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The Pragmatics and Translation of the Discourse Marker *basīṭa* in Jordanian Spoken Arabic

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Abstract

Objectives: This research investigates the pragmatic functions and translations of the discourse marker *basīṭa* (lit. simple/easy) in Jordanian Spoken Arabic (henceforth JSA). It attempts to answer two questions: (1) What are the pragmatic functions of the discourse marker *basīṭa* in JSA; and (2) What are the different translations of the discourse marker *basīṭa* in JSA?

Methods: A total of 70 naturally occurring conversations between 162 individuals who have close relationships with the researchers were collected using the observation method. Searle's (1976) Speech Act Theory and Nida and Taber's (1982) approach to translation were employed as theoretical frameworks.

Results: This study reveals that *basīṭa* serves 11 different functions, namely making a threat, providing reassurance, expressing irony, providing consolation, showing courtesy, signaling insufficiency, expressing mitigation, indicating simplicity, showing disappointment, offering assistance, and serving as a filler marker. The study also shows that using dynamic equivalence is the most appropriate method of translating the pragmatic meanings of *basīṭa* from JSA into English.

Conclusions: The study concluds that *basīṭa* is multi-functional based on the context in which it is used. Furthermore, it shows that dynamic equivalence is the most suitable method used to convey the pragmatic meanings of *basīṭa* from JSA into English.

Keywords: Pragmatics, translation, discourse markers, *basīṭa,* Jordanian Arabic.

الاستخدامات التداولية وترجمة رابط الكلام "بسيطة" في اللهجة الأردنية المحكية

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ملخّص

الأهداف: تهدف هذه الدراسه إلى البحث في الوظائف التداولية وترجمة رابط الكلام "بسيطة" في اللهجة الأردنية المحكية. وتحاول هذه الدراسة الإجابة عن سؤالين: الأول، ما الوظائف التداولية لرابط الخطاب "بسيطة" في اللهجة الأردنية المحكية؟ والثاني، ما الترجمات المختلفة لرابط الكلام *بسيطة* كما هو مستخدم في اللهجة الأردنية المحكية؟

المنهجية: جرى جمع 70 محادثة طبيعية حصلت بين 162 فردا من مدن وقرى أردنية مختلفة باستخدام وسيلة الملاحظة والتسجيل. استخدمت نظرية أفعال الكلام لسيرل (1976) ونهج نايدا وتابر (1982) للترجمة كإطار نظري لهذه الدراسة.

النتائج: توصلت الدراسة إلى أن رابط الكلام "بسيطة" متعدد الوظائف ويخدم 11 وظيفة براغماتية مختلفة: إصدار تهديد، توفير الطمأنينة، التعبير عن السخرية، تقديم المواساة، إظهار المجاملة، الإشارة إلى عدم كفاية، التعبير عن التلطيف، والإشارة إلى البساطة، وإظهار خيبة الأمل، وتقديم المساعدة، وكأداة حشو. كما توصلت الدراسه إلى أن استخدام أسلوب التكافؤ الديناميكي هو الأكثر ملاءمة لترجمة المعاني البراغماتية لرابط الكلام "بسيطة" من اللهجة المحكيه إلى اللغة الإنجليزية.

الخلاصة: خلصت الدراسة إلى أن رابط الكلام "بسيطة" متعدد الوظائف بناءً على السياق الذي يستخدم فيه. وكشفت الدراسة أيضًا أن الترجمة بالاعتماد على التكافؤ الديناميكي هي الترجمة الأكثر ملاءمة لنقل المعاني البراغماتية لرابط الكلام "بسيطة" من اللهجة الأردنية المحكيه إلى اللغة الإنجليزية.

الكلمات الدالة: علم المعنى التداولي، علم الترجمة، رابط الكلام، *بسيطة* ، اللهجة الأردنية.

Introduction

Discourse markers (henceforth DMs) are linguistic expressions used to mark discourse in both speaking and writing. "DMs are sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk" (Schiffrin, 1987, p. 31). They are frequently employed by people to have a more coherent discourse and to make the intention of the speaker more evident. Speakers also use them to facilitate and better manage their interactions (Al Rousan et al., 2020). Although DMs have received a great deal of attention in linguistics, they are still relatively unexplored in translation studies. They are regarded as a problematic issue for translators since they have more implicit meanings and cultural dimensions than the literal ones (Abbasi et al., 2012). Moreover, the nature of DMs complicates the process of translation because DMs are functional linguistic elements rather than lexical ones; therefore, they cannot be translated based on their literal meaning (Mariano, 2002). That is, they are translated using pragmatic analysis rather than semantic analysis. Their analysis relies on the context in which they occur. Context (i.e., relationship between speaker and listener, setting, physical context, tone of voice, and body language, etc.) plays an indispensable role in the interpretation of DMs (Fraser, 1999; Müller, 2005; Schiffrin, 1987). This study seeks to identify the pragmatic functions of a commonly used Jordanian Arabic DM, *basīṭa,* and its various translations in different social contexts. It attempts to answer the following questions: What are the pragmatic functions of the DM *basīṭa* in JSA? and (2) What are the different translations of the DM *basīṭa* in JSA? The findings of this study will redound to the benefit of linguistics because they will raise knowledge of the DM *basīṭa*, and how to translate it accurately from Arabic into English.

