and Isaacs (1990) introduced yet another type of the speech act of invitation which is that of ostensible invitations. They claimed that ostensible invitations differ slightly from Wolfson’s ambiguous invitations. Ostensible invitations are not meant to be taken seriously. According to Clark and Isaacs, these invitations, like other ostensible speech acts, are based primarily upon the property of joint pretense. That is to say, the inviter pretends to extend a genuine-like invitation and the invitee is supposed to recognize this invitation as ostensible. To clarify this point, consider the following situation suggested in Al-Hindawi and Khadim’s study (2017, p. 8):

(In a cafeteria, the professor who is having tea meets one of his students. After greeting each other, the professor invites the student to have tea with him.)

- The professor: Hello, it is good tea.
- The student: many thanks sir. That’s very kind of you.

In this example, the professor pretended to extend a sincere invitation. However, the extended invitation was obviously ostensible as the professor was having one cup of tea which normally cannot be shared with anyone else. The student figured out the ostensibility of the invitation. Thus, the student responded appropriately by declining the invitation.

According to Clark and Isaacs (1990), ostensible invitations are composed of two layers: a top layer and a bottom layer. At the top layer, the inviter pretends to extend an
invitation, and the invitee responds to that invitation accordingly. At the bottom layer, the inviter and the invitee mutually recognize that the top layer is merely a pretense.

**Strategies of Ostensible Invitations.** Clark and Isaacs (1990) put forth seven strategies that inviters normally utilize to signal to the invitee that the extended invitation is ostensible rather than genuine. That is to say, when the inviter (A) extends an ostensible invitation to the invitee (B) to the event (E), the inviter (A) is most likely to employ one or more of the following interrelated strategies:

1. A makes B’s presence at event E implausible. The inviter normally employs this strategy by violating the felicity conditions, particularly preparatory conditions that are required for extending genuine invitations. For the speech act of invitation to be sincere and genuine, two conditions must hold: (1) A (the inviter) must believe B (the invitee) would like to be present at event E, and (2) A must be able to provide what he/she offered. If any or both of these conditions have been violated and the violation is obvious to both the inviter and the invitee, the invitation is ostensible.

2. A extends the invitation after it has been solicited by B. An invitation can be solicited by B in two different ways: through the context or directly. To solicit an invitation through context is to make use of the rule that excluding member B of a group from attending an event E is not acceptable in some cultures and is even considered impolite. Therefore, when B learns as a bystander that others are intending to attend event E, B may typically anticipate receiving an invitation to the event. On the other hand, B may directly ask for an invitation if he/she thought that they were excluded because of A’s ignorance of B’s desire to be present at event E.

3. A does not motivate the invitation beyond social courtesy. In genuine invitations, A attempts to make the invitation appealing so that B cannot decline it. In ostensible
invitations, however, A fails to motivate the invitation which makes the pretense crystal clear.

4. A does not persist on the invitation. An invitation is typically repeated multiple times when it is genuine. Contrarily, A usually gives up on the invitation upon B’s first refusal in ostensible invitations.

5. A does not specify the arrangements of event E. That is to say, in ostensible invitations, A leaves the logistics of E (i.e., time and location) open and vague.

6. A hedges the invitation. The ostensibility of the extended invitation can be exposed by hedging an invitation that includes expressions such as “well,” “I guess,” “maybe,” etc.

7. A extends the invitation with inappropriate cues. Unlike genuine invitations, ostensible invitations are loaded with inappropriate cues, such as pausing, avoiding direct eye contact, stuttering, speaking quickly, and exhibiting other nonverbal cues which highlight the ostensibility of the invitation (Clark & Isaacs, 1990).

It is worth noting that these strategies are not employed independently. That is, they interact with one another to indicate that A’s heart is not really in the extended invitation which gives B enough grounds to question the sincerity of that invitation.

Clark and Isaacs (1990) asserted that the ostensible speech act of invitation should be carried out by both the inviter and the invitee to accomplish its intended purpose successfully. Simply put, the inviter should draw attention to the ostensibility of his/her invitation by employing signals that are already known to the invitee because of his knowledge of the inviter. Based on this assumed interrelation of inviter and invitee, Abdel Hady (2013, p. 24) remarked that “an ostensible invitation, for them [Clark and Isaacs], is a two-party game. Each player has to play his part fully so that the game can proceed.”

**Definitions of the Study Key Terms**
The present study, as its title implies, aims to examine the strategies that Saudi Arabic speakers utilize to establish ostensible invitations in light of the seven strategies proposed by Clark and Isaacs (1990). To this end, the study employs a repertoire of terms for the purpose of clarification.

**Ostensible Invitations.** First and foremost, the term “invitation” is used in this study to refer solely to the invitations that are extended ostensibly. Ostensible invitations in Saudi Arabic carry the same definition suggested by Clark and Isaacs (1990) of English ostensible invitations. Thus, ostensible invitations in Saudi Arabic could also be defined as instances of invitation where “a speaker (A) invites a hearer (B) to an event (E) the aim of which is not to establish the invitation but to accomplish some other, unstated purpose” (Salmani-Nodoushan, 1995, p. 45).

**Pretense.** Pretense is defined by Clark and Gerrig (1984, pp. 26-27) as a two-speaker interaction in which S is speaking to B, who is the primary addressee, and to B’ who "may be present or absent, real or fictitious." When issuing ostensible speech acts, S pretends to be addressing B’. B’ is intended to regard what is said by S as sincere. However, S intends for B to recognize the pretense.

**Review of Related Literature**

As it has been clarified, the speech act of invitation is not of one type. Rather, it has multiple types (e.g., genuine, ambiguous, ostensible, etc.) depending on the interlocutor’s intention. Due to its significance, each type of the speech act of invitation has been investigated by several researchers. There are many studies in the literature that addressed the invitations that are extended ostensibly and insincerely (Wolfson, 1989; Clark & Isaacs, 1990; Salmani-Nodoushan, 2005; Eslami, 2005; Naim, 2011; Abdel Hady, 2013; Al-Hindawi & Kadhim, 2017).
This section reviews a number of relevant studies which may contribute to the comprehension and enhancement of the current study. The section is divided into two subsections: the first one sheds the light on studies that investigated ostensible invitations in non-Arabic societies while the second subsection reviews studies that tackled ostensible invitations in Arabic societies.

**Studies on Ostensible Invitations in Non-Arabic Societies**

Wolfson’s study (1989) was the first to tackle non-serious invitations in English. Wolfson (1989) proposed that the speech act of invitation is of two kinds: ambiguous and unambiguous. Unambiguous invitations, as the name implies, are those invitations that include particular references to the time of the event, the place where the event will be held, and most significantly a request for response. To illustrate, the example “Would you like to go to the cinema with me tomorrow?” represents an unambiguous invitation that contains all the three previously mentioned requisites.

In opposition, based on her observation of naturally occurring data, Wolfson (1989) found out that ambiguous invitations have some salient features that distinguish them from unambiguous invitations. These features are: the lack of logistics (i.e., time and place), the invitee’s response is not required, and a modal auxiliary (e.g., must, should, etc.) is normally used. For instance, “Let’s go out together sometime” is an ambiguous invitation as it has all the salient features that characterize ambiguous invitations.

Similarly, Clark and Isaacs (1990) suggested a new type of invitation, to which they referred as ostensible invitations. Clark and Isaacs (1990) stressed that ostensible invitations are genuine-like invitations that are not meant to be taken as sincere invitations but to accomplish some off-record purpose.

In their study, Clark and Isaacs (1990) investigated ostensible invitations in English. They claimed that the speech act of ostensible invitations in English is rare. Nevertheless,
they managed to collect 156 examples of ostensible invitations in four ways. The first set of examples was collected by asking undergraduates to record instances of one genuine and one ostensible invitation they witnessed and, if possible, the purpose behind extending those invitations. The second way of collecting data was through face-to-face interviews with 10 undergraduates. From their own experience, each student was instructed to remember two ostensible and two genuine invitations, one which occurred with a friend and the other with a stranger to measure the effect of the degree of acquaintedness on the extended invitations. Similarly, the third set of data was gathered through face-to-face interviews with undergraduates, but this time the participants were in pairs. Each pair was asked to recall an ostensible invitation issued by one of them to the other. The final set of examples was tape-recorded from telephone conversations that included ostensible invitations.

