The Pragmatic Functions of Arabic Imperative Mood

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ABSTRACT

This study attempts to analyze and investigate Arabic's imperative mood's contextual and many pragmatic functions. Shortly, it deals with two important aspects . Firstly, the relationship between the speaker who has different roles and the listener who listens to the speaker. Secondly, the context in which the imperative mood is used. The researchers have the ability to identify fifteen pragmatic functions of the imperative mood in Arabic. These functions rely on the context which plays an important role in expressing and identifying the pragmatic functions. This study uses imperative structures chiefly to show some pragmatic functions other than commanding , ordering , or requesting. In this study each function is explained and clarified with examples.

KEYWORDS: Pragmatics, Imperative, Speech Acts, Context and Request

INTRODUCTION

Many grammarians like (Al- Akkawi , 1992:219 ; Al-Suyuti , 1993:441-8 ; and Al-Samara'ee , 2003:409) talk about "imperative pragmatic functions of mood" in Arabic. Anyhow, The imperative mood can be defined as a form which evokes someone to do something (Al-Alawi, 1980: 3). They consider the imperative 'commanding' as a speech act in Arabic. It is worth here to mention the factors of situation which play important role such as "who speaks , to whom" …etc. All perform in unit with textual keys to get invisible meaning of an utterance. It should be noted the 3 acts which are mentioned by Austin (1962:94). These three acts are :

1- The locutionary act : The activity of saying something.
2- The illocutionary act : The action carried out verbally such as "making a promise , giving orders , requesting, …etc".
3- The perlocutionary act : The impression is produced by using words like "frightening , persuading" to the listener .

They focus on the textual meanings of the imperative. They describe how these meanings can be achieved pragmatically. A definition of Pragmatics is the study of language use and how linguistic elements and contextual factors work together in the interpretation of an utterance . This study is concerned with the illocutionary acts of an utterance which refer to the intention of the speaker. The grammarians state that the pragmatic meaning of the imperative relies on the text in which it is utilized. They have studied the relationship between the speaker and the listener to form imperative. Al- Dweik (1997:245-50) mentions three positions that the speaker could occupy: To be in rank or position higher than the listener, Lower Position and Equal in ranks. Finally, the model adopted in this study is Al-Samara'ee (2003) .

2- Aims of the Study :

The aims of this study are as follows:

The main aim behind this study is to examine and analyze some of "imperative pragmatic functions of mood".

This study aims at giving the reader the chance to understand the main pragmatic functions of imperative mood in Arabic.

Finally, the previous studies have dealt with the grammatical and rhetorical issues of Arabic imperative, but to the best researcher's knowledge, "imperative pragmatic functions of mood" in Arabic have not as yet been paid their full due share of research. "imperative pragmatic functions of mood" in Arabic need, we

think, further analyzing and investigation, especially from a pragmatic and discourse domains .

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The current study focuses on analyzing and interpreting different pragmatic functions of imperative mood in English. The researchers collect data from different grammar books, documents and they depend on some verses from Holy Quran. The instrument of this research is the researchers, based on the procedure to data collection, researcher familiarizing and organizing and interpreting representing. The researchers try to shed light on pragmatic functions of imperative in Arabic.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

The present study tries to shed light on explaining the pragmatic functions of imperative mood in Arabic. The problem is that there is difficulty in recognizing different functions of imperative mood in Arabic. Most of Arabic learners believe that imperative mood in Arabic has only a function of command. The current study attempts to discuss some of pragmatic functions of imperative mood in Arabic . So , this study tries to fill in this gap.

Research Questions :

What are the different pragmatic functions of imperative mood in Arabic?
How does the context affect in using these pragmatic functions of imperative mood in Arabic ?
How much of the speaker's implied meaning is revealed by the imperative's wording ?

Hypotheses :

This study is carried out with some hypotheses in mind:
The verbs of imperative can be used to introduce other illocutionary actions rather than merely giving commands .
The context and co-text are very important in order to identify "imperative pragmatic functions of mood" .
Imperatives utilized to order or to command but these functions are to guide, to threaten, to seduce, to instruct and to assure a command .

Imperative Pragmatic Functions of Mood in Arabic:

Some Arab grammarians like (Al-Karooni , 1996:76 ; Al- Samara'ee 2003: 409 and Al-Hamdeh , 2013:20) agree that the imperative mood can convey a variety of meanings not only the meaning of obligation. They mention that the imperative in Arabic has two main meanings real and unreal or implied. The real imperative meaning refers to the obligation. Al-Samara'ee (2003:409) mentions some of the unreal or implied meaning of imperative which can be shown in the following points :

7.1 Permission : الاذن / الرخصة

According to Collins co-build English Language Dictionary (1990:1068) Permission means to permit someone to perform something. For Al Hashimi (2004:500) the imperative "al-amr" الامر can be used to give permission and here, the speaker has authority to permit the action to be achieved. So, the imperative "al-amr" الامر can show the meaning of permissibility as the listener 'addressee' who has a space of freedom to perform or not to perform specific action . For example:

