

A Comparison between Saudi and Jordanian University Students' Warmth of Feelings in Reporting the Death News of a Friend to Their Bereaved Parents

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Abstract. This study investigated how Saudi and Jordanian university undergraduates reported the death news of a friend to their bereaved parents. The sample of the study consisted of 64 volunteer students; 35 Jordanian students majoring in English Language, and 29 Saudi students majoring in Tourism Guidance. The researcher used a DCT to collect the data necessary for the study. Mean scores and t-test were used to analyze the data and answer the questions of the study. The findings of the study revealed that both Saudi and Jordanian undergraduates employed nine strategies to report the death news of a friend. The researcher ascribed the employment of such strategies to various factors which might help report the death news successfully.

Keywords: Death, religious, Jordan, Saudi, greetings, news, arabic, university.

INTRODUCTION

Reporting unexpected news, whether good or bad, needs appropriate skills and time that not everybody can carry out properly. The result of either piece of news has certain reactions on behalf of the notified person. Reporting bad news is a hard task if someone is prepared. It is even harder if someone is unprepared, especially when reporting sudden death news of a close friend to his/her parents. Narayanan *et al.* (2010) believed that conveying bad news is a skilled communication, and not at all easy; and Kaur (2019) described it as a complex communication task as the bearer experiences strong emotions like anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. I believe that reporting death news of a son/daughter to either parent or both is a very hard task. Nevertheless, such bad news must be conveyed to the concerned person because this news could have serious consequences on the recipient.

Buckman (1992) described breaking the bad news of an unexpected or sudden death as one of the most stressful situations health care professionals face because their message could not be delivered to the right person, or

misunderstood. Edlich and Kubler-Ross (1992), Buckman (1992), and Kaye (1996) identified some guidelines or principles for breaking the death bad news. These principles are: preparation, communicating the news, managing, and planning the next step.

Islam and Christianity agree that death is a fact and when people die, they go to another life. Thus, every living thing has an end called death. That is to say, death is inevitable. Allah says in the Holy Quran: "All that is on earth will perish. But will abide (forever) The Face of thy Lord,—Full of Majesty, Bounty and Honor." (Surah 55: al-Rahmān, or (God) Most Gracious). Then we made the sperm into a clot of congealed blood; Then of that clot we made a (foetus) lump; then we made out of that lump bones and clothed the bones with flesh; then we developed out of it another creature. So blessed be God, The Best to create! (14). After that, at length Ye will die (15). Again, on the Day of Judgment, will ye be raised up. (16). Surah 23: al -Mū-minūn, or The Believers Verses: 14-16) "Wherever ye are death will find you out even if ye are in towers built up

strong and high!" If some good befalls them they say "This is from God"; but if evil they say "This is from thee" (O Prophet). Say: "All things are from God. But what hath come to these people that they fail to understand a single fact Surah 4: al-Nisaa, or The Women, 78); Every soul will taste death. And we test you 'O humanity' with good and evil as a trial, then to Us you will 'all' be returned", Surah 21: al-Anbiya, or the Prophets, 35); ("Every soul will taste death, then to Us you will 'all' be returned" (57), Surah 29: al-Ankabut, or the Spider).

Talking about death, in general, is a taboo topic in all communities. Allan and Burrige (1991), Fernández (2006), and Al-Kharabsheh (2011) described death as a face-based timeless taboo in which psychological, religious, and social interdictions coexist. Rabab'ah and Al-Qarni (2012) found that the Saudis and the British resorted to taboos when handling death. Gomaa and Shi (2012) mentioned death as a taboo topic in all cultures, while Lakasing (2014) showed that over time, talking about death had become a non-taboo topic.

According to Al-Khasawneh (2018) and Gomaa and Shi (2012), death in all societies, is a very sensitive and fearful subject people try to avoid mentioning. Crystal (2003) indicated that mentioning harmful words, such as death always causes a feeling of discomfort. Zimmerman (2007) pointed out that societies nowadays can be described as death-denying societies, which could be due to fear of death or unreadiness for communities who believe in life after death such as Muslims and Christians.

