Deanship of Scientific Research

# The Interaction between Position and Meaning: A View from The Discourse Marker *ʃikil* in Spoken Jordanian Arabic

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## Abstract

**Objectives**: This study examines the diverse functions of the discourse marker "*ʃikil*" in spoken Jordanian Arabic, as analyzing its placement and usage in different contexts assists in comprehending its impact on meaning. Additionally, the study explores how the agreement pattern that governs "*ʃikil*" contributes to reinforcing the intended meaning.

**Methods**: The research methodology utilized in this study is quantitative in nature. An online questionnaire consisting of 10 questions was designed and distributed through various social media platforms. The questionnaire targeted 150 native speakers of Jordanian Arabic who provided responses regarding their usage of the discourse marker "*ʃikil*" in specific contexts, its position within statements, and its agreement with the subjects of those statements. Furthermore, the study incorporated the relevance theory proposed by Spenser and Wilson to address the research questions effectively.

**Results**: The analysis of the data indicates a noteworthy correlation between the position of the discourse marker "*ʃikil*" and its intended meaning within the sentence. Furthermore, the agreement pattern between the subject and the discourse marker has been found to be influential in conveying the desired meaning effectively.

**Conclusions**: This study finds that the discourse marker "*ʃikil*" in Jordanian Arabic serves different purposes based on its position within the sentence. It can indicate common knowledge or beliefs that are shared with others, express the speaker's interpretation based on visual evidence, or convey the speaker's indirect opinion without eyewitnesses or direct evidence. The study also highlights the significance of agreement patterns between the subject and the discourse marker in enhancing meaning. However, it is not necessary for the agreement pattern to be directly connected to the position of the discourse marker in the sentence.

**Keywords**: Discourse functions, discourse markers, *ʃikil*, Jordanian Arabic, agreement pattern.

## التفاعل بين الموقف والمعنى: من منظور تحليل الخطاب لعلامة الخطاب "شكل" في اللهجة الأردنية المحكية

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**ملخّص**

**الأهداف**: تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف دور مؤشر الخطاب "شكل" في اللهجة الأردنية المحكية ووظائفه الخطابية، كما تسعى إلى فهم كيفية تأثير موضع علامة الخطاب في الجملة ودور التوافق بين الاسم على تعزيز المعنى المراد التعبير عنه وإيصاله للمستمع.

**المنهجية**: جرى استخدام منهج البحث الكمّي في هذه الدراسة؛ حيث صُمّمت استبانة تتكون من 10 أسئلة ووُزِّعت عبر الإنترنت وحُلّلت الإجابات الواردة وعددها 150، جرى السؤال فيها عن كيفية استخدام علامة الخطاب "شكل" في مجموعة من المواقف مع تضمين تغيير موضع العلامة في الجملة (بدايتها، وسطها، نهايتها)، وعن التوافق بين علامة الخطاب والاسم في الجملة. كما طُبّقت نظرية الملاءمة المقترحة من قبل الباحثَين سبنسر وويلسون.

**النتائج**: أظهرت الدراسة وجود علاقة ذات دلالة بين موضع علامة الخطاب "شكل" والمعنى المقصود في الجملة، وقد جرى تحديد مجموعة من الدلالات له في الجملة كما يلي: نقل المعرفة عندما يكون هناك اعتقاد راسخ بصحة المعلومة؛ وكشف تفسير المتحدث الشخصي للمعلومة باستناده إلى الأدلة المرئية؛ وأخيرًا، التعبير عن الرأي غير المباشر للمتحدث بناءً على عدم وجود شاهد أو دليل مباشر. كما أظهرت الدراسة أهمية التوافق بين الاسم وعلامة الخطاب من حيث المساهمة في تعزيز المعنى المطلوب؛ ومع ذلك، لم يتبين بالضرورة أن يؤثر موضع علامة الخطاب في الجملة على المعنى.

**الخلاصة**: تشير الدراسة إلى أن علامات الخطاب في اللهجة الأردنية تلعب دورًا مهمًا في التواصل اليومي بين المتحدثين بها، مما يثري السياق اللغوي ويساهم في فهم المعاني وإيصال الرسائل على نحو أفضل، وتوصي بضرورة إجراء المزيد من البحوث في هذا المجال لفهم تأثيرها والدور الذي تلعبه في اللهجة الأردنية.

**الكلمات الدالة**: تحليل الخطاب، علامات الخطاب، اللهجة الأردنية، نظرية الملاءمة، نمط التوافق.

## 1.    INTRODUCTION

An area of study that is fast-growing focuses on a group of functionally linked connective expressions known as discourse markers. Even though it is generally acknowledged that these expressions play a variety of significant roles in utterance interpretation, there is a disagreement over some fundamental concepts, including how to define the discourse marker class, what kind of meaning they express, and how these expressions can be said to relate discourse elements (Schourup, 1999).