To figure out the strategies that are commonly utilized in engineering ostensible invitations, Clark and Isaacs (1990) quantitatively analyzed their collected data. They concluded that there are seven strategies that speakers tend to utilize when extending invitations ostensively (As found in the section of Strategies of Ostensible Invitations). They arguably proposed that these strategies are the tools through which speakers establish their ostensible invitations.

Clark and Isaacs’s study (1990) did not investigate the strategies of ostensible invitations solely, but also shed the light on how the invitee can interpret the inviter’s intention properly. That is to say, they investigated the ways through which the invitee can interpret the ostensibility behind the extended invitation. The study showed that the invitee can figure out the inviter’s intention through: “(1) the expectable effects of an invitation on B [the invitee], (2) the situation, and (3) A's [the inviter’s] choice of an ostensible invitation in that situation” (Clark & Isaacs, 1990, p. 502). After analyzing the speech act of ostensible invitations, Clark and Isaacs confirmed that ostensible invitations are included under the
umbrella of ostensible speech acts which, in turn, are related to other nonserious language use such as facetiousness, irony, play-acting, teasing, and sarcasm.

Clark and Isaac’s study (1990) is considered the foundation for the subsequent studies that investigated ostensible invitations in various cultures. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that there are certain flaws in that study. Clark and Isaacs themselves admitted the existence of some shortcomings in their study and attributed them to the fact that ostensible invitations are rarely extended in English culture. They highlighted that the seven strategies they came up with might not be comprehensive and the collected data is inaccurate and cannot be validated (Clark & Isaacs, 1990). Moreover, Clark and Isaacs’s study showed that the seven strategies utilized to establish ostensible invitations may also be present in genuine invitations; however, it failed to explain how the invitee can decide whether the invitation is ostensible or genuine since the same strategies can be present in both (Link & Kreuz, 2005).

A study was conducted by Salmani-Nodoushan (2005) to investigate ostensible invitations from a comparative perspective. He studied ostensible invitations in Farsi in comparison with those in English. In his study, Salmani-Nodoushan (2005) tried to be as consistent as possible with Clark and Isaacs's investigation of ostensible invitations in English. Thus, like Clark and Isaacs, he collected his data through face-to-face interviews and observation. The first set of examples was collected from 45 undergraduates. They were instructed to record instances of genuine and/or ostensible invitations that they witnessed as well as the purpose behind the exchange. Furthermore, 68 genuine and 68 ostensible invitations were collected through face-to-face interviews with 34 undergraduates from Yazd University. The third set of data was collected by interviewing 41 pairs of friends and asking them to recall an instance of ostensible invitation that has been extended by one of them to the other.
The main purpose of Salmani-Nodoushan’s study (2005) was to find out whether Farsi ostensible invitations go by the defining properties and strategies of English ostensible invitations. After analyzing the collected data, the study concluded that the defining properties and strategies that are proposed by Clark and Isaacs (1990) to set genuine and ostensible invitations apart in English are also applicable to Farsi but with different percentages. Moreover, the study found out that the type of invitation in Farsi was dependent on such variables as sex, age, and social class of the inviters. Therefore, it was concluded that the young extend ostensible invitations twice as often as the elderly, males extend ostensible invitations more frequently than females, and high-class people are more likely to extend ostensible invitations than low-class people.

However, Abdel Hady (2013) stated that Salmani-Nodoushan’s comparative study (2005) lacks accuracy in certain areas. To illustrate, Salmani-Nodoushan (2005) argued that 69% of ostensible invitations in English were extended after being solicited by the invitee, while the total percentage reported by Clark and Isaacs (1990) was 75%. In fact, Clark and Isaacs proposed that an invitee can solicit an invitation either by context or directly. While 69% represents only ostensible invitations that have been solicited by the invitee by context, Salmani-Nodoushan (2005) claimed that it is the total percentage of ostensible invitations that were extended after being solicited (directly and by context) and ignored the 6% of directly solicited ostensible invitations (Abdel Hady, 2013).

In the same vein, Eslami (2005) conducted a comparative study in which she examined the defining properties and strategies of ostensible invitations in Persian. Eslami (2005) gathered her data by observing spontaneous Persian invitations as well as interviews. The results of Eslami’s study were compared with the structure of ostensible invitations in English as reported by Clark and Isaacs (1990). Moreover, the framework designed by Clark and Isaacs for data collection and data analysis was used in Eslami’s study.
Eslami’s investigation (2005) concluded that ostensible invitations in Persian are more complex in structure than those in English. Despite the existence of the same strategies of ostensible invitations in both Persian and English, Eslami (2005) found out that these strategies are not enough to draw a distinction between genuine and ostensible invitations in Persian. That is to say, invitations that are genuine in English might be perceived as ostensible by Persian speakers, and vice versa. While Clark and Isaacs (1990) emphasized that the speech act of ostensible invitations is rare in English, Eslami (2005) claimed that ostensible invitations are used on a daily basis by Persian speakers as a manifestation of ritual politeness (ta’arof).

Moreover, Eslami (2005) refrained from the analysis of nonverbal cues that accompany the issuance of ostensible invitations as she argued that the exchanges had to be videotaped so that they can be analyzed for nonverbal cues. Some researchers (e.g., Abdel Hady, 2013) criticized Eslami’s pretext for avoiding the discussion of the nonverbal cues that accompany ostensible invitations, especially that previous scholars (e.g., Clark and Isaacs, 1990; Salmani-Nodoushan, 2005) proved that videotaping is not essential to account for such cues.

Studies on Ostensible Invitations in Arabic Societies

Naim (2011) carried out a study on speech acts in Moroccan Arabic. In his study, Naim (2011) addressed the distinction between ostensible and genuine invitations in relation to sociocultural parameters. He concluded that ostensible invitations are issued by Moroccan speakers to those who are not part of the direct family or intimate friends. In addition to genuine and ostensible invitations, Naim (2011) proposed a subtype of ostensible invitations which he called ostensible reinforced invitations. He came up with this new type of ostensible invitations as he claimed that Clark and Isaacs’ notion of ostensible invitations did not account for the use of intensifiers (e.g., swearing) in extending ostensible invitations.
Arguably, an ostensible reinforced invitation is “any ostensible invitation which can be transformed into genuine through ‘swearing’ as a politeness strategy” (Naim, 2011, p. 168). The difference between ostensible invitations and ostensible reinforced invitations is that in the latter the inviter tends to utilize persuasive devices to have the invitee interpret it as a genuine invitation. Despite the use of persuasive devices, Naim (2011) asserted that Moroccans decline ostensible reinforced invitations as they recognize their ostensibility and the pretense behind them.

The researcher believes that Naim (2011) addressed a really significant issue regarding ostensible invitations, which is the use of ostensible intensifiers. Nonetheless, Naim failed to provide an exhaustive answer to the intriguing question “How can ostensible invitations be distinguished from genuine invitations, especially with the existence of intensifying devices such as swearing in both types?”

Another study that investigated the speech act of ostensible invitations in Jordanian Arabic from a sociopragmatic perspective was conducted by Abdel Hady (2013). The study was based on 120 instances of genuine and ostensible invitations issued in Irbid City, Jordan. The corpus was compiled through observation and recalling situations where an invitation has been issued either genuinely or ostensibly. The study aimed to analyze: (1) the pragmatic functions of ostensible invitations in Jordanian Arabic; (2) the strategies for establishing invitations to be realized as ostensible; and (3) the ways through which the off-record purpose of ostensible invitations is interpreted.