Background

Definition of DMs

Despite the fact that DMs have been widely studied, scholars have not yet decided on a specific definition for them. They have been defined differently by several researchers, the most common of which are introduced by Schiffrin (1987) and Fraser (1990). Schiffrin (1987) defined DMs as linguistic, paralinguistic, or non-verbal elements that signal relationships between units of speech based on their syntactic and semantic characteristics and their sequential relationships. Specifically, Schiffrin (1987, p. 31) stated that DMs are "sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk that signal relationships between immediately adjacent units of talk, and which have thus a coherence building function on a local coherence level." Fraser (1990) viewed DMs as a set of expressions that indicate how the speaker intends the basic message that follows to relate to the preceding discourse. Taking into account the aforementioned definitions, DMs will be defined in this study as linguistic expressions that contribute to the coherence of the conversation and serve certain pragmatic functions, depending on the context.

Features of DMs

DMs have a number of features that have been identified and used by scholars. For example, Schiffrin (1987) proposed the following features for DMs: 1) DMs are syntactically separate units; 2) They have no effect on the propositional meaning of an utterance; 3) they serve a variety of functions; 4) They do not establish discourse relationships, but they show specific relationships from the potential relationships; and 5) They can have multiple functions in a given context, but each one has only one ideal function. On the other hand, Hölker (1991) (cited in Hansen, 1998) pointed out that DMs have semantic features, which include that they have no bearing on the truth conditions of an utterance, and that they do not add anything to an utterance's propositional substance, pragmatic features which stipulates that DMs are relevant to the speaking context, rather than the situation being discussed, and the functional features which assure that DMs have an expressive meaning rather than having a denotative or cognitive function.

Functions of DMs

Brinton (1996) illustrated that DMs are not pragmatically elective or redundant, but they serve many pragmatic functions. They perform a variety of functions, each of which is dependent on their position in the context (Fraser, 1999). Brinton (1996) classified the functions of DMs into two categories: Textual functions and Interpersonal functions. The former includes: opening discourse, closing discourse, serving as fillers or turn keepers, repairing markers, indicating new

or old information, capturing the listener's attention, signaling a topic shift, and asserting sequential dependencies. The interpersonal category includes expressing a reaction or a response to the previous discourse, and effecting or sharing cooperation. Müller (2005) also reported that DMs might serve many functions depending on the context in which they are used, such as starting a conversation, establishing a boundary in a conversation, acting as a filler or delaying strategy, and assisting the speaker in holding the conversational turn. As such, they are referred to as "polyfunctional" or "multifunctional".

Theoretical Framework

Searle's (1976) classification of Speech Act and Nida and Taber's (1982) frameworks were adopted to achieve the objectives of the study. Austin (1962), who is the founder of Speech Act Theory, classified speech acts into three levels: Locutionary act, Illocutionary act, and Perlocutionary act. The Locutionary act is the production of a meaningful linguistic expression, the Illocutionary act is what the speaker intended when s/he uttered a specific linguistic expression, and the Perlocutionary act is the act of inflicting effects on an audience by uttering a linguistic expression. For example, "I'm sorry I did that to you", the Locution here is the actual utterance; the Illocution is the act of apologizing; and the Perlocution is the reaction of the hearer towards the illocutionary act. Searle (1976) developed the concept of Illocutionary act, categorizing it into five types: 1) Assertive or Representative: to state the truth and the nature of things, such as suggestion, putting forward, swearing, boasting, and concluding; 2) Directives: to compel someone to do something; the different kinds of this type are: asking, ordering, requesting, inviting, advising, commanding, begging, etc.; 3) Commissives: to obligate the speaker to take action in the future; the kinds are: promising, planning, vowing, betting, opposing, and others; 4) Expressives: words used to express one's feelings regarding a situation; kinds include thanking, apologizing, welcoming, condoling, congratulating, deploring, and so on; and 5) Declarations: using speech to change the world's reality and state.

