

The Role of Pragmatic Markers in Shaping Politeness in Iraqi Dialect**Asst. Inst Halah Qahtan Dawood****University of Diyala, College of Education for Human Sciences, Department of English/ Linguistics, Baqubah, Iraq.****Email: hala.en.hum@uodiyala.edu.iq****دور العلامات التداولية في تشكيل اللباقة اللغوية في اللهجة العراقية****م.م هاله قحطان داود موسى****جامعة ديالى كلية التربية للعلوم الانسانية قسم اللغة الانكليزية/ علم اللغة****المخلص**

تلعب العلامات التداولية دوراً مهماً في إدارة العلاقات الاجتماعية، وتنظيم المحادثات، والتعبير عن الآراء في اللغة المنطوقة. وفي اللهجة العراقية، تؤثر هذه العلامات بشكل كبير في مستوى اللباقة وجودة التواصل اليومي بين المتحدثين. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف كيفية تأثير العلامات التداولية في تشكيل اللباقة في اللهجة العراقية، وكيفية تطبيقها لنظرية بوليتنس لبرون وليفينسون (١٩٨٧) في التواصل الواقعي. وتركز الدراسة على العلامات التداولية الشائعة التي يستخدمها المتحدثون العراقيون بشكل منتظم في التواصل اليومي. ولتحقيق أهداف الدراسة تم اعتماد نوعين من الإجراءات: نظرية وتطبيقية. تتضمن الإجراءات النظرية تقديم إطار نظري للعلامات التداولية، بينما تتضمن الإجراءات التطبيقية اختيار عشرة أمثلة من محادثات يومية. وقد تم تحليل الأمثلة المختارة باستخدام أدوات مناسبة. وتشير النتائج إلى أن العلامات التداولية ضرورية لتحقيق كل من اللباقة السلبية من خلال إظهار الاهتمام والاحترام للآخرين، واللباقة الإيجابية من خلال تعزيز الروابط بين الأفراد. وتخلص الدراسة إلى أن العلامات التداولية تُعد أدوات مهمة لإدارة التفاعلات الاجتماعية في اللهجة العراقية، حيث تُظهر العلاقة الوثيقة بين اللغة والثقافة واللباقة في المحادثة اليومية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: العلامات التداولية، نظرية براون وليفينسون في اللباقة، اللهجة العراقية

Abstract

pragmatic markers play an important role in managing social connections, organizing conversations, and expressing opinions in spoken language. In Iraqi dialect, these markers have a strong effect on politeness and on the quality of daily communication between speakers. This study aims to explore how pragmatic markers influence politeness in the Iraqi dialect and how they apply Brown and Levinson's (1987) Politeness Theory in real communication. The study focuses on common pragmatic markers that Iraqi speakers regularly use in everyday communication. To achieve the aims of the study two types of procedures have been adopted: theoretical and practical. The theoretical procedures consists of presenting a theoretical framework of pragmatic markers. On the other hand, the practical procedures consist of selecting ten examples from daily conversations. The selected examples have been analyzed using suitable tools. The results suggest that pragmatic markers are essential for attaining both negative politeness by showing concern and respect for others and positive politeness by promoting stronger interpersonal ties. The study comes to the conclusion that pragmatic markers which demonstrate the close connections between language, culture, and politeness in daily conversation, are crucial instruments for navigating social interactions in Iraqi dialect.

Keywords: Pragmatic markers, Brown and Levinson's politeness theory, Iraqi dialect**1.Introduction**

Pragmatic markers are linguistic elements that assist speakers in meaning interpersonal interactions, organizing speech, indicating attitudes, and assisting listeners in understanding utterances within specific context. Pragmatic markers serve at the interactional level, promoting coherence and communication in spoken and