Although communing, delivering or breaking bad news is one of the most important and challenging duties of a physician (Schilling and Mehnert 2014). It has been described as unpleasant (Rosen and Tesser 1970; Sweeny and Shepperd 2007), most stressful (Buckman 1992), most difficult and dreaded tasks medical and nursing teams have to perform (Reid *et al.*, 2011a), disappointing and emotionally draining (Nordstorm *et al.*, 2011), most stressful and sensitive (Reid *et al.*, 2011b; Pardeshi and Gupta 2016), and one of the hardest (Shomoossi *et al.* 2013). Stewart *et al.* (2000) pointed out that lack of notifier training may have unexpected reactions on behalf of the survivors. Williams (2006) also indicated that it was difficult for most people to find the appropriate and right words that comfort the bereaved. The Police Officer Standards and Training Council (2008) in the State of Connecticut classified death notification as a difficult and emotional assignment, and at the same time distressing for both the recipient and the officer. Guest (2016) also described informing relatives and loved ones of a patient's death as a sensitive and often stressful task frequently undertaken by nurses.

Buckman (1984) considered delivering bad news as a skill not a divine gift, and it could be taught like any other aspect of medical care.

The speech act of reporting death news, according to Austin (1962) and Searle (1969), could be classified as a face-threatening speech act. Austin considered it an

expressive speech act while Searle considered it a behabitive illocutionary act. Behnam *et al.* (2013) and Moghaddam (2012) assured that a great accomplishment would be to say the right thing to the right person at the right time, and Janusheva and Neshkovska (2018) indicated that the choice of the right words is vital for both the condoler and the bereaved people. In this study, choice of words is also important to the notifier of the death news, and the receiver of the news or the parent of the deceased person.

Galal (2014) said that humans try to resort to euphemism as a strategy to avoid mentioning the harmful words, such as death by other expressions. He also adds that Arabic and English languages almost reflect identical metaphors to avoid the word death. Gomaa and Shi (2012) confirmed this by considering death euphemism a common norm among all societies. People used it consciously and subconsciously to avoid the taboo, embarrassment, and unpleasantness, and to provide a softening effect. The use of euphemism could be considered a part of communicative competence or pragmatic competence, otherwise there would be some kind of pragmatic failure.

Mundby (1978) pointed out that in order to communicate effectively, the speaker should know how to produce and use all grammatical utterances appropriately. They, furthermore, must recognize what to say, with whom, and when and where. Hudson *et al.* (1992) produced six different tests of varying method and type to determine how pragmatic competence of certain speech acts (requests, refusals, and apologies) with the socio-cultural variables of power, distance, and imposition could best be assessed. Among these tests, was the Open Discourse Completion Test (OPDCT). Thus, the researcher of the current study developed his own OPDCT to collect the data for his study as it is of a different speech act, namely, Warmth of Feelings when Reporting the Death News of a Friend to Their Bereaved Parent(s). Nurdiana (2019) defined pragmatic competence as "the ability to convey and interpret meaning and to use the language in context appropriately", and if the speaker's utterance or message was perceived differently by the hearer, Hudson *et al.* (1992) called this pragmatic failure. This failure according to Crystal (1991) resulted from the inappropriate realization of the speech act.

Shen (2013) investigated the factors contributing to pragmatic failure in China's ELT classrooms. The study ascribed this failure to the following: "teacher-centered teaching; lack of authentic input; teaching English without considering the cultural differences sufficiently; and linguistic competence-oriented evaluation system".

Researchers have addressed the topic of death from different angles. Some researchers (Gomaa & Shi 2012; Rabab'ah and Al-Qarni 2012; Galal 2014; Bani Mofarrej and Al-Abed Al-Haq 2015; Al-Azzam *et al.* (2017); Al-Khasawneh 2018; Owiredu, 2020) investigated the euphemism of taboos, such as death. Conveying condolences has also been investigated (Elwood 2004; Al-

Shboul and Maros, 2013; Murad 2013; Kuang 2018; Nurliningsih and Imperiani 2020). Other researchers have investigated the responses to condolences (Samavarchi and Allami, 2012), and the functions and formulas of condolences (Kuang, 2015). Tuffrey-Wijne and Rose (2017) investigated the factors that affected communicating death-related bad news to people with intellectual disabilities.

