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An Investigation of Gender Differences in Styles of Speech in Syrian Spoken Arabic: A Sociolinguistic Perspective

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Abstract:

Language and its relation to gender have attracted the attention of many sociolinguists. Much of the research that has been done in this area indicates that men and women do not differ only biologically but also linguistically. Unfortunately, the number of studies conducted in the Arab world in general and Syria in particular regarding this issue is so limited. For this reason, gender and its influence as a social and cultural constructed element on the verbal behaviors of female and male main characters in the social realistic TV series: جلسات نسائية"Jalsat Nesaiah"has been considered and discussed. To conduct the study, R. Lakoff's (1975), Holmes' (1998), and Coates' (1986-1996) ideas have been examined and the frequency of four grammatical items has been calculated to determine the presupposed differences between the two sexes. Our results have indicated that Adnan (man main character) used more questions and directives than Hala (woman main character); they have also shown that this female character used hedges more often than male characters. No great differences have been found in their usage of affirmatives. Moreover, our investigation has proved that the chosen characters' conversations are shaped by the context in which they function as man/woman, Syrian, and as unique personalities.
Key words: sociolinguistics, gender, sex, stereotype.

دراسة لغوية اجتماعية للفروق الجندرية في أساليب الخطاب في اللغة السورية العامية

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الملخص:-

لقد جذبت اللغة وعلاقتها بجنس المتحدث- ذكر أو أنثى- انتباه العديد من رواد علم اللغة الاجتماعي و أثبتت العديد من البحوث التي أجريت في هذا المجال بأن الرجال والنساء لا يختلفون بيولوجيا ونفسيا فحسب بل أيضا لغويا.

ولسوء الحظ، عدد الدراسات التي أجريت في العالم العربي بشكل عام وسوريا بشكل خاص بشأن هذه المسألة محدود جدا. ولهذا السبب، تم في هذا البحث دراسة علاقة اللغة بنوع الجنس وتأثيره كعنصر اجتماعي وثقافي على السلوكيات اللفظية للشخصيات الرئيسية في المسلسل السوري "جلسات نسائية".ولتحقيق هذه الدراسة، تمت دراسة أفكار لاكوف (١٩٧٥) و هولمز (١٩٩٨) و كوتس (١٩٨٦- ١٩٩٦) المتعلقة بالفروق اللغوية بين الذكور والإناث وقد حظيت أربع أدوات نحوية باهتمام خاص في هذا البحث لدورها الكبير في تحديد هذه الاختلافات المفترضة بين الجنسين. وقد بينت نتائجنا أن عدنان (الرجل الذي يلعب دور البطل في هذا المسلسل) استخدم الأسئلة (كأداة لغوية) وأدوات الأمر و النهي أكثر من هالة (المرأة التي تلعب دور البطلة)؛ وقد أظهرت أيضا أن هالة مالت إلى تكرار ألفاظها و التوقف و استخدام الحشو خلال كلامها اكثر من عدنان في معظم الأحيان. لكن لم يتم العثور على اختلافات كبيرة بين الشخصيتين في استخدامهم للتأكيدات اللفظية أثناء تحدثهم مع بعضهم البعض. وعلاوة على ذلك، أثبتت الدراسة التي أجريناها أن للسياق و المحيط الذي تجري فيه الحوارات و الدور الذي يلعبه الافراد في مجتمعهم دورا كبيرا في تحديد الأدوات اللغوية المستخدمة.

1.1.Methodology

Different scenes from جلسات نسائية "Jalsat Nesaiah" TV series have been selected, downloaded, and transcribed forming the basis for this research. Of course, it is beyond the scope of this study to include all scenes performed by the two heroes of the work with their related translation as empirical data, so several considerations will be taken while selecting them for analysis. First, to control the length of the research, an unequal number of scenarios have been selected and used throughout the study. Second, since the main aim of this research is revealing the linguistic differences between male and female speakers namely, Adnan and Hala, it seems convenient to include only conversations that can serve this aim. Third, meaningful contents and typical samples that can give a full understanding of these two characters and their ways of speech are also taken for granted. Therefore, the final results and conclusions can be applied not only to the studied material but also to the series as a whole. R. Lakoff's (1975), Holmes' (1998), and Coates' (1986- 1996) ideas concerning this topic will be examined based on conversational analysis as a theoretical background. In fact, most theorists in this field claim that males and females display different linguistic features while speaking. How and why such noticeable differences appear is explained in the literature review section. Due to the limitations of the research, the total number of four varieties of speech spoken by Hala and Adnan (the main characters in this series), including questions, directives, hedges, and affirmatives have been found and compared; Other non- verbal behaviors such as gestures, eye- gaze, body postures and others that characters exploit to convey various messages won't be included in this study. جلسات نسائية "Jalsat Nesaiah" TV series is considered as an authentic source of data since it represents people's daily interactions as they are in real life. In fact, writers in this genre use speech characteristics that people most often associate with either women or men to convey character or make a point. As a result, no wonder that many researchers use these scripted conversations as a

base for their studies. It is worth mentioning that the following numbers have been used in our coding system as a way for representing some Arabic letters: 2=ء, 3=ع , 5=خ, 6=طـ, 7=ح, 8=ق, 9=ص

Theoretical Background

2.1. The Nature of Gender

In the first flush of our lives, we acquire certain characteristics and adopt particular behaviors that go in line with our genders and employ them accordingly. This process which we all undergo is called socialization; it is, in fact, inevitable and none can prevent it from happening (Wardhaugh, 2010). Although sex and gender as terms are used interchangeably among researchers and ordinary people alike, they do indeed have different meanings. The first term refers to biological characteristics that mark humans and other animals as either males or females (Cameron, 2006), whereas the latter is based on certain beliefs and notions which are learnt and received by people from the very beginning of their lives, for example, what is expected from us as males or females and what are our duties and rights are always determined by society and culture together. Accordingly, gender focuses on the social construct regarding the behavioral, cultural, or psychological traits typically associated with one sex. Females and males therefore cannot be seen but distinct identities with certain attributes inherent within them and their roles and responsibilities differ to suit their personalities. This fact has been clearly stated by many linguists like Tannen (1990), and Coates (1986) who saw gender division as a basic and dynamic aspect in social construction. In addition, Cameron (2006) claimed that the distinction between sex and gender is of a great importance since it helps in fighting what had been previously claimed that everything about women, men, and the relationship between them is connected with certain biological factors. It is worth mentioning that the term gender was regarded only as a grammatical category and no other meanings or connotations were associated to it, but when it appeared on the

'metalinguistic level', researchers in many areas started to deal with it as an analytical category then different definitions were appeared by many scholars who became more and more interested in gender and language studies till it became a separate discipline in 1970s, then developed into an enormous subgenre of sociolinguistics (Wardhaugh, 2010) .

2.2.General Theoretical Background on Language and Gender

2.2.1. The Deficit Approach

The deficit approach suggests that "women's ways of speaking are, whether by nature or nurture, deficient in comparison to men's" (Cameron, 1990: 14). The perfect start to this discussion is Jespersen. Jespersen was one of the first scholars who wrote about gender differences in styles of speech. In his article *The Woman* (1990), Jespersen underestimated the quality of women's language as compared to the "male variant". He, moreover, believed that the language of men is a norm, while the language of women is a deviation from it; hence the term 'deficiency' appeared.. Because of his belief, Jespersen divided the system of language in to ' *women's language'* and *'men's language';* the first is characterized by extensive use of educated words even sentences are less compacted or packed together.'*Men's language',* on the other hand, isn't controlled or restricted by such rules; For these reasons, Jespersen called women to imitate men's communicative styles in order to be as successful and professional as them. Although Jespersen's work was considered as a launch pad for a lot of research made in language and gender studies, it was Lakoff's introspective writings that paved the way for many later controversial discussions (Coates, 1996). Her book *Language and Woman's Place* (1975) was groundbreaking as it was one of the first books to list systematic differences between men's and women's language (Tannen, 1993). In it, she claimed that "language uses us just as much as we use language" (Lakoff, 1980: p. 239). She believed that the differences in gender-related language styles are the effect of

learning, socialization, and upbringing. She also tried to give a description for key linguistic features that characterize male and female speeches. *'Women's register'* is a term that she invented to refer to a group of linguistic items that women insert habitually in their daily conversations. Lakoff ,additionally, claimed that the typical feminine patterns which reflect women weakness and lack of confidence within society can be traced at different levels of language. At the phonological level, for example, women usually employ traditional or correct pronunciations while conversing with others. They additionally prefer to give their words a strong foreign accent to attract their interlocutors' attention. This goes in line with a study made by Trudgill (1972). Trudgill claimed that when there are two ways to pronounce a certain sound, women are likely to choose the one that is closer to the prestige or standard pronunciation. One reason behind this behaviour is that women are always encouraged to act in a courteous way that can show their politeness and complaisance (Lakoff 1975). Another explanation was given by Coates (1996) who argued that women from the very beginning of their lives are taught to speak in a less confident way than men. She also claimed that women's tentative way of speech tells stories about the conventions of their patriarchal society where women are seen as subordinate to men. Accordingly, the general assessment of the women's language in this theory is negative in comparison with the men's variant, so men's language is taken as a pattern; the fact that represents the cultural stereotypes of women's image in societies.

2.2.2. The Power and Dominance Approach

In this approach, researchers tried to explain the linguistic differences between male and female speakers in terms of male dominance and female subordination, the idea which is fixed by cultural and social traditions (Coates, 1993). Dale Spender is one of the linguists that shed light on this disparate power relationship between the two sexes (Cameron, 1990). In her claim that men are the ones "who have

made the world which women must inhabit" (Spender, 1990: 93), she stressed the notion that women are the oppressed group who are treated unequally by men. She also pointed out that language is one of many important means that men depend on to maintain their independence and to keep a high social status in a patriarchal and hierarchical social order. Spender, additionally, described women's situation in a very expressive way as following: "women are damned if they do and damned if they don't: Damned if they are assertive, and damned if they are supportive and polite, and talk like women!" (1998: 21). That means that women aren't accepted to negotiate their own opinions and beliefs nor are they allowed to discuss or impose their viewpoints. This notion was also highly supported by Zimmerman and West (1975) who pointed out, that women adhere to standard language forms as an implicit tool for challenging pre-existing assumptions about them and as a way for increasing their sense of self-worth and gaining authority in their society. Another linguist who made an interesting survey in this framework is Pamela Fishman. According to her investigation of mixed- sex talk (1977), women are viewed to do the "shitwork" in conversation. They are considered as the secret agents whose main job is keeping the conversation's wheels moving forwards which, of course, put women in a position of developing men's talk at the expense of their own (Spender, 1998: 20). So, scholars' of this theory did not only speak of sexism as a phenomenon, but they also claimed that communication breakdowns occur not because of some inherent characteristics of women's speech, but due to the dominance of men (Coates, 1996).