written conversation, in contrast to lexical elements that directly contribute to propositional meaning. Aijmer & Simon- Vandenberg (2011) define pragmatic markers as a verity of things that indicate how an utterance should be understood, reflecting the speaker's goals and presumptions about common knowledge. Pragmatic markers play an important role in effective communication because they maintain social relation between speakers, mange turns in conversation, express their attitudes, and control interaction. Therefore ,the meaning of these markers depends on the context rather than on the literal content of the statement. Pragmatic markers have become an important area of study in pragmatics and discourse analysis because they assist speakers convey negotiate meaning, and preserve smooth communication in everyday conversations. In Iraqi dialect, pragmatic markers are an essential element of everyday communications and are commonly observed in causal conversation.(Al-Abbad & Al-Qudah, 2024)Politeness plays an important role in communication because it assists people build and maintain positive relationships with others. According to theories of politeness, people use different language techniques to express respect, lessen imposition and protect their public image. Pragmatic markers help achieve these goals by reducing the directness of request, minimizing the chance of conflict, and build a sense of closeness between speakers. Some pragmatic markers in Iraqi dialect are employed to friendliness, care, and empathy. Their meaning is shaped by the situation, how something is said, and the relationship between speakers. So, pragmatic markers are important in expressing politeness and maintaining positive interpersonal communication (Alazzawie, 2014).In Iraqi culture, solidarity, respect, and appropriate social manner are highly valued. So, the dialect provides a useful way to study how pragmatic markers are related to politeness. People use pragmatic markers to adjust their speech depending on the situation and the people they are talking to. In Iraqi dialect, these markers have both textual and interpersonal functions. They make conversations flow smoothly and also assist express social meaning between speakers. Understanding these markers helps us see how language and culture are closely connected in Iraqi communication (AlJumaily& AlMuselhy, 2023).This study explores how pragmatic markers influence politeness in Iraqi dialect and looks at how these language components support efficient and socially acceptable communication.The problem addressed in this study can be reflected by the type of controversy that exist over the answers to the questions stated below:

- 1.Which pragmatic markers are most commonly employed in the Iraqi dialect, and what pragmatic roles do they serve in regular conversation?
2. According to Brown and Levinson's (1987) Politeness Theory, how do pragmatic markers influence the presentation of both positive and negative politeness strategies in Iraqi discourse?
3. How do Iraqi speakers mange face-threatening behaviors during interaction and preserve interpersonal relationships using pragmatic markers?

2. Literature Review

2.1 On Defining Pragmatic Markers

In all languages there is a group of expressions that are not usually contributing directly to the truth or falsity of a statement and as a being grammatically peripheral. In research, these expressions are commonly referred to as "pragmatic markers"Fraser (2009:295) says that these expressions appear within a discourse segment but are not part of the actual propositional content of the utterance, meaning they don't alter the truth value the proposition. Instead, they highlight certain aspects of the speaker's intended message. Words in this category usually some features: they are free morphemes, they often appear at the beginning of a proposition, they indicate an additional or specific meaning beyond the core message, and they are recognized as pragmatic markers because of their semantic or pragmatic role. Many pragmatic markers have homophones lexical counterparts which are classified according to their syntactic function such as however, clearly, ... etc.

2.1.1 Features of Pragmatic markers

- a) They are phonologically truncated and brief.
- b) They constitute a distinct tone group.
- c) Because they are peripheral forms, it is challenging to classify them under a conventional word class.
- d) They are restricted to sentence – initial position.
- e) They either appear outside of the syntactic framework or have just a tenuous connection to it.
- f) They are optional

from a pragmatic stand point, Iraqi Arabic markers help listeners understand utterances by offering contextual clues that point them in the direction of the intended meaning. They facilitate the seamless flow of conversation, assist organize discussions, and show connections between discourse portions. According to research on Iraqi Arabic, pragmatic markers serve several interpersonal and discourse purposes at once, showing the fluidity of

spoken communication (Alazzawie: 2014, 30-31). They are an important field of study in pragmatic and sociolinguistics since their interpretation is highly dependent on environmental, social, and cultural aspects. The tight relationship between language usage and cultural norms is further shown by the study of pragmatic markers in Iraqi dialect. During conversation, speakers utilize these markers to control social distance, show unity, prevent potentially face – threatening behaviors, and improve mutual comprehension (AlJumaily & AlMuselhy, 2024). Additionally, by indicating transitions, preserving topical continuity, and controlling conversational participation, these markers support textual coherence, according to discourse- pragmatic studies (Al-Abbad & AL-Qudah, 2024). So, pragmatic markers shouldn't be seen as unnecessary parts of speech; instead they are important tools that help speakers achieve their communication aims successfully. Examining these markers improves our comprehension of Iraqi discourse and offers more comprehensive insights into how language users utilize pragmatic techniques to maintain social conversation and create meaning in naturally occurring communication.