The idea of the current study came to the researcher's mind from a notification of the death of an old lady in their area. It is a habit there to notify all the area dwellers through the mosque loudspeakers. When the notifier switched on the loudspeaker, he started weeping. I, the researcher, believed that his son, daughter, parents, wife, brother or sister died. When he announced the name, it was their neighbor who was 75 years old. His weeping represented how he was influenced by the death news and pushed me to carry out this study on how to communicate death news with warm feelings to the bereaved parents of a friend. Moreover, after submitting the study for publication, two female university students had been murdered at university campus in Jordan and Egypt. The Jordanian student was shot; and the Egyptian one was slaughtered.

This study is hoped to provide future researchers in general, and Arab and Muslim ones in particular, with a scale that could help measure the warmth of feelings when reporting death news, or even discussing some bad results of any event to calm the recipient and help them accept these results, especially if they could not be changed. It is also hoped that it will help other researchers investigate such taboo topics to convince language formal curriculum authors insert such topics in the curriculum at the school level. The researcher preferred to break the sudden death bad news in person due to Kendrick's (1997) recommendation which recommended avoiding a phone call because of the lack of immediate support for the bereaved parents and relatives. Leash (1996), also, recommended a face-to-face conversation in the case of death.

Review of literature

Certain procedures have been identified to notify death news. The news should be notified, a: in person not by the telephone, b: in time and with certainty, c: in pairs, d: in plain language, and e: with compassion (<https://coronnertalk.com/ct14>). Taylor (2007) saw that death news should be delivered directly, as soon as possible, to the most appropriate person; Webber (2004), (cited in Taylor, 2007), thought this person should be a blood relative, not "next of kin" which is a misunderstood term.

Different models or protocols had been proposed for breaking bad news. They were the SPIKES protocol, ABCDE model, and the BREAKS protocol. Shomoossi *et*

al. (2013) carried out their study applying the ABCDE model suggested by some oncologists on how to communicate death news. This strategy according to Rabow and McPhee (1999) stands for "Advanced preparation", "Build a therapeutic environment", "Communicate well", "Deal with patient and family reaction", and "Encourage and validate emotion". As the current study is an educational and sociolinguistic one and its sample consists of English Language majors, the researcher will only consider Item 15 of the B section that says "I introduce myself when giving bad news", and Item 19 of the C section that says "I am clear and outspoken, but my words are sympathetic". The findings regarding Item 15 showed that 71.365% introduced themselves for the bereaved family; and regarding Item 19, 57.52% of the participants said they were clear and outspoken but sympathetic. The researchers suggested there is an urgent need for training nurses on communication skills to deliver death notification with special attention to the emotions and reactions of the survivors.

Al-Khasawneh (2018) investigated the euphemistic strategies related to death in Saudi Arabic and American English. The results of the study revealed that Saudis mostly use "part-for-whole", "overstatement", and "synonyms" strategies, whereas the "metaphorical" and "taboo" strategies were the least ones used. However, the Americans mostly use "synonyms", "taboo" and "deletion" strategies, and never use "overstatement. Ghounane (2014) investigated the euphemistic strategies and linguistic taboos of death in the Algerian society. The findings revealed that the death topic is treated with care.

Abbaszadeh *et al.* (2014) indicated that bad news is faced with similar reactions on the part of the receiver in all cultures and nations. They suggested 5 categories for delivering bad news, the most relevant one to the current study was category number 2 "Preparing the ground for delivering the bad news. According to SPIKES Protocol, bad news ought to be delivered: in person, in time, in pairs, in plain language, and with compassion (Sobczak, 2013); Kaur (2019) also recommended "establishing an appropriate setting".

