# The Communicative Act of Ostensible Lies in Academia

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## Abstract

This study examines the pragmatic role of ostensible lies—communicative acts in which falsehoods are mutually recognized but strategically presented as truth—in academic interactions within Jordanian culture. The problem addressed is the limited understanding of these socially coordinated lies and their functions in educational settings. The study's significance lies in its contribution to uncovering how such lies facilitate communication, negotiation of authority, and social boundaries. Data were gathered through informal interviews where participants recounted experiences with ostensible lies in academic contexts. The analysis involved identifying these lies and interpreting their off-record pragmatic purposes. The results reveal that ostensible lies serve several key functions, including avoiding compliments, softening authority, issuing indirect warnings, promoting self-reliance, easing fears of repercussions, persuasion, and maintaining interpersonal boundaries. These findings offer insights into the intersection of cultural norms and pragmatic strategies, with future research needed to explore their effects on educational outcomes and cross-cultural comparisons.

**Keywords**: Face, Face Threatening Acts, Join Actions, Ostensible Lies, politeness, speech acts

## 1. Introduction

This study examines the speech act of ostensible lies within the context of academic interactions between students and educators in Jordanian culture. Ostensible lies are distinct from other forms of deception, such as white lies or blatant untruths. They involve a complex and mutual understanding between the speaker and the listener, wherein both parties are aware that the information being conveyed is false. However, the falsehood is still communicated as if it were true. This makes ostensible lies inherently collaborative acts. Rather than functioning purely as a tool for deceit, ostensible lies are employed for various pragmatic purposes, often to navigate delicate social situations, maintain face, or manage relationships in ways that direct communication might fail to achieve. Consider this example.

Example (1)

> A member of a tenure committee, Professor Brown, although bound to maintain confidentiality of all materials, wished to communicate to a candidate, Professor Clay, that his tenure was endangered by the negative evaluation of a particular colleague. He did this with the following speech act:

> Brown: I'm afraid the committee is going to be concerned about your failure to serve on [a national committee of Clay's professional organization].

(Walton, 1998, pp. 33–34)

Professor Brown, on the tenure committee, needed to subtly warn Professor Clay about his at-risk tenure due to negative feedback from a colleague. Brown cleverly hinted at the problem by mentioning a committee that was unrelated, allowing Clay to understand there was an issue without breaking confidentiality (Walton, 1998).

Ostensible lies, therefore, function as a tool for managing social harmony, particularly within hierarchical relationships. What makes ostensible lies particularly interesting in the context of Jordanian academic culture is the way in which they interact with cultural norms of politeness, respect, and indirectness. Jordanian society, much like other collectivist cultures, places a high value on maintaining social harmony and avoiding direct conflict. As such, ostensible lies are often used to navigate situations where direct honesty might cause embarrassment, discomfort, or a breakdown in communication. In these contexts, lying isn't seen as morally wrong but rather as a necessary tool for preserving relationships and ensuring smooth social interactions.

In academic settings, this pragmatic use of ostensible lies plays a critical role in the interaction between students and

educators. Educators, as authority figures, are expected to maintain a degree of control and superiority, while students are expected to show deference and respect. This study explores the following questions: Do educators use ostensible lies with their students? Do students employ similar tactics with their educators? Do educators force students to use ostensible lies? Are such strategies commonly reciprocated? How do educators and students manage ostensible lies? Understanding the use of ostensible lies is significant for several reasons. It helps educators and students recognize the underlying messages conveyed through indirect communication. This awareness can lead to more effective teaching strategies. Additionally, for students, mastering this form of communication can be crucial for navigating academic and professional relationships effectively. Thus, examining these interactions offers valuable insights into the influence of ostensible communication on educational practices.

## 2. Theoretical Background

Ostensible lies are complex communicative actions that involve multiple participants and are layered in their execution. According to Clark's Joint Actions theory (1996), these interactions can be dissected through various theoretical assumptions. This section aims to introduce those layers briefly.

### 2.1 Speech Acts

In language philosophy, the speech act theory (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969) explores how "speakers can do [actions] by uttering words and sentences" (Allott, 2010, p. 178). In this view, language is not used only to describe things but to do actions. Based on this notion, when a speaker says, 'I invite you to dinner,' he is not only uttering the words but also performing the speech act of making an invitation.

This theory distinguishes between three acts: the locutionary act, the illocutionary act, and the perlocutionary act (Austin, 1962; Haugh, 2016; Searle, 1969). The locutionary act represents the utterance of words, phrases, or sentences. The illocutionary act represents the function of the utterance, "the act performed in making the utterance" (Allott, 2010, p. 178), and the perlocutionary act represents the effect of the utterance. Consider the following example.

Example (2)

Did you know that you smoke a lot of cigarettes?

This utterance shows the three acts. The locutionary act occurs when a speaker utters those words. The speaker said those words to warn the hearer. The locutionary act occurs when the speaker gets the hearer to reduce the number of cigarettes.

Searle (1969) classifies speech acts into five categories: assertives, directives, commisives, expressives, and declarations. The speech act of lying belongs to assertive acts. When making an assertion, the speaker expects the listener to accept the statement based on the speaker's credibility or provided evidence. When telling the truth, the speaker believes in the truth of a statement, aims to convey this believed truth, and perhaps also seeks to convince the listener of its truth. However, when telling a lie, the speaker believes that statement is false yet intends to communicate it as if it were true, with the additional goal of convincing the listener that he (the speaker) believes a proposition is true (Reboul, 2012). The description depicts genuine lies; therefore, in ostensible lies, the speaker and the listener know that the statement is false. In this case, ostensible lies are not deceptive.

### 2.2 Joint Activities

Clark (1996) views "language use [as] a form of joint action. A joint action is carried out by an ensemble of people acting in coordination with each other" (p. 3). This view of language use is critical to ostensible communicative acts. While people can perform actions by "uttering words and sentences" (Allott, 2010, p. 178), joint communicative acts require that conversants coordinate their interactions based on the salience of information and a mutual understanding of the common ground they share (Clark, 1992, 1996, 2006; Clark et al., 1983). That is, they should create a joint activity.

Central to this proposal is grounding and layering (Clark, 1992, 1996, 2006; Clark et al., 1983). In Clark's (1996) theory, "people try to ground what they do together" (p. 221). Grounding is a collaborative process by which interlocutors establish and maintain mutual understanding during communication (Clark, 1992, 1996, 2006; Clark et al., 1983; Isaacs & Clark, 1990).

Example (3)

    Roger: now, - um do you and your husband have aj- car

    Nina: - have a car?