In concordance with Clark and Isaacs's (1990) conclusion, Abdel Hady’s study (2013) showed that ostensible invitations in Jordanian Arabic are of two layers: a top layer and a bottom layer. At the top layer, there is a joint pretense as the inviter pretends to extend a genuine-like invitation and the invitee pretends to take it seriously and respond appropriately. At the bottom layer, however, both the inviter and the invitee recognize that the top layer is a
pretense. Moreover, Adel Hady (2013) argued that ostensible invitations in Jordanian Arabic function as mitigating, persuasive, and provocative devices. To issue invitations ostensibly, Abdel Hady (2013) found out that Jordanians utilize the seven strategies reported by Clark and Isaacs (1990). Nevertheless, Abdel Hady (2013) asserted that these seven strategies are not sufficient to differentiate between genuine and ostensible invitations. The study, therefore, suggested that the ostensibility of an extended invitation should be interpreted based on the communicators’ common ground.

Although Abdel Hady’s study (2013) was meant to deal only with the speech act of ostensible invitations, he included the speech act of offer at some points. That is to say, some of the pragmatic functions figured out in Abdel Hady’s study (2013) are functions of ostensible offers rather than ostensible invitations.

Another successive study was conducted by Al-Hindawi and Kadhim (2017) to investigate the speech act of ostensible invitations in Iraqi Arabic. The study was intended to examine the pragmatic functions and strategies of ostensible invitations in Iraqi society. Al-Hindawi and Kadhim (2017) argued that Iraqi Arabic speakers mostly extend invitations in an ostensible manner. To collect their data, Al-Hindawi and Kadhim (2017) formulated a Discourse Completion Task (DCT) and distributed it among Iraqi Arabic speakers represented by college students. The study adopted Clark and Isaacs’s model (1990) to analyze the strategies and functions of ostensible invitations in Iraqi Arabic.

In addition to the seven strategies reported by Clark and Isaacs (1990), the study concluded that there are three more strategies peculiar to Iraqi Arabic speakers which are: (1) the inviter makes statements; (2) the inviter makes generalizations; and (3) the inviter formulates the invitation as a question. Regarding the pragmatic functions, the results showed that ostensible invitations in Iraqi Arabic have eight pragmatic functions which are
compliment, polite strategy, mitigation devices, interactional strategy, gender distinction, praising strategy, deference strategy, and conversation terminator.

However, the researcher has a reservation about Al-Hindawi and Kadhim’s study (2017). While the use of the DCT as a data collection instrument may be suitable for examining the strategies employed to establish ostensible invitations, it may not be the best instrument for investigating the pragmatic functions. The researcher believes that observing naturally occurring data is the best method for investigating pragmatic functions. Thus, the results of Al-Hindawi and Kadhim’s study (2017) may not be really inclusive and reflective of all possible pragmatic functions of ostensible invitations in Iraqi society.
Methodology

This chapter provided a general overview of the methodology the researcher followed to collect and analyze the data. The first section clarified the research design followed by an overview of the population and the sample. Then, a rationale for choosing the data collection method, the data collection method, procedures, and the analysis process were described.

Research Design

To answer the research questions and accomplish its purpose appropriately, the researcher adopted the descriptive design to investigate the strategies of ostensible invitations in Saudi Arabic descriptively and systematically. Descriptive research design is a scientific approach that is based on observing and describing a subject’s activity and behavior without interfering in any way (Grove et al., 2013). Moreover, the study adopted the quantitative methods as it aimed to figure out statistically significant conclusions by examining a representative sample of a specific population.

Population and Sampling

Population

The population of the current study consisted of Saudi Arabic speakers who are living in the Central Region of Saudi Arabia, Riyadh.

Sampling

The sample of this study was obtained randomly. Thus, there are no specific criteria for choosing the informants. The sample included 37 Saudi Arabic speakers (the interviewees) from Riyadh City. The majority of the sample were females (n = 34), with 3 being males. The age of the sample ranged between 18 and 60 years. The sample belonged to educated lower and middle classes. However, age, education, and social class as variables are not accounted for in this study.
Methods of Data Collection

In cross-cultural pragmatic studies, the Discourse Completion Task (DCT) is one of the widely used data collection instruments, despite the ongoing debate over its validity and reliability. Researchers using the DCT have control over independent variables such as social status, gender, age, etc. (e.g., Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989; Al-Hindawi & Kadhim, 2017). What makes the DCT a useful instrument for the study of culture-specific patterns in speech act realization is that it can be distributed to as many informants as needed within a relatively short period of time (Aston, 1995, p. 62; Barron, 2003, p. 85). However, the DCT is not without shortcomings. It is argued that the data collected through the DCT do not completely reflect naturally occurring data (Billmyer & Varghese, 2000, as cited in Ogiermann, 2018).

Since DCT responses are highly unnatural and barely resemble naturally occurring data, the researcher collected the data secondhand through interviews, which is the same data collection method used by Clark and Isaacs (1990), Salmani-Nodoushan (2005), Eslami (2005), and Abdel Hady (2013). In the present study, the researcher used semi-structured, open-ended written and face-to-face interviews to gain a realistic insight into the strategies that Saudi Arabic speakers utilize to establish invitations ostensively.

Procedures

During the interviews, the informants were asked to recall an instance of an ostensible invitation they have observed, extended, or received. In accordance with Abdel Hady’s procedures (2013, p. 64), the participants were primarily instructed to:

1) Describe enough of the context to make the exchange intelligible.

2) Quote, as much as possible, the speech of each speaker.

3) Explain the reason that made them believe this invitation to be ostensible.

4) Report the relationship between the inviter and the invitee.
The interviews were either written or face-to-face. Written interviews were essentially the same as face-to-face interviews except that they were communicated in a written form via mobile phones so that participants could take their time to prepare their responses.

The collected data was either recorded or transcribed. To record the face-to-face interviews, the researcher used a mobile phone. However, recording the interviews was not always an option, especially with female participants as recording females’ voices could be stigmatized in Saudi culture. Thus, to overcome this issue, the researcher transcribed the significant parts of the interviews that could not be recorded.

**Data Analysis**

The present study is designed to examine the different strategies that Saudi Arabic speakers employ to issue ostensible invitations. Thus, to analyze the collected data, the researcher adopted Clark and Isaacs’s model (1990) which consists of seven strategies (As found in the section of Strategies of Ostensible Invitations). These seven strategies were organized in a checklist to check whether the strategy exists in the provided exchange or not (See Appendix 1). The data was analyzed quantitatively using Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet Software to calculate and tabulate the frequency of each strategy that Saudi Arabic speakers employed to establish ostensible invitations.

Consequently, each instance of ostensible invitations provided by the informants was analyzed to examine the strategies used to establish it. Since the strategies are interrelated and not mutually exclusive, more than one strategy may appear in a single conversation. Needless to say, the data was transcribed and translated for better understanding. Finally, Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet Software was used to design bar graphs to visualize the data that represents the frequency of each strategy in percentages.
Results and Discussion

This chapter aims at analyzing the collected instances of ostensible invitations to answer the research questions raised in the first chapter:

1. How far do Saudi Arabic speakers draw on the same strategies suggested by Clark and Isaacs (1990) for extending ostensible invitations?
2. What additional Saudi-specific strategies are employed for extending ostensible invitations, if any exist?

The defining properties and strategies of ostensible invitations in Saudi Arabic were analyzed in light of the properties and strategies of English ostensible invitations proposed by Clark and Isaacs (1990).

The chapter analyzed examples of ostensible invitations in Saudi Arabic provided by the sample to illustrate their defining properties as well as the strategies employed. Moreover, the frequency of each strategy was calculated and tabulated. Then, data was represented in the form of bar graphs and tables for purposes of clarification. Next, the results of the present study were compared with the findings of Clark and Isaacs’s study (1990). After the comparison, three more strategies that have been observed in the corpus were analyzed in detail. Finally, the chapter wrapped up with concluding remarks.

