

COMPLAINT IN ENGLISH AND ARABIC: A CONTRASTIVE STUDY

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Section One

Theoretical Background

1.1 The Speech Act of Complaint

According to Trosborg (1990: 311), complaint belongs to the category of expressive functions. This category contains the moral judgments which convey the speaker's approval and disapproval of the conduct revealed in the judgment, but the focus in this study will be on the second function, that is the act of moral censure or blame involved in the act of complaining.

Cruz (2009: 1211) asserts that complaints can be executed directly or indirectly. When complaints are issued against the hearer, they are direct. However, they can be produced against a third party and convey the speaker's lament concerning such third party's behaviour in a critical manner or about situations or events that are (un)recoverable and/or away from his own control or the hearer's. Typically, such complaints are indirect, so long as the hearer can not be accountable for the perceived offence, but the third party.

As far as a definition is concerned, Edwards (2000: 5) asserts that complaint escapes formal definitions, and remains a greatly normative and vernacular, rather than technical category.

Nevertheless, Olshtain and Weinbach (1993: 108) state that in the executing of the speech act of complaint, the speaker vents displeasure or annoyance-censure- as an outcome of a prior or continuing action, the result of which is discerned as influencing him adversely. This complaint is typically addressed to the hearer whom the speaker regards, at least, somehow accountable for the offensive action. Similarly, Trosborg (1990: 312) defines complaint as an illocutionary act in which the speaker (the complainer) voices his disapproval, negative feelings, etc, towards the state of affairs portrayed in the proposition and for which he considers the hearer (the complaine) accountable, either directly or indirectly.

Daly et al (2004: 948) say that via suggesting or conveying that the addressee is to blame for a perceived offence; direct complaints threaten the addressee's positive face, i.e. the need to be approved of and be fond of. Furthermore, via suggesting or conveying that the addressee should alter the unfavourable state of affairs, the complaint collides with the addressee's negative face, or the need to be independent.

1.2 Felicity Conditions of the Speech Act of Complaint

From the speaker point of view, the following preconditions are needed in order for the speech act of complaining to take place (Olshtain and Weinbach, 1993: 108):

1. The hearer performs a socially unacceptable act (SUA) which is contrary to a social code of behavioural norms shared by the speaker and the hearer.

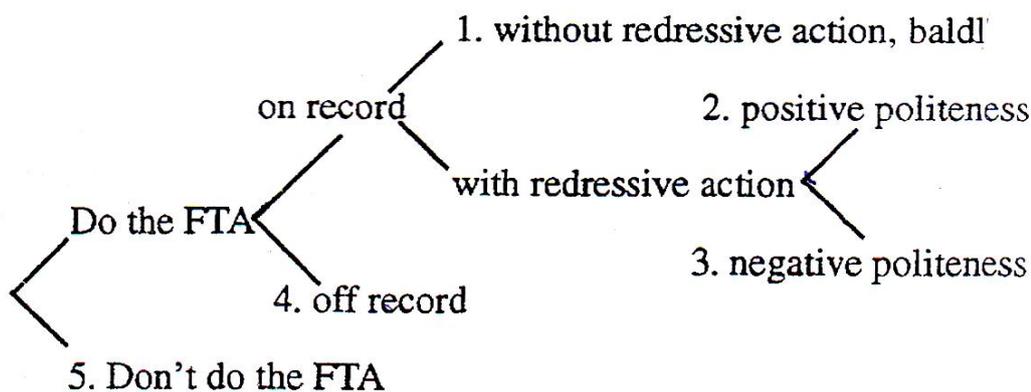
٢. The speaker perceives the SUA as having unfavourable consequences for him, and/or for the general public.
٣. The verbal expression of the speaker relates post facto directly or indirectly to the SUA, thus having the illocutionary force of censure.
٤. The speaker perceives the SUA as: (a) freeing him from the implicit understanding of a social cooperative relationship with the hearer; the speaker therefore, chooses to express his frustration or annoyance, although the result will be a conflictive type of illocution in Leech's terms (Leech, ١٩٨٣, ١٠٤); and (b) giving the speaker the legitimate right to ask for repair in order to undo the SUA, either for his benefit or for the public benefit.

١.٣ Complaint and Politeness

According to Brown and Levinson (١٩٧٨: ٧٠), the speech act of complaining implies that the speaker has a negative assessment of some aspect of the hearer's positive face. When the complaint is issued directly, i.e. when the person produces a complaint against someone or something that is present in the speech act scene, the speech act of complaining is intrinsically face threatening to the hearer (Moon, ٢٠٠١: ٥). Edwards (٢٠٠٥: ٨) asserts that complaints are inherently negative, just as criticisms are, and assume the form of morally implicative stories and descriptions of people and places.

According to Watts (٢٠٠٣: ٨٥), Brown and Levinson's politeness theory is constructed on Goffman's notion of face and on the Gricean model of the cooperative principle as well. They propose a *Model Person* with the ability to rationalize from communicative goals to the ultimate ways of maintaining those goals. Yule (١٩٩٦: ١٣٤) mentions that face means the public self -image of a person. It signifies the emotional and social sense of self that everyone possesses and anticipates everyone else to distinguish. According to Yule (ibid), a person's negative face is the need to be autonomous and to have liberty from imposition. A person's positive face is the need to be associated, to belong, and to be a member of the group. Therefore, a face-saving act that stresses a person's negative face will show concern about imposition. A face-saving act that stresses a person's positive face will show solidarity and attract attention to general goals.

Watts (٢٠٠٣: ٨٦) states that facework requires sustaining every interlocutor's face until the close of the interaction, hence, it is in favour of all interlocutors to decrease face-threatening to a minimum. Thus, politeness strategies will be those which aim at (a) supporting or enhancing the addressee's positive face and (b) avoiding transgression of the addressee's freedom of action and freedom from imposition. Brown and Levinson (١٩٧٨: ٧٤) propose a set of five possibilities for the speaker to achieve this ranging from the best case (strategy type ٥) to the worst (strategy type ١).



١,٤ Complaint Strategies

Trosborg (١٩٩٥) studies direct complaint strategies as produced by native and non-native speakers of English. She classifies complaints into four categories according to the directness scale she proposes. The criteria used for constructing this scale of directness are the following:

Propositional content (complainable)

Complainer

Accused (complainee)

(Trosborg, ١٩٩٥: ٣١٥)

The following factors are decisive in determining the directness level of a complaint (ibid.):

١. The complainable is or is not expressed directly in the propositional content. (P describes/does not describe the complainable)
٢. The complainer's negative evaluation of the propositional content is implicitly or explicitly expressed. (P is bad-articulated or implied)
٣. The negative involvement of the complainee is implicitly or explicitly expressed. (A¹ has done P-articulated or implied)
٤. The complainer's negative evaluation of the complainee's behaviour is implicitly or explicitly expressed. (C evaluates A¹'s action as bad-articulated or implied)
٥. The complainer's negative evaluation of the complainee as a person is implicitly or explicitly expressed. (C evaluates A¹ as a bad person-articulated or implied)

Altogether, ٨ sub-categories are established, strategies ١ being the most indirect, strategy ٨ the most direct.

١,٤,١ No Explicit Reproach: Hints

So as to avoid a conflict, a complainer may have resorted to hinting strategies, in which case the complainable is not stated in the proposition.