    Roger: yeah

    Nina: no –

                                                      (Clark, 1996, p. 221)

As we can see from this example, grounding is a process that involves continuous interaction where speakers and listeners provide feedback to confirm comprehension or request clarification. Grounding is essential because it ensures that both parties share a common understanding of the conversation's content. This can be achieved through various means, such as verbal acknowledgments, questions, and non-verbal cues like nodding or facial expressions. Grounding aims to create a shared knowledge base that supports effective communication.

On the other hand, layering refers to the multiple levels or layers of meaning and understanding that can exist within a conversation. In any communicative act, there is the primary message, but there can also be underlying messages, implications, and assumptions that add depth to the interaction. These layers can include the literal meaning of the words, the intended meaning of the speaker, and the inferred meaning by the listener based on context and prior knowledge. Layering appears clearly in staged communicative acts, including blunt deniability such as teasing (Clark, 1996). Consider the following exchange as an example.

Example (4)

> An exchange between the husband and wife about the husband's tutoring:
>
> Ken: and I'm cheap, - - -
>
> Margaret: *I've always felt that about you,.*
>
> Ken: oh shut up,
>
> ( - - laughs) fifteen bob a lesson at home, -

<div align="right">(Clark, 1996, p. 368)</div>

Margaret is faking her claim that she always thought Ken was cheap. Ken acknowledges her pretense with a quick retort and a laugh. Clark (1996) calls this *pretense*. The conversation shows that the speaker is staging her speech in two layers.

> Layer 2 Implied Margaret claims she always thought implied Ken was cheap.
>
> Layer 1 Margaret and Ken jointly pretend that the event in layer 2 is taking
>
> place.

<div align="right">(Clark, 1996, p. 368)</div>

The speaker shows that there is a pretense, *Ken is cheap* (Layer 2). In Layer 1, however, she wants him to understand the contrary - she says this just for amusement. Layering adds complexity to communication as participants must navigate and interpret these multiple levels to fully grasp the intended message.

Together, grounding and layering illustrate the complex nature of human communication. While grounding focuses on ensuring mutual understanding, layering emphasizes the depth and complexity of meaning that can be present in any interaction. Effective communication requires establishing common ground and being aware of and managing the multiple layers of meaning that can arise. This dual focus highlights the multi-faceted nature of conversational exchanges; participants must continuously work together to achieve and maintain understanding while navigating the rich and often complex layers of meaning embedded in their interactions.

*2.3 Ostensible Activities*

Like staged communicative projects, ostensible communicative acts include layers, and conversants should ground their intended goal. For example, in ostensible invitations (Abdelhady, 2013; Eslami, 2005; Isaacs & Clark, 1990), conversants should act and respond to each other based on at least two layers. The example below is illustrative.

Example (5)

> Ross: Do you want to come?
>
> Cathy: That's all right. I'll pass.
>
> Ross: Okay

<div align="right">(Clark, 1996, p. 378)</div>

According to Clark (1996), Ross and Cathy exchange shows that Ross is genuinely making an invitation, and Cathey accepts that as true while she knows that it is not. Therefore, the exchange includes the following two layers.

> Layer 2 Implied Ross is sincerely inviting implied Cathy to go to the game.
>
> Layer 1 Ross and Cathy jointly pretend that the event in layer 2 is taking place.

<div align="right">(Clark, 1996, p. 379)</div>

The speakers pretend to perform an actual act of invitation while they know that the invitation should be rejected. Therefore, layering is a crucial part of ostensible communicative activities for pretense.

While they share much in common with staged joint activities, ostensible communicative activities, such as ostensible invitations (Abdel Hady, 2013, 2015; Dastpak & Mollaei, 2011; Eslami, 2005; Isaacs & Clark, 1990), ostensible refusals (Abdelhady, 2024; Shishavan, 2016a; Su, 2020), ostensible lies (Abdelhady & Alkinj, 2023; Walton, 1998), ostensible compliments (Isaacs & Clark, 1990) and the like, are ambivalent. Therefore, (Isaacs & Clark, 1990) characterize those acts with the following points.

1. Pretense: A pretends to make a sincere [act].

2. Mutual recognition: A and B mutually recognize A's pretense.

3. Collusion: B responds appropriately to A's pretense.

4. Ambivalence: When asked, "Do you really mean it?" A cannot sincerely answer either "yes" or "no."

5. Off-record purpose: A's main purpose is tacit.

(Isaacs & Clark, 1990, p. 496)

These features are illustrated in example (5). In this scenario, Ross pretends to invite Cathy to an event sincerely. Both Ross and Cathy understand that the invitation is not genuine, yet they act and respond as if it is. If Cathy were to ask Ross, "Do you really want me to come?" Ross would be unable to give a straightforward answer. A "yes" would obligate him to the invitation, while a "no" would come across as rude.

This ambivalence is a characteristic of all ostensible communicative activities. Therefore, while both staged communicative activities and ostensible communicative activities are joint actions, with ostensible communicative activities, the speaker cannot deny his action.

*2.4 Politeness*

Politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987) describes how individuals manage 'face' during communication. The theory is built on "face," which refers to a person's public self-image and offers four politeness strategies.

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), the notion of *face* has two components: positive face and negative face. Positive face is the desire to be liked, admired, and accepted by others, while negative face is the wish to have one's actions unimpeded and to maintain personal autonomy. Politeness strategies are employed to navigate social interactions in ways that preserve both the speaker's and the listener's face. These strategies range from direct and less polite to indirect and highly polite, depending on the threat a communicative act poses to the interlocutors' face.

There are four main politeness strategies: *bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness,* and *off-record* (Brown & Levinson, 1987). *Bald-on-record* strategies are direct and unambiguous, used when the risk to face is minimal or when urgency overrides the need for politeness. *Positive politeness* strategies enhance the hearer's positive face by showing friendliness, solidarity, and affirmation. *Negative politeness* strategies, on the other hand, are more cautious and respectful, designed to acknowledge the hearer's need for autonomy and minimize imposition. *Off-record* strategies are indirect and rely on implication, allowing the speaker to avoid direct responsibility for a face-threatening act. By understanding and employing these strategies, communicators can effectively manage social relationships and mitigate potential conflicts in various interpersonal interactions (Allott, 2010).

For example, requesting money can impact a person's negative face wants and needs. For instance, a straightforward command like "Give me money" represents a bald-on-record request, showing no concern for politeness. Conversely, saying, "My friend, lend me some cash" underscores closeness by addressing the listener as a friend. A more tactful approach might be, "I wonder if I could borrow just five dollars for two days," which minimizes the perceived burden of the request. Alternatively, a speaker might use an off-record strategy by saying, "I need to pay the bills tomorrow," without directly asking for money, thereby hinting at their need indirectly. Ostensible communicative acts should have an off-record purpose (Abdelhady, 2013, 2024; Dastpak & Mollaei, 2011; Eslami, 2005; Link & Kreuz, 2005; Shishavan, 2016b; Su, 2020; Walton, 1998; Yaqubi, 2020). This entails that speakers use them to achieve a certain communicative function.