Defining Properties of Ostensible Invitations

In consonance with Clark and Isaacs’s model (1990), ostensible invitations in Saudi Arabic go by the five defining properties of ostensible speech acts. The following exchange supports this claim:

Context: A and B are mall saleswomen who are working in the same shop. They are around the same age. A asks B to take her home because it is too late at night and she does not want to request a ride on Uber.

A (On arriving home): tefaqal?alū?inzili tegahwai maṣi
(Come in and have coffee with me.)
B: Allah yes fídk. ?îlmarra ?ildázayyah insha’Allah
(Thanks. Maybe next time)
A: Insha’Allah, ma3 ?issalamah
(Sure. Goodbye)

The aforementioned example was reported by a Saudi Arabic speaker (A) as an instance of ostensible invitations. Albeit coated with genuinity, the extended invitation meets the defining properties of ostensible speech acts reported by Clark and Isaacs (1990) (As found in the section of the Defining Properties of Ostensible Speech Acts):

1. Pretense: A, in the above example, was merely pretending to invite B to her house.
2. Mutual Recognition: A intended her pretense to be recognized by B and herself.
3. Collusion: After recognizing the pretense, B cooperated with A and responded appropriately to the invitation. Thus, B declined the invitation and ostensibly promised to accept A’s invitation next time in an attempt to collude with A’s pretense.
4. Ambivalence: If B asked A, “Do you really mean it?” A would not be able to honestly answer the question. This defining property is highly significant as it distinguishes ostensible invitations from other non-serious speech acts such as irony.
5. Off-record Purpose: According to Brown and Levinson (1978), expressions of gratitude can be face-threatening in some cultures. This is applicable to the Saudi culture as well. Thus, in the above example, A may have extended the invitation to indirectly express thankfulness and gratitude to B for the ride.

In the present study, 38 exchanges were collected and analyzed against the five defining properties of ostensible speech acts. One example, however, was discarded because the informant provided an instance of an ostensible offer rather than an ostensible invitation.
The remaining 37 exchanges were analyzed in the following subsection to investigate how Saudi Arabic speakers linguistically and non-linguistically stage for ostensible invitations.

**Establishing Ostensible Invitations among the Study Sample**

This section aims at conducting a descriptive quantitative analysis of the strategies that Saudi Arabic speakers utilize to establish invitations as ostensible. In ostensible invitations, inviters intend to make their pretense of sincerity as vivid as possible so that it is easily recognized by the invitee. To this end, inviters employ a number of strategies to make the ostensibility behind their invitations obvious. Clark and Isaacs (1990) suggested seven strategies that inviters employ to make their pretense of sincerity vivid (See the section of the Strategies of Ostensible Invitations). In line with the study carried out by Clark and Isaacs on ostensible invitations in English, the data gathered for this study was checked against the seven strategies proposed by those two scholars. Based on Clark and Isaacs’ strategies, the utilization of each of the seven ostensible invitation strategies by the 37 Saudi Arabic speakers, who represent the study sample, is explained in the sub-sections below in detail, along with illustrating examples; some of these strategies are subdivided into several categories.

**Descriptive Quantitative Analysis of Use of the Seven Ostensible Invitation Strategies among the Study Sample**

**Implausibility Strategy**

*A makes B’s presence at event E implausible.* There are certain preparatory conditions that must be met for the speech act to be effective. However, in the strategy of implausibility, inviter A violates one or more of these preparatory conditions, which are summed up as follows: A must believe B would like to attend event E; A must be able to follow through with what she/he offered. If any of these conditions was violated, invitee B would have grounds to believe that the invitation was extended only ostensibly (Levinson, 1983). For
instance, if A invites B when they both know that A cannot provide what she/he offers, B will have enough grounds to interpret the invitation as ostensible. In line with the features of this strategy, the following exchange of conversation between two Saudi speakers from Riyadh illustrates the violation of preparatory conditions:

**Context:** A was traveling abroad for medical treatment. A gets back to Saudi Arabia but is still sick. Thus, A is not ready to receive guests yet. A’s relatives call to check on her.

A (by the end of the call): *hayyakum ʕindi bukrah ʔasoofoom wetfoooni*  
(You are welcome to come over to my house tomorrow, so we can see each other.)

(Sure, if you get better and your condition is stable, we will pay you a visit.)

In the above exchange, the inviter’s ability to follow through with what she offered was questionable given the fact that she was still sick and just got back home after a long trip. Thus, the preparatory condition related to the inviter was not met. Although A’s relatives knew that A was not ready to meet guests and she only extended the invitation ostensibly, they responded as if it was genuine and promised to visit when she gets better.

In the corpus compiled for this study, the preparatory conditions were violated in 49% (18 instances) of the collected exchanges. According to Clark and Isaacs (1990), the implausibility strategy consists of three categories: (a) A cannot provide, (b) B is not interested, and (c) B cannot come. In 44% (8 instances) of the 18 instances in which the preparatory conditions were violated, A was not able to practically provide what she/he offered. In 33% (6 instances) of the exchanges, A believed that B was not interested in coming. In the remaining 22% (4 instances), A knew that B would not be able to come. Table 1 and Figure 1 below show the frequency of the occurrence of the sub-categories of the Implausibility Strategy in the conversation exchanges collected for the study.
Table 1

Frequencies and Percentages of Implausibility Strategy Use among the Study Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implausibility</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. A cannot provide</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. B not interested</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. B cannot come</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1

Bar Graph Indicating Frequencies and Percentages of Implausibility Strategies among the Study Sample

Strategy of Soliciting

A invites B only after B has solicited the invitation. As it has been stated in the section that discussed the strategies of ostensible invitations, an invitation may be solicited directly or by context. In soliciting an invitation by context, the invitee B can seek out an invitation through context by taking advantage of the fact that it is considered impolite to exclude a member of a group in Saudi culture. Moreover, B can solicit the invitation indirectly. For
instance, if B knows that others are attending an event to which she/he is not invited, B can ask questions that highlight B’s exclusion. When an invitation is solicited directly, B thinks that A may not be aware of their desire to attend event E; therefore, B requests an invitation explicitly. The following is an instance of a directly solicited invitation between two colleagues using Saudi Arabic in the region of Riyadh:

**Context:** A and B are university colleagues. Before the lecture begins, they are chatting. A is talking about her aunt’s wedding which is going to be held the following Saturday.

B: *Allah ŋindkom zawaadʒ, Warak ma ŋazamtini! Min zamaan ŋan ?izzawadʒat*

(Oh great! You have wedding! And you didn’t invite me! It’s been quite a long time since I have been to a wedding.)


(It would be my pleasure to have you as a guest, but the wedding invitation cards are personal and the wedding party is arranged by the groom's family, who are inviting the guests themselves. But for sure, I’ll try to fetch an extra card for you.)

B: *Wesh daŋswah! taraa bas ?amzah maŋak*

(Come on! I was just teasing you.)

In the above exchange, A extended an ostensible invitation after it has been solicited by B. B responded to the invitation by clarifying that she was only trying to joke with A. The ostensibility of the extended invitation was obvious to both A and B, because if B did not solicit the invitation, A would not have extended it.
In 14% (5 instances) of the collected exchanges, A extended an ostensible invitation after it has been solicited by B. Solicitation strategies can be direct, indirect, or by context. In the present study, there is only one instance (20% of the 5 instances) of an ostensible invitation that has been solicited directly which is provided above. Similarly, one ostensible invitation (20% of the five instances) has been solicited indirectly. In the other 3 instances (60% of the five instances), the invitations have been solicited by context (See Table 2 and Figure 2 for statistical illustration of the use of this strategy among the study sample).

