ABSTRACT

GÜMÜŞ, Nisan Ece. *A Sociopragmatic Study on Turkish Native Speakers' Condolence Speech Acts*, Master's Thesis, Ankara, 2024.

The speech act of condolences is one of the least frequently investigated speech acts. This study explores the speech acts of condolences in Turkish that are conveyed on Facebook. The data focuses on the speech act of condolences uttered as a response to death announcements on Facebook. Methodologically, the first step of this study comprises the analysis of the condolences in Turkish collected from Facebook following Elwood's (2004) classification of condolence strategies and modifications made by Lotfollahi & Rasekh (2011), Samavarchi & Allami (2012), Behnam et al. (2013), Murad (2013), Hashempour (2016), Janusheva & Neshkovska (2018), Nurlianingsih & Ayu Imperiani (2020), Alemi et al. (2021) and Amartey (2021). Based on the results of this analysis, common condolence strategies by Turkish native speakers were identified. It was found that most condolence strategies involved statements related to Islam which is the most common religion in Turkey. The second step of my study involves an experiment in which I tested Turkish native speakers' assessments of the level of appropriateness of different types of condolences. In doing so, I invited them to assess real-life examples from Facebook. Focusing on the sociolinguistic variables of social distance and the ranking of the imposition, I discussed which factors contributed to the way condolences are expressed in this speech community. The only strategy which suggested that most of the native speakers of Turkish noticed the variations in the ranking of the imposition between the bereaved and the deceased was "expression of sympathy". On the other hand, the ratings of the strategy of "offer of assistance" indicated that most of the informants were aware of the differences in social distance only in the second hypothetical situation where social distance and the ranking of the imposition were low, and the third hypothetical situation where social distance was high, and the ranking of the imposition was low. As such, this study contributes to our knowledge of a relatively understudied type of speech act and its realizations in Turkish culture.

Keywords: Condolence, Speech Act, Pragmatics, Linguistic Anthropology, Facebook, Turkish

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