According to Nida and Taber (1982), who borrowed theoretical ideas from semantics and pragmatics to explore the field of translation (Panou, 2013), the translation should reflect the natural meaning of the source language. Language comes first, followed by the stylistic features of both the source and target languages. According to Nida (1969), a translator must keep analyzing structure throughout the translation process, which is why s/he should read the text several times before beginning the translation process. That is, s/he has an overall idea about what is going on (the context), but if s/he begins translating right away, s/he will fall behind. Even at the word level (lexical level), Nida (1969) explained that when there is a lexical ambiguity, the right meaning is the one that fits the context. To this end, the translations of the scenarios that include the DM *basīṭa* are based on Nida and Taber's framework (1982). They classify equivalence into two main types: Formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence. Nida (1969) also argued that in formal equivalence, the target text (TT) is very similar in form and content to the source text (ST), but in dynamic equivalence, later referred to as 'functional', an effort is made to express the ST message as naturally as possible in the TT (Panou, 2013). Nida and Taber (1982) emphasized that the translator's priority is to ensure that the translated text is as accurate, understandable, and clear as the source text. Consequently, the context was very cautiously considered when we translated the DM in order to be as dynamic as possible.

Literature Review

Many studies about DMs have been carried out in a non-Arab context (e.g., Bolden, 2006; Pratama, 2017; Šolienė, 2018). Bolden (2006) examined the DMs So and Oh in social interaction between close friends. The findings demonstrate that So and Oh are two options for continuing the debate that has been stopped and demonstrated that So prefaces other-attentive themes disproportionately, while Oh prefaces self-attentive topics. Moreover, Pratama (2017) analyzed the use of the DM Insya Allah (God's Willing) in an Indonesian context from a pragmatic perspective. The data consisted of one hundred utterances spoken by various speakers in various contexts. The findings show that Insya Allah is a reliable DM for both commissive and expressive speech acts. It was pointed out that the DM *Insya Allah* serves 6 pragmatic functions: strengthening the speaker's utterance, wishing for a good outcome, showing a fatalistic attitude, showing a religious

identity, indicating scheduled future plans, and conveying humor. Šolienė (2018) also investigated the quantitative and qualitative distribution of the Lithuanian DMs na and nu 'well'. The data was collected from a self-compiled bidirectional parallel corpus of fiction texts and the spoken sub-corpus of the Corpus of the Contemporary Lithuanian Language. The findings reveal that the two DMs na and nu can perform the following functions: responding to a previous turn, facilitating cohesion, and helping the flow of discourse in conversations.

In the Arabic context, a number of scholars have explored different DMs in different Arab countries. For instance, based on a corpus of natural conversations in Yemeni Spoken Arabic, Al-Zubeiry (2020) investigated the functions of the DM 'ʔamaanah'. Adopting an eclectic analytical method, the study found that ʔamaanah' serves 8 functions: as an expression of oath, as a commitment marker, as a reprimand marker, as a mitigation marker, as an epistemic marker, as an entreaty-marker on directive act, as an attitude marker, and as a displeasure marker. Bidaoui (2016) also discussed the use of DMs of causality and clarification in Egyptian, Moroccan and Algerian dialects. The data were collected through informal multi-party conversation and structured interviews. The findings demonstrate that causality may be expressed through the use of six variants, which are liʔanna, liʔannu, ħit, aħqaʃ, parce que, and ʕaʃan. In his study of the use of the DM maʕ nafsak among young Saudi university students in an online setting, Al Rousan reported that this DM serves 12 different pragmatic functions based on the context in which it is used. These functions include refusal, lack of interest, annoyance, reprimanding, doubt, unwillingness, distancing oneself from others, challenging, scolding, disappointment, choice, and preserving personal privacy. Furthermore, Alazzawie (2014) explored the functions of the DM Yamawwad in Iraqi Arabic dyadic conversations. The study shows that the DM Yamawwad serves a variety of pragmatic functions based on the context in which it is used, including showing courtesy, hope, rebuke, and refusal, expressing disappointment, annoyance, strong will, disagreement, displeasure, surprise, empathy, and apology, conveying anger, and warning of danger.