Table 2

Frequencies and Percentages of Solicitation Strategies among the Study Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Solicitation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Directly</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Indirectly</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. By context</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2

Bar Graph Indicating the Frequencies and Percentages of Solicitation Strategy Use among the Study Sample
**Strategy of Absence of Motivating Invitee**

A does not motivate the invitation beyond social courtesy. In genuine invitations, A sincerely wishes that B would accept the invitation. To this end, A attempts to persuade B to accept the invitation by using motivating expressions that make the invitation look attractive to the invitee. In ostensible invitations, however, A fails to give motivating reasons beyond social courtesy. It is worth noting that this strategy is closely related to the absence of persistence strategy. They are hardly distinguished from each other as each of which entails the other. That is to say, persisting on the invitation may involve motivating it to make it appealing to the invitee. Albeit almost inseparable, the researcher followed Clark and Isaacs’s method and analyzed them separately for reasons of comparability. The following extract is an example of how A fails to motivate the invitation beyond social courtesy:

**Context:** A and B are university colleagues. They run into each other in the cafeteria. A has just bought juice and salad and she is sitting on a table. On observing B, A invites B to share the meal with her.

A: *Hala B! Ma kent ʕaarfah ?innek dzayyah hina. Taʕaali kuli maʕai tawwi ?axadʕalabi*  
(Hello B! I didn’t know you’re coming to the cafeteria. I’ve just got my order. Let’s eat together.)

B: *Hala wallah, belʕaafiah ʕalaik barooħ ?atʕlob lee.*  
(Hello A. Enjoy your meal. I’ll order for myself.)

A: *Allah yʕafeek*  
(Enjoy your meal too; literally, may you have a healthy meal.)

As was evident from the above exchange, the ostensibility of A’s invitation was crystal clear because a glass of juice and a bowel of salad normally cannot be shared. Moreover, A did not attempt to encourage B to accept the invitation. In 73% (27 instances) of
the collected examples of ostensible invitations in Saudi Arabic, the inviter failed to extend the invitation beyond social courtesy. In the remaining 27% (10 instances) of the exchanges, A encouraged B to accept the invitation by elaborating on it to make it more appealing despite its ostensibility (See Table 3 and Figure 3).

**Table 3**

*Frequencies and Percentages of the Strategy of Absence of Motivating Invitee among Study Sample*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Not motivating Invitee</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Motivating Invitee</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 3**

*Bar Graph Indicating Frequencies and Percentages of the Absence of Motivating Invitee Strategy among Study Sample*
The Absence of Persistence Strategy

A fails to persist or insist on the invitation. The literature on ostensible invitations proved failure to persist on the invitation to be an essential indicator of ostensibility (Al-Hindawi & Kadhim, 2017; Clark & Isaacs, 1990; Salmani-Nodoushan, 2005). Eslami (2005), however, concluded that despite the significance of the strategy of persistence, it is not a reliable indicator of ostensibility.

According to Clark and Isaacs (1990), in genuine invitations, A extends the invitation several times before B can accept it. B may initially refuse A's invitation; A may then give further inducement for B to accept; B may once again refuse A's invitation; A may attempt a third time, and only then would B accept. Thus, when A accepts B’s first polite refusal without giving B another chance to accept, B would have enough grounds to believe that the invitation is ostensible (Clark & Isaacs, 1990).

The example mentioned under the strategy of absence of motivating invitee is also applicable here as A accepted B’s first refusal (belsaafiah ṣalaik barooh ḥa?lob lee) and did not pursue the invitation.

In 86% (32 instances) of the examples of ostensible invitations gathered in this study, A failed to extend a second invitation. This percentage indicates that Saudis tend to avoid persistence on ostensible invitations to make their pretense vivid. Albeit ostensible, A insisted on the invitation and extended it several times in 14% (5 instances) of the exchanges in the corpus of the present study (See Table 4 and Figure 4).

The following exchange illustrates an instance of an ostensible invitation in which the inviter ostensibly insisted on the invitee to accept the invitation:

Context: In the university, A runs into an old friend B. After exchanging greetings and chatting, A wants to cut the conversation short so that she can leave. Thus, A ostensibly invites B to her house.

(Our friends are coming to my house tonight. See you then.)

B: yemken ?adzi

(Maybe I’ll pass by.)

A: Laazem laazem tedzeen ?illeilah

(No, No! You have to come tonight.)

Table 4

*Frequencies and Percentages of the Absence of Persistence Strategy among Study Sample*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Persistence</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. A does not persist</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. A does persist</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4

*Bar Graph Indicating Frequencies and Percentages of the Absence of Persistence among Study Sample Ostensible Invitations*
Vague Arrangement Strategy

A is vague about arrangements. Clark and Isaacs (1990) proposed another strategy that involves a violation of the preparatory conditions which is related to the arrangements of the extended invitation. Unlike genuine invitations, A leaves the time and place of event E vague in ostensible invitations. If such logistics are not specified in the invitation, B would have reason to believe that the invitation is ostensible. The following extract exemplifies this strategy:

**Context:** A, B, and C are friends. They are gathering in C’s house. A is wearing her abaya and ready to leave.

A (while preparing to leave): _farrefooni fi baiti qereeb._

(Honor me with your visit soon.)

B: _Insha’Allah ṣala xeir yaa rabb._

(Sure, we intend to visit you.)

In the above extract, A uttered the word “qereeb” (soon) which serves as an indicator of the ostensibility of the extended invitation because of its vagueness.

In 59% (22 instances) of the collected data, the arrangements were vague and not clearly stated by the inviter A (See Table 5 and Figure 5). It is worth highlighting that in the other 41% (15 instances) of the examples of ostensible invitations in the corpus of this study, the logistics of event E were supplied by the context. Thus, they did not have to be stated explicitly. The following example illustrates this point:

**Context:** A is about to leave for the gym. A runs into the new neighbour B who is living next door. A wants to leave a good first impression and decides to invite B.

A (waving his hand): _?issaalamu ṣalaikom ya dzaar, hayyak xoḍ maṣi findzaal gahwah_  

(Hello my neighbor, please come in for a cup of coffee.)
STRATEGIES OF OSTENSIBLE INVITATIONS IN SAUDI ARABIC


(Hi. Thank you, my brother. Next time for sure.)

Table 5

Frequencies and Percentages of the Arrangement Strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arrangements</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Vague arrangements</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Clear arrangements</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5

Bar Graph Indicating Frequencies and Percentages of the Arrangement Strategy among Study Sample

Hedging Strategy

A hedges the invitation to B. When A hedges the invitation, B can infer that A’s heart is not really in it. According to Eslami (2005), A may hedge a genuine invitation when the invitee is of a higher status. Thus, hedging may be used in genuine and ostensible invitations, but with completely different functions. In this regard, Eslami (2005) argued that while
hedging in a genuine invitation is used for purpose of politeness or deference, in an ostensible invitation, it is used “to show tentativeness and hesitancy, therefore signaling the inviter’s pretense” (p. 469). The sincerity and the exact function of a hedged invitation are determined by context.

Saudi Arabic speakers can highlight the ostensibility of their invitations by hedging them using such expressions as “?iðaa habb,” (if you like) “?iðaa weddak,” (if you wish), etc. In the following extract, A hedges the ostensible invitation to B using the expression “?iðaa habbah” (if you like):

**Context:** A and B are married sisters living next to each other. A and B are meeting at their mother’s house. It is late at night and A is feeling sleepy. Thus, A decides to leave.

B: *lāa bitrooheen? xalleek fwaibillah*

(Are you leaving? Please stay a little bit longer.)

A: *?eeth wallah barooh lakin ?iðaa ?inti habbah ti?zseen teshareen Ŧindi haiyyak*

(Yes, I am leaving. You can come to my house to spend the rest of the night if you like.)

B: *Baʔafool*

(I will see.)

In the study corpus, A hedged the invitation to B in only 5% (2 instances) of the ostensible invitations made (See Figure 7).