The situation: Neglected cleaning roster (two friends share a flat and have agreed on a shared

cleaning arrangement. A fails to do her share. B complains).

١. The kitchen was clean and orderly when I left it last.

١,٤,٢ Expression of Annoyance or Disapproval

A complainer can voice his annoyance, dislike, dissatisfaction, etc. regarding a particular state of affairs which he regards bad. The utterance may also convey the ill consequences caused by an offence for which the complainees is considered covertly accountable

a. Annoyance

٢. You know I don't like dust, I'm allergic to dust, didn't you know it?

b. Ill -Consequences

٣. I have already spar, spa. I have already spent ten minutes oh, quarter of an hour I think it was, cleaning up the bathroom itself.

١,٤,٣ Accusations

The complainer is able to ask the hearer questions in relation to the situation or declare that he was somehow associated with the offence and thereby attempt to prove the hearer as a potential agent of the complainable. Alternatively, the complainer can openly accuse the complainees of having committed the offence.

a. Indirect Accusation

٤. Look at the mess, haven't you done any cleaning up for the last week?

b. Direct Accusation

٥. You don't even clean up after you when you have been there, you used to do it what is up with you now?

١,٤,٤ Blaming

According to Trosborg (١٩٩٥: ٣١٨), an act of blame assumes that the accused is condemned of the offence. Three acts are recognized with regard to the explicitness with which the complainer forms his condemnation of the accused.

a. Modified Blame

٦. It's boring to stay here, and I hate living in a mess, anyway you ought to clean up after you.

b. Explicit Condemnation of the Accused's Action

٧. You never clean up after you, I'm sick and tired of it.

c. Explicit Condemnation of the Accused as a Person

٨. Bloody fool! You have done it again.

١,٤,٥ Directive Acts

Trosborg (ibid.: ٣٢٠) asserts that when a complaint is produced, a directive act may be embedded or added.

a. Request for Repair

Consider the following situation:

Situation: Passenger to follow passenger smoking in a non-smoking compartment in a train:

٩. This is a non-smoker. In this situation, the speaker is complaining. Nevertheless, the complaine would have misunderstood the utterance if he does not at the same time take the complaint as a request to give up smoking or to depart the compartment (ibid.: ٣٢١).

b. Threat

Situation: Cassette stolen from shop.

١٠. Now, give me back what you have stolen, or I shall have to call the police.

c. Request for Forbearance

١١ Well, I'd really like to find about this because I'm hoping it won't happen again.

In Trosborg's (١٩٩٥) study the foregoing directive acts are included as complaint strategies but treated as additional acts. In this study, Trosborg's foregoing framework of complaint strategies is adopted for the analysis. Within this framework each specific strategy can be described and that enables researchers to make comparison of learners versus native speakers' realizations of complaint, as well as cross-cultural comparison.

١,٥ Internal Modifications

According to Trosborg (١٩٩٥: ٣١٣), specific kinds of internal modifiers, **downgraders**, minimizing the impact a complaint liable to have on the accused and via containing them in a complaint, they are more probable to make it sound more polite. However, the containing of **upgraders** has the reverse influence in the sense that they maximize the impact of a complaint on the hearer. Moreover, via containing internal modifiers in terms of **downgraders** or **upgraders** it is likely to maintain variable degrees of politeness while sustaining the very level of directness.

١,٦ Indirect Complaints

Boxer (١٩٩٣a: ٢٨٠) asserts that indirect complaint is a sort of negative evaluation. A negative evaluation is a speech act that estimates a person or a situation via a statement that conveys a negative semantic load. An indirect complaint is defined as "the expression of dissatisfaction to an addressee about oneself or someone/something that is not present". It is different from a direct complaint in the sense that the addressee is neither considered accountable nor able to cure the offence. While both direct and indirect complaints possess the potential of guiding to long interactions between interlocutors, it is typically merely in the latter that one finds conversational material on which common beliefs and attitudes may be vented (ibid.). According to Boxer (١٩٩٣b: ١١٩), indirect complaints are often used for opening and maintaining interactions.

١,٧ Indirect Complaint Themes

According to Boxer (١٩٩٣b: ١٠٨) and Boxer (٢٠١٠: ١١٦) a number of themes of indirect

complaints abound in ordinary social interaction. These are self-directed indirect complaints, where speakers utter a self-put down (e.g. My thighs are beyond hope.), other-directed indirect complaints, where speakers complain about another person(s) (e.g. He takes such bad care of himself.) and situation indirect complaints, where speakers complain about a personal or impersonal situation (e.g. This bread is stale.)

١,٨ Responses to Indirect Complaints

The way in which the addressee replies to an indirect complaint can importantly encourage further interaction. That is, relying on the kind of responses extracted, the complaint sequence can assert or reassert solidarity among interlocutors, or distance them from each other (Boxer, ١٩٩٣a: ٢٨٦).

١,٨,١ Zero Response or Change of Subject

According to Boxer (١٩٨٩: ٣١), such responses are typical in situations where the addressee is exhausted of listening to S's complaint because the addressee knows S to be a chronic complainer, where there is a reduced intention for solidarity, or where there is a high degree of social distance and the complainer is of higher status. An example of a situation in which the addressee alters the subject will explain how such a response can frustrate an opener. The sequence is on the topic of vacations:

١٢. A....the last couple of times we went, with the kids, away, you know, it takes a day and a half to get anywhere cause you spend six hours on an airplane.

B. So you stayed at... Hotel. We liked that place.

(ibid.)

١,٨,٢ Question

Boxer (١٩٩٣a: ٢٨٨) asserts that this category comprises questions that request amplification of the indirect complaint in addition to those that invite S to support his complaint. The former, those that reveal the complaint, are the most recurrent type of questions and usually function as temporary responses that consequently lead to one of the other types of responses.

Situation: Two female graduate students:

١٣. A: I was up all night with C [A's daughter].

B: What's wrong?

A: She's had this hacking cough, and it's gotten worse. So I'm gonna take her to the doctor.

B: You know, M [B's daughter] is home sick today too

A: Why?

B: I'm not sure, she's still sleeping. She's either exhausted or caught a chill or both.

(ibid.: ٢٨٧)

١,٨,٣ Joking/Teasing

These responses are frequently found in service encounters, and between little-acquainted interlocutors who wish to manifest a light-hearted kindness (Boxer and Pickering, ١٩٩٥: ٥٣). The following is a service encounter in which A, a female S, notice a long line forming. B is the

receptionist:

١٤. A: When we got here there was nobody waiting. Look at it now!

B: Gray Line drops off a bus load every hour.

(ibid.)

١,٨,٤ Contradictions

According to Boxer (١٩٨٩: ٣٤), there is one method available for the addressee to inform S that the complaint is not approved of and accepted is to contradict S or take the part of the object of the complaint via some kind of defense on its part. This sort of responses either involves intimate, status equals with social distance, the desire for social distance, or non-native speakers who may not have been conscious of socially unacceptable responses.

Situation: A husband; B wife

١٥. A: What a horrible nose his wife has!

B: Listen, in some societies that's considered beautiful.

(Boxer, ١٩٩٣b: ١١٦)

١,٨,٥ Advice/Lecture

Advice repeatedly occurs as an indirect complaint response, but sporadically it functions as encouragement of S (Boxer and Pickering, ١٩٩٥: ٥٣):

Situation: Two female strangers are talking to each other at a swimming-pool. S is about to enter the water in which the addressee has already been swimming:

١٦. A: Ow it's cold! You're brave.

B: Just take the plunge. It feels good once you get in.