2.2 .Theories of politeness

More recent research in politeness theory, especially that of Leech (1980) and Brown and Levinson (1987), has emphasized on politeness as a pragmatic phenomena. Politeness is defined as a method used by a speaker to achieve various aims, including developing or sustaining harmonious relations. These strategies may involve a variety of different strategies such as various types of conventional and non- conventional indirectness. (Thomas,2013: 157-158) Brown and Levinson's politeness theory remains a central framework for analyzing politeness phenomena. They defined "face" as "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself or herself". This idea has a number of characteristics. Firstly, the face is public. Second, face is social. The third characteristic is that face is claimed. The last thing face is something we want. Levinson and Brown also distinguish between positive face and negative face. Having our social image recognized and endorsed by others throughout a conversation is a positive face wish. Negative face is related to our image's right and respect. (Goldsmith,2008: 256)

2.2.1 Strategies of politeness

2.2.1.1 Positive Politeness

Positive politeness attends to the addressee's face by showing that the speaker agrees with the hearer's desires. Positive politeness, according to Brown and Levinson (1987), is a response to the addressee's positive face, his enduring want that his desire be deemed desirable. This is due to the fact that in verbal communication "face is something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained or enhanced, and must therefore, be constantly attended to" (Brown & Levinson, 1987: 66). Generally speaking, it is thought that the more effort a speaker puts into keeping his facial expression, the more he conveys his sincere wish for the hearer's face to be pleased and accepted. According to Brown and Levinson, the three main processes of positive politeness are: establishing a point of agreement, communicating that both the speaker and the hearer are cooperating, and satisfying the hearer's desires for certain underlying objectives, such as requests, inquiries, etc. Iraqi speakers employ both positive and negative politeness as pragmatic techniques to preserve social peace and respect relation between individuals. The politeness theory of Brown and Levinson (1987) states that whereas negative politeness attempts to limit imposition and respect the hearer's freedom of action, positive politeness seeks to fulfill the hearer's need for acceptance, solidarity and belonging. Positive politeness is commonly conveyed in Iraqi dialect through inclusive language, professions of care, praises, and phrases of fondness. Positive politeness techniques are frequently used to fortify social ties and convey shared delight among speakers. Iraqi speakers frequently stress friendliness and group affiliation. (Abdulkhaleq, 2020).

2.2.1.2 Negative Politeness

Negative politeness is primarily focused on partially fulfilling (redressing) H's negative face, his fundamental need to uphold claims of territory and autonomy. Therefore, negative politeness is primarily avoidance-based. Negative politeness techniques are realized in guarantees that the speaker acknowledges and respects the addressee's negative-face desires and will not (or will very slightly) interfere with the addressee's freedom of action. Negative politeness, therefore, is typified by self-effacement, formality, and restriction, with focus on extremely limited facets of H's self-image, centered on his desire to be unhindered. (Brown & Levinson, 1987: 66). Iraqi dialect also exhibits negative politeness, especially when it comes to requests, invites, and rejections. Speakers frequently use respectful language, explanations, apologies, and indirect expressions to soften potentially embarrassing behaviors. According to research on invitation rejections in Iraqi Arabic, speakers usually use a combination of courteous language, explanations, and apologies to maintain the interlocutor's bad reputation and prevent social confrontation (Nassar, 2021). Additionally, depending on social distance, power

dynamics, and cultural expectations, Iraqi Arabs use both positive and negative politeness techniques. According to recent study, these strategies are important for maintaining social cohesiveness, respect, and solidarity in Iraqi society (Nordin et al.,)

3. Methodology

This methodology will ensure comprehensive understanding of the use of pragmatic markers in the Iraqi dialect and examine their role in shaping politeness across different social and communicative contexts.