This paper explores the effect of the change of the word utterance of the discourse marker *ʃikil* in the sentence and how this affects its meaning. The researcher has used the questionnaire to gather the necessary data for this study because it would preserve the sentence's original meaning in light of the placement of the under-investigation discourse marker. This word is both used as a coherence marker and a facilitator of speaker-hearer communication, in which case the concerned discourse marker is vital for 'the hearer's search for optimal appropriateness' (Jarrah et al., 2020).

The following discussion is structured as follows: the succeeding section introduces the definition of the discourse markers and their function and some of their features. In addition, we will have an overview of the Jordanian Arabic and its varieties. The next section explores the methodology of this study through data collection and data analysis. The last section contains the discussion and findings of this study.

## 2.    BACKGROUND

Discourse markers (DMs) are connecting words that demonstrate the relationship between different discourses: the relationship between what has already been written or spoken of and what will be done so. They are characterized as a type of expression that points out how the speaker intends to pass the basic message that follows to relate to the prior discourse (Fraser, 1990). Some are typical of spoken language and quite informal. Discourse markers, then, organize a command to control the understanding of the text in which they appear. They frequently append a personal meaning that reflects the speaker's assessment of the situation, or the speaker's point of view. They have little or no lexical meaning, but they show the speaker's attitude or mood (Blakemore, 2002 & 1987; Fraser, 2009). The usage of a certain expression in a given context is referred to as its discourse function. Commands, statements, and inquiries are all examples of discourse functions, which serve as a cue for the structural connections between words, and work as a link between phrases. When users of the language look beyond the sentence level, the function of discourse markers is evident and even crucial in examining the hidden meanings of some words, whose use is hard to understand without linking the utterance to its larger context, the speaker-hearer relationship, and their shared knowledge (Jarrah & et al 2019). In other words, they are important in that they contribute a great deal to the coherence of spoken discourse (Fraser, 1990; Lenk, 1998) and play a vital role in its interpretation (Schiffrin, 1987; Al Rousan, 2015).

Because they frequently hint at something coming ahead, one of the most crucial characteristics of discourse markers is that they are spoken first, that is they are recognized more frequently in spoken than in written conversation (Al Rousan, 2020). It is believed that the use of the Discourse Markers makes speech more friendly and sociable (Algouzi, 2021), and optional as the utterance would be grammatically correct, meaningful, and complete without them. (Al Rousan, 2020).

According to Yulianto (2021), Discourse Markers promote and assist text interpretation. They are key attributes in joining sentences to make the text coherent. Raputri et al, 2022 described Discourse markers as elements that have the role to make the written or spoken language more real, operative, and understandable to the sender or recipient. Here lies the significance of the current study that it touches upon an area that has scarcely been explored in Arabic texts — that is the use of the discourse markers in the Jordanian context. It is noticed that the discourse marker *ʃikil* is frequently used in the Jordanian spoken language. The current study has linked the pragmatic function that the discourse marker *ʃikil* conveys and has linked it with its position in the sentence. The study questions how the meaning is affected by the change of the discourse marker's location in the spoken Jordanian language used in The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, an Arab nation in the Levant region of Western Asia, on the east bank of the Jordan River. Jordanian Arabic (JA) is a dialect of the Arabic language, used by about 9 million people thought to reside in Jordan. It is regarded as one of the Arabic dialects, along with some sub-dialects that share some fundamental morphological, phonological, and syntactic characteristics.

### 3. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

According to earlier research, people employ Discourse Markers in talks to fulfill a variety of pragmatic purposes, relying on the context in which they are utilized. Discourse Markers considerably impose the spoken discourse's coherence, and they help the addressee in comprehending the speaker's intended meaning. Additionally, discourse markers denote relationships between phrases, such as emphasizing the propositional nature of sentences and identifying sentence transitions. (Al Rousan, 2020). They can also serve interpersonal purposes, such as expressing views, restating deductions that have already been made, and conveying an understanding of the intended meaning. Studies have investigated the types of DM's most frequently used and have deeply examined the way speakers use them and the explanatory functions they carry (Algouzi, 2021; Schourup, 1999).

Blackmore (1987), inspired by Spenser and Wilson's Relevance Theory framework, discovered that not only that Discourse Markers give a procedural meaning to guide the conceptual meaning of a certain utterance, but also she found that information carried by this utterance may be more appropriate and relevant by allowing the derivation of a contextual implication, supporting a particular assumption (e.g., moreover), and specifying the role of an utterance in discourse (e.g., anyway, finally, incidentally, by the way).