*2.5 The Social Learning Theory*

Bandura's (1977) social learning theory emphasizes the interaction between personal, behavioral, and environmental factors, incorporating concepts such as modeling, enactive rehearsal, vicarious learning, and self-efficacy (Legg, 2023). In classroom environments, educators can utilize Bandura's principles through conversation, modeling, observation, and setting clear expectations to teach or reinforce fundamental skills and behaviors (Legg, 2023). These strategies can be effectively implemented in various educational contexts by fostering learning through interaction and modeling.

Social and emotional skills development in school is linked to students' cognitive growth, highlighting the need to

explicitly teach and practice these skills (Steins & Haep, 2014). In the same vein, Jennings et al. (2021) emphasized that teachers' social and emotional competencies are vital for creating a classroom atmosphere where students feel safe, connected, and engaged, demonstrating the profound impact of teacher behaviors and interactions on student development.

Students' interactions with peers reflect the social hierarchy of the classroom and school, and teachers can use their understanding of this social structure to enhance student productivity and minimize distractions (Baumgartner, 2024). Positive peer interactions among school students significantly contribute to their academic performance, with evidence suggesting that collaboration with high-achieving peers can boost academic success and influence future career choices (Hamm & Hoffman, 2022). In addition, the social learning theory asserts that individuals partly learn by observing others and emulating their behavior, with learning occurring within a social context through interaction, shared experiences, and reinforcement (Dollase, 2014). Integrating social learning principles into educational practices helps develop students who are prepared for collaborative, team-based practice, highlighting the importance of the social environment in determining what and how students learn (Mangal et al., 2024).

### 2.6 Cultural Context

Understanding the cultural context is crucial for communication (Al-Khatib, 2008; Al-Khatib, 2021; Giri, 2006; Ihmeideh et al., 2020; Korac-Kakabadse et al., 2001; Pitychoutis & Spathopoulou, 2024; Tanova & Nadiri, 2010). According to Rubin (1984), "the needs, goals, attitudes, habits, and values of the individuals involved represent [a] source of influence on communication within relationships" (p. 265). In the Arab world, the educational landscape, from primary schools to universities, is deeply influenced by cultural values that shape communication and learning experiences. Therefore, "[cultural] norms influence social interaction in most forms of spoken or written discourse" (Al-Khatib, 2008, p. 10).

Several studies have explored the role of politeness in Jordanian educational institutions, highlighting the interplay of cultural and social norms in shaping communication practices (Al-Khatib, 2006; Al-Khatib, 2021; Bataineh, 2013; Bataineh & Bataineh, 2006; Farghal & Al-Khatib, 2001; Ihmeideh et al., 2020; Kreishan, 2018). At the school level, education is characterized by a structured and disciplined environment, whereas the communication culture at universities is more open, promoting dialogue, debates, and collaborative projects (Adely et al., 2019). In Jordanian universities, students often utilize less direct and more polite strategies, particularly in speech acts like refusal and complaint. This reflects a broader cultural emphasis on maintaining harmony and avoiding confrontation. For example, Jordanian students' refusal strategies are typically less direct compared to their Western counterparts, aiming to preserve social relationships and respect hierarchical structures.

## 3. Review of Literature

### 3.1 Ostensible Activities

The study of ostensible invitations (Abdel Hady, 2015; Dastpak & Mollaei, 2011; Eslami, 2005; Isaacs & Clark, 1990; Link & Kreuz, 2005; Yaqubi, 2020) has led to a significant surge in research on ostensible activities establishing them as the cornerstone in this field of study. Therefore, it is crucial to review ostensible activities to have a clear understanding of ostensible lies.

Isaacs and Clark (1990) highlight invitations where the inviter extends an invitation without the genuine intention of it being accepted. These invitations are characterized by a pretense of sincerity from the speaker, mutual recognition of the pretense by both the speaker and the addressee, collusion from the addressee, ambivalence about the invitation's acceptance, and an off-record purpose from the speaker. The primary goal of these invitations is not to initiate a genuine invitation but to fulfill an unstated objective, such as maintaining social politeness or avoiding confrontation (Isaacs & Clark, 1990). In addition, Eslami (2005) investigates the defining features of genuine and ostensible invitations in Persian, comparing them to those in English, as reported by Isaacs and Clark (1990). Based on spontaneous Persian invitations and interview data, the study reveals that the structure of ostensible invitations in Persian is more complex than in English. Furthermore, (Abdel Hady, 2015) examines the pragmatic functions of ostensible invitations in Jordanian Arabic and provides a comprehensive analysis of how these communicative acts are utilized within the cultural context of Jordan. The study identifies several key functions of ostensible invitations in Jordanian culture. These functions include mitigating face-threatening acts, serving as persuasive devices, and acting as provocative tools.

In addition to ostensible invitations, studies have also been conducted on ostensible refusals (Abdelhady, 2024; Shishavan, 2016b; Su, 2020). Shishavan (20216) investigated genuine and ostensible (ritual) refusals in Persian, produced in response to genuine offers and invitations. The findings showed that the primary motivations for producing ritual refusals in Persian include adhering to rules of politeness and enhancing the face of both the speaker and the interlocutor. Thus, the pretense of the sincerity of ritual refusals stems from the speakers' concern for maintaining rapport. Furthermore, Abdelhady (2024) investigates the pragmatic functions of ostensible refusals. The study reveals that ostensible refusals serve multiple functions, including avoiding support to maintain personal dignity, responding to compliments to ensure sincerity,

mitigating embarrassment through polite deflection, adhering to cultural rituals, fostering customer loyalty by showing generosity, expressing frustration indirectly, and facilitating negotiation in commercial interactions.

To round up, the role of ostensible activities in managing interpersonal relationships and cultural expectations is evident; nevertheless, they vary from one culture to another.

*3.2 Ostensible Lies*

The research on ostensible lies is scarce, with only two studies focusing on ostensible lies in broad contexts (viz., Abdelhady & Alkinj, 2023; Walton, 1998). These two studies represent the foundation of this research, providing critical insights into the nature and function of ostensible lies.