2.2.3. The Difference Approach:

The scholars of this approach claimed that men and women are brought up in different sociolinguistic subcultures; the fact that accounts for the differences in speech behaviors between them. The notion that sex differences should be understood in terms of cultural differences is first introduced by the two anthropologists Maltz and Borker (1982) who claimed that the 'socialization process' we all undergo contributes greatly

to our femaleness or maleness. D. Tannen is another supporter of this framework. In 1990, she asserted that "If women speak and hear a language of connection and intimacy, while men speak a language of status and independence, then communication between men and women can be like cross-cultural communication, prey to a clash of conversational styles" (p. 42) . Although Tannen's writings confirmed the fact that men try to control women in their verbal and non-verbal behaviors, they also assured that male dominance is not the only reason that could account for all observable differences in conversations (Tannen, 1990). In her great work, *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation*, Tannen pointed out that when women converse together, they tend to use expression that can create intimacy, show sympathy and maintain identity in their respective groups. Men, instead, incline to use linguistic techniques that negotiate dominance and confirm their status within the group; this could be proved through their increase usage of directives and competitive language. Tannen additionally claimed that while women like to stay in a friendly atmosphere where mutual trust between them and other speakers can be built, Men prefer to engage in speeches that can enhance their power and manifest their skills. In fact, men are socialized to communicate in a 'one-up, one down' style in which the goal is to gain the highest scores in conversations . Females, on the other hand, have no problem in being controlled by others since that signals strong connections with people and because they are socialized to communicate in a 'rapport-talk' style in which the aim is to view and comprehend others' point of views (Tannen 1990). John Gray (1992) is another writer who claimed that the reasons behind miscommunication between males and females are their completely dissimilar ways of using language. In his groundbreaking production, *Men from Mars and Women from Venus*, he tried to find solutions to the serious disagreement between married couples which sometimes lead to stop their relationship from continuing. He claimed that our different ways in expressing notions and feelings are the essence

of many problems. Indeed, men and women don't use different languages, but they attach different meanings to the words they utter. They are taught from the very beginning of their lives to behave in a certain way and to adopt the common characteristics that are associated with their gender. Wood in her book, *Gendered lives*, also asserted that women's linguistic norms of behaviour are distinct from that of men due to their contrasting roles they play in life; while men reflect in their speech the dominance of power they receive from their society, women reflect their supporting roles. Accordingly, the common ground for all aforementioned authors is that males and females speakers operate different norms in their conversations; these norms do not only assert the fact that these two genders are psychologically and biologically different, but they also tell socio-cultural stories about our societies. In fact, not all linguists support this view and a lot of studies show that these differences are not always apparent especially if the language under study is a written one. Mulac (1989), for instance, brought a group of people whose age, gender and social class were different then he gave them some written messages and asked them to find out whether their writers were males or females. Surprisingly, those subjects found difficulty in fulfilling the task since the styles by which the messages were written had a lot of common characteristics. Therefore, he claimed that if differences between male and female communicators are as great as how many theorists affirm why these differences are not observed in written and spoken styles alike. In fact, the lack of agreement between many studies makes the research on this topic an essential prerequisite in order to reach satisfactory results.

2.3. Speech practices associated with gender

The following is a presentation of some men's and women's features of language that have been discussed a lot in literature

2.3.1. Polite forms

In conversations, women adhere to polite linguistic forms more than men. This fact was stated by Holmes (1995) who claimed that women always show good manners and respect for the feelings of others while taking part in any communicative activity. Fishman (1980) also claimed that women's styles of speech go in line with their conversational goals; they care more about building bridges of understanding with their interlocutors. Men, on the other hand, don't converse to show love and interest. For this reason, males' speeches are sometimes considered characterless and void of intimacy. Their main focus is how to hold floor and control the topic under discussion (Holmes, 1995).

2.3.2. Questions

Questions as a linguistic device are not only used by speakers to gain information or to obtain particular facts and details. In casual speech, for example, they are used to invite embarrassed or shy addressees to participate in conversation. Additionally, questions can give a chance to open lively discussions between speakers, hence creating a more active atmosphere during conversations (Coates, 1996). So, raising questions can effectively help in eliciting different responses and reactions from negative and positive participants together. According to Coates (1986), women show greater tendency to convert their statements into questions more than men. They use this technique as an implicit way to keep the wheels of conversation rolling. Men's use of questions while communicating is mainly for delivering information or asserting certain points of view about the subject under discussion. It is worth mentioning that women tend to ask more questions in intimate settings while in public or formal contexts, men are generally the ones who ask questions. In mixed- sex conversations they are more likely to ask critical questions and antagonistic questions – i.e. questions that involve challenging and are viewed as an attack to the speaker. (Coates, 1986). One type of questions that have received a lot of attentions by linguists is tag questions. Carli (1990), for example, stated that tag

questions are overused by women especially when they are conversing with men which indicates that tag questions as a device is used for expressing submission, yielding and obedience. In a study made by Siegler and Siegler (1976), the participants were given a task of identifying whether certain sentences are originally produced by male or female speakers. Most participants claimed that women usually produce sentences with tag questions while men use assertive styles of sentences to assure their points of view and they passed their judgment accordingly. Conversely, Holmes (1985; 1995) and Coates (1987) claimed that both men and women equally insert this type of question in their speech to serve many functions like softening the force of a speech act, directing and facilitating the conversation and making it run smoothly, and reducing the force and unpleasant effect of certain utterances like directives and imperatives and thus expressing politeness. (Dubois & Crouch, 1975; Fishman, 1980; Kipers, 1987).

2.3.3. Disclaimers, Qualifiers, Fillers, and Hedges

Women's speech is usually rich with statements that starts with disclaimers like ' I think' or ' I guess' which help in reducing the force of utterance or assist in making a polite suggestion. Moreover, women tend to heavily use qualifiers and fillers while trying to describe things in their minds or to show their involvements and interests in others' speech (Lakoff, 1975). Mulac (1999) additionally claimed that women use more adverbs like 'very' or 'really' to emphasize what they are talking about. He also asserted that women generally use hedges and polite linguistic expressions more than men supporting by that the findings of Bent Preisler (1986), who also depended on empirical study to verify his results. He brought a group of four people then he recorded their speech after introducing them some controversial subjects like violence on television. After examining the recordings, Priesler came out with a result that women use more hedges than men do.

2.3.4. Commands and Directives

Mulac 1999, Goodwin 1980, and Mills 1995 claimed that men are more likely to give their conversation an imperative tone in order to express authority and achieve dominance over other speakers, so they use "aggravated directives" (Braun, 2004: 15) to meet their demands. Women, on the other hand, naturally refrain from imposing their opinions and values on others while conversing with them. This can give a reason why they don't heavily insert imperatives and directives in their speech even when they try to give instructions or make suggestions(Goodwin, 1980; Zimmerman & West, 1983).

2.4. Empirical and Practical Research:

2.4.1. Darani and Darani, (2010): Language and gender: A prosodic study of Iranian speakers' talk

This study investigated the possible relationship between gender and the prosodic behaviour of Iranian men and women in formal context. The data was randomly collected from Iranian TV news programs whose participants were all educated. Twelve talks had been chosen to be analyzed using the Praat speech analysis software. Additionally, the one-way ANOVA was used to compare between men's and women's pitch in both cross-sex and same-sex talks. The results showed that unlike female speakers, male speakers tended to use a higher pitch of voice while talking in heterogeneous groups compared to homogenous ones which indicated that males and females didn't react similarly in the same situation, linguistically speaking; they rather insisted on emphasizing these differences that were culturally inherited.

2.4.2. Jan, (2002): Interpretation of Gender in a Malaysian Novel: The Case of Salina

The aim of this study was investigating the differences in communicative styles between male and female characters in a Malaysian Novel, Salina, written by A. Samad Ismail. The main reason

for choosing Salina was the researcher's belief that the language of this literary work depicted directly or indirectly the cultural norms and practices of the Malaysian society. Five excerpts were randomly selected to be analyzed and only two linguistic features were examined, namely super polite forms and hedges. The findings of this research showed that most of the characters were polite to each other which indicated that there were no gender differences in the use of this linguistic feature. This study additionally suggested, in contrast to other studies, that male speakers were greater users of hedges in compare to their female counterparts; the claim that supported the idea that there was no exclusive feature used by one gender.

2.4.5. Chit Cheung Matthew Sung, (2013): Doing gender and leadership: A discursive analysis of media representations in a reality TV show.

This study aimed at investigating the different discursive styles that male and female managers adopted while 'doing leadership' in the American reality TV show *The Apprentice*. The language of four project managers (two men- two women) had been analyzed depending on discourse analysis as its framework. The findings of this study indicated that while the first two male and female managers applied linguistic style of leadership that matched with traditional gendered expectations, the other managers adopted a mixed style by using linguistic techniques that usually conformed with their opposite gender violating by that the stereotypically gendered speech norms while doing leadership at work. This study also indicated that although a mixed style was perceived positively in the reality TV show, masculine discourse style was still more acceptable among the audience of this show.

Data Analyses and Discussions:
3.1. The Analyses:
3.1.1. A Brief Account of Hala's and Adnan's Social Background:

Hala was a widow who got married instantly after her graduation from the Faculty of Fine Arts. Her husband died so young leaving her a beautiful girl called Mona. In order to be financially independent, Hala sold the villa she inherited and bought instead a small house, a shop and a car. After many years of living alone with her daughter, she fell in love with a man called Adnan. Adnan proposed to Hala many times, but Mona stood as a stumbling block in his way; the thing that put Hala in a critical situation with Adnan and Mona together. Most of the series' events revolved around the challenges that Hala faced and how she could finally overcome them.

Adnan was a single strong minded man who travelled to Sweden where he lived for years. He returned back to Syria as a visit but his accidental meeting with Hala forced him to change his plans. Adnan went through many relationships but none of them was serious. Being always busy, he didn't notice the passage of time. He suddenly became a forty- aged man without being a father or a husband. After meeting Hala and proposing to her, Adnan decided to buy a land where he could build a villa and raise crops. Adnan was characterized as an oriental man even though he travelled abroad. His plans should be always achieved regardless of others' circumstances. This fact had been revealed throughout the series.

3.1.2. Linguistic Analyses of Hala and Adnan

We shall first investigate how Hala and Adnan differ in their discursive styles by drawing upon a number of linguistic features that help in understanding their personalities. In the following excerpt, Adnan wanted to know whether Hala was married or not, but Hala wasn't ready enough to disclose anything regarding her private life.