**Strategy of Inappropriate Cues**

*A delivers the invitation with inappropriate cues.* In ostensible invitations, A may use inappropriate cues and body language to make his/her pretense of sincerity vivid. That is to say, when inviters extend invitations ostensibly, they may speak rapidly, hesitate, mumble, pause, avoid eye contact, etc. to highlight the ostensibility of their invitation. According to
Abdel Hady (2013), there are other significant inappropriate cues that have not been accounted for in Clark and Isaacs’s study, such as preparing to leave, shouting the invitation while walking away, etc. In the following extract taken from the corpus, A issued the invitation while preparing to leave, which is an inappropriate cue that was employed to minimize A’s commitment to the invitation:

**Context:** A and B are close friends since childhood. After high school, they went their separate ways. It happens that B has volunteer work at the same university at which A is studying. A and B meet at the university and chat for hours. When they are about to leave:

A (while wearing her abaya) says rapidly: *Laazem nidztemes barraa ?ildzaam ahale qraorri, wnenaadi baqiyyat ?ilbanaat min zamaan sqankom* (We have to arrange for a get-together somewhere outside the university and invite the rest of our friends. It has been a long time since I have seen you all.)

B: *Insha’Allah nikallim ?ilbanaat wnittifiq maSaahum.* (Sure, we’ll call the girls and arrange for a get-together.)

In the above example, A extended the invitation with inappropriate cues, i.e., wearing the abaya in preparation to leave, rapidly made invitation. B read the cues and answered very generally without specifying a time or asking for any details.

In 19% (7 instances) of the collected data, A extended the invitation with inappropriate cues. The inappropriate cues in this study are classified into three categories: speaking rapidly, intonation, and preparing to leave. In 42% (3 instances) of the ostensible invitations extended with inappropriate cues in the study corpus, A extended the invitation while preparing to leave. In 29% (2 instances) of the 7 instances of ostensible invitations, A’s intonation lacked enthusiasm which highlighted the ostensibility of the invitation. In 29% (2 instances) of the data, A extended the invitation rapidly (See Table 6 and Figure 6).
Table 6

Frequencies and Percentages of the Inappropriate-cue Strategies among the Study Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inappropriate-cue Strategies</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Preparing to leave</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Intonation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Speaking rapidly</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6

Bar Graph Indicating Frequencies and Percentages of the Inappropriate-cue Strategies among the Study Data

Statistical Description of the Total Rate of Frequencies of Clark and Isaacs’ Seven Ostensible Invitation Strategies among the Study Sample

Results related to the total rate of frequencies of the use of the seven strategies by the 37 Saudi speakers from Riyadh, who represented the study sample, are represented in Figure 7 below.
Figure 7

**Total Rate of Frequencies of the Seven Ostensible Invitation Strategies in Saudi Arabic as represented by the Study Sample**

The bar graph in Figure 7 above, as the case with all the bar graphs developed in the sub-sections on each strategy, was based on the 37 exchanges collected as data for the study, through individual interviews. The bar graph here sums up the results related to the total rate of using the seven strategies among the study sample, hence providing quantitative findings that contribute to answering research question 1, namely, ‘How far do Saudi Arabic speakers draw on the same strategies suggested by Clark and Isaacs (1990) for extending ostensible invitations?’

**Comparison of Ostensible Invitations in English and Arabic**

After analyzing the collected data against the seven strategies set by Clark and Isaacs (1990), it is concluded that Saudi Arabic speakers utilize the same strategies that English speakers use to issue ostensible invitations. However, the difference between the two languages can be observed in the weight of each strategy. That is to say, each strategy is...
present in both languages but to various degrees. Nevertheless, there is a great similarity between Arabic and English in terms of such strategies as implausibility, absence of motivating invitee, absence of persistence, and vague arrangements (See Table 7 and Figure 8). The following table presents the frequencies and percentages of the seven strategies used to establish the differences between ostensible invitations in Arabic and English.

**Table 7**
Comparison of Clark and Isaacs’ Seven Ostensible Invitation strategies in English and Arabic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ostensible Invitation Strategy</th>
<th>English</th>
<th></th>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. A makes B’s presence at event E implausible</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. A invites B only after B has solicited the invitation</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. A doesn’t motivate the invitation beyond social courtesy</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. A is vague about arrangements</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. A hedges the invitation to B</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. A doesn’t persist on the invitation</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. A delivers the invitation with inappropriate cues</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 8

*Bar Graph Illustrating Percentages of Ostensible Invitations in English and Arabic*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGY</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implausibility</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solicitation</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absence of motivating</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vague arrangements</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hedging</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absence of persistence</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inappropriate cues</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Additional Strategies for Extending Ostensible Invitations in Saudi Arabic**

Generally speaking, speech acts differ cross-culturally. Thus, it is hypothesized that the use of the speech act of ostensible invitations in Saudi Arabic differs to some extent from that in other cultures. Besides the seven strategies set by Clark and Isaacs (1990), there are three more strategies observed in the collected data. These strategies are: using intensifiers, extending the invitation in the form of a question, and asking someone else to extend the invitation on behalf of the inviter, the last of which seems to be specific to Saudi Arabic speakers. The three strategies are explained in detail and illustrated with exchanges provided by the study sample in the following sections.

**Using Intensifiers**

Clark and Isaacs (1990) did not account for the use of intensifiers in ostensible invitations. As it has been mentioned in the literature review, Naim (2011) managed to tackle the use of “ostensible intensifiers” by Moroccan speakers to persist on ostensible invitations.
Moreover, Abdel Hady (2013) reported that Jordanians utilize ostensible intensifiers as a way of pretending sincerity. The use of ostensible intensifiers is closely related to the persistence strategy.

In Saudi culture, speakers extensively use intensifying and empty swearing devices when extending genuine invitations. In the corpus of this study, there are instances where speakers employ intensifiers to persist on invitations that are recognized by both the inviter and the invitee to be ostensible. In the exchange provided under the persistence strategy, the inviter A uttered the word “laazem” (obligatory) twice to persist on an ostensible invitation. Moreover, some of the collected exchanges included the word “d’aroori” (necessary) as an ostensible intensifier. In the following extract, A swears in God’s name to persist on an ostensible invitation:

**Context:** A is a mother of a 5-year-old child. B is a teacher of A’s child. The child wants his teacher to visit them in the weekend. A and B are chatting via WhatsApp:


(My son insisted that I call and ask you to come over and visit us. I promised him that I’ll invite you. I swear (by God) you’re like sister to mine and it will be an honor if you accept my invitation.)


(Oh, my dear. We’re together all through the week. I only have the weekends for myself.)

A: *wallah yefarrefni tesaiyeren ?alaai wetenawwereen makani.*

(I swear “by God” that it will be an honor to have you in my house.)

In the above exchange, A swears in God’s name twice despite the ostensibility of the invitation. B, however, managed to overlook the force of the swearing device “wallah” (By God) and focused on the reason that makes A’s invitation ostensible, namely, that A made it clear from the beginning that it is her son’s rather than her desire to invite the teacher.

In genuine invitations, Saudi Arabic speakers may utilize swearing devices that cannot be interpreted as ostensible, such as “ʕalei ?i gʕalaag” (literally, I will divorce my wife if you do not accept my invitation) and “ʕalei ?ilharaam” (to forbid something for him/herself that is originally permissible in Islam). According to Abdel Hady (2013), the inviter in genuine invitations would emphasize the impact of swearing by using expressions such as “ḥalaft billah” (I have sworn in God’s name) or “ma raah ?asʕoom ṣalaah ?aayyam” (You’ll not make me fast three days for false swear) to remind the invitee of the penance of not fulfilling the Qasam (swear) in Islam, which is fasting three consecutive days.

In 27% (10 instances) of the exchanges in the corpus of this study, inviters employed ostensible intensifiers. In 40% (4 instances) of these 10 exchanges, A used the intensifying devices “lazeem” and “dˁaroori.” In the remaining 60% (6 instances) of the 10 exchanges, A utilized swearing devices such as “wallah” and “billah ʕaleik” (See Figure 9).