Walton (1998) employs qualitative interviews as the primary method of data collection. Walton conducted interviews with ten informants from academic, business, and medical settings, gathering 33 examples of ostensible lies. Each informant was asked to recall and describe instances of ostensible lies, defined as statements that are blatantly untrue and recognized as such by both the speaker and listener. This method provided a diverse set of examples, though it did not address the frequency of these events in natural settings. Walton's data analysis involved categorizing the collected examples into distinct types based on their functions. The taxonomy included categories such as bullying, avoiding true deceit, and intentionally leaking information. The analysis aimed to understand the underlying power dynamics and communicative functions of these speech acts. The classification considered both the ostensible (on-record) and underlying (off-record) purposes of each example, emphasizing how these lies assert social power and manage face-threatening situations.

The results show the role of ostensible lies in reinforcing and negotiating power dynamics in interpersonal relationships. These lies often assert authority, avoid confrontation, and manage social interactions to maintain the speaker's power. For instance, academic informants frequently cited budget-related ostensible lies used to justify denials of requests. While the study primarily discusses interactions in educational settings within the American context, it does not encompass all aspects of ostensible lies. Further research is needed to explore these dynamics in other cultural contexts, such as the Arabic cultural context, to gain a more comprehensive understanding.

Abdelhady and Alkinj's (2023) study examines the pragmatic functions of ostensible lies in high-context cultures, focusing on the Jordanian context. Using the Joint Action theory framework by Clark (1996), the researchers explore how these lies function within communication. The data collection involved direct observation, and participant recalls, leading to a qualitative analysis of 30 examples. The study identifies that ostensible lies in Jordanian culture fulfill various roles, such as implying information, expressing refusal, conveying rejection, extending apologies, showing annoyance, bragging, and adhering to regulations.

The methodology for data collection and analysis is thorough and detailed. Data was collected through observation and recalls, based on the approaches of Isaacs and Clark (1990) and Abdel Hady (2013). Thirty participants from the researchers' social network were asked to recall and narrate their experiences with ostensible lies. Observational data was collected over four months, supplemented by participant recalls, where individuals described the context, reasons, and sequences of ostensible lies they encountered. The data analysis followed Walton's (1998) methodology, using a Critical Discourse Analysis approach to uncover the functions of each ostensible lie. The findings contribute significantly to understanding lying behaviors in high-context cultures, particularly in Jordan. They highlight the intricate and subtle nature of communication in these cultural settings. By examining the pragmatic functions of ostensible lies, the research enhances existing literature on cross-cultural communication. The insights gained are valuable for people and organizations navigating communication in high-context cultures, promoting more effective and culturally aware interactions.

However, this study has a significant limitation. It does not thoroughly investigate ostensible lies within educational settings. The educational context has unique power relations and interactions that could influence the occurrence and functions of ostensible lies. Studying how these lies occur in interactions between students, teachers, and administrative staff could provide deeper insights into their pragmatic functions and implications. Focusing on ostensible lies in educational settings would address this gap and broaden our understanding of ostensible communicative acts across different societal areas. This would be particularly useful in developing effective communication and conflict-resolution strategies in educational institutions.

The primary limitation of studies on ostensible lies (viz, Abdelhady & Alkinj, 2023; Walton, 1998) is that they do not focus mainly on educational contexts. Instead, they explore broader applications, leaving a gap in the literature regarding the role and impact of ostensible lies within educational settings. This study addresses this gap by building upon their foundational work and extending the investigation into education.

## 4. Methodology

### 4.1 Population and Sampling

The study population consists of Jordanian instructors teaching in Irbid City, northern Jordan, including ten faculty members (both male and female)[1] from the same region. This research employs convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling method where participants are selected based on availability and proximity to the researcher.

### 4.2 Data Collection

Ostensible speech acts "are rare in most situations, so it is difficult to collect more than the occasional example by combing ordinary conversations" (Isaacs & Clark, 1990, p. 494). Therefore, following the literature (Abdel Hady, 2013, 2015; Abdelhady & Alkinj, 2023; Isaacs & Clark, 1990; Walton, 1998), after obtaining the participants' verbal consent to participate in this study, the researchers collected their data through informal interviews, asking participants to recall cases of insincere lies they observed or witnessed at school, university, or other educational settings. They were requested to provide sufficient context to make the conversation understandable and to quote, as accurately as possible, the dialogue surrounding the lie, including the parts immediately before and after it (Isaacs & Clark, 1990).

During the interviews, participants answered several types of questions: Where did the interaction take place? What was happening before the interaction was made? Who was involved in the interaction? What exact words were used in the interaction? Did the speaker add any qualifiers or hesitations that seemed out of place? How did the other person respond to the lie? Did the lie seem genuine to you? Why or why not? What do you think was the real intention behind the speaker's words? Have you seen similar instances in other educational settings? What do you think the speaker expected to accomplish with the ostensible lie? Could you describe the tone of voice and body language of the speaker during the interaction? These questions helped participants focus on the details necessary for identifying and understanding the ostensible lies. The researchers attentively listened and meticulously recorded their observations, incorporating contextual elements using handwritten note-taking.

### 4.3 Data Analysis

The data is analyzed in two stages. In the first stage, the researchers analyzed the recalled instances against the defining properties of ostensible communicative acts:

1. Pretense A pretends to make a sincere [act].

2. Mutual recognition A and B mutually recognize A's pretense.

3. Collusion B responds appropriately to A's pretense.

4. Ambivalence When asked, "Do you really mean it?" A cannot sincerely answer either "yes" or "no."

5. Off-record purpose A's main purpose is tacit.

(Isaacs & Clark, 1990, p. 496)

The first four steps helped the researchers distinguish ostensible lies from genuine lies. These steps emphasize the social and cooperative aspects of ostensible lies, distinguishing them from genuine lies, which are characterized by true deception and a lack of mutual acknowledgment between the parties involved.

In the second stage, the researchers focused on the fifth step, the off-record purpose behind ostensible lies. To understand the purpose of ostensible lies, the researchers analyzed the data thematically based on their functions in light of the im/politeness theories (Bousfield & Locher, 2008; Brown & Levinson, 1987; Kecskes, 2015). The analysis proceeds by categorizing these lies based on their politeness strategies - whether they align with positive politeness (seeking to establish a connection and affirm social bonds) or negative politeness (aiming to avoid imposition on others). For instance, an ostensible lie might be told to flatter someone, thereby employing positive politeness, or to tactfully decline an invitation, which involves negative politeness. By applying a thematic coding approach, researchers systematically examine the frequency, context, and effects of these lies. This method allows for a deeper understanding of how ostensible lies function as pragmatic tools within the scope of im/politeness, contributing to the broader discourse on the social acceptability and relational consequences of such communicative acts.

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[1] Further studies are required as this study does not address the impact of the participants' profiles on data analysis regarding ostensible lies.

