L1 Pragmatic Transfer: Arabic Pragmatic Markers in Jordanians' English Discourse

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Abstract:

This study investigates the use of five Arabic pragmatic markers in the English discourse of Jordanian speakers, highlighting their functional and structural impact. It examines the strategic deployment of these markers within utterances, their syntactic positioning, collocational tendencies, and, most critically, their pragmatic force. Drawing on Unuabonah and Muro's (2022) framework on pragmatic borrowing, the study analyzes how Arabic lexical items serve communicative functions in Jordanian English discourse. The markers under scrutiny—jaʕni: ('that is'), ʕinnu ('that'), ʕinʃallah ('if God permits'), ja:hara:m ('oh, forbidden'), and bas ('only')—are extracted from recorded midterm and final test responses by Oral Skills students at the University of Jordan over two years. The findings reveal that jaʕni: operates as an elaborative, inferential, mitigating, and summarizing device; ʕinnu functions as a recalling marker; ʕinʃallah conveys agreement, hope, and emphasis; ja:hara:m signals ridicule and sympathy; and bas serves both contrastive and delimiting functions. This study underscores the dynamic nature of pragmatic transfer, demonstrating how Arabic discourse strategies shape English communication in Jordanian contexts.

Keywords:

Pragmatic markers, pragmatic borrowing, Jordanian Arabic, foreign language.