In the Jordanian setting, Al Rousan et al. (2020) examined the pragmatic functions of the DM bas in JSA. The data was collected from 24 dyadic conversations. They found out that this DM serves 16 pragmatic functions: some of which are: providing an interpretation, showing contrast, expressing regret, closing a conversation, indicating speaker's hesitancy, and initiating a topic, etc. Hamdan and Abu-Rumman also (2020) delved into the pragmatic functions of DM Yahummalali in JSA. Based on their exposure to this DM and familiarity with its contexts in Jordanian society, the study revealed that the DM Yahummalali serves 19 pragmatic functions, including expressing dismay, disappointment, anger, surprise, jealousy, sarcasm, dissatisfaction, shock, sadness, and regret, etc. Moreover, in their study of the discourse functions of the word ʃu: 'what' in JSA, Jarrah et al., (2019) reported that besides its lexical use (an interrogative operator, an exclamative particle, and a relativizer), the word ʃu: has developed a discourse function as a D-linker relating questions to the previous discourse. Al-Harahsheh and Kanakri (2013) also examined the pragmatic functions and translations of the DM Ťayib (Okay) and its cognate tabb in JSA. Their data was collected from 18-videotaped conversations. Specifically, 36 speakers of Jordanian Arabic participated in this study. Their findings reveal that Ťayib and its cognate tabb serve ten pragmatic functions: to serve as a backchannel marker; to express misunderstanding; to show objection; to indicate an introduction to a new topic; to serve as a mitigation term; to express challenge; to mark the end to the conversation; to ask someone to be patient; to show permission; and to serve as a filler.

Concerning the translation of DMs, few researchers have studied the translation of DMs in different languages (Farhan & Fannoush, 2005; Farghal & Samateh, 2016; Hu, 2020). Farhan and Fannoush (2005) examined the difficulties of translating DMs from English into Arabic. Their study demonstrates that translators encounter certain difficulties when translating DMs, including indeterminacy and confusing propositions. Farghal and Samateh (2015), who investigated Blum-Kulka's (1986) claim that explicitation cases in the TT correspond to implicitation cases in the ST when translating DMs from English into Arabic, studied a corpus of three DMs: fa, 'ið, and bittaalii. Their findings reveal that there are four types of correspondence in DMs: 1) explicitation to explicitation; 2) explicitation to implicitation; 3) explicitation to zero equivalents; and 4) naturalizing and smoothing the conversation's flow. Hu (2020) analyzed the subtitling of the DM Well in Friends Serial. He pointed out that free translation was widely used in the subtitle translation of Friends to convey the hidden meaning of dialogues. Furthermore, he found that more than half of Well that appeared in the texts were deleted in translation.

Methods

Participants

The participants in this study were all native speakers of JSA. They were all relatives, friends, and colleagues of the researchers from different regions in Jordan. Convenient sampling was particularly used in this research. Having chosen the participants, the researchers contacted them all to obtain their consent to participate in the study. The 162 participants, males or females, come from different occupations, ages, and educational backgrounds. They were all rest assured that their identities will be very confidential.

Data Collection

This study is qualitative in nature, and it is observation-based. The data were gathered from 70 naturally occurring face-to-face conversations. The data collection process took around three months, specifically from September 11th, 2021 until December 14th, 2021, to complete. All the conversation took place in informal friendly settings. Having obtained consents from the participants, all the conversations were video-recorded. Despite its methodological challenges and limitations, video-taping remains one of the powerful data collection methods. It can help researchers capture all details of live settings (Wears, 2000). This includes participants' body language, facial expressions, tone of voice. It can also help them review and clarify their observations by replaying the video-recordings. Body language including facial expressions can help interpret the message further as they can reveal emotions, feelings, and attitudes of speakers.

Data Analysis

The data analysis was conducted by identifying and describing the pragmatic functions of the DM *basīṭa*. This study draws upon the pragmatic functions introduced by Brinton (1996) and Fraser (2006). The data were transcribed, and the DM *basīṭa* was then analyzed based on the context in which it occurred. The exchange structure (turn) was the basic unit of analysis. The analysis was done manually, where the pragmatic functions of the DM *basīṭa* were classified under a number of categories. It is important to note that some functions may overlap; that is, a single DM may correspond to more than one function in a given context (Brinton, 1996; Fraser, 1999). The examples used in the study were translated by the researchers themselves. Inter-rater reliability was conducted to make sure that the functions of *basīṭa* fits under their designated categories and their translations were accurate. Two Jordanian professors of linguistics who have decent knowledge in pragmatics assisted in evaluating the classification, functions, and translation of the DM. The agreement among the referees was very high.

Findings

The findings demonstrate that the DM *basīṭa* is multifunctional, i.e., it performs a wide range of functions in different contexts. These functions were identified, classified and discussed with an illustrative example randomly selected from the data. Twelve pragmatic functions for the DM *basīṭa* were identified. In what follows, the original Arabic example is used in bold, its transliteration in italics, and its translation between brackets. Due to word limitations, only one example on each category is discussed.