Excerpt 1:

1- Adnan: I have noticed that you wear no ring... I mean, are you married or not? Sorry for this question

 <Adnan: k2ny mala7azt fi ma7bas b2edik y3ny k2nek malik mtzawjeh… 2na asif 3lsw2al>

2-Hala: yeah, I wear no ring on my finger

<Hala: l2 mafi ma7bas b2edi>

3- Adnan: well… but I have also noticed that you were talking with your daughter on the phone

<Adnan: mnyh… bs k2nek knti 3m t7ki m3 bintik>

4-Hala: yeah

 <Hala: eah>

5-Adnan: by the way, I have lived in Sweden for 15 years, but I haven't got married till now

 <Adnan: 3la fikra, 2na kaman 3sht biswid 15 sena w ma tzwajt, ma 9ar na9ib>

In this excerpt, Adnan drew upon a number of discourse strategies indicative of a typically masculine discursive style; his first question could be seen as a powerful linguistic device to force certain feedback from Hala. In fact, not knowing whether Hala was married or not created a feeling of unease inside his heart, so he decided to express his doubts more freely by asking her frankly (line 1), but his usage of the polite word 'sorry' and the hedge 'I mean' helped in reducing the force of his intrusive question. In fact, His way of asking and giving comments (lines 1, 3) could be coded as stereotypically masculine (Holmes, 2006). Adnan went on to talk about himself in the form of informative sentences (line 5) as a way for encouraging Hala to reveal more details about her without reserve. This indeed supports Holme's claim (1998) that men tend to focus more on the referential meaning of the language more than women. Additionally, his attempt to reveal information about his life without being asked to do so also indicated that he was quite ready to enter in a new relationship with Hala. The adverb he used in the line (5)

'by the way' indicated, furthermore, that Hala wasn't that much satisfied with the kind of topic under discussion, so he tried to attract some attention from her, but it seemed that his attempt was doomed to failure. Hala's short answers in lines (2, 4) were far from encouraging the conversation to continue. She didn't care about her equal participation in the conversation. Although the continuer 'yeah' was used to affirm Adnan's suggestion about her, it also showed her hesitation to uncover secret information regarding her life (in lines 2, 4).

Excerpt 2:

1- Adnan: By the way, Mariam had called me and asked me to remember her to you.

   <Adnan: 3la fikra maryam eta9let w bitslem 3lyky>

2- Hala: that's so fine

   <Hala: Allah yslmha>

3- Adnan: They are thinking of leaving Sweden to Canada; she did her best to convince me to go with them

 <Adnan: 2l 3m yfakru ytrku 2stralia w ysafru 3la kanada w 3m t8n3ni wallah 7ata ru7 m3hum>

4- Hala: Yeah <Hala: eah>

5- Adnan: I felt that she knows about you more than you know about her

   <Adnan: 7setha bt3ref 3nk 2ktar ma bt3rfi 3nha>

  6- Hala: Really! What does she know about me?

   <Hala: ballah   shu   bt3rif?>

7- Adnan: Actually, what she knows makes me come to invite you for having a cup of coffee with me

   <Adnan: wallah yali bt3rfuh 3nk hu yali shj3ny ejy la23zmek 3la fnjan 2hweh>

  8- Hala: I think that Maraim hasn't mentioned good things about me

   <Hala: wallah shaklha maryam alhakyi yali hakutuh 3ny ma bisr alkhatir bunub>

9- Adnan: Vice versa; she has said very good things about you; by the way, since you want to go shopping, let's me accompany you as a change of plan instead of going out for coffee.

 <Adnan: bil3ks tamam 7akat ktir shaghlat mney7a, blmunasabeh bema 2nek ray7a 3lsu2 5lyna nghyr mashru3 el2hwa w ru7 m3k 3la lsu2?>

10- Hala: mmm... no

 <Hala: mmm... la2>

11- Adnan: As you like

 <Adnan: eah metl ma bdk>

12- Adnan: What about giving you a lift?

 <Adnan: shu r2yek wa9lak?>

13- Hala: no, thanks. I do have my own car

 <Hala: la2 shukraan 3ndi sayara>

14- Adnan: well… what about giving you a lift to the place where your car is parked?

 <Adnan: 6ayeb bw9lik 3la syartik?>

15- Hala: No need for that; it is parked over there

 <Hala: la2 mafi da3i; lekha sayarti>

16- Adnan: ok; what about giving me a lift to ALumawyeen Square where I barked my car?

 <Adnan: 6ayib fi majal tw9lini 3la sayarti 9affha bisa7et 2l2mawyean?>

In this excerpt, Hala drew upon a range of minimal responses with different linguistic functions. While they indicated Hala's active attention to what was being said by Adnan in line 4, they helped in making her refusal to go out with him less severe in line 10. Hedges were additionally used by her for a multifunctional purpose: 1- producing positive and encouraging feedback 2- mitigating the force of her utterance 3- expressing uncertainty regarding what has been discussed. The hedge 'really' in line 6 was produced with positive feedback utterance to invite Adnan to reveal what Mariam has said about her and

to downplay the directness of her question. 'I think' in line 8 was also used to express her doubts and the feeling of unease about the kind of information that Mariam has uncovered before Adnan. Other discursive strategies that are typically associated with a feminine register and have been drawn upon a lot in this excerpt are compliments and politeness devices. In line 2 Hala's compliment reflected her attempt to pay attention to Adnan's positive face needs. In fact, she oriented to maintain a harmonious relationship with him. Additionally the word 'thanks' in line 13 and the explanation that follows it helped in reducing friction in her interactions with Adnan. Adnan's suggestion to give Hala a lift was politely refused due to the reason that Hala had her own car not because she didn't, as a matter of fact, accept his sudden appearance in her life. In his speech, Adnan was similarly keen on achieving a good social relationship with Hala. He always showed a tendency to initiate more topics with her to maintain the main stream of the conversation and to break silence that might occur, thus directing the conversation the way he liked. It is worth mentioning that introducing new topics is considered as a salient feature of male speech strategy; men are always keen in deciding which topics to elaborate on. While talking about Mariam latest news (line 1, 3), he directed Hala's attention to himself by saying that his sister was trying to convince him to travel with them. Then, aiming to add some suspense to his style of speech, Adnan told Hala that Mariam knew a lot of thing about her. This tactic helped in making Hala contribute more actively to the conversation. In fact, Adnan was very good at changing the subject while still maintaining a joint construction of the conversation, making the transition less abrupt. This could be proved further in line 9, 12, 14, 16 when he tried to suggest more than one idea in just few seconds. Different linguistic techniques like suggestive questions and attention getters were perfectly used by him to introduce his new topics. The phrase 'by the way' in line 9, for example, aimed at calling Hala's attention to the new suggestion he was going to make. Though questions in the last few lines could be additionally

interpreted as devices for making suggestions, they could be also seen as polite requests for accompanying Hala on her daily trip, but in a jokey manner.

Excerpt 3:

1- Adnan: I came over your shop yesterday, but it was closed; hope that everything is ok with you

<Adnan: mbare7 mr2t fl2yt elma7l mskar fnshaghal baly lekun 9ar shy la sama7llah>

2- Hala: No fear… I mean…what happened with me wasn't that much serious

<Hala: l2 kluh khayr y3ni 9ar shy bs ma bi5wef kteer>

3- Adnan: So, were you in a date with someone?

<Adnan: ezn kan y3ni mathalaan 3ndek maw3d>

4- Hala: mmm...Maybe

<Hala: mmm… bijuz>

5- Adnan: I am talking seriously

<Adnan: l2 3njed 3m 27ki >

6- Hala: maybe

<Hala: mmkn>

7- Adnan: Are you in a relationship or not?

<Adnan: bihl 29a9 mafi mumkin, ya murtb6a ya malik murtb6a>

8-Hala: maybe

<Hala: ns   3la   ns>

In the first line, the question was a statement saying, "hope that everything is ok with you". The question didn't function as a typical question, i.e. an interrogative, but as an indicative, showing Adnan's care rather than actually asking. The fact that Adnan phrased his speech like this way is to weaken the intrusive tone of his utterance. He wanted to know why Hala closed her shop, but Hala as usual refrained from giving him a satisfying answer. This could explain why he was so blatant when he daringly asked Hala " Are you in a relationship or not?" (Line 7) Although Hala's short answers mainly functioned as encouragement for

the conversation to continue, they made Adnan really suspicious; the reason that pushed him to use imperatives in order to elicit a certain response from her. In fact, he wanted Hala to be less humorous and more cooperative but his soft style of speech helped in making his command less severe.

Excerpt 4:

1- Hala: She may refuse

  <Hala: bijuz ma twaf2>

2-Adnan: right, but why don't you just try?

  <Adnan: bijuz lakn shu lman3 2nk t7awli?>

3-Hala: I do not know indeed.

< Hala: wallah ma b3rif>

4-Adnan: By the way, after many years, your daughter will be in a college and will have her own life. I mean that your daughter will leave you alone finally.

  <Adnan: leki bintek 2kid b3d kam senah ra7 t9ir biljam3h w ra7 t9ir elha 7ayatha alsha59ieh y3ni ra7 tetl3 be25ti9ar mn 7ayatik>

5- Hala: I know this fact

<Hala: b2rif had elshy>

6- Adnan: so, let her understand it

  <Adnan: 6ayib fahmiha halshi>

7- Hala: this isn't the whole story; this isn't the whole story

<Hala: mu bs hyk, mu bs hyk>

8- Adnan: what else?

  <Adnan: lkn shu>

9- Hala: I don't know; I feel uneasy and I am in such a hurry

  <Hala: ma b3rif 2na maly mrta7ah w must3jleh ktir>

10- Adnan: as you like, but when you stop feeling so, this is my card

  <Adnan: mitl ma bdk, bs t7sy enuh ma b2yanah mst3jleh ktir hei karti>

Adnan's speech in the previous dialogue could be seen as a prime example of 'playing the expert' in a conventionally masculine way. His

tone was slightly lecturing and instructional; he also tried to direct the conversation the way he liked by using logic and facts (line 3). Additionally, he could be said to display a certain degree of a cooperative discourse style as an attempt to tackle Hala's problem with sympathy and understanding. His statements in lines (2, 5) could be interpreted as suggestions about how best to deal with her daughter. Although Adnan'a argument sounded so realistic and convincing, Hala was not sure enough that her daughter could really understand the facts which Adnan stated. Most of her expressions in lines (1, 3) and repetitions (line7) reflected her inner fears and doubts about the best way to deal with her daughter. In order to avoid a further discussion with Adnan, Hala claimed that she was in a tearing hurry to leave (line 9). Adnan seemed to be very patient with her behaviors (line 10). His speech was almost devised in a way that prevented the usage of strong statements and orders (line 10). The main linguistic difference between Hala and Adnan in this excerpt is that Hala tried to communicate emotionally while Adnan tried to find solutions and logical interpretation of her problem which further proves that women tend to focus on the effective meaning of the conversation more than men.

Excerpt 5:

1- Adnan: when can you accept my invitation?

 <Adnan: 2ymta ra7 t7ny 3lyna w t2bli 3zimte ya tara?>

2- Hala: One day

 <Hala: shy yawm>

3- Adnan: one day! Can you exactly determine when will this day come? Will it come after a week, a month, a year or even a century! I do really want to now

 <Adnan: shy yawm! Y3ni fyky ta7dedi 2lyawm mathalan b3d esbu3, shahr, sena 2w b3d 38d y3ni mshan n3rif 2mta had 2lyawm>

4- Hala: I mean...I mean... when I get ready

 <Hala: bs...bs... la9ir jahzeh>

5- Adnan: When you are ready!

<Adnan: aywaa lat9iri jahzeh!>

Although Adnan was so calm at the beginning, he couldn't conceal his annoyance at being ignored by Hala. His questions mainly revolved around criticizing and mocking her (lines 1, 3, 5). His assertive tone was clearly noticed in (line 3) when he tried to force Hala to answer him in a more definite way. Being in an embarrassing situation, Hala couldn't express herself freely. Her confusion was revealed by the usage of the hedge ' I mean' (in line 4) for two times successively with pauses between them.