**Figure 9**

*Bar Graph Indicating the Use of Intensifiers in Saudi Arabic Ostensible Invitations*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Devices</th>
<th>Frequency (Percentages)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intensifying devices</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swearing devices</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**A Extends the Invitation in the Form of a Question**

In the Saudi culture, speakers extend genuine invitations assertively so that they do not leave room for the invitee to doubt the sincerity of the invitation. Thus, when the inviter extends the invitation in a less assertive manner, the invitee would have a reason to believe that the inviter’s heart is not really in the invitation. Interestingly, in 5% (2 instances) of the corpus of the present study, the participants reported exchanges where the inviter extended the invitation in the form of a question to make the pretense of sincerity vivid (See Figure 10). The following exchange illustrates this strategy:

**Context:** A is calling his friend X on the phone. A and X plan to go out to have a coffee. B is A’s roommate who is busy studying for his exam. B overheard A’s phone call.

A (after hanging up): *Benrooh nitgahwaa ?anaa we X, Texaaweena?*  

(X and I are going to grab a cup of coffee, would you like to come with us?)  

B: *lāa wallah fawfat ʕainak mafyool ?aðaaker.*  

(I really can’t “B swears by God here, which is common in Arabic.” As you can tell, I am busy preparing for my exam.)  

A: *Allah yiesser lak.*  

(May God help you!)

In the above exchange, A knew that B was not going anywhere given the fact that he had an exam to study for the next day. Yet, A extended an ostensible invitation to maintain B’s face so that he would not feel excluded even if the reasons behind the exclusion are mutually understood. Nevertheless, A and B mutually recognized the pretense behind the invitation. Thus, A highlighted the ostensibility of the invitation by issuing it in the form of a question.

**A Asks Someone Else to Extend the Invitation on His/her Behalf (Delegation)**
In genuine invitations, the inviter is typically keen to extend the invitation him/herself to the invitee so that the invitee senses the genuinity of the invitation and accepts it. Based on the corpus of the present study, Saudi speakers may delegate someone else to extend the invitation on their behalf to indicate to the invitee that the invitation is only extended ostensibly, and the inviter is not really interested in the invitee’s presence. Moreover, Saudis may utilize this strategy to avoid what is known in the Saudi society as “farhah” (to blame) as the invitee may blame the inviter for excluding him/her. Consider the following example:

**Context:** A, B, and C are relatives. They are around the same age. The relationship between A and B is strained. C calls A to tell her that she is visiting her the next day. A is sure that B will know about this gathering, and if she is not invited, family issues may happen.

C: *Weddi ?asaiyer ſalaik bokrah ?iðaа faeqiаh*  
(I would like to visit you tomorrow if that suits you.)

A: *hayyak Allah, ?aśazz men yidżi*  
(You are welcome. It’s my pleasure to have you.)

C: *Allah yesallemk*  
(Thank you.)

A: *biļlah gooly le B ?iðaa weddaha tidżi maŚak*  
(Please tell B to come as well if she wants)

In the above exchange, A knew that B would not accept an invitation extended through the third party, C. At the same time, B cannot blame A for not inviting her because she received an invitation despite the indirect way she received it.

In 5% (2 instances) of the examples of ostensible invitations gathered in this study, the inviter asked someone else to extend the invitation on his/her behalf. For the invitee, this strategy is a good indicator of the ostensibility of the extended invitation. Thus, the invitee
usually does not show up in event E to which he/she was invited through a third party. To the researcher’s best knowledge, this strategy is peculiar to Saudi Arabic speakers.

*Statistical Description of the Total Rate of Frequencies of the Additional Strategies for Extending Ostensible Invitations among the Study Sample*

Simply put, the analysis of the study corpus revealed that since the speech act of ostensible invitations differs cross-culturally, there are strategies used by Saudi Arabic speakers that are not found in all languages or dialects. First, the sample of the study used intensifiers and swearing devices in 27% of ostensible invitations in the corpus. Second, the results showed that in 5% of the instances, the study sample formulated the ostensible invitation as a question. Third, in 5% of the instances, the study sample reported ostensible invitations in which they employed a strategy that is peculiar to Saudi Arabic speakers which is the delegation where the inviter asks someone else to extend the invitation on his/her behalf (See Table 8 and Figure 10). Thus, this study confirmed the existence of Saudi-specific strategies for extending ostensible invitations.

**Table 8**

*Frequencies and Percentages of the Additional Strategies for Extending Ostensible Invitations among the Study Data*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using intensifiers</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Extends the Invitation in the Form of a Question</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Asks Someone Else to Extend the Invitation on His/her Behalf</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This chapter analyzed and discussed the strategies that Saudi Arabic speakers utilize to extend invitations ostensibly based on the corpus compiled for this study. The chapter is concluded by restating the questions along with their answers.

Q. 1. How far do Saudi Arabic speakers draw on the same strategies suggested by Clark and Isaacs (1990) for extending ostensible invitations?

As it has been proven, all the seven strategies proposed by Clark and Isaacs (1990) are employed by Saudi Arabic speakers as well, yet with relative weight. The most frequently used strategies by Saudi Arabic speakers to issue ostensible invitations in the collected exchanges are absence of persistence, which was detected in (86%) of the exchanges, and absence of motivating invitee which was used in (73%) of the collected ostensible invitations. Those were followed in order of frequency by vague arrangements (59%), implausibility (49%), inappropriate cues (19%), solicitation (14%), hedging (5%) (See Appendix 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Frequency (Percentages)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intensifying Devices</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delegation</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 10**

*Bar Graph Illustrating Percentages of Additional Strategies for Extending Ostensible Invitations in Saudi Arabic*

Concluding remarks
Q. 2. What additional Saudi-specific strategies are employed for extending ostensible invitations, if any exist?

In addition to the seven strategies set by Clark and Isaacs (1990), Saudi Arabic speakers utilize three additional strategies that were observed in the exchanges provided by the study sample. These strategies are: using intensifiers, extending the invitation in the form of a question, and asking someone else to extend the invitation on behalf of the inviter, the last of which seems to be peculiar to Saudi Arabic speakers (See Figure 11).

**Figure 10**

Bar Graph Illustrating the Frequencies of All Ostensible Invitation Strategies Used by the Study Sample
Summary, Conclusions, Implications, Limitations, and Suggestions

This chapter aimed at presenting a summary of the issues discussed, a list of conclusions that the researcher arrived at, a number of implications, and the limitations of the study. Finally, the chapter wrapped up with a list of suggestions for future research.

Summary

This study aimed at examining the strategies that Saudi Arabic speakers utilize to establish ostensible invitations. The study was composed of five chapters. The first chapter, which is an “Introduction,” was a point of departure. It was meant to present a full-fledged account of what the study is about. To this end, the chapter was dedicated to providing a background of the study, presenting a statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, and questions of the study.

The second chapter, including the “Literature Review,” was designed to provide a comprehensive discussion of the theoretical framework related to the topic of ostensible invitations. The significance of this chapter lies in the fact that it located the present study within the existing body of knowledge, and it brought forth some kind of justification to the questions that a reader of this study may have. Briefly, this chapter: 1) discussed the speech act theory from Austin’s (1962) and Seale’s (1969) perspectives; 2) provided an overview of Brown and Levinson’s politeness theory as well as the notion of face; 3) introduced ostensible speech acts, defined them, and delineated their defining properties; 4) explained ostensible invitations and their strategies as proposed by Clark and Isaacs (1990); 5) provided definitions of the concepts of ostensible invitations and pretense; 6) reviewed, in a detailed manner, studies that tackled ostensible invitations in both non-Arabic and Arabic societies.

In the third chapter titled, “Methodology,” the researcher presented the research design adopted for this study which was the descriptive design. Then, the researcher specified the sample as well as the population from which the sample was selected. The next section
delineated the method of data collection the researcher used in this study which was the interview. After specifying the data collection method, the researcher elaborated on the procedures followed to analyze the collected data. Finally, the chapter concluded with a description of how the collected data was analyzed, and what programs were used for data analysis.