**5. Findings and Discussion**

*5.1 Themes of Ostensible Lies*

1. Avoiding Compliments

Receiving compliments is a face-threatening act for the course coordinator because it damages the negative face wants of the receiver of a complaint (Aporbo et al., 2024; Brown & Levinson, 1987; Farghal & Al-Khatib, 2001, 2001; Holmes, 1986). Compliments can create a sense of obligation in the receiver to reciprocate or respond positively, which may conflict with their desire for freedom from imposition (Holmes, 1986). Additionally, the receiver might feel pressured to maintain the positive impression created by the compliment, leading to anxiety or discomfort (Farghal & Al-Khatib, 2001). This is particularly challenging in hierarchical settings where power dynamics influence interactions. As a result, receiving compliments can inadvertently threaten the course coordinator's negative face wants, complicating interpersonal communication in academic environments (Aporbo et al., 2024; Farghal & Al-Khatib, 2001).

Example 2

Context: A female instructor, A, had a conversation with her colleague, B, who had coordinated a department meeting involving ten instructors, to thank him for his efforts during the academic year.

> A: *duktu:r    ʔaʃkurka         ʕalæ    idærratı        al-qisim*
>
>   professor    thank.you        on       managing        the-department
>
>   *biʔuslu:b       ʒami:l       xilælla       al-fasil*
>
>   style          nice          through       the-term
>
>   'Professor, thank you for managing the department nicely this semester.'

> B: *lam      ʔakkun ga:dir     ʕalæ ʔidærati*
>
>   Not      be       able       to       managet
>
>   *al-qisim          lawlæ      wudʒu:dukı*
>
>   the-department    if.not     you.be
>
>   'I wouldn't have been able to manage the department without you.'
>
>     [both of them know that she did not offer help to her colleague]

> A: [surprised]
>
>     *ʕaʃkurak,      hæða    mın   luʈfik*
>
>     Thank.you      this      from   kindness.your
>
>     'Thank you, that's very kind of you.'

In this example, two teachers are discussing department management. A knows that she did not contribute to managing the department. Therefore, she thanks B for effectively managing the department. When B hears the compliment, he responds with an ostensible lie, saying, 'I couldn't have managed it without.' Both educators understand this is a lie because they both know that A did not contribute at all to department management and that the second speaker is fully capable of managing it independently. However, A goes along with the ostensible lie and thanks B again for telling her that.

The primary reason for the lie appears to be a desire to maintain a cordial and supportive relationship. Despite B not contributing to the management of the course, both parties engage in complimentary remarks. Therefore, the ostensible lie serves to avoid conflict, keep the interaction positive, and preserve the professional relationship. This is in line with (Abdelhady & Alkinj, 2023)

2. Compromising Authority

Maintaining professional authority is a face-saving act for the teacher because it involves balancing the enforcement of institutional rules while also managing interpersonal relationships with students. When teachers bend the rules slightly to accommodate students' requests, they risk their credibility and authority being questioned by others who expect strict adherence to institutional policies (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Holmes, 1986). This delicate balance is challenging in hierarchical academic settings where power dynamics influence interactions. By compromising on rules, teachers may inadvertently undermine their professional reputation, complicating their ability to enforce policies consistently (Farghal & Al-Khatib, 2001). Ostenisble lies help in compormising authority. Consider the following example.

Example 3

Context: A student, A, should be marked as absent. The instructor, B, knows this is the last chance for the student to pass the course.

A: *sajilni:    hudur        hay    Ɂilmarrah    law  samaħt,*
  Mark.me   present        this    time         if   please.you

  *ma       ʕɪndɪ    furṣa              θa:ni:ja        Ɂarʒu:k*
  not       have.me change             second                please

  'Mark me present please, I do not have a second chance, please.'

B: *qa:nu:n    al-dʒa:miʕa    bɪˈqu:l Ɂiða: kunt ˈħa:ðɪr*
  Regulation  the-university states    if       were   present

  *bɪs      nasɪt   tɪħki: ˈħa:ðɪr     bɪˈjo:mɪha    bɪsadʒɪlæk   ˈħa:ðɪr*
  but      forgot  to.say present    on.that.day   I.mark.you    present

  'According to the university policy, if you were present but forgot to respond to the call of attendance, I can mark you present.'

[continues]

  *Ɂɪnta kunt ˈħa:ðɪr bɪs       nasɪt tɪħki: ˈħa:ðɪr  ˈsaħ*
  You   were  present but      forgot say    present right

  'You were present but forgot to respond to the call of attendance, right!'

  [both the student and the instructor know he was not present]

A: *Ɂasˈf nasɪt       Ɂɪħki: ˈħa:ðɪr*
    Sorry forgot      to.say     present

  'Sorry, I forgot to say I was present.'

B: *tajjɪb ha:ˈjɪl ˈmarra: bɪsadʒɪlæk ˈħa:ðɪr*
  Okay   this    time         mark.you          present

   'Okay, this time, I will mark you present.'

A: *ʃʊkˈra:n*
  Thank.*you*

  'Thank you'

In this scenario, a student did not attend a session, and according to university regulations, students who do not must be marked absent. This student, however, faces severe consequences if marked absent, including getting a warning. Despite knowing the student was absent, the professor offers the student an opportunity to issue an ostensible lie. The professor reminds the student of the regulation but suggests that if the student claims that he forgot to respond to the call of attendance. The student picks up on this hint and states that he forgot to respond, even though both know this is not true. The professor then marks the student as present, accepting the ostensible lie as a true statement.

The professor's request for the ostensible lie stems from a sense of sympathy for the student's predicament. At the same time, this approach allows the professor to appear compliant with the regulations. The professor can truthfully claim that the student reported that he was present. The scenario shows that the teacher faces a 'face-threatening act' by potentially being seen as either too lenient or not strict enough in enforcing university rules. By bending the rules slightly (recording a tardy instead of an absence), the teacher risks their credibility and authority being questioned by others who expect strict adherence to institutional policies.

This situation could make the teacher appear inconsistent or overly sympathetic, potentially undermining their professional reputation among colleagues and other students (Dronia, 2013). The use of the ostensible lie saves the teacher's image and helps the student to overcome his issue.

3. Implicit Warning

Issuing a warning in a classroom setting is a face-threatening act for teachers and students because it directly challenges the student's image of competence and integrity while scrutinizing the teacher's authority and fairness (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Goffman, 1967). Implicit warnings are a subtle approach to address misconduct without causing public embarrassment or conflict. This approach not only preserves the student's dignity but subtly encourages them to rectify

their mistake, fostering an environment that promotes honest behavior and self-improvement (Noddings, 2005).

Our data shows that ostensible lies serve as an effective strategy to address misconduct while maintaining a supportive and respectful learning atmosphere. The following example is illustrative.

Example 4

Context: During an exam, a teacher, A, noticed that a student, B, was trying to get a paper out of his pocket.