Excerpt 6:

1- Adnan: What's wrong with you?

<Adnan: shu 29tek shbek?>

2- Hala: Nothing; I am a little bit annoyed

<Hala: mafy shy mtday2h shwy>

3- Adnan: But you were good yesterday!

<Adnan: 3la 3lmy mbara7 knty kteer mne7a>

4- Hala: so much!

<Hala: eah kteer!>

5- Adnan: our evening was good; we enjoyed our time and laughed a lot and I thought of calling you at night, but it suddenly sprang to my mind that you might have a quarrel with your daughter

<Adnan: w lsahra kanet la6ifeh w nbasa6na w da7kna w 5atar 3la baly 27ki m3k blayl bs 2lt balaha hal2 btkun 3m tet5an2 m3 Muna>

6- Hala: Yeah, Your expectations were in place

<Hala: hueh hyk>

7- Adnan: It is just a matter of time

<Adnan: m3lsh bdha w2t>

8- Hala: oh… I think that we don't have to be in a great hurry in our relationship

<Hala: aah… kan lazim n5fif shwy>

9- Adnan: not to be in a hurry?
<Adnan: n5fif shwy!>

10- Hala: I mean that we don't have to meet a lot in the coming days.
<Hala: y3ni n5fif nshuf b3d bihalkm yawm>

12- Adnan: is Mona the reason for this decision?
<Adnan: mshan Muna?>

13- Hala: she isn't the only reason…
<Hala: la mu bs mshan Muna>

14- Adnan: what are you reasons? Say them!
<Adnan: lkn mshan shu 36yni sabab tany>

15- Hala: I am the actual reason; I am…I am not ready enough for a serious relationship
<Hala: mshany 2na kman... 2na ... 2na mali jahzeh le3la8ah jaddeah>

16- Adnan: in fact, you are not ready for a serious relationship nor for unserious one! What do you want from me? What do you actually want? Nothing! Is that right?
<Adnan: mu jahzeh le3la8h jaddeah w 6b3n 2kid mu jahzeh le3la8ah ghyr jaddeah? m3naha shu bdk mny, shu bdk mny , mabidk shy mny 9a7?>

17- Hala: That isn't what I mean; that isn't what I mean
<Hala: l2 mu hyk , mu hyk 29dy>

18- Adnan: What do you mean?
<Adnan: lkn shu 29dak>

19- Hala: I cannot prevent my daughter from doing things I myself do
<Hala: 2na mafyny 7rrem 3la bnty shy 2na 3m 23mluh>

20- Adnan: But Mona isn't a little child!
<Adnan: bs ya Hala Muna malha 9ghireh>

21- Hala: I know she just needs more time
<Hala: b3rf bdha w2t>

22-Adnan: so, what is your suggestion? We don't have to meet again?
<Adnan: w shu bt8tr7y bhlw2t? ma nshuf b3dna?

23- Hala: no, we just have to be more careful
<Hala: l2 bs enu n5afif shwy>

24- Adnan: What do you mean by that?
    <Adnan: 2dysh y3ni n5afif>

25- Hala: (crying)
    <Hala: crying>

26-Adnan: As you like. By the way, if you decide what you actually mean by "we are not in a hurry" and what you need from me, just give me a call. You know my phone number
 <Adnan: eah mtl ma bt2mry, 3la fikra ra8amy m3k bs t3rfi 2dish bdna n5afif w t5dedn shu m3natha laklmet n5fif w bt3rfi shu bdk mn al29a klha   eb2y   etsli   fini>

 27- Hala: crying
     <Hala: crying>

        Adnan's first question reflected the caring side of his personality (line 1). He wanted to know whether he was the reason behind Hala's annoyance or not due to the fact that they spent the last evening together. Although his exclamatory sentence revealed that Hala was happy with him yesterday, her sarcastic comment in line 4 refuted this assumption. As they go in the conversation, Adnan's gentle way of speech had turned upside down when Hala asked him to stop meeting each other for a while. In fact, his imperative and sarcastic tone prevented Hala from defending herself before him. It seemed that Adnan was acting like a sort of policeman trying to restore the peace. This could be seen through his usage of many accusing questions. Hala, who was so perplexed, (lines 10, 13, 15, 17, 23) tried to assert her individual voice by using the personal pronoun "I" (line 15), but Adnan's great annoyance prevented him from hearing her. That was so clear when he both asked and answered his question at the same time ignoring any reply that Hala could give (line16). Not knowing what to say, Hala started to utter broken phrases that reflected her hesitations and uncertainty (lines 17, 23). The thing that made Adnan fly into a rage (lines 18, 20, 22, 26).

Excerpt7:

1- Hala: what is this?

  <Hala: shu had?>

2- Adnan: open it to see

  <Adnan: fta7i bt3rfi>

3- Hala: Are you going to marry

  <Hala: 7atettjawz?>

4- Adnan: yeah, do you expect me to wait for you the rest of my life?

  <Adnan: eah bdy etzwaj lkn bdy 3ysh 3mri 3m estnaky?>

5- Hala: Yeah… I mean…

  <Hala: eah, 29sdi…>

6- Adnan: you mean that I can't live without you?

  <Adnan: 29dk mafyny 3ysh blaky?>

7- Hala: No, this isn't what I meant...but...actually it is your right…You can marry anytime you like

  <Hala: la mu hek 29di...bs... 3adi ya3ni 72k...b72lak ttzawaj >

8- Adnan: what else?

  <Adnan: bs hyk>

9- Hala: what shall I say?

  <Hala: shu bdk y3ni 2lk?>

10-Adnan: at least say "congrats"

  <Adnan: 2ulili mabruk>

11- Hala: I don't want to say so

  <Hala: ma bdy 2lk mabruk>

12- Adnan: aren't you happy for me?

  <Adnan: lysh? shu ma fr7tyly?>

13- Hala: No

  <Hala: la2>

14- Adnan: I haven't heard

  <Adnan: ma sm3t shu 2lti?>

15- Hala: please, don't marry; don't marry

  <Hala: mshan allah, mashan allah la ttzawaj

16- Adnan: Are you begging me?

    <Adnan: y3ni 3m ttrjyny?>

17- Hala: Yes; I beg you. Please, don't marry

    <Hala: eah 3em etrjak mshan allah la ttzawaj>

18- Adnan: Don't claim that you cannot live without me

    <Adnan: w hal2 b3d shwy bt2ulili mafyny 3ysh 7ayati bedunak>

19- Hala: I do love you; I do love you; I can't go on in life without you

    <Hala: w lak l2nuh 2na b7bk, 2na b7bk w ma fyny 3ysh blak>

20- Adnan: what about Mona?

    <Adnan: w Muna shu?>

21- Hala: I don't know

    <Hala: ma b3rf>

22- Adnan: You have to make up your mind now

    <Adnan: hl2 bdk ta5di 8arar ya eah ya l2, hal2 bdk ta5di 8arar>

23- Hala: give me a chance

    <Hala: 6ayib bs 36yni fr9a>

24- Adnan: I won't give you any; you have to decide now

<Adnan: mab2a fi fra9, fra9 5ala9 shltha mn 8amusi hla2 bdk ta5di8rarik

25- Hala: I need one month

    <Hala: bs shahr wa7id>

26- Adnan: if you read what has been written on the card, you will know that my wedding day is after 10 days, so you have only 10 days. Decide now whether you want me or not.

    <Adnan: ymkin 2nte ma ntbahti shu maktub 3la lkrt, tari5 3rsi b3d 3hr tyam, m3k 3hr tyam t8rry bs… b2a hal2 bt8rry ya eah ya l2 shu 2lti?>

27- Hala: only 10 days!

    < Hala: 3shr tyam?>

    The first question that Hala used here didn't aim at gaining information from Adnan (line 3). She simply couldn't believe what was going on around her. Adnan didn't only give her an affirmative response but also stated his main reason in another question that expressed his

disapproval of her behaviour (line 4). Although Adnan's speech reflected no concern for his addressee's feelings, Hala seemed to watch every word she was uttering. The hedge 'I mean' in line (5), for example, was used to make her tone less tense especially after answering Adnan in a very assertive way. The reason that made him interrupt her to complete what she couldn't speak, but in a very provocative way. Although Hala claimed that Adnan had a freedom of getting married anytime he wanted, her inner voice yelled the complete opposite (line 7). Her pauses and hedges reflected what she felt and denied what she said. This is, in fact, one of the linguistic feature of women's speech; women usually say things that seem to have opposite meanings than what they really intend. Hala was in a very weak position; she tried her best to stop Adnan from leaving her alone. Regardless of her dignity and self-image, she expressed her love to Adnan in a very overtly way (lines 15, 17, 19). She seemed to stop watching her words since everything could be lost. Her speech was full of many linguistic devices that could reflect her emotional disturbance. Her repetitive phrases were used to make Adnan give his decision a second thought. Adnan, on the other hand, tried to be so sarcastic and criticizing (lines 16-18). In fact, Most of his questions carried one important function which was blaming Hala for his own choice. Hala was still uncertain till this moment; the hedges that she showered her speech with always expressed her inability to take even one step in the right direction (line 21). She didn't want Adnan to get married nor did she want to lose her daughter. For her, there was no prospect of compromise in sight. Adnan wanted Hala to take up her decision as soon as possible; the thing that explained why his speech was full of imperative and commands (lines 22, 24, 26).