(ibid.)

Here, the advice functions to stimulate S to begin swimming. This brief exchange serves as a conversational opener that leads to upcoming conversation between the two women. They resume their talk while in the pond, tackling health-related matters (ibid.).

١,٨,٦ Commiseration

According to Boxer (١٩٩٣b: ١١٧), commiseration is the most recurrently encountered indirect complaint responses. This category embraces all responses that display agreement or reassurance, responses in the shape of exclamation possessing an implicit commiseration, and any other response having implicit agreement like a mono-syllable utterance in which some prosodic feature signals commiseration. The most familiar type of commiserative response is in the shape of straightforward agreement with the S, elaboration of the S's complaint, or some kind of affirmation of the validity of the complaint. The following example is taken from an exchange between two female graduate students about doing a homework assignment together:

١٧. A: I'm getting more and more lost.

B: So am I.

A: And yesterday he went over the homework, which is fine, but it didn't prepare us at all for this week.

B: No. He's just not a good teacher.

(ibid.)

Section Two

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This section is dedicated to the analysis of some selected English and Arabic novels. It deals with the speech act of complaint in its two versions: direct and indirect in English and Arabic. The data contains *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain and *The Catcher in the Rye* by D. J. Salinger on the one hand. On the other hand, it includes *اولاد حارتنا* (The Children of Gebelawi), *زقاق المدق* (Midaq Alley) and *حكاية بلا بداية ولا نهاية* (*A Story without a Beginning or an End*) by Najeeb Mahfouz.

٢.١ Method of Analysis

As far as direct complaint is concerned, instances containing the speech act of complaint are analyzed according to Trosborg's (١٩٩٥) model of complaints strategies. Additionally, social factors such as social status are taken into consideration because they play a significant role in the use of a specific complaint strategy besides the researcher highlights the situations within which the speech act of complaint is performed since such situations contribute much towards a better understanding of the act of complaining in literary texts.

Actually, the analysis of the extracts containing direct complaints is carried out according to the following criteria:

١. The syntactic realizations of complaints strategies and frequency of occurrence of certain patterns.
٢. The use of lexical internal modification markers.
٣. The use of certain complaint strategies.

The texts of the novels take the following symbols through the analysis:

- T^١ = The Adventures of Tom Sawyer
- T^٢ = Adventures of Huckleberry Finn
- T^٣ = The Catcher in the Rye
- T^٤ = زقاق المدق (Midaq Alley)
- T^٥ = اولاد حارتنا (The Children of Gebelawi)
- T^٦ = حكاية بلا بداية ولا نهاية (A Story without a Beginning or an End)

٢.٢ Syntactic Realizations

On the first level of analysis, complaints which are encountered in the English and Arabic data are analyzed according to their various syntactic patterns and the frequency of occurrence of certain

patterns. Thus, syntactically speaking, and as far as this study is concerned, it is found that the great majority of complaints in the English and Arabic data assume the form of declaratives. Declaratives constitute ٤٣% of the English set of data compared to ٤٥% of the Arabic set of data.

١٢. Tom, Tom, I love you so, and you seem to try every way you can to break my old heart with your outrageousness.

(T١: ٣٠)

١٣. اكثرنا متسولون، اطفالنا جياع، وجوهنا متورمه من صفع الفتوات.

(T٥: ١٢٥)

(Most of us are paupers. Our children are in hunger and our faces are swollen in inflammation of the slaps of the ruffians.)

Additionally, some of the complaints which appear in the English and Arabic data are realized via questions of distinctive types. Questions form ٢٩% of the complaints occurring in the English data compared to ٣٤% in the Arabic data.

١٤. What are you prowling around here this time of night, for-hey?

(T٢: ٧٣)

١٥. أتطمعين أنت أيضا في مالي الحلال وولايتي المستمده من كرامات جدي الأكرم؟

(T٦: ٢٤)

(Do you too desire my lawful money and my guardianship that stems from my grandfather's blessings?)

١٦. سامحك الله..كيف هانت عليك أمك؟

(T٥: ٢٤١)

(Allah forgive you. How you neglected your mother!)

According to the findings of this study, some complaints take the form of exclamatives. As far as the English data is concerned, exclamatives form ٣,٥% of the complaints which are detected in the English set of data compared to ١٠% in the Arabic set.

١٧. What a mess you are always making.

(T٢: ١٢)

١٨. كيف سولت لك نفسك أن تخاطبني!

(T٤: ١٤١)

(How dare you talk to me!)

Additionally, a number of complaints in the English and Arabic sets of data are realized by means of conditional clauses. In the English data, the complaints assuming the forms of conditional clauses greater than those in the Arabic set of data. In the English data they are ١٢% while in the Arabic data they are ٣,٦%.

١٩. If you don't shut up, I'm gonna slam ya one

(T٣: ٥٥)

٢٠. إن عدت الى هذيانك قضيت على نفسك و على أهلك بالذبح كالنعاج.

(T٥: ١٨٦)

(If you revert into your hallucination, you will have yourself and your family be slaughtered as sheep.)

Finally, some complaints in this study are realized by means of imperative sentences which convey the illocutionary force of a request because they are produced by interlocutors who are equal. They represent ١٠% of the English set of data while in the Arabic set of data they are ٥%.

٢١. Lift up, will you? You're on my towel.

(T٣: ٣٩)

٢٢. أرجع الي أخي.

(T٦: ٢٢)

(Bring my brother back to me.)

The following table illustrates the basic syntactic patterns of complaint in the English and Arabic data.

Table ١: Rates of syntactic patterns of complaints in the English and the Arabic data

Syntactic patterns	English data		Arabic data	
	number	percentage	number	percentage
١. Declaratives	٢٥	٤٣%	٢٥	٤٥%
٢. Questions	١٧	٢٩%	١٩	٣٤%
٣. Imperatives	٦	١٠%	٣	٥%
٤. Exclamatives	٢	٣,٦%	٦	١٠%
٥. Conditional clauses	٧	١٢%	٢	٣,٦%

٢,٣ Internal Modification Markers

On the second level of analysis, English and Arabic complaints are examined according to the use of internal modification markers. As stated before, a complaint may be softened or weakened by the inclusion of downgraders, and aggravated or strengthened by the inclusion of upgraders. The following table shows the distribution of internal modification markers in the English and Arabic data.

Internal modification markers	English data		Arabic data	
	number	percentage	number	percentage
Downgraders	٨	١٣,١%	٤	١٢,٥%
Upgraders	٥٣	٨٦,٨%	٢٨	٨٧,٥%

Table ٢: Rates of downgraders and upgraders in the English and Arabic data

From the table above, it can be seen that native speakers of English use more downgraders than native speakers of Arabic. In both languages, downgraders are used by interlocutors who are either equal or non-equal in terms of social status. Downgraders represent ١٣,١% of internal modification markers detected in the English data while in the Arabic data, they represent ١٢,٥%.

Situation:

٢٣. Will ya please cut your crumby nails over the table? (T٣: ٣١)

In the previous situation, the speaker asks his neighbour, who has been cutting his nails over the floor, to cut them over the table in order not to step on them and get hurt. The speaker uses the politeness marker *please* in order to mitigate his request.