> A: *ʔanæmæ ʃuʃit ʔɪʃiː jæ ʕaliː, ʔanæʃuː jæ ʕaliː*
>
>    I                    not    see          anything  hey    ali         I            what    hey     Ali
>
> 'I didn't see anything Ali. I didn't see what, Ali.'
>
> B: *ʔɪnta mæ ʃuʃit ʔʃiː ʔustæð, ʔæsɪf*
>
>    You                 not    see        anything   teacher              sorry
>
>    'You did not see anything, sorry teacher.'
>
> A: *tamæm hæj ʔɪlmarrah*
>
>    ok                  this                  time
>
>    'It is okay this time.'

In this example, a teacher observes a student attempting to cheat by taking a paper from his pocket. The teacher knows that if he directly accuses the student of cheating, he will have to enforce disciplinary actions in front of the other students. Instead, the teacher decides to issue a subtle warning by saying, 'I didn't see anything,' which is an ostensible lie since he clearly saw the student trying to take the paper out. The student picks up on the hint and responds, 'You didn't see anything,' effectively colluding with the teacher. Both the student and the teacher are aware that this statement is false.

The teacher's choice to use an ostensible lie instead of directly issuing a first warning might be driven by a desire to maintain classroom harmony and offer the student a chance to self-correct without public embarrassment. This approach not only preserves the student's dignity but also provides an implicit warning, allowing the student to recognize and rectify his mistake discreetly. Such a tactic can be particularly effective in educational settings where the goal is not just to punish wrongdoing but to make students learn from their mistakes and encourage them to adopt good behaviors on their own.

4. Encouraging Self-Reliance

Encouraging self-reliance is a face-threatening act for the teacher because it involves withholding information that the student expects to receive, potentially challenging the student's sense of competence and the teacher's role as a knowledge provider (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Goffman, 1967). This approach aligns with educational philosophies that value student-centered learning, where students are encouraged to develop problem-solving skills and take responsibility for their own learning (Dewey, 1938; Knowles, 1984). As a result, the teacher's strategy supports the development of critical thinking and autonomy, which are essential for academic success and personal growth. The use of ostensible lies can encourage greater self-reliance and critical thinking in students. See the following example for illustration.

Example 5

Context: A teacher, A, is invigilating his students during an English test. The student, B, struggles to remember the meaning of a word. He seeks help from his teacher.

> B: *doktɔːr ʃu: maʕna: hæj ʔalkɪlma bɪ-lʕarabiː*
>
>    Professor what meaning  this word          in-Arabic
>
> A: *mæ baʕrɪf maʕnæhæ*
>
>    Not    know     meaning.it
>
>    *ħawɪl ti-tðakar*
>
>    try                    to-remember
>
>    *darasnaha gabɪl ʔusbuːɣ*
>
>    studied.it    before   a.week
>
>    [A is the teacher of the course]
>
> B: *ʃkuran duktɔːr*
>
>    Thank.you            professor

In this example, a student is struggling to understand the meaning of a certain word in his native language during an exam. The invigilator for the exam is also the course instructor. When the student asks the teacher for the meaning of the word in Arabic, the teacher, who is a native Arabic speaker, responds with, 'I don't know the meaning of this word.' This is an ostensible lie because the teacher obviously knows the meaning, having taught the chapter before. The student recognizes the lie but plays along, thanking the teacher despite not getting an answer. Both the teacher and the student are aware of the falsehood. The student colludes with the teacher, pretending that the lie is true. This interaction demonstrates mutual recognition and ambivalence about the lie. If questioned about his statement, the teacher cannot simply affirm it, as that would imply he doesn't know the subject, which is not true. Conversely, if he admits the lie, he would have to provide the answer, which might discourage students from learning independently.

By pretending not to know the meaning of the word and encouraging the student to figure it out independently, the teacher positions himself as a facilitator of deeper learning rather than just a dispenser of information. It aligns with educational philosophies that value student-centered learning.

5. Fear of Repercussions

Expressing dissent or criticism in an academic setting can be a face-threatening act for students because it risks jeopardizing their future opportunities, evaluations, or relationships with faculty (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Goffman, 1967). This type of lie can be seen as a strategy for self-preservation. It also reflects students' desire to avoid potential negative consequences, such as receiving a poor grade or damaging their rapport with the instructor. It highlights the complex dynamics of power and vulnerability within educational settings, where honesty might be sacrificed to maintain a facade of compliance and approval (Farghal & Al-Khatib, 2001). Example (6) below is illustrative.

Example (6)

Context: A teacher, B, asked the students to write their opinion on it, but each one had to write their name on the paper, and I made sure the names were written. After he had collected the papers, even a student, B, who would fail, wrote that it was one of the most enjoyable courses they had taken.

> A: *ʔalmasa:q      min            ʔajmal           ʔal-masa:qat    ʔilli          darastha*
>
>    The-course     of            most.beautiful   the-courses     of             studied.I
>
> 'This subject is one of the most enjoyable ones I have studied.'
>
> [all students are surprised]
>
> B: [continues]
>
> *ya salam      min            ʔajmal           ʔalmasa:qat    binisbih  ʔɪlak*
>
> oh nice        of            most.beautiful   courses         for        you
>
> 'Wow, one of the most enjoyable courses for you!'
>
> A: [The student did not comment.]

In this example, a student pretends that the course is one of the best he has ever taken. The teacher knows that the student is struggling in the course and is at risk of failing. It is also evident to the other students that the student is not being truthful. Despite this, both the teacher and student collude with the student's comment to avoid embarrassing him in front of his peers. The student lies to maintain social harmony and protect their relationships with the teacher. By accepting the lie, the teacher maintains classroom harmony and the student's dignity.

We conclude that ostensible lies can minimize repercussions between students and their instructors if educators collude with their students. This type of lie can be seen as a strategy for self-preservation in an academic environment where students may feel that their future opportunities, evaluations, or relationships with faculty could be jeopardized by expressing dissent or criticism.

6. Persuasion

Shifting blame is a persuasive strategy in academic settings that students may utilize to deflect responsibility for their shortcomings or mistakes onto others, thereby protecting their self-image and avoiding potential negative consequences (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Goffman, 1967). This strategy of shifting blame allows students to maintain their positive face by portraying themselves as diligent while attributing failure to external factors. It helps to navigate the power dynamics and expectations within educational settings, where admitting personal failure can particularly damage one's academic reputation (Farghal & Al-Khatib, 2001; Holmes, 1986). Consequently, ostensible lies are a defensive mechanism to manage impressions and protect self-esteem.

Example (7)

Context: Students cannot take their scratch papers from the exam room in TOEFL tests. A student, A, needs to take his scratch paper after finishing his exam. The invigilator, B, did not allow him.