3.2. Discussion:

According to the theories mentioned previously, men and women apply different linguistic strategies to convey various messages, but can this assumption be applied to Hala's and Adnan's ways of speech? Our analysis of the previous conversations gives an impression that this

distinction is to a certain degree applicable which indicates that the traditional male and female roles haven't completely deteriorated as how many modern theorists claim. Despite the fact that these two characters are witnessed to some extent using discourse features that do not accord with their gender and employing a mixed style, their speech strategies justify the theorists' talk about certain feminine and masculine traits. In accord with the previous transcriptions, Hala applied certain linguistic features that reflected her diplomatic and sensitive nature. She, for example, did her best to avoid direct disagreement with Adnan especially when he tried to convince her to get married of him regardless of her daughter's opinion or when he opened needless conversations. Direct statements and taboo words are, furthermore, avoided by her. Although there are few examples which indicate her usage of imperatives, they are weakened with hedges, fillers or polite words to reduce their emphatic effect. The fact that Hala was also interested in metamessages was also obvious in the previous scripts. When Hala has not expressed her sadness and annoyance and claimed that she is ok when Adnan showed her his wedding cards, she indirectly told Adnan that her sufferings could not be spelled out in words and that she badly needed him beside her though she pretended otherwise. Adnan, on the other hand, is represented as powerful and assertive who did not hesitate to say or do whatever he wanted. His empowerment in part seems to stem from his use of language. That is so obviously seen when he had forced Hala to make her mind up whether or not she accepts to marry him regardless of her difficult circumstances. Explicit and direct manner isn't the only feature that characterizes Adnan's speech in the previous transcriptions. The structure of his sentences is often as logical and solution-oriented as a mathematical puzzle; the thing that helped him in taking the lead throughout the conversations. In his speech with Hala, Adnan, for instance, didn't sympathize with her or reveal his compassion towards her problem with her daughter; he, instead, has asked her to solve her dilemma by stating reasonable things to Mona in order to accept his

marriage with her mum. Another dictated sign of a male linguistic style is Adnan's focusing on referential (informative) meaning of the language. Most questions that are raised by him are aimed at gaining particular information from Hala regarding her private life. Sarcastic tone and dry comments are also examples of the features that appeared frequently in Adnan's speech especially in the last dialogues. Despite of the previous mentioned features, there are certain examples where male and female characters conform to the other gender norms of speech. Adnan's assertive manner in knowing what is going on with Hala (excerpt 3) revealed the caring and sympathetic aspect of his personality which indicates that men do not only focus on referential meaning of the language but also on the effective one. Of course this evidence does not indicate that his masculinity is at stake. In her speech with Adnan, Hala did also transgress stereotypical gendered expectations for her speech patterns especially when she suffered from increasing pressure and become under more constraints in her life. She could be seen as a prime example of a woman (especially in the last excerpt) who redefines herself as powerful in terms of male values refuting by that the claim that "stereotypical expectations restrict women's interactional behaviour more than men's". (Thimm et al. 2003: 532). In fact, many recent arguments have been made to prove that while males are powerful in certain situation, they are not so in others. This can also be applied to women whose activity and passivity depend wholly on the context which they find themselves in.

3.4. A Further analysis of some linguistic features in males' and females' conversations:

3.4.1. Questions:

When it comes to questions, Adnan used more interrogatives than Hala. Out of about thirty-one instances of questions, he asked twenty-seven of them (approximately 87%) and Hala 4 (approximately 12.9%). The functions performed by these questions are the following:

1- Expressing disagreement

2- Asking for information

3- Keeping the conversation going

4- Rhetorical questions (Adnan's sequence of questions when Hala asked him to stop meeting each other).

5- Trying to prompt a response from the hearer (Adnan's interest in knowing whether Hala is married or not).

6- Asking for clarification.

3.4.2. Hedges& fillers:

"Being uncertain is considered feminine, whereas directness is seen as a masculine trait" (Lakoff, 1975). Hedges and filler are linguistic forms that women excessively insert while speaking, as they reduce the force of their utterance. According to the previous transcription, out of 28 instances of hedges, Hala performed twenty (approximately 71.4%) while the remaining 8 are performed by Adnan (approximately 28.5%). Hedges in the previous dialogues are used for the following reasons:

1- In order not to be direct and categorical.

2- To avoid imposing one's opinions on other.

3- To show the sensitive side of one's personality.

4-To soften up their speech after an especially direct and harshstatement.

5- To avoid making an attack on others' personalities and thus developing the argument into a more serious conflict.

It is worth mentioning that in order not to affect their fluency and confidence in conversations, both male and female characters avoid hedging their statement especially when they try to play the role of expert while lecturing others or when they show a tendency to focus on information and facts rather than making statements about feelings. "But if their speech focus on sensitive topics, the usage of hedges become vital because, otherwise, given the mutual disclosure of participants, talk would be impossible since, due to the characteristics of these topics, statements cannot be said bluntly" (Coates, 1996:165)

3.4.3. Affirmatives:

It was observed that all previous conversations were so active to a degree that it was hard to detect periods of silences. This can be proved through the usage of a number of affirmatives like yeah, well and ok by Adnan and Hala similarly to show their interest in topics being discussed. According to the above conversations, out of Adnan used (approximately 52.6%) while Hala used (47%) which indicate that there are no great differences between the two genders in their usage of affirmatives.

3.4.4. Directives:

Issuing directives in the form of imperatives is a typical feature of male speech. This linguistic device is mainly used to establish a leadership position or to exercise some control over others. Sometimes commands become less severe because they are mitigated by a humorous reference or by hedges. This can be especially seen in women's speech since they always tend to avoid threatening the face of the other partner in the conversation and in order not to be negatively evaluated (Holmes, 2008). Adnan produced (approximately 69.2%) while the rest are issued by Hala (approximately 30.7%).

Conclusion:

The research into the representation of gender speech pattern differences in Syrian Spoken Arabic suggests the following conclusions:

1- The study has indicated that Adnan used more questions than Hala; this finding doesn't go in line with Lakoff's theory (1975).

2- This study has also shown that this female character used hedges more often than the male character confirming by that the findings of Lakoff (1975) and Holmes (1998).

3- According to the analyzed data, Adnan tended to use more directives and commands in his speech more than Hala; these findings match Coates' findings (1986).

4- The study has also pointed out that both male and female speakers equally tend to produce positive feedbacks while conversing with each

other; this finding goes in contrast with Holmes' claim that women produce more affirmatives than men (1998).

Besides these results, our qualitative analysis of the research suggests the following:

1- The female character (Hala) tried to avoid making harsh criticism on her partners' ways of speech.

2- Her speech can be also described as metamessaged.

3- She, additionally, tended to focus on the effective meaning of the language more than the informative one.

4- The male character (Adnan), on the other hand, tended to manipulate his style of speech to be as logical and solution- oriented as a mathematical puzzle.

5- He didn't also hesitate to express his direct disagreements over things that don't go in line with his desire.

6- Sarcastic tone and dry comments were also part of his style of speech.

In addition to these facts, male and female characters do conform to the other gender's style of speech in certain contexts. While the male character (Adnan) didn't hesitate, for example, to uncover his sensitive and caring aspects of his personality while talking with his partner. The female character (Hala) didn't equally hesitate to argue powerfully for her rights (as seen in different scenes) using all possible linguistic techniques in hands.

Accordingly, our hypothesis that male and female characters adopt different linguistic styles in conversation is applicable with some exceptions (previously stated) which indicates that the conception of gender as categorical, fixed and static should be abandoned and that the language of women is neither defective nor is the language of men dominated. Men and women, in fact, adopt certain linguistic forms that match with their goals and aims and their activity and passivity depend wholly on the roles they play and the situation they find themselves in. The findings, furthermore, indicate that the characters' adopted styles of speech cannot be generalized since they are Syrian in nature and that

they may vary from one society to another, so it can be concluded that context, in most cases, plays a crucial role in influencing both gender's styles of speech, and that [… the perception of the different speech styles between men and women lies in our own beliefs and perceptions. To a certain extent, we tend to exaggerate perceived differences in the verbal styles of men and women because we live in an environment that stresses differences rather than similarities] (Jan, 2002:9).

4.2. Delimitations & Recommendations:

The purpose of this study is to investigate gender differences in styles of speech in Syrian Spoken Arabic. Despite spending considerable effort in the analysis of the selected scenes, there are certain limitations that shouldn't be ignored. No interpretation is given to any contextual references i.e. facial expressions, body postures, eye- gaze, and other non-verbal actions haven't been included in this study. Additionally, our empirical data is limited to include only mixed-dyadic conversations. In other words, conversations that are held between homogeneous groups are excluded here. Furthermore, although we find the selected transcribed scenes to be exemplary, we are aware that they may not give a full impression of the Syrian drama as a whole. Choosing other sequences from other TV series may have provided different perspective. Nevertheless, we hope that this research will contribute, however little, to the study of gender differences in styles of speech. It is also worth mentioning that the importance of this research lies behind its novelty. Many previous studies were made on foreign, American & British , TV series and programs - like *Friends, Sex and the City, Desperate Housewives, and Reality TV Show*- but none was made on Syrian TV series and programs in spite of their importance and popularity in all Arab world as a whole. There is no doubt that future inquiries on this subject are still needed for further insights. Other research on other linguistic features would be of a great benefit to sociolinguistic students, so we recommend that future studies examine other different issues such as the relationship between gender and politeness or interruptions or the

differences in the non-verbal behaviors between male and female speakers to see how far the results of the previous research in this arena can be applied to our culture as Arabs.

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The Interplay between Text and Emojis in Iraqi Telegram Group Chatting: A Pragmatic- Relevance Study

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Abstract:

Internet-Mediated Communication (IMC) has entered a new era with the rise of emojis. These colourful signs are neither redundant nor decorative in nature. Instead, they possess a potential for affecting the final interpretation of the accompanying text. The current study probes the connectedness of emojis to textual exchanges in Telegram group chatting, namely the ostensible incongruity between text and emojis. It explores the influence that emojis posit on the user's intended meaning in Iraqi Telegram university chat group. Building on pragmatic, relevance-theoretic approach, data analysis was executed according to Yus's (2014) model, a version revised by Li and Yang (2018). The study addresses two research questions: (1) What kind of connection is there between text and emojis in Iraqi Telegram group chatting? and (2) What implications does the use of emojis have in Iraqi Telegram group chatting? The results the study came up with indicated that the apparent mismatch between text and emojis could be eliminated by marking a deeper meaning other than the one signaled by the surface meaning of the text. The results also showed that parallel emotion signal is the most significant function in the whole sample. The implication of this finding denotes that emojis were primarily utilized to convey a social meaning that is equivalent to the one depicted by facial expressions and body language in face-to-face conversations.

Keywords: *Internet-Mediated Communication, Emojis, Text, Relevance*

العلاقة المتبادلة في المعنى بين النص و الرموز التعبيرية في الدردشة الجماعية العراقية عبر التليغرام: دراسة تداولية

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الملخص:-

لقد دخل التواصل عبر الانترنت حقبة جديدة مع نشوء الرموز التعبيرية. لا تعد هذه العلامات الملونة فائضة عن الحاجة ولا تستخدم لأغراض تجميلية بطبيعة الحال، بل انها تمتلك القدرة على التأثير على التفسير النهائي للنص المصاحب لها. تستكشف الدراسة الحالية الترابط بين الرموز التعبيرية والتبادلات النصية في الدردشة الجماعية عبر التليغرام و بالأخص عدم التناغم الظاهري بين النص و الرموز التعبيرية. تستقصي الدراسة التأثير الذي تمارسه الرموز التعبيرية على المعنى المقصود للمستخدم في مجموعة درشة تليغرام خاصة بطلبة الجامعات العراقية. تم تحليل البيانات وفق المنهج التداولي و نظرية الصلة و ذلك باتباع منهج يس (٢٠١٤) و تحديداً النسخة المعدلة بواسطة لاي و يانغ (٢٠١٨). تجيب الدراسة على سؤالي البحث التاليين: (١) ما نوع الصلة الموجود بين النص و الرموز التعبيرية في الدردشة الجماعية العراقية عبر التليغرام؟ و (٢) ما هي مضامين استخدام الرموز التعبيرية في الدردشة الجماعية العراقية عبر التليغرام؟

واشارت النتائج التي خرجت بها الدراسة الى امكانية التخلص من عدم التناغم بين النص والرموز التعبيرية باكتشاف معنى أعمق من المعنى السطحي للنص. كما توصلت الدراسة الى أن إشارة المشاعر الموازية هي الوظيفة الأهم في العينة برمتها و هذه النتيجة تدل على أن الرموز التعبيرية تستخدم بالدرجة الأساس للتعبير عن المعنى الأجتماعي المماثل للمعنى الذي تنقله تعابير الوجه ولغة الجسد في المحادثات الواقعية.