Rabab'ah and Al-Qarni (2012) investigated euphemism in informing the death news of a mother to her son who is the boss by one of his employees, and the death of a friend's relative to a friend. The findings of the study revealed that the most frequently used categories by the Saudi participants were "part-of-whole", "overstatement", and "understatement" for both formal and informal situations.

Nurliningsih and Imperiani (2020) investigated the condolences speech act of 20 Indonesian adolescents aged between 11 and 19 years old based on Elwood's (2004) classification of condolences strategies, and Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness. The findings of the study revealed that the adolescents employed all the seven strategies identified by Elwood (2004) viz: Seeking absolution from God; Expression of sympathy; Future-

oriented remarks; Offer of assistance; Expression of concern; Related questions; and Acknowledgement of death, respectively.

Kuang (2015) investigated the functions of Malaysian condolences written in text messages such as the semantic functions they perform. The findings of the study revealed 51 semantic functions which were later categorized into 8, viz: Showing concern via directives, showing sympathy, offering assistance, expressing wishful thinking, giving an explanation before sympathy, eulogizing the deceased, showing sympathy and eulogizing the deceased at the same time, and showing uncertainty.

Murad (2013) studied 85 email condolences written by Arab native speakers to a Hebrew colleague who had lost his daughter. Analysis of these emails revealed the use of the following strategies: a. Acknowledgement of death; b. Expression of sympathy; c. Offer of assistance; d. Future-oriented remarks; e. Expressions of concern; f. Appreciation of the dead (eulogy); and g. Direct condolence.

Al-Shboul and Maros (2013) studied how Jordanian Arabs conveyed their condolences through 678 posted comments written via Facebook. The findings of the study revealed the use of seven major strategies viz: a) Praying for the God's mercy and forgiveness to be with the deceased; b) Reciting Quranic verses; c) Enumerating the virtues of the deceased (Eulogy); d) Expressing shock and grief; e) Offering condolences; f) Realizing death is a natural part of life; and g) Using proverbs and sayings.

Farina (2011) investigated the condolences strategies of 200 native Persians. The findings revealed the use of five major strategies, viz: expressions of condolences, expressions of regret and grief, praying for God's mercy and forgiveness, expressions of positive feelings and compliments about the deceased, and using poems, sayings, and proverbs.

Lofallahi and Eslami-Rasekch (2011) investigated condolences in Iranian context. The findings revealed strategies unique to the Muslim community, viz: seeking absolution from God via certain religious expressions, and religious-oriented sympathy. The study concluded that there is a subtle difference in the way condolences is expressed in an eastern society when compared to western ones.

The previous studies represent three main ideas: how the news of death should be notified, euphemism of dealing with taboo topics such as death, and how to condole bereaved people through an SMS, e-mail, or posts via the Facebook. The findings of these studies revealed some kind of connection to the culture of the respondents. The researchers of the current study resorted to these studies as their study merges all three ideas represented in them.

Methodology

Study objectives and questions

The main objective of this study was to uncover how Saudi and Jordanian university undergraduates communicate the death news of a friend to their bereaved parent(s). Therefore, the researcher intended to find out the strategies employed by undergraduate students when reporting this speech act. He also intended to find out the level of use of each strategy employed. So, the questions of the study are: first, what strategies do Saudi and Jordanian university undergraduates use when they communicate the death news of a friend to their bereaved parent(s)? Second, what is the level of warmth of feelings among Saudi and Jordanian undergraduates when reporting the death news of a friend to their bereaved parent(s)?

Sample

The sample of the study consisted of 64 volunteer students majoring in Tourism Guidance and English Language at King Saud University in Saudi Arabia and Yarmouk & Jadara Universities in Jordan during the first semester of the academic year 2021/2022. Their ages ranged between 20 and 21 years old. All of them were Saudis and Jordanians.

Data collection instrument

The researcher developed a DCT in which he asked the volunteers to write what they would say to the bereaved parent(s) of their friend if he/she died suddenly. The question was written in Arabic and the respondents were asked to write what they would say in such a situation in Arabic, also.

Instrument validity

To measure the content validity, the tool was given to five experts in the fields of Applied Linguistics, Language Curricula and Instruction, Educational Psychology, Arabic Language, and Counseling. All of them approved its appropriateness for data collection.