In the fourth chapter titled, “Results and Discussion,” the research questions were satisfactorily answered. The compiled corpus was interpreted and analyzed quantitatively against the seven strategies proposed by Clark and Isaacs (1990) for establishing ostensible invitations. The data was presented in tables and bar graphs for the sake of clarifying and validating the study results. Most importantly, the results were thoroughly discussed.

Conclusions of the study

The present study has come up with the following conclusions:

1. Clark and Isaacs (1990) argued that in English “ostensible invitations are rare” (p. 494). Saudi Arabic speakers, however, utilize ostensible invitations in their daily lives as a face-enhancing act.

2. Ostensible invitations in Saudi Arabic go by the seven strategies stipulated by Clark and Isaacs (1990), yet with relative weight.

3. The most frequently employed strategies are absence of persistence (86%), and absence of motivating invitee (73%), which were followed in order of frequency by vague arrangements (59%), implausibility (49%), inappropriate cues (19%), solicitation (14%), and hedging (5%).

4. In consonance with Naim’s (2011) and Abdel Hady’s (2013) conclusions, the results of the present study indicated that Clark and Isaacs’s (1990) seven strategies alone are not sufficient to set genuine and ostensible invitations apart in Saudi culture since Saudi Arabic speakers may utilize strategies that are normally associated with genuine invitations (e.g., swearing, insisting, motivating, etc.) to establish ostensible invitations.
5. The results revealed that Saudi Arabic speakers employ another set of strategies to highlight the ostensibility of their invitations; those are: using intensifying and empty swearing devices (e.g., َُّعَرْرٰرٰى “necessary,” َلَاذَمٰ “obligatory,” َّلُهَل “I swear,” etc.) (27%), extending the invitation in the form of a question (5%), and asking someone else to extend the invitation on behalf of the inviter (5%).

6. As far as the researcher knows, the strategy of asking someone else to extend the invitation on behalf of the inviter is peculiar to Saudi Arabic speakers.

7. It is worth noting that the present study may not be comprehensive which suggests that there might be more Saudi-specific strategies that could not be detected in the corpus of this study.

8. Al-Hindawi and Kadhim (2017) claimed that the strategy of extending the ostensible invitation in the form of a question is peculiar to Iraqi Arabic speakers. Nevertheless, the results of the present study revealed that Saudi Arabic speakers utilize this strategy as well.

9. In line with Clark and Isaacs’s (1990) and Abdel Hady’s (2013) claim, ostensible invitations in Saudi Arabic are made up of two layers: a top and a bottom layer. At the top layer, the inviter and the invitee engage in a joint pretense as the inviter pretends to extend a genuine invitation, and the invitee pretends to take it seriously. At the bottom layer, both the inviter and the invitee recognize the ostensibility of the extended invitation.

Implications of the study

The present study serves several applied purposes. First, the results of this study can be beneficial for developing language teaching programs by elaborating more on communicative competence. According to Widdowson (1979, as cited in Salmani-Nodoushan, 2005), language teaching is supposed to “transfer from grammatical competence, a knowledge of sentences, to what has been called communicative competence, a knowledge of how sentences are used in the performance of communicative acts of different kinds” (p.
Additionally, Hymes (1971) argued that grammatical competence is of no use unless it is comprehended through communication. To this end, it is hoped that sociopragmatic studies that tackle communicative acts such as the present study may help in developing language teaching materials.

Moreover, sociopragmatic studies, including the present study, are beneficial for foreign language learners in various ways. These studies help learners communicate in the target language proficiently. Moreover, the learner would be familiar to some extent with the target culture. Thus, the pragmatic failure that normally occurs among speakers of different languages or dialects will be minimized.

Interpreters and translators can benefit greatly from such a study since the results of this study can help them successfully choose culturally suitable equivalents in the target language. Furthermore, studies that address speech acts in general shed the light on cultural aspects that translators should take into consideration during the process of translation.

**Limitations of the Study**

One of the limitations of the current study is that it focuses on investigating the Saudi Arabic dialect that is spoken in the Central Region of Saudi Arabia, Riyadh, without accounting for the other different sub-dialects that are spoken in Saudi Arabia. Needless to say, differences among speakers of various dialects may be as significant as those among speakers of various languages. Thus, there are potentially other strategies for extending ostensible invitations in the sub-dialects of Saudi Arabic that are not investigated in this study.

With respect to the data collection instrument used in the current study, written and face-to-face interviews are used to collect the required data although observation is the best method for investigating ostensible speech acts as Wolfson (1989, as cited in Eslami, 2005) confirmed that “our best access to communication patterns is through the direct observation of
speech in use” (p. 457). Due to lack of adequate time, observing naturally occurring data was not an option.

Another limitation has to do with social variables as the present study does not examine how social variables can affect the strategies of ostensible invitations. That is to say, social variables such as age, gender, and degree of acquaintedness among the interlocutors are not addressed in this study. Additionally, pragmatic parameters, such as power and rank of imposition have been proven to influence the speech act of ostensible invitations in other studies of different cultures (e.g., Al-Hindawi & Kadhim, 2017; Clark & Isaacs, 1990). However, these parameters are not addressed in the current study.

**Suggestions for Further Research**

This study was primarily designed to investigate the strategies that Saudi Arabic speakers employ to extend invitations ostensibly. Moreover, it examined whether there are specific strategies that are peculiar to Saudis. However, more similar studies might be carried out with different focuses. The researcher suggests the following lines of research:

1. Examining ostensible invitations in Saudi Arabic in comparison with genuine invitations to decide whether a specific strategy is a good indicator of ostensibility or not.
2. Investigating the strategies used to extend ostensible invitations in the regional dialects of Saudi Arabic such as Najdi, Zahrani, Hijazi, etc.
3. Other kinds of ostensible speech acts such as ostensible refusals, ostensible apologies, ostensible compliments, etc. have not been addressed in Saudi Arabic. To fill a gap in the cross-cultural literature, it is strongly recommended to look into these speech acts in the Saudi culture.
4. In the current study, the strategies of ostensible invitations have been examined based on Clark and Isaacs’s (1990) model. Future studies may consider other frameworks (e.g., politeness theory) to investigate this speech act.

5. This study used the interview as a data collection instrument. Thus, one promising line of research would be to replicate this study using observation as the data collection method.

6. It is recommended that future studies conducted on ostensible invitations account for nonlinguistic factors such as age, gender, the rank of imposition, power, etc.

7. Future studies may investigate the pragmatic functions of ostensible invitations in Saudi Arabic.
References


STRATEGIES OF OSTEINSIBLE INVITATIONS IN SAUDI ARABIC


### APPENDICES

**Appendix (1)**

**Sheet of Data Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conversation Number:</th>
<th>____________________________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Characteristic Features of the Invitation (Isaacs and Clark 1990)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1- Making the Invitation Implausible</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2- Soliciting the Invitation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3- Motivating the Invitation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4- Persisting upon the Invitation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5- Clear Arrangements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6- Hedging the Invitation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7- Using Inappropriate Cues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other Suggested Indicators for SA Ostensible Invitations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1- Swearing Devices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2- Asking someone else to extend the invitation on their behalf</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3- Extending the invitation in the form of a question</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

1 This data analysis sheet was designed by Abdel Hady (2013).
Appendix (2)

Frequencies and Percentages of Strategies of Ostensible Invitations in Saudi Arabic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. A makes event E implausible</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. B can’t come</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. B isn’t interested</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. A can’t provide</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. B solicits invitation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. By context</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Indirectly</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Directly</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. A doesn’t motivate invitation</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. A motivates invitation</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. A doesn’t persist</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. A does persist</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. A leaves arrangements vague</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. A hedges the invitation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. A uses inappropriate cues</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Speaking rapidly</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Intonation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Preparing to leave</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Using intensifiers</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Extending the Invitation in the Form of a Question</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. A Asks Someone Else to Extend the Invitation on their Behalf</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix (3)

Stages of ostensible speech acts according to Al-Hindawi and Kadhim (2017)

![Diagram of Stages of Ostensible Speech Acts](image-url)