1. Introduction

With the advent of technology, online communication becomes mosaic in nature. It comprises different forms of textual, visual, and audio effects. However, the interaction between the textual and the visual seems to have a hand over the other types. One of the most prominent phenomena in the digital arena at present is the interrelation between text and emojis.

It is indisputable that the rise of emojis is so pervasive phenomenon that cannot go unnoticed. Emojis have attracted so many scholars from different fields to explore their role in online communication. For linguists, emojis are part of the new virtual language. Just like text, emojis have forms, meanings, and functions. However, the view that link emojis to texts in online conversations is still at its infancy. The current paper sheds light on the degree to which emojis contribute to the underlying meaning of the text to which they are attached in Iraqi Telegram group chatting. It aims to investigate the nature of interaction between text and emojis and the impact of using emojis on the user's intended meaning in Telegram group chatting. This is so because the relationship between text and emojis is not always straightforward. In most cases, emojis have different connotations than the accompanying text. As such, it is hard to identify the underlying meaning that users intend to convey. The difference in meaning could result in a misinterpretation due to the ostensible mismatch between the visual effect and the verbal message.

2. Online Text

Online text refers to text-based communication over the Internet. It is devoted to mark any written communicative activity performed by means of the network. The term 'text' is controversial as it encompasses a variety of meanings. However, in general, it can be used to denote any coherent piece of language under discussion (Barton & Lee, 2013: 25).

Written forms constitute the bulk of exchanges implemented over the Internet. Despite of that, the virtual world exhibits a rather distinct view

of the term 'text'. According to Barton and Lee (2013: 26), digital texts are more dynamic than offline texts and they are constantly changing. In addition, online text is mainly characterized by informal use of language whereas offline text is usually written to fulfill official aims.

Online text exhibits a wide range of properties which can be subsumed under two headings: textual paralinguistic cues (TPC) and abbreviations. Textual Paralinguistic Cues (TPC) refer to "written manifestations of nonverbal audible, tactile, and visual elements that supplement or replace written language and that can be expressed through words, symbols, images, punctuations, demarcations, or any combination of these elements" (Luangrath et al., 2016: 98). In principle, written Internet-Mediated Communication (IMC) lacks such nonverbal features as facial expressions, body language, and voice manipulations which enable the interlocutors to identify the tone and the emotions embedded in their messages. Accordingly, users resort to a number of strategies, such as letter repetition, punctuation mark repetition, laughter, and capitalization, to make up for the shortage in online nonverbal behaviour.

Abbreviation is one common feature of digital writing and a hallmark of chat rooms language in particular. Online communicators tend to utilize abbreviated expressions in order to 'save valuable typing time' (Danet, 2001: 18). In fact, not all abbreviated forms are contemporary. Instead, some of them have been conventionalized prior to the evolution of IMC. Some of online abbreviated forms mentioned by Crystal (2006: 91-92) include: asap (as soon as possible); btw (by the way); cu (see you); jam (just a minute); m8 (mate); np (no problem); rip (rest in peace).

3. Emojis

The term 'emoji' is of a Japanese origin. Evans (2017: 18) describes it as "an anglicized version of two Japanese words *e*, 'picture', and *moji*, 'character'… [E]mojis are colourful symbols the winks, smilyes, love hearts and so on embedded as single character images, or glyphs, in our digital keyboards."

The emergence of emojis can be traced back to 1998, when the Japanese expert of telecommunication, Shigetaka Kurita, unveiled the first emoji signs (Danesi, 2017: 2). Till 2010, emojis were widely used in Japanese mobile and electronic systems. Nonetheless, the actual debut of emojis was in 2011 when they were integrated within systems of mobile phones that were available across the world (Evans, 2017: 18). Smartphones with IOS and Android systems were provided with emojified keyboards to be used as a new mode of computerized facial expressions. This broad recognition of emojis ended up with the announcement of the emoji of "Face with Tears of Joy," as the 2015 "Word of the Year" by Oxford Dictionary (Alshenqeeti, 2016: 56; Danesi, 2017: vi ; Evans, 2017: 10-11).

The creation of emojis was first intended to fill the gap of the lack of nonverbal cues in digital exchanges. Thus, efforts were basically devoted to develop a set of emojis that are capable of miming the human facial expressions. However, later on developers decided to extend the scope of emojis to cover different symbols of everyday life. Emojipedia (2019) classifies emojis into eight categories: smileys and people, animals and nature, food and drink, activity, travel and places, objects, symbols, and flags.

The meaning of emojis can be better understood if it is conceived in terms of signs. According to Evans (2017: 94), emojis are icons, i.e. the meaning of the emoji is attached to the object they denote via resemblance. An icon is based on analogy between the entity and the concept to which it refers, e.g., the icons of applications that appear on smartphone screens. The semantic component of emojis is also governed by a number of contextual parameters. As Danesi (2017: 51-52) points out, the manner in which emojis are connected to concepts and emotions can be adjunctive, substitutive or mixed. To clarify, the adjunctive mode involves the co-existence of text and emoji in an utterance. Principally, the emoji can be integrated into three main positions in the message: initially, finally or in the middle. This would add a tone to the meaning of the text and correspondingly the meaning of the emoji will be affected

as well. As with the substitutive relation, the message is composed of emojis only. This involves what Danesi (2017: 35) labels as 'emoji competence' or the knowledge of using and interpreting emojis appropriately in different contexts. Finally, there could be a mixed mode which has aspects from both adjunctive and substitutive modes. In such case, the meaning of the emoji is contiguous to the understanding of the two preceding levels.

4. Yus's (2014) Model

The analysis is carried out according to Francisco Yus's (2014) eight-function taxonomy of *emoticons* that is based on a pragmatic and relevance-theoretic approach. However, the researcher adopted the version of the model modified by Li and Yang (2018: 4) who applied Yus's model to *emojis* (instead of emoticons) and reworded the eight functions as follows: 1) attitude signal; 2) attitude intensity enhancer; 3) illocutionary force modifier; 4) humor; 5) irony; 6) emotion signal; 7) parallel emotion signal; and 8) emotion intensity enhancer. In fact, emojis (e.g. 😟,😊) are viewed as successors of emoticons (e.g. :-(, ☺) (Novak et al., 2015: 1) that lay full graphical effects to them (Danesi, 2017: 3). Accordingly, emoticons have been replaced by emojis in the theoretical account of the model in the current study.

The first function that emojis may fulfill in relation to the accompanying text is attitude signal. In IMC, the interactant's attitude is not quite explicit or is not visually recognizable (Yus, 2014: 519). Hence, communicators tend to use emojis to facilitate the identification of their attitudes. Emojis can play a key role in signaling attitudes that are not explicitly identifiable by text-based messages. Emojis can also enhance the intensity of the attitude that the accompanying text underlies (2014: 520). The task that the emoji performs here is to increase the power of the attitude expressed by the preceding text.

Emojis can be powerful devices for modifying the illocutionary force as well as the content of an unpleasant message. According to Yus (2014: 520), an emoji can achieve relevance via strengthening or

mitigating the illocutionary force of the speech act. Likewise, Dresner and Herring (2010: 257) argue that the winking 😉 can be used to weaken the force of the illocutionary speech act of a request as in the following sentence:

"I would like a noncircumventing solution 😉"

The emoji in the example above downgraded the request making it less face-threatening.

In textual IMC, the recognition of humor is not easily detectable. The reason is the absence of nonverbal cues (such as body language, facial expressions, and prosodic features) that would lead the receiver of the message to identify the sender's real intention. However, evidence from IMC research revealed that emojis can be typical devices for expressing humor. As Yus (2014: 521) demonstrates, one main function that an emoji can fulfill is to derail the message from being interpreted literally and to provide a humorous sense instead.

Emojis can be employed to highlight irony in textual IMC. Originally, the ironic meaning is not straightforward in online conversations due to the absence of nonverbal cues. To bridge things up, interlocutors resort to emojis to facilitate expressing their ironic attitudes. Yus (2014: 522) mentions the following example of someone living a high life:

What a hard life you lead 😆.

The grinning squinting face emoji 😆 (Emojipedia, 2019) in the example above implies dissociation on behalf of the speaker from the surface meaning of the message providing an entirely opposite meaning of the recipient's real life (Yus, 2014: 522). The speaker posits an emoji at the end of the utterance to achieve relevance via providing an ironic tone.

Emojis can be effective devices for signaling emotions. The function that an emoji can perform here is to reflect the emotion embedded in the content of the utterance (Yus, 2014: 523). By adding an emoji to an utterance, a user can signal an emotional meaning that is difficult to express without the aid of the emoji.

Another function that emojis can fulfill in cyber communication is to add an emotive meaning in parallel to the communicative act. According to Yus (2014: 524), emojis have a phatic (social) connotation in that they reflect how the communicative act gives rise to the emotional state.

The last function to be realized by emojis is to enhance the intensity of the emotional state coded by the utterance (Yus, 2014: 526). In such case, the speaker's emotions or feelings are already expressed verbally. However, the emoji achieves relevance by fostering the strength of the emotions contained by the accompanying utterance.

5. Relevance Theory

Relevance Theory (RT) is one of the most influential theories that have emerged in the last four decades. It is "a cognitive pragmatics theory of human communication which was developed in the mid-1980s by Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson in their book, *Relevance: Communication and Cognition* (1986, 2nd edition 1995)" (Yus, 2010: 753; Italics in the original). The main hypothesis of RT is that humans are equipped with a biological apparatus that gives rise to the maximization of relevance of inward stimuli (Yus, 2006: 512). Yus adds that relevance is not merely motivated by means of exterior stimuli; rather, it is achieved via such interior factors as mental representations and thoughts where all constitute the source of mental processing.

The focus of RT is how to minimize the cognitive effort involved for decoding a message and, consequently, to achieve relevance. As stated above, the research problem is centred on the non-straightforwardness of the relationship between the text message and emojis in Telegram chat rooms. This gap can be bridged by the application of the RT to account for the manner in which both the message sender and receiver arrive at a shared cognitive environment to access the typical interpretation of exchanges.

6. Research Methodology

The study is conducted qualitatively as it meets a range of the requirements of qualitative research. These requirements include: implementing research in its natural context, the engagement of the

researcher himself in collecting data and describing documents, the emphasis upon the meaning that informants derive, and the interpretability of data in context.

6.1 Data Selection

The data were selected from online text-based conversations delivered by Iraqi university students in a Telegram chat group. The total number of messages opted for analysis is 2000. Having insights from Herring's (2004: 11) account of computer-mediated discourse analysis (CMDA), the selection of data is based on phenomenon and time. In terms of phenomenon, emojis constitute a hallmark and one of the most prominent features of Telegram chat group. With regard to time, a ten-day thread of conversations is collected for the study ranging from 1/1/2019 to 10/1/2019.