Situation:

٢٤. أخشى أن تعيد سيرة عمك في هذه الحياة. (T٥: ٧٨)

(I am afraid that you are going to be in emulation of your uncle.)

In this situation, the speaker is complaining by expressing his fear that his son is going to be like his uncle who is rough and rude. He employs the subjectivizer *أخشى أن* (I am afraid) in order to soften his complaint. It can be noticed that in the data native speakers of English employ more upgraders in their complaints than their Arab counterparts. Nevertheless, in both the English and Arabic sets of data upgraders are employed more than downgraders. They represent ٨٦,٨% of the total internal modification markers that occur in English complaints compared to ٨٧,٥% in Arabic ones. Similarly, as with downgraders, upgraders are used by interlocutors with symmetrical or asymmetrical relations. In the last case, one of the interlocutors is usually higher than the other.

Situation:

٢٥. Now, sir, why are you late again, as usual? (T١: ٣٤)

As regards this situation, the speaker (schoolmaster) is complaining as the hearer (pupil) is in the habit of arriving late at school. The complaint is presented in the form of a question for the reason behind the offence. The speaker uses the intensifiers *again* and *as usual* in order to magnify the complaint. The use of the vocative *sir* is also ironical because the hearer is inferior to the speaker. This contributes to the intensity of the utterance.

Situation:

٢٦. لم تزرنا حتى دعوناك يا جاحد.

(T^o: ١٨٣)

(Oh, you ungrateful, not visited us until being invited.) In this example, the speaker is complaining since the hearer (her adopted son) has performed a socially unacceptable act (neglecting his mother). The hearer has left the house for a long period of time and when he returns he does not go to visit his mother. Thus, she invites him in order to make sure that he is alright. She uses the adjective جاحد (ungrateful) so as to enhance the hearer's offence that is of forgetting his mother.

٢,٤ Direct Complaints

٢,٤,١ Complaint Strategies

An analysis of complaint strategies used in the English and Arabic data is given below:

٢,٤,١,١ No explicit reproach: Hint

Situation:

٢٧. Hey, I've read this same sentence about twenty times since you came in.

(T³: ٢٧)

In this example, the speaker (Holden) is complaining because the hearer (Ackley) persists asking him irritating questions while he is busy reading a book. This causes the speaker to become annoyed and therefore to issue the utterance. Nevertheless, the utterance is polite because the speaker tries to save the hearer's face by performing an off-record face-threatening act when he resorts to produce a hint regarding a particular state of affairs which he believes to be bad and the hearer to be indirectly responsible for.

According to Olshtain and Weinback (١٩٩٣: ١١١), when the interlocutors are equal or the speaker has higher social status, the tendency is for severe strategies. However, in this situation, the speaker and the hearer are not intimates. Thomas (١٩٩٥: ١٢٨) states that interlocutors who are intimates feel less required to employ indirectness. That is why the speaker here resorts to this indirect strategy because he is not intimate with the hearer. Despite the fact that the speaker does not mention the offence in the utterance, he tries to increase the impact on the hearer by employing the intensifier *hey*, the expression *twenty times* and making explicit reference to the hearer via the pronoun *you*.

Situation:

٢٨. و لكنني الأخ الأكبر.

(T^o: ١٢)

(But I am the eldest bother.)

In order to avoid an open confrontation with the hearer (his father), the speaker (Idrees) is inclined to use a hinting strategy. His father has decided to nominate his younger son to look after the family's endowment. Feeling distressed in consequence of being deprived of his legal right as the eldest son in the family, the speaker expresses his dissatisfaction by producing a complaint concerning this state of affairs which is not mentioned in the utterance.

In this situation, the speaker is inferior to the hearer in terms of social status (father-son), that is why the former resorts to an indirect strategy. According to Olshtain and Weinback (1993: 111), when the speaker is of lower status than the hearer, the propensity is for less severe complaints.

٢,٤,١,٢ Expression of disapproval or annoyance

This category is of two types:

٢,٤,١,٢,١ Annoyance

Situation:

٢٩. This room stinks.

(T٣: ٥٩)

In this example, the speaker is visiting the hearer and while the former is sitting in the latter's room, a musty smell of unwashed socks overwhelms the place. This incident makes the speaker express his annoyance regarding this state of affairs which he believes to be bad. The speaker tries to avoid an open conflict with the hearer, yet he makes it obvious that some sort of violation takes place. By mentioning the offence in the utterance, the speaker implies that he regards the hearer accountable but avoids stating that. The utterance is polite because the hearer can choose to interpret it as a complaint or ignore it.

Additionally, the speaker and the hearer are equal (both are students) but they are not intimates, which makes the speaker employ a less direct strategy

Situation:

قاتل الله الحقد و الحسد. ٣٠.

(T٦: ١٤)

(Allah fight malice and envy.)

As regards the foregoing situation, a group of the residents decide to meet the speaker Sheik(h) Mahmood in order to complain about the miserable circumstances they are living in which they ascribe to the policy of the religious men of the town. In order to save the hearer's face, the speaker resorts to a religious discourse which is used as a strategy of positive politeness. Actually, the relationship between the interlocutors is that of power; however, by using a less direct strategy, the speaker wishes to achieve a balance between expression of annoyance and sustaining of social harmony.

٢,٤,١,٢,٢ Ill- Consequence

Situation:

٣١. Oh, what shall I do, what shall I do! I'll be whipped, and I never was whipped in schools.

(T١: ٨٨)

In this example, the speaker (Becky) complains expressing the ill- consequence resulting from the offence for which she considers the hearer (Tom) indirectly accountable. While she is looking at a picture of a naked human figure contained in the schoolmaster's book, the hearer peeps at her. This confuses her and causes her to tear the picture. Thus, she starts crying in awareness of the gravity of

her upcoming punishment.

Additionally, the speaker and hearer are equal. Besides, they are lovers; however, because they have broken up their relation the speaker uses a less direct strategy.

٢,٤,١,٣ Accusation

This category comprises two types:

٢,٤,١,٣,١ Indirect Accusation

Situation:

٣٢. Phoebe, have you been smoking a cigarette in here? Tell me the truth, please, young lady.

(T٣: ٢١٠)

In this example, the speaker (mother) questions the hearer (her daughter) about the offence. She indirectly accuses her little daughter of having been smoking in her bedroom. Actually, the speaker tries to establish the hearer as the agent of the offence. Here, the speaker is higher than the hearer; hence she makes use of a more direct strategy (Olshtain and Weinback, ١٩٩٣:١١١). Formulating the accusation as a question is less face-threatening to the hearer's face. The speaker implies that the hearer is responsible for the offence. In this case, the hearer still has the opportunity to disclaim responsibility without explicitly contradicting the speaker.

Situation:

٣٣. لماذا تتبعني؟

(T٤: ١٤٢)

(Why are you following me?)

In this example, the speaker (Hameedah) asks the hearer (Faraj) about the offence. She indirectly accuses him of following her while she is exercising walking. She presupposes that the hearer follows her and asks for a reason. Similarly, as with the English example, the speaker tries to minimize threat to the hearer's face by formulating the accusation in the form of a question.

٢,٤,١,٣,٢ Direct Accusation

Situation:

٣٤. I never see such an old ostrich for wanting to gobble everything- and I a trusting you all the time, like you was my own father.