Making a Threat

A threat is the speaker's intention to cause harm to the hearer. Threatening is a commissive act that carries a pledge to do something to the hearer rather than for the hearer (Searle, 1976). A commissive act is an illocutionary act used to force the speaker to do something in the future (Searle, 1976). Noteworthy is that all the occurrences of *basīṭa* in this category are accompanied with a menacing, sarcastic, or funny tone. Moreover, *basīṭa* in this category occur at the beginning of the speaker's utterance proceeded or followed the DMs tajib or māʃi

Example (1)

Daughter: **ماما بدي اطلع***māma biddi aṭlaʕ*

(Mum, I want to go out.)

Mother: **لأ فيش طلعة***laʔ fīʃ ṭ ālʕa*

(No, you will not go out.)

Daughter: **ماما كل مرة بتعملي هيك فيي! ما بدي أرد وهيني طالعة** *mama kul marra ibtiʕmali hēk fji! ma biddi ʔarud w hajni ṭalʕa*

(Mum! You always do that! I will go out, like it or not.)

Mother: **بسيطة ماشي اطلعي والله لأقول لأبوكي** *basīṭa māʃi iṭlaʕj wallah laʔaqōl laʔbōki*

(**Okay**! Go out, and I swear to God, I will tell your father.)

The abovementioned conversation occurred between a daughter and her mother; the daughter wants to go out despite her mother's refusal. The mother was irritated by her daughter's insistence to go out, so she made a threat to inform her father. She initiates her threat by using *basīṭa*, followed by māʃi (Ok) (used for emphasis), and "Do it, and I will tell your father", which evidently emphasizes her threat. Concerning its translation, in this category, *basīṭa* was translated into (Okay). It was translated based on Nida and Taber's (1982) dynamic equivalence. The tone of voice and facial expressions were extremely helpful in determining the correct translation.

Providing Reassurance

The findings show that *basīṭa* is also used in JSA to provide reassurance to others. Lessening of worries and fears is referred to as reassurance (Traeger, et al., 2017). In this category, *basīṭa* embodies an expressive function. According to Searle's classification of speech act (1976), expressives are used when speakers express their attitudes toward a previous action or a psychological state of mind. The use of *basīṭa* as a reassurance marker is frequently accompanied with body language and voice tone and pitch.

Example (2)

Daughter: **يا ماما تعبانة** *ja māma taʕbānih*

(Mum, I feel sick.)

Mother: **لا بسيطة مرضك انفلونزا عادية** *la basīṭa maraḍik ʔinflawanza ʕādijih*

(**Do not worry**! You are having a normal flu.)

The daughter is worried about becoming sick, but her mother reassures her that she is fine. Because the mother understands the psychological influence of reassuring by using comforting words, she said *basīṭa* in a reassuring tone to make her daughter feel less worried and frightened. The expression (Do not worry!) was used as an equivalent translation to the DM *basīṭa* in the example above because it serves the same pragmatic function.

Expressing Irony

The use of *basīṭa* is one of the strategies speakers of JSA use to express irony. Grice (1980) views irony as a rhetorical figure holding an opposite meaning than it literally expresses. That is, the hearer understands something opposite to what is actually intended. It is an expressive speech act that can be understood only from a pragmatic perspective.

Example (3)

Hana: **شكله المطعوم بعمل حرارة** *ʃiklo ilmaṭʕōm biʕmal ḥararah*

(It seems like fever is one of the vaccine's side effects.)

Marwa: **لا لا بس حرارة الف ههههه** *la la bas ḥarara ʔalf hahaha*

(No, no, just nearly 1000, (laughing ironically).)

Hana: **اذا هيك بسيطة ههههه** *ʔiða hēk basīṭa hahaha*

(Then, it is **not a big deal** (laughing ironically).)

Example (3) describes a situation that occurred between two girlfriends, Hana and Marwa; Hana is afraid of getting vaccinated against COVID-19. She is particularly asking about fever, which is one of the vaccine's side effects. Marwa responds, "No no, just nearly 1000 Celsius, hahaha". Hana's use of *basīṭa* with an ironic laughter indicates the opposite meaning of *basīṭa*. The tone of Hana's voice when she says *basīṭa*, as well as the way she laughs emphasize that *basīṭa* is used here to express irony. Using dynamic equivalence, *basīṭa* was translated into (not a big deal) as this translation fits the context.

Providing Consolation

Another function of *basīṭa* that was observed in the data is expressing consolation. An expression of consolation not only expresses sympathy but also provides encouragement and support in tough situations. Consolation aims at making a

person feels better. Consolations are classified under expressive speech acts (Searle, 1976).