6.2 Data Collection

Conversations were collected on February, the 6th, 2019 from the digital archive of the chat group. The data were gathered via computer Telegram software through the 'export chat history' option. The exported chats were automatically transformed into Chrome HTML documents. Thereafter, all the contents were copied and pasted into Word Microsoft Documents. Afterwards, all messages were given numbers and kept in the same order they appeared in the original source. So, the sample could appear as one large block of 2000 messages.

6.3 Anonymity and Sequencing

With regard to anonymity and sequencing of data, a number of techniques were followed. Each turn in the conversations was given a serial number. A member's name was substituted by U (standing for User) followed by number, for instance, (U1, U2, U3, …, etc.). Numbers were provided on the basis of the appearance of users in the chat group. Names and nicknames employed in vocative forms or those mentioned throughout the course of conversations were replaced by (Name). A username address was replaced by '@(Username)'. Unlike formal language, IMC exhibits distinct features with regard to arrangement and sequencing of text. One characteristic of Telegram and most of Instant Messaging platforms is that in most cases the message of a single sender is not delivered all at once. Instead, the message is subdivided into

smaller fragments that are sent bit by bit in vertical sequencing. In many occasions, what happens is that the interlocutors need to reply just to one fragment of the message rather than to all its contents. To solve such a problem, the researcher resorted to place 'M+No', (message plus number) e.g. 'M1', 'M2', prior for each fragment of message that needed to be replied to in the interaction. When a user has to reply to an already posted message, he/she summons the addressee's name by tapping and holding on the massage which he/she wants to react to, and then chooses the command 'Reply' among other choices. For privacy purposes, the researcher mentioned the serial number of the addresser's turn, followed by U+No, and then the addressee's serial number of the message replied to preceded by '@', e.g. 127) U49@126.

6.4 Method of Data Analysis

The method devoted for data analysis is grounded on Creswell's framework of qualitative inquiry (2014). Consequently, the analysis of data falls into six steps through which a transition is directed from the specific to the general. These comprise "organizing and preparing the data for analysis", "reading through all the data", "coding", "description", "interrelating themes", and "interpretation" (Creswell, 2014: 197-200).

7. Data Analysis and Discussion

The sample comprises 2000 messages and the number of emoji-containing utterances is 457. The remainder of messages is either naked emojis or purely textual exchanges which both lie outside the scope of the study. Table (1) shows the frequency and percentage of emoji-containing utterances in relation to the overall number of messages.

Table (1): Frequency and Percentage of Emoji-Containing Utterances as Contrasted against the Total Number of Messages

Total Number of Messages	Frequency of Emoji-Containing Utterances	Percent
2000	457	22.85%

The number of emoji-accompanied utterances comes to 457 out of 2000 messages. This constitutes 22.85% of the overall messages realized

in sample. This finding, though relatively low, underlines the significance of emojis in relation to text and it highlights the contribution of emojis to the final interpretation of the message.

In general, the presence of the functions of emojis is not highly marked in the sample. However, the variance they exhibit has a number of implications with regard to the relation of emojis to the accompanying text. The functions are ranked grounding on their salience in the sample. Those with the highest scores appear first followed by less appearing functions and so on. Table (2) shows the frequencies and percentages of all the functions realized in the sample.

Table (2): The Frequencies and Percentages of Functions of Emojis in the University Telegram Chat Group

Function	Frequency	Percent
Parallel Emotion Signal	169	37
Attitude Signal	86	18.8
Emotion Signal	57	12.5
Humor	42	9.2
Emotion Intensity Enhancer	37	8.1
Irony	27	5.9
Illocutionary Force Modifier	22	4.8
Attitude Intensity Enhancer	17	3.7
Total	457	100

At the top of the hierarchy, parallel emotion signal is located. This is the most prominent category that reaches the highest level in the entire sample. Participants use emojis to signal emotions in parallel to the

communicative acts in 169 occasions and the percentage of this is 37% of the overall functions realized in the data. Participants do not attach emojis to utterances because they experience certain emotions. Rather, the intent seems to reveal a sort of affect that is analogous to the one delivered by means of nonverbal behavior while communicating in face to face (FtF) conversations. Emojis achieve relevance not towards the content of the utterance, but to the communicative act around which the dialogue revolves. The salience of this function is an indicator of the social role emojis play when attached to texts. The following example explains how participants combine emojis with an utterance so as to highlight the emotions that come in parallel with the communicative acts:

1550) U8@1549: /ʔɪntɪ ʔaj kulɪjja/

                (Which college do you attend)

 1553) U71@1550: /kulɪjjat tarbɪja/ ☺

                (College of Education ☺)

In (1550), U8 asks U71 to name him the college that she is studying at. U71 informs U8 in (1553) that she is studying at the 'College of Education', and she concludes her message with a smiling face emoji ☺. Nonetheless, there is no clear reason to which one can ascribe the pleasure that U71 reveals through the use of the smiling emoji. In fact, locating this emoji performs a phatic function where the smiling face does not belong to the mention of the college name; rather, it is attributed to the social bond that would exist between the two interlocutors in the chat room. In the above example, there is no direct relationship between the utterance and the emoji; therefore relevance can only be achieved by proposing that the underlying meaning of the emoji is in parallel to the communicative act of the utterance and not to the content of the utterance itself. In such case, the role of the emoji has a high resemblance to the nonverbal behaviour that accompanies FtF communication.

The second in ranking is attitude signal. The frequency of this function comes to 86 occurrences and the percentage of this is 18.8% of

the overall number of functions realized in the study. This indicates that almost fifth of emoji-containing texts is devoted to mark the recognition of the interlocutors' attitudes which cannot be foreseen by the exclusive meaning of the utterance. Participants express their propositional attitudes via emojis which otherwise are hardly identifiable by means of the text alone. The function that an emoji fulfills here is to guide the receiver of the message to identify the propositional attitude towards the content of the utterance. The propositional attitude is not made manifest between the addresser and the addressee by means of the utterance. It is the attachment of the emoji to the utterance which facilitates the recognition of that attitude. This explicates why participants tend to make use of this function more than others. To examine the manner through which emojis achieve relevance by reflecting the interlocutor's propositional attitudes, consider the following example:

1610) U71: */ʔɪnʃa:ḷḷa tɪzzawwadʒ w-tɪtxarradʒ ja: rab/* 😁

(I wish you get married and graduate😁)

1612) U2@1610: */θa:nks bas leeʃ gɪltɪ tɪzzawwadʒ wbaʕdeen
tɪtxarradʒ/* 🤦

(Thanks, but why you first wished me marriage then graduation 🤦)

In (1610), U71 has two wishes for U2: to get married and to graduate (from university). In (1612), U2 thanks U71 for his wishes; however, he quickly reacts to U71's statement by asking her about the reason behind placing 'marriage' prior to 'graduation'. It sounds that U2 is dissatisfied with U71's attitude because he, deep in his mind, believes that marriage is not a priority for him. In the meantime, his goal revolves around doing well at the university and graduating. This is evidenced by the utilization of 'man facepalming' emoji 🤦 which has a clear indication of disappointment on behalf of U2 towards U71's view. The attachment of the emoji facilitates the identification of the attitude inherent in the utterance with which it is merged. In relevance terms, the cognitive effort is accumulating until the interpretation of the utterance is guided by the cognitive environment provided by the emoji.

In the third place comes emotion signal. This function collects 57 instances out of 457. This constitutes 12.5% of the whole share of emoji-based utterances. It is evident through statistics that the salience of this function is not high. However, in comparison with most functions, emotion signal is relatively significant particularly when the detection of the emotional state of the addresser would not be attainable with the mere reliance on text. Consider the following example:

1) U1: /ṣa:rat 2019/ 🙂❤️

(Now it's 2019 🙂❤️)

The message in (1) is exactly delivered by 2019. U1 provides a statement through which he announces that the new year is on. The two emojis that are adhered to the text unveils the emotional state of the utterer. The user is not merely informing other interlocutors about the new year. Instead, he employs the smiling face and the red heart emojis 🙂❤️ to signal her delight with the advent of the new year. The interpretation of the underlying meaning of the whole message is manifested by relying on the affective attitude undertaken by the emoji towards the content of the text.

The fourth grade goes for humor whose frequency reaches 42 instances representing 9.2%. The majority of participants in the chat room are anonymous for each other. In addition, the general context of the Telegram group tends to be serious due to the educational orientation it is based on. These two properties are expected to hinder the excessive engagement in humorous conversations, and this may explicate the low presence of humor in comparison with the three aforementioned categories. The sense of humor can be derived when users do not intend their text-based exchanges to be interpreted literally. Instead, they opt for adding emojis to the utterances to provoke an indirect humorous meaning beyond the one portrayed by the literal use. The following example shows how humorous utterances underlined by banter (one of the strategies used to signal out humor) can be conceived with the aid of emojis:

975) U1: /ʕiraftɪtʃ wɪr-rab/ 🌝

(I knew you; I swear by God 🌝)

976) U50: */ʔɪnta masi:ħi:/* 😂

(Are you a Christian 😂)

977) U1: */mulħɪd wa-lħamdu: lɪla:h/* 😌

(I'm an atheist; thanks for Allah)

978) U18: 😂

979) U50@977: */hahahahahahahah/* 👍😂

(hahahahahahahah👍😂)

In the above dialogue, U1 uses a Christian form of swear, 'by God', instead of 'by Allah' that is habitually used in Islam which the user affiliates to. U1's statement is combined with a smiley moon-face emoji 🌝 which mirrors an emotion in parallel to the communicative act. In response to U1, U50 asks if the latter is in fact a Christian locating a face-with-tears-of-joy emoji 😂 at the end of the question. The function of this emoji is to guide the receiver of the message to infer the indirect jocular sense embedded in the utterance. The unseriousness of the conversation continues as U1 replies to the question by claiming that he is an 'atheist' and he thanks 'Allah' for that! He follows this propositional attitude by the attachment of the relieved-face emoji 😌 which can be used to convey different types of pleasant emotions including "good-natured humor" (Emojipedia, 2019). The interpretation that fits into this context can be facilitated by considering the entire dialogue to be a form of 'banter'. It is evident that all interlocutors are not serious about the information they provide in this dialogue. This interpretation is guided by the use of emojis particularly in (976) and (977). In these two exchanges, the emojis achieved relevance by reducing the cognitive effort required for the decipherment of the messages by adding an indirect humorous meaning other than the one realized by the texts which they combine with.

Emotion intensity enhancer occupies the fifth position in UG. The realization of this category is low in UG. It recurs in 37 occasions and the percentage it represents is 8.1% of the eventual participation of all functions. In fact, the low contribution of this category can be ascribed to the possibility of identifying the interlocutor's emotional state by means of text alone. Text-based exchanges could be sufficient for designating the emotional state of interlocutors. Nonetheless, users tend to add emojis to exchanges in order to increase the strength of the emotions characterized by the utterance. So, the emojis are not attached to utterances needlessly. Rather, they are coupled with utterances in order to intensify the power of emotions embedded in these utterances. Consider the following example:

1679) U71: M1: */ʔɪljɔ:m farħa:na ʔɪʃtareet mala:bɪs/* 😄😌

(I'm happy today because I've bought clothes 😄😌)

In (1679), U71 bought clothes and she is delighted for that reason. Her statement could be sufficient for her interlocutors to understand the reason behind her joy. All the same, the placement of grinning face and the relieved face emojis 😄😌 tend to possess the same connotation as that of the text which precedes them; they are employed to convey pleasure and relief respectively. The two emojis achieved relevance via enhancing the intensity of the emotions underlain by the accompanying text.