Schiffrin (1987) wrote that "The analysis of discourse markers is part of the more general analysis of discourse coherence-how speakers and hearers jointly integrate forms, meaning, and actions to make overall sense of what is said" (1987, p.49). She investigated the following Discourse Markers: oh, and, but, or, so, because, now, and you know, in her exploration of unstructured interviews, interactions, and spontaneous speech. In her study, she claimed that discourse markers serve an integrative function that contributes to discourse coherence. They are connectors between what is being said and what has already been said. Her work was very inspiring in the field of linguistics.

Moreover, Lenk (1998) referred to DM's that relate segments of discourse that are not directly related to the topic. She examined the Discourse Markers: however, and, and still, in two conversational corpora: British English and American English. Her findings reveal that these DMs often occur at the beginning and the end of digression. Lenk stated that "The discourse marker however closes digressions that are relevant to the development of the main topic, or that bear interactional significance. Still, when used as a discourse marker, closes off subjective comments within a quasi-objective narration or presentation of facts." (p. 256).

Müller (2005) used qualitative and quantitative analyses to examine the use of the Discourse Marker "so" by English native speakers and German non-native speakers having the assumption that learners of English may use "so" as the native speakers do, but with much lower frequency. The meanings of "so" were discussed at two levels, textual and interactional. On the textual level, so is a marker of result or consequence. So is also "a marker of a boundary between instructions and the beginning of narrative" (Müller, 2005, P. 80). On the interactional level, so operates as a discourse marker that shows a speech that directly addressed the hearer and challenge him to establish what the speaker is implying (Müller, 2005). Another meaning of so is that it functions as a marker of a transition-relevant place. The study concluded that all meanings or functions of so occurred in the native and the non-native data. However, native speakers of English used so almost twice as often as German non-native speakers.

Yulianto (2021) defined discourse markers as terms that play a role in the management of discourse flow and structure, as this is their primary role at the discourse level. Yulianto used the data in sentences that contain discourse markers in four News Articles of The Jakarta Post and found that Discourse Markers were additive, adversative, causal, and continuative. For this purpose, the researcher used a descriptive qualitative method, and the data were analyzed by applying the theory of discourse markers from Halliday and Hasan (1976). The result showed the discourse markers found in four news articles were adequate and important for the readers to have a better understanding of the articles.

In Arabic studies, Discourse Markers are also largely discussed by researchers. For example, Al Kohlani (2010) studied the functions of Arabic DMs (e.g., wa and, fa, then, since, aw, or, inna, certainly, etc.) in Arabic newspaper articles. She analyzed their function at both: the sentence level and the paragraph level. Her findings showed that DMs can serve certain functions at the sentence level, such as additive, contrastive, explanatory, sequential, alternative, exceptive, subjective, and

interactive. At the paragraph level, DMs may have the following functions: continuity, refocus, and change of topic, and this particular result was also confirmed by Al Kohlani (2010), supporting the speaker's effect in the interaction between the speaker and the hearer.

Kanakri and Al-Harahsheh (2013) studied the pragmatic functions of the DM ʔa:di (meaning "normal") in Jordanians' speech. The study concluded that ʔa:di serves multiple functions based on the context in which it is used, especially to lessen the effect of bad news, to ask for permission, to show disappointment, to express contempt and courtesy, to indicate acceptance, to save one's face, and to show indifference, among other functions (Al Rousan, 2015).

In another study by Al-Harahsheh and Kanakri (2013), the researchers implemented the relevance theory as a theoretical framework for their study to explore the pragmatic functions of the Jordanian Spoken Arabic DM tayyib meaning "Okay or fine". According to them, tayyib may be used to continue what precedes it. It also can mean stopping, showing objection; introducing a new topic; ending the discussion, and asking the listener to be patient and to fill a gap.

Al Rousan (2015) investigated the pragmatic functions of the DM maʕ nafsak in the Saudi Spoken context by analyzing young Saudi students' interactions on WhatsApp, and how they used maʕ nafsak. Maʕ nafsak is generally used as a linguistic device by the speakers to build and keep the conversation flowing, and to facilitate communication. The study concluded that the Discourse Marker under study helped in the production and comprehension processes of a particular oral interaction. It is mainly used to serve many pragmatic functions, such as refusal, lack of interest/indifference, annoyance, unwillingness, challenging, and preserving personal privacy.