A: *diktu:r        bagdar                Ɂæxud        maʕi:*
    Professor    can                       take              with.me

*Ɂal-waraga    Ɂalmaswadda      barra            qæʕıt      alɁımtihan*
The-paper        scratch                out                hall          the-testing

'Professor, can I take the draft paper with me outside the exam hall?

B:: *mamnu:ʕ      Ɂaxıð        Ɂajja        waraqa*
     prohibited        taking          any          paper

*xa:ridʒ      qa:ʕat      alɁixtiba:r      ħasab        Ɂat-tʕali:ma:t*
outside          hall        the-test            based.on          the-instructions

'It is prohibited to take any paper outside the exam hall according to the instructions.'

A: *bas  diktu:r              kull      Ɂaddaka:tira*
    But professor             all                professors

*bismaħu      Ɂin      Ɂaṭṭullæb      ju:xudu        ɁalɁawra:g*
Allow              to          the-student      take            the-papers

*bas Ɂintama: bittsimaħ*
But    you      not              allow

'But Professor, all the other professors allow students to take the papers outside the hall except you.'

B: [the instructor knows that this is not true]

*mumkin*
perhaps

*la:kin      Ɂana:      bimʃi ʕala      ttaʕli:ma:t*
but                    I        adhere  to          the-regulations

'Perhaps, but I am following the instructions.'

A: [puts the paper in the trash and leaves the room]

In this example, the student uses an ostensible lie to test the instructor's leniency. He claims that all instructors allow students to take scratch papers with them when they finish their exam. Both the student and the instructor know this is untrue based on their shared knowledge. Despite recognizing the lie, the instructor chooses to collude with the student to avoid appearing rude. The instructor responds politely, acknowledging the student's concern.

This interaction shows that the student uses the ostensible lie as a persuasive strategy to influence the instructor's decision, highlighting the mutual recognition and shared common ground that make the lie evident. This case demonstrates how ostensible lies can be used strategically to persuasive strategies.

6. Utilizing a Pretext

Creating a pretext can be a complex social manoeuvre that balances face-saving tactics with potential risks to one's social image (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Goffman, 1967). Students may fabricate reasons to achieve their goals in an academic setting without directly challenging the established rules. This tactic allows the student to navigate institutional constraints and achieve their objective without direct confrontation, thus preserving their own face while manipulating the situation to their advantage (Farghal & Al-Khatib, 2001; Holmes, 1986).

Example (8)

Context: A student, A, wants to verify his answers. The instructor, B, told the student that he will not help the student with answers but to clarify a question if it is not clear.

A: *dıkto:r      dʒa:wabt              kıll      ɁalɁasɁıla*
    Professor    answered            all                questions

*Bæs              bıddi                      ɁıtɁakkad*

But                    want.I                    make.sure

*mɪn*          *ʔɪd͡ʒaːbaːti*

of                     answer.my

*ana*          *kɪlʃi*          *tˤaːmaːm*                    *bæsʔɪtʔakkɪd*

I              everything          ok                    but          make.sure

'Professor, I answered all the questions but I want to check my answers. Everything is fine but I just want to make sure.'

B: *mamnuːʔ*

not.possible

*bis*          *ʔɪða*    *fiː suʔaːl*    *miʃ ˈwaːɐeħ, ʔisʔaːl*

Except          if      in question   not   clear   ask

'It is not allowed, but if there is an unclear question, ask.'

   [after one minute]

A:   *tˤajjɪb*              *dɪktoːr*          *fiː*    *suʔaːl miʃ ˈwaːɐeħ*

   Ok                    professor       in     question not clear

   *bɪ-suʔaːl*      *ʔɪθ-θaːniː*

   in-question   the-second

'Okay, doctor, the second question is not clear.'

In this scenario, the student initially seeks to have his answers verified by the teacher. However, upon learning that the teacher can only clarify questions if there is a question that is not clear, the student changes his request.

7. Maintaining Boundaries

Each professional role comes with expectations on behavior and responsibilities. Not adhering to these can lead to face-threatening situations where the individual's competence or dedication is questioned. For example, a doctor who appears too casual or dismissive may threaten the patient's face by seeming not to take their concerns seriously. Consider the following interaction.

Example (10)

Context: A student has undergone a plastic surgery. The teacher, B, has taught the student before and knows that the student was absent because of undergoing a plastic surgery.

A: *hɪl*        *taʕˌrɪˌfiː ʔajjɪ*          *d͡ʒʊzʔ mɪn waʒhɪ*

   Can        know        which            part    of    face.my

*xadˤaʕ*        *lɪd͡ʒɪraːħa*

Undergone      surgery

'Can you tell which part of my face has undergone surgery?

[The plastic surgery is clear]

B: *ma baʕrɪf*

   not   know

  'I do not know.'

*ʔantɪː*        *d͡ʒaˌmɪːla mɪn    zæmaːn*

   You        beautifful        from    long.time

'I do not know. You are beautiful since a long time.'

A: *jɪsʕɪdk*        *ʔʊstæːða haːda*    *mɪn   lʊtf.ɪk*

   Happy.make      teacher          this      from    kindeness.your

  'May you be happy, teacher. This is kind of you.'

In this example, a student asks her teacher if she can identify the part of her face that has undergone surgery. The teacher

responds with an ostensible lie: 'I don't know.' Both the teacher and the student fully know that plastic surgery is evident. This lie is considered ostensible because both parties mutually recognize that the teacher did not answer truthfully. However, the student does not accuse the teacher of lying and instead colludes with the answer, thereby maintaining the pretense. The teacher's lie serves a strategic purpose. If she had answered, 'Yes, I know,' it could have led to a conversation deemed unprofessional between a student and a teacher. Using the ostensible lie, the teacher answers the student's unspoken desire for reassurance. The student wanted to hear that she is beautiful before and after the surgery. Therefore, the teacher's response, though untruthful, is satisfying for the student and helps maintain the professional relationship between them.

*5.2 Guidelines for Educators*

This section provides educators with practical tips on effectively utilizing and responding to ostensible lies in educational settings. It focuses on strategies for integrating these principles seamlessly into daily teaching practices.

5.2.1 Using Ostensible Lies

Using ostensible lies can be an effective strategy for educators to manage classroom interactions. However, our research indicates that educators risk their face image when employing ostensible lies, especially with students who might behave impolitely, ignoring social norms and expectations. According to Beschieru (2021), "students tend to behave more impolitely towards their teachers probably because they need to assert their identities, to gain power, and to show off in front of their peers" (p. 47). Studies (e.g., Bayraktarolu & Sifianou, 2001; Beschieru, 2021; Félix-Brasdefer & Mugford, 2017; Muhammad et al., 2020; Peng et al., 2014; cf., Santamaría-García, 2017) reported that students may show impoliteness by challenging their teachers. One instructor shared an experience where he used an ostensible lie with a student, who openly accused him of lying in front of her classmates.