(T٢: ١٥٧)

In this example, the speaker violates the hearer's positive face via directly accusing him of having committed the offence. The speaker resorts to a simile in order to portray the hearer's ill-behaviour. As regards this situation, both the speaker and the hearer pretend to be the brothers of a wealthy man who died recently and inherit some of his properties. Here, the speaker accuses his partner of hiding the money in that dead man's coffin to retrieve it later without informing him. Here, the hearer has no chance to disclaim responsibility for the offence because this is an explicit

accusation. The speaker and hearer are equal besides they are close friends the thing that enables the speaker to use a more severe strategy (Olshtain and Weinback, ١٩٩٣: ١١١)

Situation:

٣٥. تتآمر عليّ مع ادريس الذي طردته اكراما لك .

(T٥: ٤٩)

(You are conspiring against me with Idrees whom I have dismissed to honour you.)

In this example, the speaker (Adham's father) violates the hearer's (Adham) positive face by openly accusing him of having committed the offence (the hearer is accused of conspiring with his brother against their father). The hearer who is reluctant is convinced by his wife's ambition and his brother's wickedness to spy on their father's will. While the hearer is searching for the will, his father comes in and discovers the conspiracy. Similarly, as in the previous example, the hearer has no opportunity to disclaim responsibility for the offence. The speaker is superior to the hearer in terms of social status (father-son). In addition, they are intimates which makes the former inclined to use a severe strategy (Olshtain and Weinback, ١٩٩٣: ١١١).

٢,٤,١,٤ Blame

This category includes three types:

٢,٥,١,٤,١ Modified Blame

Situation:

٣٦. Well, I don't say that it wasn't a fine joke, Tom to keep everybody suffering 'most a week so you boys had a good time, but it is a pity you could be so hard-hearted as to let me suffer so. If you could come over on a log to go to your funeral, you could have come over and give me a hint some way that you warn't dead, but only run off.
(T١: ٨٠)

In this instance, the speaker (Aunt Polly) violates the hearer's positive face by blaming him for not taking an alternative to repair the undesirable state of affairs for which he is considered responsible. Tom and his friends determine to become pirates. Thus, they run away from home in order to live on Jackson's Island in the middle of the Mississippi Here, the speaker implicitly blames the hearer saying that he could have sent her some kind of message that he is alive to relieve her and put an end to her pain.

Additionally, in this situation, the speaker is higher than the hearer, the thing that plays a role in the selection of this strategy. However, the speaker tries to minimize the impact of the utterance on the hearer by employing a conditional clause *if you could* and the past tense *you could have*.

Situation:

٣٧ ألا تجد قولاً افضل من هذا تخاطبني به؟

(T٤: ٦٦)

(Do not you find something better to say?)

As regards this situation, the speaker tries to minimize threat to the hearer's positive face by expressing a mild disapproval of an act for which the hearer is regarded accountable. The speaker (Um Hussein) calls her husband in order to persuade him to give up his homosexual habit. As a result, he becomes indignant and accuses her of foolishness. In fact, she is annoyed and blames him implicitly via asking him whether he could not find better words than the ones he uses. The interlocutors in this situation are equal which makes the speaker use a severe strategy.

٢,٤,١,٤,٢ Explicit Condemnation of the Accused's Action

Situation:

٣٨. Because if he'd one she'd a burnt him out herself! She'd a roasted his bowels out of him 'thout any more feeling that if he was a human!

(T١: ٥٨)

In this example, the speaker (Tom) violates the hearer's (Aunt Polly) positive face by directly stating that the action for which the hearer is held responsible is bad. Aunt Polly practices a multitude of home-remedies in order to cure Tom including feeding him pain-killer. Tired of the daily doses, Tom feeds a spoonful to the cat which upon receiving the medicine begins to perform some somersaults in the air. Tom tries to show his aunt that the endless doses of medicine are as much torture for him as it is for the cat. The relation between the speaker and hearer is that of power. Hence, the speaker tries to minimize the impact of the face-threatening act on the hearer by using a conditional clause *if he'd*, the past tense *burnt him* and using the third person singular pronouns *he* and *she* instead of the first and the second person pronouns *I* and *you*.

Situation:

٣٩.

تزوجت يا حسين!.. اهلا بك يا عروس.. تزوجت يا حسين دون ان تخبرنا!؟ كيف رضيت ان تزف في غياب والديك و هما على قيد الحياة؟!

(T٤: ١٧٨)

(Hussein you have got married! Oh, bride you are welcomed. Hussein you have got married without informing us! How have you consented to wed in the absence of your parents, in time they are alive?)

As regards the previous situation, the speaker (Um Hussein) violates the hearer's (her son) positive face by blaming him for getting married without informing and inviting his parents to his wedding party. The utterance assumes the form of an exclamation to express the degree to which the speaker is affected by this news. In fact, in this situation, the speaker is higher than the hearer, the thing which makes the former resort to a more severe strategy (Olshtain and Weinback, ١٩٩٣: ١١١).

٢,٤,١,٤,٣ Explicit Condemnation of the Accused as a Person

Situation:

٤٠. Oh, child, you never think. You never think of anything but your own selfishness. You could think to come all the way over here from Jackson's Island in the night to laugh at our troubles and you could think to fool me with a lie about a dream: but you couldn't ever think to pity us and save us from sorrow.

(T١: ٨٦)

In this example, the speaker (Aunt Polly) damages the hearer's (Tom) positive face by explicitly stating that he is an irresponsible social member. In pursuit of becoming a pirate, Tom runs away from home to live with his friends on Jackson's Island. After his return, he tells his aunt that he has dreamed about her. When his aunt visits her neighbour, she discovers that the dream is merely a lie.

Actually, the speaker is higher than the hearer in terms of social status, the thing that makes the former produce a direct face-threatening act. According to (Olshtain and Weinback, ١٩٩٣: ١١١), when the interlocutors are equal or the speaker has higher social status, the tendency is stronger for more direct complaint strategies. Additionally, the speaker and the hearer are intimates the thing that also play a role in the strategy selection. Thomas (١٩٩٥: ١٢٨) states that interlocutors who are intimates feel less required to employ indirectness.

Situation:

٤١. الناس يكبرون و يعقلون, أما أنت فكلما كبرت قل عقلك

(T٤: ٦٨)

(As people grow older, they become more reasonable, but for you the more you grow, the more you lose your mind.)

In this instance, the speaker (Um Hussein) violates the hearer's (her husband) positive face by explicitly stating that he is a thoughtless person who loses his mind bit by bit as he grows older contrary to normal people. She condemns him for his homosexual disposition. The speaker and the hearer are equal, which causes the former to use this severe strategy for complaining (Olshtain and Weinback, ١٩٩٣: ١١١).

٢,٤,١,٥ Directive Acts

This category comprises two types:

٢,٤,١,٥,١ Request for Repair

Situation:

٤٢. Listen, if you're gonna smoke in the room, how 'bout going down to the can and do it? You may be getting the hell out of here, but I have to stick around long enough to graduate.

(T٣: ٥٢)

In the previous example, the speaker (Stradlater) violates the hearer's (Holden) negative face by making a request. The speaker asks the hearer to repair the undesirable state of affairs for which

the latter is regarded responsible. Stradlater asks Holden to go and smoke in another place in order not to cause him to be dismissed. The speaker tries to minimize threat to the hearer's face by producing an indirect request which contains the formulaic expression *How about*. Besides, the speaker and hearer are equal (they are room-mates), the matter that causes the speaker to incline to use such direct strategy.