Another study explored the discourse marker in the Jordanian Arabic (Harb et al, 2022). Based on a naturally-occurring corpus, the study investigated the functions of the discourse marker ʕaad in interviews with 60 participants. Upon analyzing all occurrences of ʕaad in the corpus, the study concluded that ʕaad is a discourse marker that delivers additional information that shows the speaker's attitude towards what the host sentence had expressed. It also showed that although the position of a DM in the sentence is not semantically important, it is significant at the pragmatic level (communicatively).

**Theoretical Framework**

It is important to know how thoughts are communicated from one person to another. The speaker expresses his thoughts or what is called "intended thoughts" to the receiver (hearer), taking into account the mutual context of the communication between the speaker and the hearer to understand the thoughts correctly. It is done by a conduit, as shown in the following model:

Speaker's thought/intention ⇒ encoded ⇒ transmitted ⇒ decoded ⇒ intention/thought understood.

The theoretical framework adopted in this empirical study is the Relevance Theory, which aims at building an adequate theory of communication that goes beyond the speaker's meaning (Wilson, 2019). The Relevance Theory is a cognitive theory of pragmatics developed by Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson in the 1980s, presupposing that human communication is usually intention-based, and so they consider the verbal comprehension in speech engagement is not only the decoding of speech utterances but also the explanation of the potential property of the speaker's inputs, i.e. the speaker's intended thoughts that will supposedly lead to cognition (Sperber & Wilson, 2004). In other words, the Relevance theory asserts that linguistic communication is relevance driven, that has cognitive or contextual effects, enabling the hearer (the receiver) to deduce and elaborate on the meaning of the speech from the existing contextual assumption. As the Discourse markers contribute to making the sentence understandable and coherent (Kao & Chen, 2011), the researcher, in this current study, will examine the effect of the Discourse Marker *ʃikil* in the Jordanian context, and discover the effect of changing its position in the sentence on receiving the intended meaning.

**Agreement Pattern and Relevance:**

Agreement is a grammatical value that involves a change in the sentence to match the gender or the number of words in this sentence (Bettega & Leitner, 2019). It is necessary to enhance the meaning of the sentence. In the course of this paper, agreement comes to be a second investigation in this study as the researcher analyzes the functioning of agreement in spoken Jordanian Arabic currently. Agreement is questioned concerning the Discourse Marker under study and the

subject that comes in the sentence and how the intended meaning is conveyed accordingly.

### 4. METHODOLOGY

In this section of this research, the researcher presents the data collection and the data analysis of this word which, as will be shown later, develops a discourse function. This function structures the discourse of the context, and it facilitates the discourse understanding and perception of the idea behind it.

A questionnaire with ten questions has been made available online for this reason due to the present covid-19 pandemic circumstances. In compliance with ethical protocols, the researcher has requested the opinion of two professors at the School of Foreign Languages to have a look at the questionnaire used in the study and adjust any part of it, if necessary. The questionnaire begins with a declaration from the researcher assuring the recipients that the responses are anonymous and that the material would only be used and archived for academic study. The questions are all about the effect of the function change of the word *ʃikil* as a result of its altered placement inside the sentence. (150) responses have been received. More than 80% of the respondents are under 40 years old, and 88% are females.

Sample of the study

**Table (1): The distribution of the sample according to the variables of the study**

| Variable | Category | Number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sex | Female | 132 | 88% |
| | Male | 18 | 12% |
| | Total | 150 | 100% |
| Age | More than 40 | 36 | 24% |
| | 30-40 | 36 | 24% |
| | 20-30 | 78 | 52% |
| | Total | 150 | 100% |
| Educational Attainment | Less than a bachelor | 12 | 8% |
| | Bachelor degree | 60 | 40% |
| | Master's Degree | 60 | 40% |
| | Ph.D. Degree | 18 | 12% |
| | total | 150 | 100% |

The answers to the questions have come as follows in Table (2):

**Table (2)**

| Question | A | B | C |
|---|---|---|---|
| Q1 | 75% | 25% | - |
| Q2 | 0% | 100% | - |
| Q3 | 68% | 32% | - |
| Q4 | 76% | 24% | - |
| Q5 | 56% | 44% | - |
| Q6 | 24% | 76% | 0% |
| Q7 | 0% | 16% | 84% |
| Q8 | 64% | 0% | 36% |
| Q9 | 48% | 52% | - |
| Q10 | 76% | 12% | 12% |

Note: the questionnaire is attached in Appendix I

The word *ʃikil* is used to convey the idea that the speaker is narrating a relaxing event that may have occurred but is not necessarily the case. Typically, the speaker bases his or her narrative on shared knowledge and convictions (Jarrah and Shammari, 2017). This is illustrated in the question number 4, and 10. Additionally, *ʃikil* might be used when the speaker bases his advice on his interpretation. This appears in questions 1, 2, and 7. Additionally, one of the functions encodes indirect evidence, which is evidence that the speaker does not personally experience. Their rejection in the environments where the speaker thought the event to have occurred is one piece of evidence. These predicates can only be employed in situations when the speaker is not aware of the event for it to be felicitous (Al-Malahmeh, 2013). Such circumstantial evidence may be accompanied by the speaker's prior familiarity with cases of a like nature. The following questions will demonstrate this: 3, 6, and 9.