Example 11

Context: A teacher, A, is invigilating his students during an English test. The student, B, struggles to remember the meaning of a word. He seeks help from his teacher.

> B: *dɒktɔːr      ʃuː    maʕnaː    hæj    ʔalkɪlma   bɪ-lʕarabiː*
>
>    Professor    what    meaning   this    word       in-Arabic
>
> A: *mæ baʕrɪf   maʕnœhœ*
>
>     Not    know     meaning.it
>
> 'I do not know the meaning of it.'
>
>  [A is the teacher of the course]

(repeated)

In this conversation, while ostensible lies offer a potential solution in challenging situations, the instructor may still suffer damage to his face image if the student challenges his teacher and confronts him for lying in front of his classmates. The mere accusation in the classroom can undermine the teacher's credibility and make it difficult to restore their reputation.

Using ostensible lies can lead to future complications for educators. Classroom management requires consistency (Freiberg, 1983). "A teacher who is consistent in reinforcing the class rules […] will have the chance to provide the students with more opportunities to learn with fewer disruptions. The need to be consistent is not a one-time effort" (Freiberg, 1983, p. 10). Therefore, when a teacher emphasizes a policy at the beginning of the semester, he should apply it consistently. For example, if a teacher empathizes with students who did not attend a session and excuses their behavior with a fabricated reason, he must maintain consistency in future similar situations.

Example 12

Context: A student, A, should be marked as absent. The instructor, B, knows this is the last chance for the student to pass the course.

> A: *sajilniː    hudur        hay    ʔilmarrah    law   samaħt,*
>
>    Mark.me        present              this    time                     if  please.you
>
>     *ma      ʕɪndɪ    furṣa     θaːniːja      ʔarʒuːk*
>
>    not              have.me        change         second                      please
>
>  'Mark me present please, I do not have a second chance, please.'
>
> B:    *ʔɪnta kunt ˈħaːðɪr bɪs      nasɪt tɪħkiː ˈħaːðɪr ˈsaħ*

You were present but forgot say present right

'You were present but forgot to respond to the call of attendance, right!'

[both the student and the instructor know he was not present]

A: *ʔasˈʃ nasɪt    ʔɪħkiː ˈħaːðɪr*

Sorry forgot    to.say    present

'Sorry, I forgot to say I am present.'

B: *tajjɪb haːˈjɪl ˈmarraː bɪsadʒɪlæk ˈħaːðɪr*

Okay    this    time    mark.you    present

'Okay, this time, I will mark you present.'

(repeated)

If other students notice this approach, they might exploit it, expecting the same leniency. Therefore, teachers must avoid using ostensible lies publicly in front of other students. While coordinating an excuse for one student might seem manageable, applying the same approach consistently can become problematic. Students might start using similar excuses to avoid punishment for their tardiness. This makes it difficult for the teacher to manage and maintain fairness in the classroom. "Just as street lights are used to give each motorist an equal opportunity to enter and leave an intersection, classroom rules are needed to establish equal opportunities for each student to learn." (Freiberg, 1983, p. 10). To prevent such issues, the teacher should handle these situations without fabricating reasons for the entire class.

Applying Bandura's (1977) social learning theory to the issue of ostensible lies in the classroom reveals that this behavior is learned through observation and interaction within the educational setting. Students may observe their peers using ostensible lies to manage academic difficulties and perceive this as an effective strategy to avoid negative repercussions. This behavior is reinforced when teachers implicitly accept these lies, further entrenching the practice.

5.2.2 Responding to Ostensible Lies

Based on Walton (1998), ostensible lies are often utilized by individuals who hold power over others. However, power dynamics are elastic and context-dependent (Bayraktarolu & Sifianou, 2001; Beschieru, 2021; Candela, 1998; Cornelius & Herrenkohl, 2004; Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 1998; Sidky, 2017). In classrooms, teachers generally hold power over their students. Erickson (1986) cited in Candela (1998, p. 140) postulated that " only the teacher has legitimate power in the classroom   because of their institutional position and their greater knowledge of the topic." However, in other educational contexts, such as exams, this power dynamic can shift, allowing students to gain power over teachers (Candela, 1998). That is, "while traditional classroom relations relied on the teacher's authority and control in the classroom, the current situation indicates a shift in the power relations existing in the class" (Beschieru, 2021, p. 37). As we illustrated before.

Example 13

A: *tˤajjɪb    dɪktoːr    fiː    suʔaːl    miʃ ˈwaːveħ*

Ok                professor question    not    clear

*bɪ-suʔaːl    ʔɪθ-θaː.ni*

in-question   the-second

'Okay, doctor, there is a question that is not clear.'

(repeated)

Many participants have noted that, based on their common ground, they can distinguish ostensible lies from genuine ones, especially when students use a pretext to achieve their goals. Educators should understand how their responses align with regulations or instructions when addressing ostensible lies. In these situations, educators should maintain the pretense and respond as if the case is genuine, coordinating with students accordingly. Although teachers typically hold the upper hand in power dynamics, this balance can shift if students know the regulations.

## 6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the study on ostensibility lies in the context of Jordanian academic interactions and offers significant insights into the complex communication dynamics between students and educators. Ostensible lies, which are mutually recognized, serve various pragmatic functions such as avoiding compliments, compromising authority, issuing implicit warnings, encouraging self-reliance, and maintaining boundaries. These functions highlight the intricate interplay of social, cultural, and communicative norms that shape educational interactions. Understanding these functions can lead to

more effective teaching and learning strategies.

Practically, the findings of this study offer valuable guidelines for educators on the effective use and response to ostensible lies. Educators can utilize ostensible lies to manage classroom interactions tactfully, preserve authority, and create a supportive learning environment. However, they must also be mindful of maintaining consistency and fairness in their application of these strategies. Responding to ostensible lies requires a delicate balance of upholding institutional regulations while accommodating students' needs and preserving their dignity. Ultimately, this study highlights the importance of cultural and contextual awareness in shaping communicative practices within educational environments.

This study represents the first and only study on ostensible acts within educational settings. While it provides insights into the pragmatic functions and implications of ostensible lies, there remains a significant need for further research in this area. Future studies should explore ostensible acts across different cultural and educational contexts to understand them on a larger scale. Additionally, quantitative research could help establish the frequency of these acts and their effects on academic performance and interpersonal relationships. By expanding the research scope, scholars can understand how ostensible communication influences educational practices globally.

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