Example (4)

In this example, the girl is heartbroken, so she opens up to her friend and at the end she says:

Girl: خسرته (تنهيدة) يا ريت خبرته بالحقيقة بس بسيطة هاد قدري*xsirtoh (with sigh) ja rīt xabbartoh bil haqīqa bas basīṭa hād qadari*

(I lost him (with a sigh), I wish I had told him the truth; but it is **alright**, he is not meant for me.)

The girl was complaining to her girlfriend about her fiancé. Since Jordanian culture forbids girls from having a boyfriend, the girl lied to her fiancé about her previous relationship. When he found out the truth, he decided to end their engagement. After deep grief and intense pain, the girl sought to comfort herself by employing *basīṭa* and by trying to convince herself that he is not meant for her. Clearly, *basīṭa* was used to provide self-consolation and comfort. Despite the fact that the first part of the utterance was full of regret and sadness, the second one signals self- consolation by the use of *basīṭa*. The use of *basīṭa* as a consolation marker necessitates an English equivalent that has the same effect as *basīṭa*. Therefore, *basīṭa* was translated as (That's alright/fine/ok!) using dynamic equivalence.

Showing Courtesy

Showing courtesy is an expressive speech act performed to express politeness and respect towards others (Mills, 2003). The DM *basīṭa* in JSA may be used as an illocutionary force to indicate courteous attitudes and show awareness of other peoples' feelings.

Example (5)

Example (5) is about a girl (Asma) who asks her girlfriend (Noor) to carry her bag as she goes to the store to buy a bottle of water.

Asma: شكرا كتير وبعتذر تأخرت عليكِ*ʃukran iktjjr w baʕtaðir itʔaxart ʕalēki*

(Thanks a lot, and I am sorry for being late.)

Noor: لا بسيطة بس لازم اروح عندي موعد*la basīṭa bas l āzim ʔarawiḥ ʕindi mawʕid*

(**No worries**! But I have to go; I have an appointment.)

Asma thanks Noor for waiting and apologizes for being late. Although Noor was actually upset, as the researcher noticed, for waiting for a long time, she replies by using *basīṭa*, expressing a courteous attitude. The utterance "But I have to go; I have an appointment", which Noor utters along with *basīṭa*, shows that *basīṭa* was used for courteous purposes. Regarding its translation, *basīṭa* was translated in example (5) into (No worries), which expresses friendliness, courtesy, and amiability in English. This function demanded the use of dynamic equivalence rather than the formal one since the literal translation, in this context, would not reflect the correct meaning.

Representing Insufficiency

The DM *basīṭa* is also used to denote insufficiency or small quantity or amount. It serves a representative function.

Example (6)

Mother: ضل أشياء كتير هناك ؟*ḍal ʔaʃj ā? iktir ihnāk?*

(Are there many things left on the table?)

Daughter: لا بس اشياء بسيطة*la bas ʔaʃjā? basīṭa*

(No, just **few things**.)

The mother asks her daughter if there are still any eating utensils on the dining table to bring. The daughter responds with "No, just few things", indicating a very small quantity. The DM *basīṭa* is used in this context to denote a small quantity of items. Hence, based on the context, *basīṭa* here carries the meaning of (few), and therefore it was translated into (few), using formal equivalence.

Expressing Mitigation

There are many linguistic expressions that can be used to streamline works, simplify situations, and so on. The findings of this study show that *basīṭa* can function as a mitigation marker, i.e., it can lessen the effect of an illocutionary force. To clarify, *basīṭa* can be used when a speaker wants to tell someone that the matter is trivial and not worth paying attention to.

Example (7)

In the conversation below between two male relatives, Ahmad and Jamal, Ahmad expresses his disappointment with the fact that his phone battery has run out, saying:

Ahmad: ييييييييīīīīīī j ā ?allah! tilif ōni ṭafa يا الله! تلفوني طفى

(Oh, God! I cannot believe it! My phone shut off.)

Jamal: xawafitni fakart ṣ ār ?ifj basīṭa ja zalamih خوفتني فكرت صار اشي بسيطة يا زلمة

(You scared me! I thought that something bad has happened. It is **not a big deal**, man)

Ahmad expresses his great annoyance with his phone, saying: "I cannot believe it! My phone died." Jamal uses the DM *basīṭa* to indicate insignificance, by using *basīṭa* in a tone of voice that indicates triviality. Regarding the translation of *basīṭa* in the above example, it was translated as (It is not a big deal). Dynamic equivalence was used here to convey the right function.

Indicating Simplicity

The conversation below occurred between two friends, Ali and Adham. Adham shows how easy the situation is by using the DM basi:ṭa.

Example (8)

Ali: ki:f ḍami:ruh ṣiḥi كيف ضميره صحي؟

(How did he have a turn of conscience?)