According to the question of this research: what is the effect of the function of the discourse marker on its position in the sentence' in this section, the researcher will analyze the data that have been collected according to the specific functions of the discourse marker, as shown in the questions. It is important to mention that the variables in this study are: the discourse marker *ʃikil* as an independent variable and its position in the sentence, and the meaning it conveys in the sentence as a dependent variable. The demographic variables (age, gender, and education) will be ignored in this study and recommended to study their effect on using the discourse marker in future studies.

The first function of the discourse marker under discussion implies the common knowledge and beliefs that the speakers share in the context. The question is:

The weather is gloomy:

a.    *ʃikiluh*            *ra7*       *teʃti*       *lyoum.*
Evidently     will      rain       today
Evidently, it will rain today.

b.    *ra7*       *teʃti*     *ʃikilha*              *lyoum.*
Will  rain       it seems today
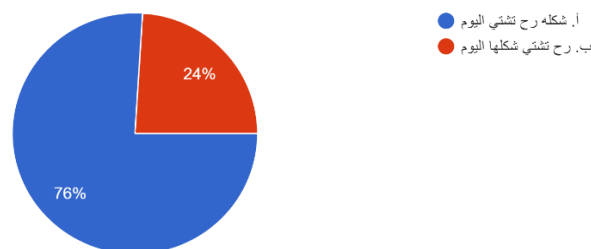It will, Evidently, rain today.



**Figure (1)**

The majority of the respondents have taken the first answer, the first position of the sentence.
The other question is:
On the way to the airport:

a.    *ʃikluh*              *ra7*        *tsa:fer.*
It seems           will       travel
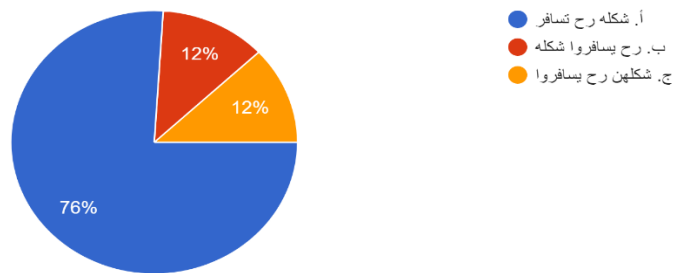Apparently, she will travel

b.    *ra7*       *yEsafru:*                      *ʃikluh*
will   they travel           apparently
They will travel, apparently

c.    *ʃikilhin ra7 ysa:fru*

Apparently, they will travel



أ. شكله رح تسافر
ب. رح يسافروا شكله
ج. شكلهن رح يسافروا

**Figure (2)**

The first answer has the biggest percentage (76%) and the other two (12%) for each.

From these examples, it is noticed that even by the change of the position of the word and with the change of its morphology, the first position is salient in this case, with the base form of the word regardless of the agreement with the subject.

The second function of the discourse marker *ʃikil* is the own interpretation of the speaker, as in questions: 2,7 and 8.

Question number 2:

The exam was difficult:

a. *ma      darast        ʃiklak            mni:7.*
Not   studied        Evidently      well
You didn't study apparently well

b. *ʃiklak                  miʃ    da:res          mni:7.*
You Evidently            not    studied         well
You, Evidently, didn't study well.



أ. ما درست شكله منيح
ب. شكلك مش دارس منيح

**Figure (3)**

Question number 7:

Who you think will win the competition?

a. *ʔelbint          ʔesği:reh        ra7      tfu:z      ʃikluh*
The girl        little              will      win      apparently
The little girl will win apparently.

b. *ʔelbint    ʔesği:reh      illi      ʃikluh              ra7      tfu:z*
The girl      little            that      apparently        will      will

The little girl that will apparently win.

c.   ʃikiklha   ʔelbint   ʔesǧi:reh        ʔilli       ra7       tfu:z

she seems      the girl            little            who       will      win

The little girl will apparently win.