Situation:

اتركيه يا مرة و كفى فضيحة! ٤٣

(T٤: ٨٥)

(Oh, woman, release him and try to bury such a scandal.)

In this example, the speaker violates the hearer's (his wife) negative face by producing a request. He asks her to repair the deplorable state of affairs for which she is considered accountable. When the hearer meets the man who is in love with her husband, she attacks and insults him in front of the people of the town. Hence, her husband intervenes and asks her to release that man. The speaker and hearer are equal which enables the former to produce an on-record request.

٢,٤,١,٥,٢ Threat

Situation:

٤٤. And look here— you drop that school, you hear? I'll learn people to bring up a boy to put on airs over his own father and let on to be better than what he is. You let me catch you fooling around that school again, you hear?..... You are swelling yourself up like this. I ain't the man to stand it
(T٢: ١٥)

In this instance, the speaker (Huck's father) openly attacks the hearer's (Huck) negative face by issuing a threat. The widow Douglas adopts Huck and tries to civilize him. His father who is an uneducated drunker is annoyed because this makes him feel that he is inferior to his son. Thus, he threatens Huck saying that if he does not stop attending school, he will beat him. . In this situation, the speaker is higher than the hearer besides they are intimates the case that makes the former inclined to use such a direct strategy for complaining (Olshtain and Weinback, ١٩٩٣: ١١١) and (Thomas, ١٩٩٥: ١٢٨).

Situation:

اذا غادرتُ بيتك للمرة الثالثة فتكون الثالثة و الاخيرة..٤٥

(T٦: ١٢٢)

(Leave your house for the third time, it will be the last.)

In this example, the speaker violates the hearer's negative face by issuing a threat. The hearer has divorced his wife twice because he suspects that she is having an affair with the priest of the town. Now, when he raises the same issue, she threatens him saying that if she leaves his house this time, it

will be forever. The speaker and hearer are equal (husband and wife) as regards social status, which causes the former to employ this direct complaint strategy.

The table below shows the distribution of complaint strategies in the English and Arabic data.

Complaint strategies	English texts		Arabic texts	
	number	percentage	number	percentage
No explicit reproach				
١. Hint	٢	٣%	٥	٩%
Expression of annoyance or disapproval				
٢. Annoyance	٥	١٠%	٣	٥%
٣. Ill consequence	١	١,٨%		
Accusation				
٤. Indirect accusation	١	١,٨%	٣	٥,٤%
٥. Direct accusation	٧	١٢,٢%	١٢	٢١,٨%
Blame				
٦. Modified blame	٢	٣,٥%	٣	٥,٤%
٧. Condemnation of the accused's action	١٠	١٧,٥%	٩	١٠,٩%
٨. Condemnation of the accused as a person	١٧	٢٩,٨%	١٥	٢٧,٢%
Directive acts				
٩. Request for repair				
١٠. Threat				
١١. Request for forbearance	٩	١٥,٧%	٦	١٠,٩%
	٣	٥,٢%	٢	٣,٦%

Table ٣: Complaint strategies in the English and Arabic data

It can be seen that the English and Arabic sets of data follow a similar trend in strategy distribution. Blame is most frequently used, whereas no explicit reproach and expressions of annoyance or disapproval are least frequently used. Accusation and directive acts are in between. Despite the similar tendency, there is a statically significant difference. The findings indicate that English native speakers use more expressions of annoyance or disapproval than their Arab counterparts while Arab native speakers use more hints than their English peers. Additionally, blame and directive acts are used more in the English data than in the Arabic data while accusation is used more in the Arabic set of data than in the English set.

٢,٥ Social Relations

As known, social relations are of two kinds: symmetrical and asymmetrical. According to Alaiwi (٢٠١٠: ٩٧), symmetrical relations are those relations in which the speaker and hearer have an equivalent social status, while asymmetrical relations include those in which they differ in terms of social status, that is, the speaker is either higher or lower than the hearer and vice versa.

As far as this study is concerned, the findings show that the vast majority of the speech act of

complaint occurs within exchanges between participants of symmetrical relations. They constitute ٥٤% of the English set of data compared to ٥٨% of the Arabic set. As regards the speech act of complaint that occurs between interlocutors with asymmetrical relations, it is found that they form ٤٦% of the English data versus ٤٢% of the Arabic data.

Within the last category, the study discovers that ٧٨% of the speech acts of complaint in the English data are performed by speakers of higher status while ٢١% are produced by speakers of lower status. This is also held true for the Arabic data in which ٧١% of the speech acts of complaint are performed by speakers of higher status compared to ٢٨% by speakers of lower status.

lastly, as regards this study, and as far as the English data is concerned, the researcher finds out that ٥٨% of complaints are direct while in the Arabic data direct complaints constitute ٤٢% of the data. This is a sign of negative politeness. The directness/indirectness distinction is important in speech act theory. However, the interpretation of directness varies from culture to culture. In Arabic directness is frequently grasped as rudeness and is condemned, while in English it is viewed as a means for true communication and is socially accepted (Albassam, n. d.: ٢).

Data	Direct complaints		Indirect complaints		Total
	number	percentage	number	percentage	
English data	٥٧	٥٨%	٤٥	٤٦%	٩٧
Arabic data	٥٥	٤٢%	٧٤	٥٧%	١٢٩

Table ٤:
Direct and indirect complaints in the English and Arabic

data

٢.٦ Indirect Complaints

As regards indirect complaint, the researcher adopts the work of Diana Boxer in this regard which has been high lightened previously. So, it is found out that indirect complaints constitute ٤١% of the English set of data compared to ٥٧% of the Arabic set of data. It can be stated that indirect complaints are used more in the Arabic data than the English data. They are used for seeking commiseration, opening and sustaining a conversation and letting off steam.

٢.٦.١ Indirect Complaint Themes

Indirect complaints tend to centre on three themes. These are self-directed indirect complaints, where speakers utter self-put down, other-directed indirect complaints, where speakers complain about another person(s) and situation indirect complaints, where speakers complain about a personal

or impersonal situation.

٢,٦,١,١ Other- Indirect Complaints

As for this study, the findings show that the second category that is of other indirect complaints is the most frequent in the English and the Arabic sets of data. They represent ٥٠% of indirect complaints that occur in the English data compared to ٥٥,٤% in the Arabic data. In the following situations, indirect complaints focus on talk about another person. This type is commonly referred to as gossip.

Situation:

A and B are two acquaintances talking about their neighbour:

٤٦. A: I reckon that old man was a coward, Buck.

B: I reckon he warn't a coward. Not by a blame' sight. There ain't a coward amongst them Shepherds- not a one.

(T٢: ٨٢)

Situation:

A and B are two brothers talking about their uncle:

٤٧. A: هذا الرجل مقيت، ما أفذرة، حتى في هذه الساعة المبكرة تنفث أنفاسه رائحة الخمر.

B: إنه يتكلم كثيرا، و لكنه لم يمد لنا يدا باذى.
(T٥: ٨١)

A: (This man is of hate. How filthy he is. Even at this early hour, he stinks of wine.)

B: (He is talkative, but he did not hurt us.)