Adham: basīṭa dʒiddan haddatuh w ḥakētluh ?iḥki: il haq بسيطة جدا هددته وحكيتله احكي الحق

(Very **simple**! I threatened him and told him to tell the truth.)

The speaker here uses the DM *basīṭa* to describe how easy it was to force the other participant to tell the truth. Ali asked his friend, Adham, about another young man who is known as a sociopath. Ali was shocked learn that the young man told the truth even though he doesn't have any conscience. The DM basi:ṭa is used in such a context to express easiness and simplicity. In the preceding example, the DM basi:ṭa was translated into (Easy). Formal equivalence was applied in the translation of the DM basi:ṭa since one of the English meanings of basi:ṭa is (easy).

Showing Disappointment

Disappointment is a result of unexpected negative events caused by uncontrollable circumstances, making people feel powerless and inactive (Zeelenberg et al., 2020). It is a negative expressive pragmatic function (Searle, 1976).

Example (9)

In this context, a daughter (Farah) is talking with her mother (Hiba) about her professor, who refuses to register her in his class.

Farah: ildaktōr ikt īr imnj īḥ bas ma bi?dar jiḍ īfni ʕal ʃuʕbah الدكتور كتير منيح بس ما بقدر يضيفني عالشعبة

(The professor is very kind, but he can't add me to his class.)

Hiba: āh bas law bido bi?dar ااه بس لو بده بقدر

(Ok! But if he wanted to add you, he could.)

Farah: basīṭa بسيطة

(Just **forget it**.)

Farah expresses her disappointment by using *basīṭa* in a disappointed tone with a sigh, revealing her negative emotions towards her professor who refuses to add her to the class. Farah's lack of speech and sad tone of voice indicates such disappointment. We translated *basīṭa* into (Just forget it!), using dynamic equivalence to convey the intended meaning.

Offering Assistance

Offering assistance carries out a commissive function. Commissives are statements that bind the speaker to a future action for the advantage of the hearer, e.g., promising, and offering (Searle, 1976).

Example (10)

In this scenario, Maram states that she has been trying for a long time to resolve a mathematical problem but fails. Her friend, Ruaa, promises to help her.

<u>Maram</u>: عم بحاول احل المسألة بس مش عارفة اطلع الناتجʕ*am baḥāwil ʔaḥil il masʔalih bas miʃ ʕarfih aṭaliʕ il nātidʒ*

(I have been trying to solve the mathematical problem, but I cannot come out with the result.)

<u>Ruaa</u>: بسيطة بنعملها انا واياكـ*basīṭa ibnʕmilha ʔana w ijāki*

(**Do not worry!** we'll do it together.)

Maram says that she attempted to solve the mathematical problem but could not, implying that she is looking for assistance. Ruaa, in a friendly tone of voice, uses *basīṭa* to indicate that she would assist her friend to solve the problem. Based on the context, *basīṭa* was best translated into (Do not worry!), using dynamic equivalence.

Serving as a Filler Marker

Fillers are DMs that speakers use when they need to think or pause during their speech. They are also utilized when the speaker is unsure about his/her next utterance or has choices to choose from in his/her utterance (Erten, 2014). Based on the definition of filler markers, there are many DMs that Jordanians used in their daily lives as fillers, such as wallah (I swear to God), okay (Okay), tamam (Ok), aha (Ah), and ṭajib (Okay). It is noticed that *basīṭa* can be also employed by Jordanians as a filler marker.

Example (11)

Example (11) describes a situation in which a person is upset with his friend because he tried to call him on Facebook Messenger but received no response.

Khalid: ترا رنيتلك ليش ما رديت؟*tara ranitlak ljiʃ ma radjit?*

(I called you, you know. Why didn't you pick up the phone?)

Muath: المرة الجاي رن عادي مش ماسنجر*ilmarra ildʒʔjāj rin ʕāʔdj miʃ masindʒar*

(Next time, call me on my phone number, not on Messenger.)

Khalid: بسيطة... برنلك بكرا ان شاء الله*basīṭa barinilak bukra ʔin ʃāʔ allah*

(**Well** !I will call you tomorrow.)

After his friend informed him that his internet was down, Khalid said *basīṭa*, paused for few seconds, and then said I will contact you tomorrow. The DM *basīṭa* here is used as a filler word, perhaps to formulate thoughts or to think about what should be uttered. Using dynamic equivalence, *basīṭa* was translated into (well), which is a filler marker in English (Interjection).