أ. البنت الصغيرة رح تفوز في المسابقة شكله

ب. البنت الصغيرة اللي شكله رح تفوز في المسابقة

ج. شكلها البنت الصغيرة رح تفوز في المسابقة
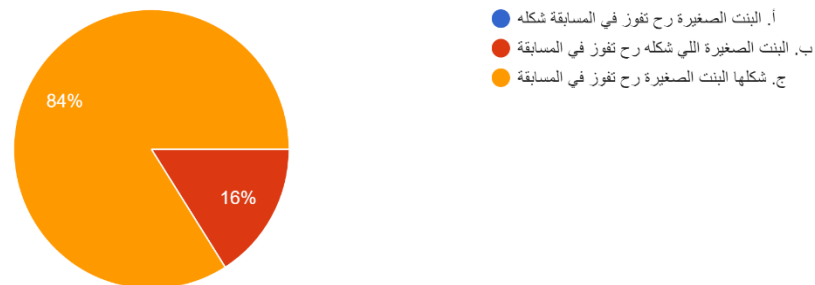
**Figure (4)**

Question number 8:

The shops are closed:

a.   ʃikluh            bisakruh         bakki:r

It apparently   they close          early

Apparently, they close too early

b.   bisakrinn          ʃikilhum          bakki:r

They close       they apparently    early

They close apparently too early

c.   ʃikiklhin          bisakrinn          bakki:r

They apparently,          they close          early
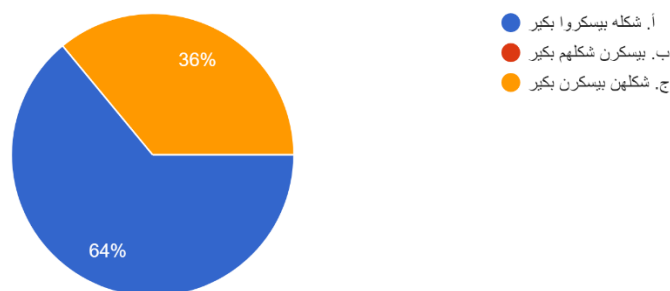
Apparently, they close too early



أ. شكله بيسكروا بكير

ب. بيسكرن شكلهم بكير

ج. شكلهن بيسكرن بكير

**Figure (5)**

In these types of questions, the speakers put their own opinions or interpretations in their answers. They are pretty sure, maybe according to their previous experience but still not sure about their answers. All respondents in question number 2 ignored the first answer of the question which has the word ʃikil at the very beginning of the sentence. all answers go in favor of the second answer instead. In this answer, we can see that the work ʃikil comes to agree with the listener, the subject, as a second person, you 'anta'.

The case in question number 7 resembles somehow the previous case. In this context, the speaker thinks and declares

that the little girl in the competition seems to win the competition. Maybe he/she has pieces of evidence on that. The respondents ignored the first answer which has the word *ʃikil* at the end of the sentence. The second answer has 16% of the responses. The word *ʃikil* here is in the middle of the sentence and it does not agree with the subject "you", but has a null constituent. In this example also the main clause contains an embedded clause, proceeded by an overt "that" "ʔ*illi*". However, this didn't affect the choice of the respondents, but at least, wasn't ignored as the first answer. The third answer has the majority of the respondents, who think that it is the most appropriate answer and the closest to Jordanian Arabic. *ʃikil* is at the beginning and agrees with the subject as the feminine case. This sentence gives some confidence in the answer to the question so that the speaker uses it.

Moreover, question number 8 has three answers, and one of them was ignored too. this time it is the second answer, where the discourse marker is in the middle of the sentence and disagrees with the subject in the masculinity. A bigger portion of the answers go to the first answer. The word is in the first position of the sentence but in the base form, as a null constituent subject. The third answer has 36% of the responses. *ʃikil* is at the first position of the sentence and agrees with the verb: *ʃikiklhin besakrinn.*

The last set of questions has the last function discussed in this research. It is the indirect evidence that the answer might hold. There is no eye-witness evidence for the answer. However, the speaker focuses on what he/she thinks that it is the focal point or foci in the idea illustrated. This is discussed through questions: 1, 3, 5, 6, and 9.

Question number 1 is as follows:

The car doesn't move:

a. *ʃikluh*      *ma:*      *fi:ha*      *benzi:n*

it apparently   no      have      petrol

Apparently, there is no petrol

b. *ʃikilha*      *ma:*      *fi:ha*      *benzin*

the car apparently      no      have      petrol

Apparently, it doesn't have petrol

Well, as seen in the first answer, the subject is the null constituent there. This answer has the 76% of the responses, whereas the other answer which has an overt subject has 24%.