3.1 Research design

This paper adopts qualitative research design, as it particularly appropriate for examining the use of pragmatic markers in Iraqi dialect, where meaning is highly dependent on context and social communication. Qualitative methods allow an in-depth investigation of how pragmatic markers function in Iraqi discourse and how they contribute to the expression of politeness in everyday interaction. The sample of the present study consists of ten examples collected from social interaction and daily discussions.

3.2 Analysis of Data

The data collected will be analyzed using Brown and Levinson's (1987) Politeness Theory as a theoretical framework to examine how pragmatic markers act as a language tool for positive and negative face.

Example 1: والله (Wallah)

Utterance : والله ما اعرف (I swear / I honestly I don't know)

This term is mainly used to show the speaker's certainty, sincerity and strength of feeling. It functions as a stance and epistemic marker expressing the speaker's emotions and how strongly they believe in what they are saying. It promotes positive politeness by being truthful, fostering social closeness, and establishing trust

Example 2: ترة (tara)

Utterance: ترة هو تعبنا (you know/ I'm telling you he is tired)

This expression is a marker of interaction. It is employed to highlight crucial information, indicate common expertise, or grab the listener's attention. It frequently has a tone of quiet caution, clarification, or reminder. By reminding the audience of something they both know, it might convey positive politeness by appealing to solidarity and shared knowledge.

Example 3: اذا ممكن (itha mumkin)

Utterance: اذا ممكن تسوي لي جاي (If possible can you make me some tea)

This is a pragmatic indication used in Iraqi Arabic to make demands less direct and more courteous. It shows that the hearer's capacity or willingness is taken into account. The pragmatic marker is being mitigated. In terms of politeness, it mostly conveys negative politeness by lessening imposition, respecting the listener's autonomy, and softening the request.

Example 4: زين (zain)

Utterance: زين وين نروح (ok, well, where shall we go?)

This term is a pragmatic marker in Iraqi Arabic that is used to easily change subjects, show agreement, or structure speech. It can also be used to prepare or soften a reaction. Positive politeness is frequently demonstrated by cooperating or expressing agreement while preserving harmony in the discourse.

Example 5: لك (lak)

Utterance: لك وينك (Hey, where are you)

This phrase is used as a pragmatic marker in Iraqi dialect to speak directly to the listener, frequently adding an emotive tone like emphasis, surprise, friendliness, or light criticism. It is primarily an interactional marker (managing interpersonal connections) and a vocative marker (addressing the hearer). attitude marker, which conveys feelings such as astonishment or assertiveness. In terms of politeness, it is positive politeness. It frequently conveys informality and unity by fostering intimacy and familiarity.

Example 6: حبيبي (Habibi)

Utterance: حبيبي تعال اقعد يمي: (My dear, come sit next to me)

This expression is used in Iraqi dialect. It is primarily an affective/stance signal (showing pleasant mood), an interactional marker (forming interpersonal contacts), and a vocative marker (term of address). By demonstrating closeness, respect, friendliness, fortifying social ties, and fostering group cohesion, it powerfully conveys positive politeness. .

Example 7: بلا زحمة (bala zahma)

Utterance: بلا زحمة ممكن سؤال؟ (Excuse me, can I ask question?) (If it's not too much trouble, may I ask a question?)

It is a pragmatic marker in Iraqi dialect that indicates respect for the hearer and is used to initiate requests in a courteous manner. It primarily mitigates interactional and pragmatic markers (handling demands). In terms of politeness, it mostly conveys negative politeness by softening requests, limiting imposition, and demonstrating respect for the listener's time and effort.

Example 8: تدلل (tdallal)

Utterance: تدلل البيت بيتك (please, make yourself at home, you are most welcome this house is your house)

It is primarily an interactional marker (managing social interactions), an affective/stance marker (showing generosity and friendliness), and occasionally a response marker (answering requests) that communicates hospitality. By displaying generosity, kindness, solidarity, and strengthening the hearer's pleasant face (feeling appreciated and welcomed), it powerfully displays positive politeness.