٢,٦,١,٢ Self- Indirect Complaints

Actually, native speakers of English use more self-indirect complaints than their Arab peers. Self-indirect complaints form ٢٥% of indirect complaints found in the English data versus ٢١,٦% in the Arabic data.

Situation:

A and B are close friends:

٤٨. A: Dad fetch it! This comes of playing hookey and doing everything a feller's told not to do. I might a been good, like Sid, if I'd tried-but no, I wouldn't, of course. But if ever I get off this time, I lay I'll just waller in Sunday schools!

B: You bad! Confound it, Tom Sawyer, you're just old pie 'longside o' what I am. Oh, Lordy, Lordy, Lordy, I wish I only had half your chance.

(T١: ٥١)

Here, the speaker is complaining about a personal shortcoming or quality that he is a careless boy who often plays hockey instead of attending school and does everything he likes without paying

attention to other people's recommendations.

Situation:

A and B are two acquaintances:

٤٩. A: مع الزمن سيرى الناس في رجلا غارقا في الخطايا ملوثا ضائعا، شيد من أموالهم بفساد ذمته بناء ضخما.

B: أكثر الناس ليسوا أفضل من ذلك.

(T٦: ٥٩)

A: (With process of time, people will see me as a man saturated in sin, polluted and lost exploiting their money in constructing a magnificent building with his corrupt conscience.)

B: (Most people are not better than you.)

In this situation, the speaker is complaining about a personal defect or characteristic that he is a sinful, polluted lost person who exploits other people's money in constructing a huge building in consequence of his corrupt conscience.

٢,٦,١,٣ Situation- Indirect Complaints

Finally, native speakers of English use more situation indirect complaints than their Arab peers. They constitute ٢٥% of the English set of data compared to ٢٢,٩% of the Arabic set of data.

Situation:

A and B are close friends:

٥٠. A: Oh, boys, let's give it up. I want to go home. It's so lonesome.

B: Oh, no, Joe, you'll feel better by and by. Just think of the fishing that's here.

(T١: ٧٢)

As regards the previous situation, the interlocutors have left home so as to live on an island to become pirates. Thus, A is complaining about the situation on that island in which he finds himself rather than a personal shortcoming.

Situation:

A and B are a husband and his wife:

٥١. A: لعنة الله على الوقف.

B: لا تكفر بالنعمة يا أدهم.

(T٥: ٣٢)

(A: Allah damns the endowment.

(B: Do not be ungrateful, Adham.)

Here, the situation is not personal but one of universal importance in the sense that, Adham is an allegory for the Prophet Adam. Hence, he symbolizes all human beings.

The following table illustrates the main themes of indirect complaints found in the English and Arabic data:

in the English and Arabic data.

٢,٦,٢ Social Distance

Boxer (١٩٩٣b: ١٠٣) states that in its most unsophisticated form, social distance is a measure of the extent of friendship/intimacy between interlocutors. As regards this study, social distance is of three types: strangers, acquaintances and intimates.

According to the findings of this study, other indirect complaints in the English and Arabic sets of data occur most frequently among intimates than acquaintances or strangers. Boxer (ibid: ١١٢) mentions that it is more acceptable to complain about other people to friends or intimates than to strangers.

Also, situation indirect complaints with personal focus are more common among intimates than acquaintances in the English and Arabic data. Additionally, and in contrast to Boxer's (١٩٩٣b) findings that self and situation indirect complaints with impersonal focus are most frequent among strangers, in this study, they occur most frequently among acquaintances and less so among intimates in the English and Arabic data.

٢,٦,٣ Indirect Complaint Responses

As far as this study is concerned, five types of indirect complaint responses are identified as significant categories of the ways in which interlocutors in the English and Arabic data respond to indirect complaints. Below are examples and explanations of each of these responses which are extracted from the English and Arabic sets of data.

٢,٦,٣,١ Zero Response or Change of Subject

Situation:

A and B are two male neighbours:

٥٢. A: He's got this superior attitude all the time. I just can't stand that sonuvabitch.

B: Do you mind cutting your nails over the table, hey?

(T٣: ٣٠)

In this situation, there is a high degree of social distance between A and B. Although they know each other for a period of time, B desires to distance himself from A by altering the subject because of the latter's chronic complaining regarding that same person.

Situation:

A is a girl. B is her mother:

٥٣. A: آه يا خسارتك يا حميدة! لماذا توجدين في هذا الزقاق؟! و لماذا كانت أمك هذه المرأة التي لا تميز بين التبر و التراب؟

B:

(T٤: ٢٦)

(Alas, Hameedah. Why do you exist in this lane? Why has your mother been such a woman who does not discriminate between gold and dust?)

Here, the hearer becomes exhausted of listening to her daughter's recurrent complaint as the latter is a chronic complainer who often complains about the lane they reside in and their living conditions and longs for something better.

٢٦,٣,٢ Questions

Situation:

A is a little sister. B is her brother:

٥٤. A: This boy, Curtis Weintraub, that's in my class, pushed me while I was going down the stairs in the park. Wanna see?

B: Leave it alone. Why'd he push you down the stairs?

A: I don't know. I think he hates me. This other girl and me, Selma Atterbury, put ink and stuff all over his windbreaker.

B: That isn't nice. What are you_ a child, for God's sake?

A: No, but every time I'm in the park, he follows me everywhere. He's always following me. He gets on my nerves.

B: He probably likes you. That's no reason to put ink all...

(T٣: ١٩٥)

The hearer, here, desires to get more information about the reason for the complaint via resorting to questions for elaboration. It can be noticed that this type leads to another type of response that is of advice which is presented by the hearer in the last line of the exchange.

Situation:

A is a husband. B is his wife. They are talking about the town priest:

٥٥. A: ثبت لي أنه رجل مضجر.

B: حدث بينكما شيء؟

A: يعيد ما يقول و يقول ما يعيد، بطريقة رجل يحفظ كلمات معاد عن ظهر قلب، كالبيغاء، كالالة، و دائما بلا روح!

B:

شد ما تحمست له يا عبد الله.

A: لا أنكر أنني كنت مبهورا به، و لكنه مضى يتكشف لي على حقيقتة، قاومت الملل شهورا، انتظرت عيئا أن يقول شيئا جديدا، و لكن لا جديدا، رجل يؤدي وظيفته بلا روح، ينادي على بضاعته كبيع البطاطا.

B: متى اكتشفت ذلك؟

A: منذ زمن قصير، و لكن ليس من اليسير أن نجازف بإنكار ما تعودنا الإيمان به!

B: ليكن, لاتذهب الى الدرس إن يكن ذلك يضايقك.

(T٦: ٩٢)

A :(It is proved to me that he is a boring man.

B: What happened?

A: He repeats what he is saying and says what he repeats as a man who memorizes words by heart, as a parrot or a machine and always spiritless.

B: You were very enthusiastic about him, Abdullah.

A: I do not deny that I was impressed by him but with time his reality is disposed to me. I resisted the feeling of boredom and waited in the vain hope that he would say something new. Nevertheless, there is nothing new; a man performs his job spiritlessly as a seller calling to attract people's attention to his potatoes.

B: When have you discovered that?

A: Since short time but it is not easy for us to risk denying what we used to believe in?

B: Let it go. And do not go to the lecture, in case it upsets you.)