أ. شكله ما فيها بنزين
ب. شكلها ما فيها بنزين
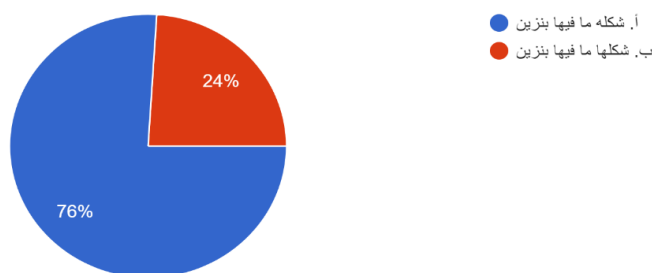
**Figure (6)**

Question number 3:

They didn't receive me as expected

a. *ʃikluh*      *ma:*      *bye3rafu:ki*      *mni:7*

it apparently   no      recognize you      well

It seems they don't recognize you

b. *ma:*      *bye3rafu:ki*      *ʃikilhum*

no      they recognize you      they apparently

They might don't recognize you apparently.

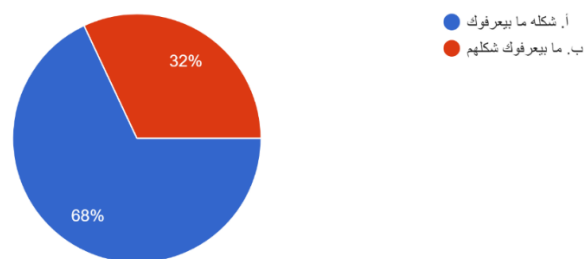The answers are as shown in the chart:



أ. شكله ما بيعرفوك
ب. ما بيعرفوك شكلهم

**Figure (7)**

I will go for the rest of the questions before having any comments on them.

Question number 5:

The food smells yummy!

a.  *ʃikluh          miʃ      ma:kel   min      essubuh inta*

it seems        not      eat       since    morning you

It seems that you haven't eaten anything since morning

b.  *miʃ        ma:kel  ʃikilak            min      essubuh*

not    eat      you seem            since    morning
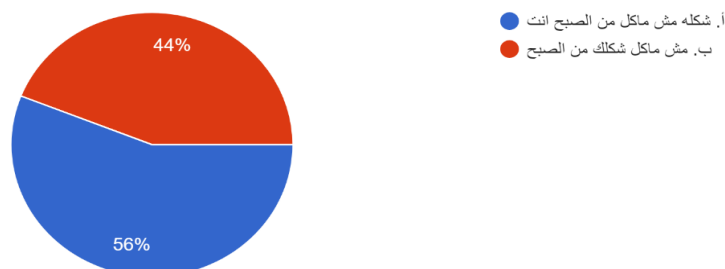
You seem that you haven't eaten anything since morning



أ. شكله مش ماكل من الصبح انت
ب. مش ماكل شكلك من الصبح

**Figure (8)**

Question number 6:

The employees are not at their offices

a.  *ʃikilhum mudi:rhum      miʃ      mawdʒoud*

they seem      their boss        not      here

they seem that their boss is not here

b.  *ʔelmudi:r        ʃikluh            miʃ      mawdʒoud*

The boss        it seems not        here

the boss, apparently, is not here

c.  *ʔemudi:r        miʃ      mawdʒoud        ʃikluh*

The boss        not      here              he seems
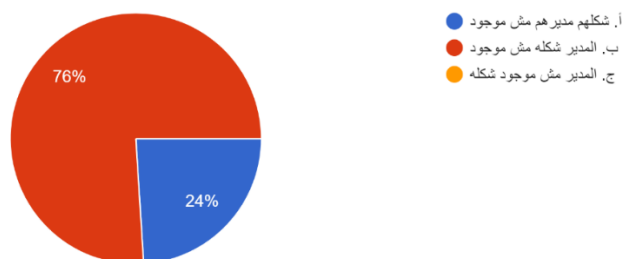
The boss is not here apparently.

**Figure (9)**

In this example, the respondents ignored the last answer, which contained the word at the end position. The majority went for the second answer. This answer has the word *ʃikluh* in the middle position and not agreeing with the subject 'they'.

The last question, question number 9:

Oh pity! The machine is broken.

a. *ʃikil    ʔelma:rkah    miʃ    kwaiseh!*
Seem        the brand      not    good
It seems that the brand is not good

b. *ʔelma:rkah    ʃikilha              miʃ    kwaiseh!*
The brand      the brand seems  not    good
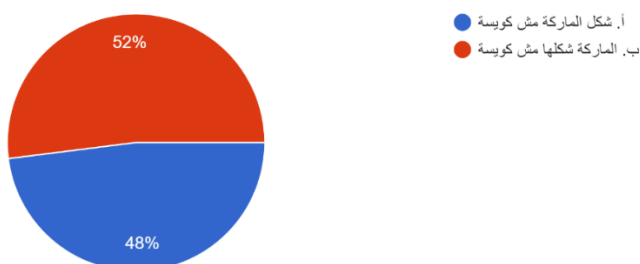the brand seems to be not good



**Figure (10)**

The answers for this question seem to have an approximate similar result, with a slight difference of about 4% between them that goes to the second answer where the discourse marker is placed in the middle of the sentence. This difference might be insignificant because the number of respondents is not that big.