Data analysis

Based on the review of related literature, the researcher analyzed all speech acts included in the students' responses that represent a certain level of warmth of feeling in reporting the death news of a friend. The responses revealed 367 speech act. The 29 Saudi students reported 182 speech acts and the 35 Jordanian students reported 185 ones.

Table 1. Strategies of warmth of feelings employed by Saudi and Jordanian students when reporting death news of a friend.

No	Strategy	Frequency & percentage	
		Jordanians (35 students)	Saudis (29 students)
1	Greetings	25 (71.4%)	29 (100%)
2	Making sure the message is directed to the right person	35 (100%)	29 (100%)
3	Introducing oneself	7 (20%)	3 (10.3%)
4	Paving the way to death news	18 (51.4%)	19 (65.55)
5	Use of euphemism statements that soften death news	20 (57.1%)	17 (58.6%)
6	Expressing sorrow for death news	19 (54.2%)	25 (86.25)
7	Employment of Quranic texts in conveying death news	17 (48.6%)	13 (44.8%)
8	Communicating a clear and precise message	27 (77.1%)	29 (100%)
9	Prayer for the dead person	17 (48.6%)	18 (62.1%)
Total		185 (58.7%)	182 (69.7)

Findings

To answer the first question of the study "What strategies do Saudi and Jordanian university students employ when they report the death news of a friend to their bereaved parent(s)?", the researcher took the speech acts reported by of all students' answers and analyzed them benefiting from the findings of the review of literature and registering any new expressions or strategies that indicate warmth of feelings. These expressions were classified into nine strategies as in [Table 1](#) below.

[Table 1](#) shows that the respondents provided strategies that show some kind of warmth of feelings when reporting the death news of a friend to their bereaved parent(s). It also shows that the strategy of "Making sure that the message is directed to the right person" was employed by all Saudi and Jordanian respondents, whereas the strategy of "Introducing oneself" was the least employed by both samples; only 10 students employed it (Seven Jordanian students and three Saudi ones). All Saudi respondents also employed the strategies of "Greetings" and "Communicating a clear and precise message". These same strategies "Communicating a clear and precise message", and "Greetings" occupied the second and third ranks respectively.

To answer the second question, "what is the level of warmth of feelings among Saudi and Jordanian undergraduates when reporting the death news of a friend to their bereaved parent(s)?", the mean scores and standard deviations of warmth of feelings of Saudi and Jordanian university students and the situations employed, when reporting a friend's death news to their bereaved parents, have been calculated, and were followed by t-test for both independent samples as indicated in [Table 2](#).

[Table 2](#) shows that there are significant differences at $\alpha=0.05$ between the two mean scores of the level of warmth of feelings of Saudi and Jordanian university students when reporting a friend's death to their bereaved parents for strategies 1, 6, and 8. These strategies show that Saudi university students' feelings were warmer than those of Jordanian university students. This Table also

shows that there were no significant differences in the warmth of feelings for strategies 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, and 9 between both samples.

Discussion

The participants' responses showed that Situation no. 2 "Making sure the message is directed to the right person" obtained the highest frequency. All 64 respondents employed it. They used phrases like: "*?mi alaziz, anta waled (name of dead person)*" [Dear uncle, are you the father of X?]; "*keif Halak ya ?mi*" [How are dear uncle?]. This situation could have come first due to speaker's care and interest in delivering the message of bad news to either parent or both of the bereaved parents as the speaker is a friend of the dead person. The phrases uttered by the speakers also employ euphemism which could attribute to the level of education and impact of language, religion. And social courses they studied at school and university.