In the foregoing situation, the hearer shows interest in the speaker by asking him questions to draw out the complaint in a more elaborated form. Hence, the hearer gives the speaker more probability to express his feelings. Similarly, as with the English set of data, this response leads to another category of responses that is of advice.

٢,٦,٣,٣ Advice/ Lecture

Situation:

A and B are two male close friends:

٥٦. A: Oh, Tom, they can see in the dark, same as cats. I wish I hadn't come.

B: Oh, don't be afraid. I don't believe they'll bother us. We ain't doing any harm. If we keep perfectly still, may be they won't notice us at all.

(T١: ٤٥)

As regards this situation, the advice functions as a sort of encouragement to the speaker who is scared to think that devils are approaching them in consequence of performing a witch's ritual in a graveyard at midnight.

Situation:

A and B are two lovers:

٥٧. A: جئت بعد معركة، أف، هذه الحياة لاتطاق.

B: لاتبالي بشيء.

(A: I have come after a battle. Ugh, life is unbearable.

B: Do not care about anything.)

Similarly, in this situation, the advice functions as a kind of support and encouragement to the speaker in order to enable her to get over her desperation resulting from her father's oppression.

٢,٦,٣,٤ Contradiction

Situation:

A and B are two male neighbours:

٥٨. A: I still say he's a sonuvabitch. He's a conceited sonuvabitch.

B: He's conceited, but he's very generous in some things. He really is. Look. Suppose, for instance, Stradlater was wearing a tie or something that you liked. Say he had a tie on that you liked a helluva lot_ I'm just giving you an example, now. You know what he'd do? He'd probably take it off and give it to you.

(T٣: ٣١)

In this example, B tries to inform A that his complaint is not entirely approved of and accepted by defending the person on whom the complaint is centered. He provides an example which enhances that person's generosity and how he would give anything he has to anyone who likes it.

Situation:

A and B are two acquaintances with status inequality:

٥٩. A: و إذا بي أشعر بزحف الزمن، من خلال حياة التقشف و المرارة أخذ الزمن يطاردني.

B: ولكنك في مطلع الشباب.

(T٦: ١٩٧)

A: (I start feeling the passage of time. Through the life of thrift and bitterness, time begins chasing me.

B: But you are at the bloom of your life.)

In this situation, the hearer wants to inform the speaker that her complaint is not approved of and accepted via using a contradiction. She is complaining as she endures a harsh life where she has to take care of her younger brothers. She expresses her fear that her youth and beauty will be spoiled by time in consequence of thrift and bitterness. The hearer tries to challenge the validity of the speaker's complaint by using this type of response.

٢,٦,٣,٥ Commiseration

Situation:

A and B are close friends taking about a mutual friend:

٦٠. A: I hate to hear 'em abuse him so like the dickens when he never done that.

B: I do too, Tom. Lord, I hear 'em say he's the bloodiest-looking villain in this country, and they wonder he wasn't ever hung before.

A: Yes; they talk like that all the time. I've heard 'em say that if he was to get free they'd lynch him.

B: And they'd do it, too.

(T١: ٩٨)

In the situation above, the interlocutors resort to commiserations in order to make each other feel comfortable. Both interlocutors have witnessed a murder which an innocent man is falsely accused of. Through a mutual complaint, the hearer tries to inform the speaker that he knows such feeling since he himself has undergone the same experience.

Situation:

A is a husband. B is his wife:

٦١. A: لكنني أنا سبب موته! أنا من دون أحفاده جميعا حتى الأشرار منهم و ما أكثرهم!

B: ذهبت بنفس لا تشوبها شائبة سوء.

(T٥: ٥٠٠)

(A: I am to blame for his death. I am between all his grandsons even the wicked ones and they are many.

B: You went with a pure self not stained with evil.)

In this situation, the hearer attempts to make the speaker feel better as he blames himself for his grandfather's presumed death. In order to meet his grandfather, who detaches himself from the outside world in consequence of senility and weakness, the speaker breaks into the farmer's house at midnight where he is forced to kill a servant who suspects him as a burglar. Thinking that he has killed his grandfather, the speaker regards himself as the worst among that old man's grandsons even the wicked ones as he is the one who sends him to his final destiny. The hearer endeavours to reassure the speaker that he does not intend to do that and that it is merely an accident.

The following table shows the distribution of indirect complaint responses identified in the English and Arabic data:

Table ٦: Indirect complaint responses in the English and Arabic data

Response type	English data	Arabic data
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Joking/ teasing	٠%	٠%
Zero response or change of subject	١٧,٥%	٨,٧%
Questions	٢٠,٥%	١٢,٢%
Advice/ Lecture	٧,٥%	٢٠%
Contradictions	٢٥,٦%	٣٥%
Commiserations	٣٠,٧%	٢٤,٥%

Section Three Conclusions

٣,١ Conclusions

١. In both English and Arabic, complaint is a face-threatening act which causes a loss of face on the part of the hearer because he is considered responsible for the perceived offence. Besides, a complaint is sometimes accompanied by a request for compensation.
٢. While in English indirect complaints can be used as a means of sharing negative evaluations with another person in the pursuit of creating solidarity, indirect complaints in Arabic have a negative image because they are viewed as indications of weakness on the speaker's part and socially and religiously denounced. Consider the following proverb: الشكوى سلاح الضعفاء. (Complaining is the weapon of the weak)
٣. From a practical point of view, it can be said that the selection of novels as a means for data collecting has been proved to be an appropriate choice as they provide the research with many instances of complaint that serve to verify the main hypotheses and fulfill the aims of this study. Hence, the study of the speech act of complaint can be applied to English and Arabic novels.
٤. It can be concluded that complaints can be expressed directly and indirectly in English and Arabic novels. However, there is a difference in the distribution of the two types of complaints since direct complaints represent ٥٨% of the English data compared to ٤٢% in the Arabic data while indirect complaints constitute ٤١% of the English data versus ٥٧% of the Arabic data. This can be ascribed to the different norms of the two cultural groups. In English, directness is viewed as a tool of true communication while in Arabic it is seen as rudeness and socially condemned (Albassam, n. d.: ٢).
٥. As regards complaint strategies, it is observed that native speakers of English and Arabic show a preference for most direct strategies when complaining. This is confirmed by the findings that the two strategies: *explicit condemnation of the accused's action* and *explicit condemnation of the accused as a person* represent ٤٦% of complaint strategies found in the English data and ٣٨% in the Arabic data. Actually, some strategies are culture-specific. For instance, *ill consequence* occurs in the English data while it is absent in the Arabic data. On the other hand, a strategy such as *request for forbearance* does

not appear in both cultures.

٦. In this study, indirect complaints occur less in the English than the Arabic data. Actually, they are used for seeking commiseration and making someone feel better, opening and sustaining a conversation and letting off steam. The three major themes of indirect complaint appear in the English and Arabic sets of data; however, other(s)-directed indirect complaints are the most common category in the two languages. They form ٥٠٪ of indirect complaints encountered in the English data compared to ٥٥,٤٪ in the Arabic data.

٧. Finally, English and Arabic indirect complaints elicit the same categories of responses. However, in the English data, commiseration is the most common type of responses while in the Arabic data contradiction is the most frequent response. Social factors such as social distance, social status and gender play a significant role in this regard, i.e. advice is a male response, contradictions appear among intimates and commiserations occur among status-equals.

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