In the previous set of questions, the answers are all in the first utterance except for one of the answers. There is no agreement between the discourse marker and the subject in nearly all sentences. For example, in question number 3, the word *ʃikluh* is at the beginning of the sentence, and doesn't follow the null subject "they". The same applies to question 1, where the word *ʃikluh* is the first utterance in the sentence that got the bigger number of respondents and doesn't agree with the null subject "it". Notice in all these sentences that they all contain negation.

## 5.    CONCLUSION

The discourse markers are found to be significant in this research as empirical support for adjusting speakers' modes of thought in accordance with situations. One of the discourse markers that is frequently employed in Jordanian Arabic to indicate the speakers' perspective, even when they are not quite sure of it, is *ʃikil*. The discourse marker *ʃikil* serves a

particular purpose in the sentence based on where it occurs in the sentence. It is evident that this position has an impact on the context's meaning. The word is infrequently used at the end of sentences, according to the survey, but more frequently at the first and the middle utterances in the Jordanian Arabic contexts.

However, it is usually employed as the first and middle utterances. The majority of those surveyed used the opening statement to demonstrate shared knowledge or to imply shared beliefs between the speaker and the listener. Additionally, it serves as a way of assuring the incident while indicating the speaker's personal perception. It is mostly linked with the visual evidence of the context. In this instance, the discourse marker *ʃikil* concurs with the sentence's pertinent subject, that is it appears in agreement with the relevant subject in the sentence. First-position discourse marker also tells that in the case of the meaning of the no-evidence opinion, the sentence must comprehend negation to hold this concerned meaning.

The discourse marker *ʃikil* is also commonly used in the middle position of the sentence, where it must be inflected to agree with the sentence's subject to fit in the sentence and be suitably placed, as can also be seen from the instances of this particular meaning. In this position, the discourse marker may not agree with the subject of the sentence. However, it is not used in the plural form much in Spoken Jordanian Arabic. Instead, it is used in the masculine form when the subject is plural, which does not comply with the spoken Saudi Arabic, as stated in Fakih (2016), where the feminine form is used in the plural subject.

The indirect proof of the incidence is the third meaning that is examined. The associated set of responses reveals that the word *ʃikil* frequently appears at the beginning of the phrase. It may also appear in the middle. Additionally, in such a situation, the discourse marker does not agree with the subject, which is null in this instance, but it is implied by the meaning of the phrase. Therefore, there is no apparent inflection. The indirect-evidence meaning in this situation is accompanied by negation, which brings up the last argument. In other words, the sentence conveys the speaker's negative emotion.

Agreement in using the discourse marker and the subject of the sentence varies. It is noticed from the examples that agreement does not rely on the position of the discourse marker in the sentence since it is found that it might agree with the subject and sometimes does not. However, it is seen that there is no agreement with the subject when the meaning is commonly shared, and it takes the masculine form. The reason for such a phenomenon might be that the basic form, that is when the speaker does not refer to a certain person, in the Arabic language is the masculine form. Agreement supports the meaning of the sentence in showing the general opinion of the speaker and holding it to the receiver/ hearer where there is no need for agreement between the discourse marker and the subject in the sentence. This is illustrated in figure1. On the other hand, agreement can be seen when the speaker has his/ her own interpretation of the direct evidence, as in question (7), where the speaker is sure about the information he/ she shows. In this case, agreement is clear, indicating the confidence of the speaker. So, agreement with the discourse markers in spoken Jordanian Arabic is not affected by the position of this discourse marker in the sentence, but it is connected with the meaning that it illustrates.

This current study comes in compliance with other studies that discourse markers play a significant role in conveying the intended meaning in the utterance. Discourse markers are multi-functional since their meaning change according to the context. The present study shows that the position of the discourse marker in the sentence affects the meaning that the speaker desires to show. However, the study indicates that agreement between the discourse marker and the subject in the sentence is not affected by the position of the discourse marker, but it supports the meaning of the utterance.

In the end, the study is an attempt to contribute to the other studies of discourse markers in Arabic varieties, especially the spoken language. The researcher recommends figuring out more discourse markers in spoken Arabic since it is a rich area for study and needs more exploration. It is recommended to involve the demographic variables, such as gender and age, and discover their effects on using the discourse markers. A further study might explore the use of discourse markers by using different methodological techniques, such as interviews, and compare its results to this present study.

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