Situation no. 8 "Reporting a clear and precise message" was employed by all Saudi students, while it was employed by 27 Jordanian students. They did this by using phrases like: "*ibnak wasadigi elaziz intagala ela raHmati illah ithra Hadeth sair mu'sef*" [Your son, my dearest friend, had passed away by a car accident]. "*akhoi (name of dead person) died*", [My brother x passed away]. These two utterances show a direct message, but still full of warm feelings and sorrow towards the bereaved parents. The speaker says "my dearest friend; and my brother" to show the parents that he/she has also lost a very close person. This could be a result of the lessons and lectures on friendship, which students study at schools and universities, attend or watch on TV, or You Tube canals. This result disagrees with Shomoossi *et al.* (2013). This could be attributed to the type of education which mostly indicates that human sciences graduates are better at communication with others than medicine and nursing graduates.

Situation no. 1 "Greetings" was utilized by all Saudi

Table 2. T-test results of the level of warmth of feelings among Saudi and Jordanian university students.

ID	Scale and Its Situations	Nationality	Mean	Std. Dev.	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
					F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.
1	Greetings	Jordanian	0.71	0.46					
		Saudi	1.00	0.00	124.86*	0.00	-3.69*	34	0.00
2	Making sure the message is directed to the right person	Jordanian	1.00	0.00 ^a					
		Saudi	1.00	0.00 ^a					
3	Introducing oneself	Jordanian	0.20	0.41	4.80*	0.03	1.08	61.63	0.29
		Saudi	0.10	0.31					
4	Paving the way to death news	Jordanian	0.51	0.51					
		Saudi	0.66	0.48	3.51	0.07	-1.13	62	0.26
5	Use of euphemism statements that soften death news	Jordanian	0.57	0.50					
		Saudi	0.59	0.50	0.06	0.81	-0.12	62	0.91
6	Expressing sorrow for death news	Jordanian	0.54	0.51					
		Saudi	0.86	0.35	35.10*	0.00	-2.97*	60.29	0.00
7	Employment of Quranic texts in conveying death news	Jordanian	0.49	0.51					
		Saudi	0.45	0.51	0.29	0.59	0.29	62	0.77
8	Communicating a clear and precise message	Jordanian	0.77	0.43					
		Saudi	1.00	0.00	67.24*	0.00	-3.17*	34	0.00
9	Prayer for the dead person	Jordanian	0.49	0.51					
		Saudi	0.62	0.49	2.00	0.16	-1.07	62	0.29
Total		Jordanian	5.20	1.91					
		Saudi	6.28	1.41	2.91	0.09	-2.52*	62	0.01

^a t cannot be computed because the standard deviations of both groups are 0.

students, and only by 25 Jordanian students. They greeted the parents by saying: "*assalamualiku wa rahmtu Allahi wa barakatuh*", [Peace and pity of Allah be upon you]; "*marhaba*", [Hi/Hello]. Greeting is an Islamic moral. Islam urges all Muslims to greet known and unknown people alike. Use of this situation at a High level can be attributed to religious background. Moreover, use of mobile phones could have contributed to the High level of use of "Greetings" as the first word uttered in a phone call is "Hello" or as used by Arabic native speakers "*marhaba*" or "*assalamualiku wa rahmtu Allahi wa barakatuh*".

Situation no. 5 "Use of euphemism statements that soften death news" nearly obtained the same percentage by both samples. They euphemized and softened the death news by saying: "*lilah ma ?ata wa lilah ma akhath*", [It's all God's will]; "*iSber waiHtaseb la?al Allah yaghfer lah thonubah*", [Be patient so that God might forgive him]. The first sentence reminds the parent that we all will be back to Allah and we will leave this life sooner or later. Moreover, the second sentence asked the parent to be patient as God has promised patients with Heaven. This agrees with Nurliningsih and Imperiani (2020) and Murad (2013) in their strategy 'Acknowledgement of death'; with Al-Shboul and Maros (2013) and Farina (2011) in "Using proverbs and sayings" and "poems" Farina (2011); and use of "giving an explanation before sympathy" (Kuang, 2015).

Situation no. 6 "Expressing sorrow for the death news" was employed more by Saudi students than by Jordanian students. The speakers expressed their sorrow for the bad news they bear by saying "*a?dhama Allaha ajrakum*", [May God Glorify your reward]; "*aHsana Allaha ?zaak*", [May God welcome your condolences]. This agrees with Nurliningsih and Imperiani (2020), Kuang (2015), Murad (2013), Farina (2011), and Elwood (2004) where the respondents employed expressions of sympathy and concern; with Al-Shboul and Maros (2013) where the respondents employed expressing shock and grief.