Discussion

Based on the data analysis that relied on Searl's (1969) Speech Act theory and Nida and Taber's (1982) approach as theoretical frameworks, this study has revealed that the DM *basīṭa* is pragmatically multifunctional; it serves a number of pragmatic functions in a variety of contexts. The entire discourse in which *basīṭa* was used was carefully examined in order to accurately determine its pragmatic functions; that is, the researchers focused on the DM depending on the context in which it was used. Therefore, the context is critical in determining the pragmatic functions of the DM *basīṭa*. This is in line with (Lenk, 1998; Fraser, 1999; Schiffrin, 1987) who mention that the context is very significant in identifying the meaning of DMs. The analysis demonstrates that the DM *basīṭa* indicates expressive speech acts, representative speech acts, and commissive speech acts. On the other hand, *basīṭa* was never used as a directive or declarative speech act in the data, possibly due to the environment in which the data was collected. To be more specific, the backgrounds of the participants, as well as the regions from which the data was collected, play an important role in identifying the speech act.

In addition, *basīṭa* tends to express rather positive pragmatic functions such as providing reassurance, introducing consolation, offering assistance, expressing showing courtesy, and mitigation. On the other hand, the negative pragmatic functions of *basīṭa* are limited to making threats, expressing irony, and showing disappointment. Consequently, *basīṭa* has more positive functions in Jordanian society than negative ones. This is a positive quality that adds value to the Jordanian Arabic DM *basīṭa*.

This study also reveals that identifying the pragmatic functions of the DM *basīṭa* is not an easy task. The pragmatic functions of *basīṭa* may overlap and they are sometimes hard to distinguish. The difficulties in identifying the pragmatic

functions of the DM *basīṭa* stems from the fact that DMs are multifunctional. For example, the function of reassurance and the function of simplicity may to a great extent overlap. Because of this overlapping, the process of translating the DM *basīṭa* was also a bit difficult.

Moreover, the distinction between semantics and pragmatics may be useful to explain the translations of the DM *basīṭa*. Semantics is concerned with aspects that do not depend on the context, whereas pragmatics is concerned with situation-dependent aspects of meaning (Allwood, 1981). According to Szabó (2005), semantics deals with what is being said while pragmatics deals with what is implied. The process of translating the DM *basīṭa* highly depends on its pragmatic functions. Because the DM *basīṭa* is a multi-purpose expression used by Jordanians in a variety of contexts, it could not be translated literally.

The link between the receptor and the message should be roughly the same as that which existed between the original receptors and the message, according to dynamic equivalence (Nida, 1969). The DM *basīṭa* was translated in most conversations using dynamic equivalence rather than formal equivalence because this study is concerned with the speaker's intended meaning. The translations of *basīṭa* were intended to be as accurate as possible; therefore, dynamic equivalence was used to accomplish the purpose of this study. Formal equivalence was used in translating the DM *basīṭa* only in two cases; *basīṭa* was translated into (few) when it indicates a small quantity, and into (easy) when it expresses simplicity. Few and easy are two of the English meanings of *basīṭa*.

Conclusion

Even though there have been numerous studies on DMs, none of them have been conducted to investigate the functions and translations of the DM *basīṭa*. It would not be wrong to state that there is a gap in literature regarding the DM *basīṭa*. The present study aimed to use naturally occurring conversations to explore the pragmatic functions of *basīṭa* based on the Speech Act Theory. Also, it aimed at translating the DM *basīṭa* in various contexts to facilitate the translation process since translators may face difficulties when dealing with such a term. The data of the current study was analyzed qualitatively. Observation was used to collect the data of this study. The current study has provided a thorough analysis of the pragmatic functions of the DM *basīṭa*, which are used in JSA. The analysis revealed that the DM *basīṭa* is multi-functional as it performs the following 12 pragmatic functions: making a threat, providing reassurance, expressing irony, providing consolation, showing courtesy, signaling small quantity, expressing mitigation, indicating simplicity, showing disappointment, offering assistance, and serving as a filler marker.

DMs are crucial in speech, and translators must be familiar with their functions in order to translate them correctly. If translators are not aware of the pragmatic functions of DMs, they may omit them without considering their impact on the speech. Translators should research the pragmatic functions of DMs before starting their translation task. This study has shown that the process of translating the DM *basīṭa* is not an easy task because it is a culture-specific term that is heavily dependent on context. *basīṭa*'s various translations are highly dependent on the context. The implied meaning should be identified before translating the DM *basīṭa*. *basīṭa* was translated using dynamic equivalence except when it indicated a small quantity or expresses simplicity; In these two cases it was translated using formal equivalence. Finally, JSA is a very rich linguistic environment for carrying out a variety of studies. Many DMs in JSA, such as wow, Aha, and indari, are awaiting investigation to determine their pragmatic functions and their various translations.

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