The sixth position is taken by irony. Emojis are exploited to add an ironical tone in 27 instances making 5.9% of the total realization of categories. Irony is a complicated psychological phenomenon which involves a higher level of processing. This might counts for the very limited presence of it in the whole sample. In this respect, emojis achieve relevance by triggering an underlying ironic meaning rather than the one maintained by the literal meaning of the utterance. Consider the following example:

982) U50@981: */ʔi: waḷḷa ħa:ltɪ-ɪnnafsjɪa fad marra/* 😞

(Yes, my psychological state is really bad 😞)

983) U1@982: */huwwa mɪnu: mɪrta:ħ nafsɪjan/* 🙄💔

(No one is psychologically feeling well💔🙄)

988) U49: /keef-ıl ʔaħwa:l/

        (How are things)

989) U53@988: /tama:m/

          (Very well)

990) U50: /mıtwansi:n mırta:ħi:n/ 😶

        (Happy and comfortable 😶)

In (982), U50 seems to be in a bad mood. This is evident through the placement of a disappointed face emoji 😞 at the end of the utterance. Against all reason, U50 describes the situation she and her colleagues live by via denoting that they are feeling 'happy' and 'comfortable'. Yet the underlying meaning of the mouthless emoji 😶 does not correspond to that of the verbal message which precedes it. The mouthless emoji is conventionally used to "convey moderately negative emotions, such as disappointment, frustration, or sadness" (Emojipedia, 2019). Hence, a search for relevance is triggered as soon as such an ostensible contradiction exists. One solution is that the text should not be interpreted literally; rather, it underlies an implicit sarcastic tone that is guided by the use of the emoji. U50 cannot be depicted as being happy simply because she has just expressed her bad temper in (982). Relevance, then, can only be manifested when the meaning of the utterance is conceived non-literally along with the meaning that the accompanying emoji offer in the given context.

Illocutionary force modifier is sequenced in the seventh class. The frequency of this function comes to 22 and the percentage is 4.8% of the overall use of emojis. The utilization of emojis in order to attenuate the force of speech acts is so minor. Participants tend to restrict or to avoid using emojis for mitigative purposes. This can be assigned to the absence of power relations (such as doctor-patient relation) among interlocutors who are somehow similar in terms of age and the educational level. However, the few cases which witnessed the use of emojis as

illocutionary force modifiers shed some light on how emojis possess the potential to serve mitigative purposes. Consider this example:

805) U46: /ʔa:x ʔɪtðakkarɪt ɪssa:dɪs galbɪ ɪnħɪsar/ 😄😄😄

(Huh, I remembered the 6 class and my heart sank 😄😄😄)

The user in the above example definitely is not feeling happy. This is evident through the use of such painful words as 'huh' (a groan in pain), and 'my heart sank'. All the sudden, the user contradicts what she states verbally and attaches a row of smiling face emojis. This clash between the negative meaning of the utterance and the positive meaning of the emojis involves ultra cognitive effort to achieve relevance. The user seems to posit a thread of smiling emojis to mitigate the utterance and to prevent the negative feeling that the utterance implies from penetrating into the other interlocutors. Technically speaking, the emojis modified the 'expressive' speech act which the utterance underlies into an 'assertive' speech act making it less face-threatening. The function that the smiling emojis serve here is to alleviate the content of the utterance so as not to be construed as a complaint, but as a description of the conditions the user experienced (Dresner & Herring, 2010: 258).

Finally, attitude intensity enhancer concludes the table making the least contribution among other categories. The group members rarely tend to benefit from this function. Out of 457, only 17 occasions are employed for increasing the force of attitudes. This little number merely constitutes 3.7% of the total use of functions in the whole sample. The marginality of this function can be ascribed to that the propositional attitude is already exhibited by the utterance. Therefore, participants tend to avoid intensifying its power visually. However, whence the emoji is added, it can achieve relevance by strengthening the propositional attitude which is already highlighted by means of the utterance. The following example clarifies how this is possible:

1288) U55: /ʔaşlan huwwa maħħad jħɪb burdʒ ʔɪl-ħamɪl w-ɪl-kul jɪġa:r mɪnna/

(Originally, no one loves Aries and everyone is jealous of it)

1294) U1@1288: /leeʃ jɪġa:ru:n mɪnna/ 😐

(Why are they jealous of it?) 😐

1297) U55@1294: */jkɪrhu:na lɪʔan huwwa mumajjaz/* 😌

(They just hate it because it is unique 😌)

In this conversation, U55 presumes that Aries people are not welcomed in society and that everyone is jealous of them. U1 asks U55 about the rationale behind signaling such an attitude following his question by a neutral-face emoji 😐 to express his attitude towards U55's one. In (1297), U55 replies that people hate Aries individuals due to the latter's uniqueness. The attachment of the smiling emoji 😌 is intended to reflect U55's admiration of the Aries due to his belief in the special traits they possess. As the propositional attitude is already exhibited by the utterance, the smiling emoji achieves relevance by intensifying the power of that attitude.

8. Conclusions

The current paper examines the relatedness of text-based exchanges to emojis in Iraqi Telegram group chatting at the university level. The conclusions of this study are:

1. Eight functions are considered in analysis to account for the connectedness between online text and emojis.

2. It has been found out that the ostensive incongruity between text and emojis can be eliminated by signaling a deeper meaning other than that of the accompanying text. This task is performed by six functions out of eight, namely attitude signal, illocutionary force modifier, humor, irony, parallel emotion signal, and emotion signal.

3. For the two other functions, i.e. attitude intensity enhancer and emotion intensity enhancer, the meaning of the text is compatible with the meaning of emojis. However, emojis are not redundant here; they achieve relevance by fostering the level of those attitudes and emotions respectively.

4. Another finding is that emojis are principally employed to convey a phatic (social) meaning by the participants of the three samples. This is ascribed to the prevalence of parallel emotion signal that is based on

achieving relevance by adding emojis to utterances where the intent is to highlight the emotions that are felt among interlocutors during interaction in a similar manner to the role played by body language in physical conversations.

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Appendix

A Chart of Iraqi Arabic Phonemic System

The following is a list of the phonemic symbols of the Iraqi Arabic. The list is adopted from Ghalib (1984: xii-xiii). Some modifications are provided for convenience and accessibility of typing.

1. Consonants

Symbol	Symbol in Arabic	Description	Example	Phonemic Transcription	English Equivalent
/ʔ/	ء	A Glottal Stop	أنام	/ʔɑnɑ:m/	I sleep
/b/	ب	A Voiced Bilabial Plosive	بارد	/bɑ:rɪd/	cold
/t/	ت	A Voiceless Denti-alveolar Plosive	تعبان	/taʕbɑ:n/	tired
/θ/	ث	A Voiceless Inter-dental Fricative	ثوب	/θɔ:b/	dress
/dʒ/	ج	A Voiced Palato-alveolar Affricate	جمل	/dʒɪmɑl/	camel
/tʃ/	چ	A Voiceless Palato-alveolar Affricate	چان	/tʃɑ:n/	was
/ħ/	ح	A Voiceless Pharyngeal Fricative	حديد	/ħadi:d/	iron
/x/	خ	A Voiceless Uvular Fricative	خير	/xeer/	good (n.)
/d/	د	A Voiced Denti-alveolar Plosive	دار	/dɑ:r/	house
/ð/	ذ	A Voiced Inter-dental Fricative	ذاب	/ðɑ:b/	melted
/r/	ر	A Voiced Alveolar Flap	رابح	/rɑ:bɪħ/	winner
/z/	ز	A Voiced Denti-alveolar Fricative	زيْت	/zeet/	oil
/s/	س	A Voiceless Denti-alveolar Fricative	سفر	/safɑr/	travel (n.)
/ʃ/	ش	A Voiceless Palato-alveolar Ficative	شنو	/ʃɪnu:/	what
/ṣ/	ص	A Voiceless Denti-alveolar Emphatic Fricative	صباح	/ṣabɑ:ħ/	morning
/ḍ/	ض	A Voiced Denti-alveolar Emphatic Plosive	ضابط	/ḍɑ:buṭ/	police officer
/ṭ/	ط	A Voiceless Denti-alveolar Emphatic Plosive	طفل	/ṭɪfɪḷ/	child
/ð̣ /	ظ	A Voiced Inter-dental Emphatic Fricative	ظِل	/ð̣ɪl/	shadow
/ʕ/	ع	A Voiced Pharyngeal Fricative	عسل	/ʕasɑl/	honey
/ġ/	غ	A Voiced Uvular Fricative	غابة	/ġɑ:bɑ/	jungle
/f/	ف	A Voiceless Labio-dental Fricative	فقير	/faqi:r/	poor
/q/	ق	A Voiceless Uvular Plosive	قفل	/quful/	lock
/k/	ك	A Voiceless Velar Plosive	كريم	/kari:m/	generous
/g/	گ	A Voiced Velar Plosive	گَوُم	/gu:m/	stand up
/l/	ل	A Voiced Alveolar Lateral	ليل	/leel/	night
/ḷ/	ل	A Voiced Alveo-dental Lateral, Verlarized	شغل	/ʃuġuḷ/	work (n.)
/m/	م	A Voiced Bilabial Nasal	مُر	/mur/	bitter
/n/	ن	A Voiced Denti-alveolar Nasal	نسيت	/nɪseet/	I forgot
/h/	هـ	A Glottal Fricative	هلال	/hlɑ:l/	new moon
/w/	و	A Voiced Velar Approximant	وردة	/wardah/	flower
/j/	ي	A Voiced Palatal Approximant	ينجح	/jɪndʒɑħ/	he succeeds

2-Vowels

Symbol in IPA	Symbol in Arabic	Description	Example	Phonemic Transcription	English Equivalent
/ɑ/	◌َ	A Short half-open unrounded vowel	بَس	/bɑs/	only
/ɑ:/	ا	A Long Open front unrounded vowel	جامع	/ʔimɑ:mɪʕ/	mosque
/ɪ/	◌ِ	A Short half-close Front with Lip-spreading Vowel	سِن	/sɪn/	tooth
/u/	◌ُ	A Short Half-close Back Rounded Vowel	مهم	/muhɪm/	important
/u:/	و	A Long Close Back Rounded Vowel	شوف	/ʃu:f/	look (v.)
/i:/	ﭕ	A Long Close Front with Lip-spreading Vowel	سمين	/sɪmi:n/	fat
/ee/	ﯾ	A Long Half-close to Half-open Front with Lip-spreading Vowel	ليش	/leeʃ/	why
/ɔ:/	و	A Long Half-close to Half-open Back Rounded Vowel	موز	/mɔ:z/	bananas