Situation no. 4 "Paving the way to deliver the death news" was also used more by Saudi students than by Jordanian students. The speakers tried to pave the way for delivering the bad news by using phrases like: "*?mi, anta insan moemen bigadha' Allahi wagadarih*", [Dear uncle, you are believer and you believe in fate]; "*kul shai fi adonia laho nihayah*", [Everything has an end]. The first sentence praised the bereaved parent by describing him as a believer; this introduction expresses warm feelings of the speaker, and acceptance of what's coming on, on behalf of the listener. The second sentence reminds the parent that we will all die and nobody will live forever.

Situations no. 7 "Employment of Quranic verses in reporting death news" was employed more by Jordanian students than by Saudi students. As all students were Muslims, they recited some verses from the Holy Quran to help them convey the most difficult message they were carrying for the bereaved parent. They might also have used these verses to remind themselves and the parent that all people will die. They recited verses like "Every soul

shall have a taste of death*" "الموت ذاقه ذ ففس كل" and "Everyone on it is perishing* But will remain the Presence of your Lord, Full of Majesty and Splendor*" "عدل بها من كل" "هو الإكرا الجلال ذو ربك وجه ويد بقی فان". This could be attributed the Islamic culture they belong to or to the textbooks they study at university or studied at school. It could be due to their participation in the rituals of death in Jordanian environment. This agrees with Al-Shboul and Maros (2013) and Lotfallahi and Eslami-Rasekch (2011) where the respondents recited Quranic verses. It could also agree with what Al-Khasawneh (2018) and Rabab'ah and Al-Qarni (2012) called "part of whole".

Situation no. 3 "Introducing oneself" came last with a low rank. Only 7 Jordanian students and 3 Saudi ones introduced themselves when they communicated the death news to the bereaved parent. This low number could be attributed to many different reasons, such as: they could have forgot to introduce themselves because this could be their first time to deliver such piece of news; they could have thought they were known to the bereaved parent; they could have felt panic of the noisy message they had to deliver to a parent of friend. This result disagrees with Shomoossi *et al.* (2013) which could be attributed to the nature of the sample and experience in life; they are doctors and nurses. The sample of this study consists of undergraduate students with little experience in terms of their age when compared to samples of other studies.

To wrap up, the findings revealed religious and cultural presence impact on the warmth of feelings in reporting death news by Jordanian and Saudi university students. This agrees with Lotfallahi and Eslami-Rasekch (2011), and disagrees with the strategies suggested by Elwood (2004) and Kuang (2015).

Conclusion and recommendation

Among the most important factors of pragmatic failure according to Kasper and Rose (2001), lies in the necessity for learners to receive a great amount of input from the environment due to the fact that textbooks may lack some communicative activities which target the pragmatic competence. However, the findings of the current study showed that Jordanian and Saudi undergraduates received a great amount of input from their environment and textbooks they have studied. The findings of the study also indicate that both Jordanian and Saudi undergraduates have a great deal of pragmatic success reflected in most of the strategies they employed in expressing their warmth of feelings when reporting the death news of a friend to their bereaved parents. The social media might have also helped raise pragmatic success of Jordanian and Saudi undergraduates in reporting the death news of a friend due to the increased number of deaths as a result of COVID 19 and the high employment of the social media in condoling and reporting

death news. Moreover, both Jordanian and Saudi parents almost always accompany their sons to participate in condoling bereaved friends and neighbours.

The researcher recommends other researchers to duplicate this study on other cultures using other data collection tools such as the focus group discussion, and interview. The researcher also recommends graduate studies students in English Language Curricula and Instruction, and Applied Linguistics to investigate this important topic so that the findings of their studies could draw the attention of curriculum designers to include such topic in the curriculum. Finally, researchers can also investigate students' pragmatic success and failure in reporting the death news.

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