Example 9: يمعود (Yamawwad)

Utterance: يمعود شد حيلك (Hey man, push yourself/ keep going)

This is a vocative pragmatic sign. Because it promotes interpersonal intimacy and unity. This expression is positive politeness fosters intimacy, solidarity, informality, and a sense of shared social identity. However, how it is interpreted depends much on the context, and when it is employed in confrontational or critical speech, it may become impolite expression.

Example 10: خوش (Khosh)

Utterance: خوش فكرة هاي (This is a good idea)

This expression is an evaluative pragmatic marker that is used to convey appreciation, approbation, or a favorable assessment of a person, activity, or item. It is a key component of positive politeness. By expressing acceptance and emotional alignment with the hearer, it improves social peace.

Table 1/ Analysis according to pragmatic function and relationship between function and politeness strategies

No	function	frequency	percentage	Positive politeness	Negative politeness
1	Interactional	4	28.6%	4	0
2	Affective/ stance	4	28.6%	4	0
3	Vocative	3	21.4%	3	0
4	Mitigation	2	14.3%	0	2
5	Discourse management	1	7.1%	1	0

3.3. Discussion of Results

The result of analyzing the selected examples are presented in the form of answers to the research questions raised in the introduction.

1. Which pragmatic markers are most commonly employed in the Iraqi dialect, and what pragmatic roles do they serve in regular conversation?

The results of the study showed that the following pragmatic markers are commonly employed in Iraqi dialect: "wallah," "tara," "habibi," "lak," "zain," "itha mumkin," "bala zahma," "tdallal," "yamawwad," and "khosh." These markers play a number of practical purposes that promote social conversation. For example "tara" serve as interactional marker that draws attention to crucial information and appeals to common knowledge, whereas "wallah " is primarily employed to convey sincerity and speaker commitment. By showing familiarity and fostering social ties. Markers like "habibi" ,"lak "and "yamawwad" fulfill vocative and interpersonal purpose. Furthermore "itha mumkin," and "bala zahma," serve as mitigation strategies that soften requests, while "zain" is employed for subject transition and discourse control. The results show that pragmatic markers in the Iraqi dialect play a crucial role in maintaining social relationships, expressing opinions and attitudes, organizing conversation and assisting people communicate effectively.

2. According to Brown and Levinson's (1987) Politeness Theory, how do pragmatic markers influence the presentation of both positive and negative politeness strategies in Iraqi discourse?

The results show that pragmatic markers play a crucial role in expressing both positive and negative politeness in Iraqi dialect. The statistical analysis show that 80% of the markers were related to positive politeness, while 20% were related to negative politeness. Positive politeness markers are used to show closeness, solidarity,

friendliness and emotional connection. These markers help speakers build stronger social ties and promote a feeling of belonging. Whereas negative politeness markers are used to reduce imposition, make requests more polite and show respect for the hearer. So, pragmatic markers assist Iraqi people communicate politely and adapt their speech according to communication goals.

3. How do Iraqi speakers manage face-threatening behaviors during interaction and preserve interpersonal relationships using pragmatic markers?

According to the investigation, pragmatic markers are widely used by Iraqi speakers to regulate face-threatening acts and preserve interpersonal connections. Social relationships between speakers are reinforced through the use of pragmatic markers such as habibi, tadallal, yamawwad, lak, and wallah. These markers assist create affection, trust, and an emotion of solidarity among speakers. They support the hearer's positive face by showing respect, affection and appreciation. Also, speakers employ markers such as itha mumkin and bala zahama when asking for favor or making request in order to lessen imposition and respect's the listener's freedom of action. Interactional markers such as zain and tara assist preserve smooth conversations by managing topics and lessening the possibility of misunderstanding. Therefore , pragmatic serve as important-management strategies that help speakers reduce conflict and build stronger interpersonal relationships in everyday communication.

4. Conclusion

The study has highlighted the important role of pragmatic markers in shaping politeness in the Iraqi dialect. These markers act as essential communicative tools that help speakers to express solidarity, respect and consideration for others while maintaining positive and harmonious social relationships. By lowering face-threatening behaviors and enhancing interpersonal connections. Pragmatic markers support both positive and negative politeness techniques according to the study conducted through Brown and Levinson's politeness theory. In Iraqi society, language, culture, and social values are closely linked, as seen by their frequent usage.

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