1- إشرب !
Drink !
In the previous example, the addresser 'speaker' is a teacher who gives a permission to one of his students who wants to drink water. The addresser tries to use a direct imperative امر مباشر by using the verb 'drink / إشربْ ' in order to convey the meaning of sentence like the following "تستطيع ان تذهب وتشرب الماء" which means ' You can go out to drink some water'. It should be noted that if decontextualized, it might be difficult to consider addresser is granting consent to the addressee 'listener'. On the top of that, the verb 'drink /إشربْ ' in Arabic is a transitive verb فعل متعدي but the addresser 'speaker' tries not to utilize object perhaps to make it a short command that should be done by the 'listener' at once. The second example as in the verse 187 Surah

Al- Baqarah 2:

2- Eat and drink until the white thread of dawn becomes distinct to you from the black thread {of night}.

The main purpose of the order or command is to give a permission to muslims to drink and eat till seeing the light of the day (Al- Samara'ee , 2003:409) .

7.2 Insult : الاهانة

The imperative verbفعل الامر in Arabic can be used in order to express the meaning of '**insult**'. According to the definition of '**insult**' which is existed in Longman Dictionary of English (1993:683), the insult means to be abusive or impolite in action to someone or to be disrespectable with others. Insult as a speech act in Arabic can be represented by using direct imperative form صيغة الامر المباشر . Look at the following example :

3- اخرس .

Shut up !

In above example, the addresser 'speaker' uses imperative "al-amr"الامر to express contempt for the addressee 'listener'. Choosing the form of lexical verb can show the invisible meaning of the addresser 'speaker' like 'listen/ اصغي, be quiet / اهدى' differ from verbs like 'shut up/ اخرس' in the degree of politeness.

7.3 Humiliating : الاذلال

Some grammarians like Al- Samara'ee (2003:409) and Al- Hamdeh (2013:35) defined humiliating as "Making a person who loses their respect for themselves". Humiliating as a speech act in Arabic can be achieved by using direct imperative form صيغة الامر المباشر . For example :

4- نزلْ ايدك تعمل نفسك شاطر

Put your hand down , you just try to be clever!

In the previous example, the addresser 'speaker' is a smart pupil and teacher requested him challenging question. But lazy student wants to reply the question. Here, the addresser 'speaker' finishes his imperative "al-amr" الامر with the verb clause "تعمل نفسك شاطر" such a sentence denotes disrespect the addressee 'listener'. Anyhow, humiliation can be regarded as a threat the listener's negative face .

7.4 Incapacitation : التعجيز

According to Al- Samara'ee (2003:409) the imperative verb فعل الامر can convey the meaning of incapacitation. Especially, when the addresser 'speaker' commands the listener 'addressee' to do specific action that he is possibly or impossibly capable of performing. This means instead of forcing them to do anything, you incapacitate them the wanted activity. Such function of imperative can be seen in Holy Quran in the verse 23 Surah Al- Baqarah 2:

5- Then bring forth a surah like it.

Here, the imperative verb فعل الامر in the verse has lost the obligation meaning to that of incapacitiating the misbelievers and show their disability (Al- Samara'ee, 2003:409) .

7.5 Threating : التهديد

Some grammarians like Wierzbecka (1987:197) and Al- Samara'ee (2003:409) assert that in Arabic "al-amr"الامر the imperative can convey the meaning of threating. They define threating as an action which is utilized when someone furiously threatens another person that bad thing will occur of he / she doesn't perform something. On the other words, the listener 'addressee' has option to select which is a sign of indifference on the part of the speaker which denotes for threatening and warning. They believe that threating is different from getting attention in "its disability to be utilized per-formatively: Someone can say 'I warn you' but not 'I threaten you'". Wierzbecka asserts that numerous threats are followed by an imperative 'Doing that or else'. So, the act of speaking which refers to threating in Arabic is achieved by the use of direct imperative or prohibition. Al- Samara'ee mentions that when you say to your son threaten him as shown in the following example :

6- إلعب ولا تدرسْ .

Play and don't study .
Here, the speaker 'addresser' try to convey his order / commands by using the meaning of prohibition i-e. "don't play". Threating speaker has some degree of power over the 'listener' to perform some certain activity (Al – Samara'ee , 2003:409) .

7.6 Advice and Guidance : التوجيه والارشاد

This is of a very common use of imperative "al-amr" الامر Arab and Western grammarians like Wierzbecka (1987:197) and Al–Samara'ee (2003:409) state that in Arabic "al-amr" الامر the imperative can be used to express the meaning of advice and guidance. They describe advising as a speech act which employs an imperative "al-amr" الامر and they add that it is an opinion that someone offers you about what must do or how you must act in a certain situation. Wierzbecka makes a distinction between advising and suggesting in that "Suggestions can be represented by an interrogative construction like "what about---?", "Why do not you ---?"…etc. Whereas advice commonly does not represent by questioning form for instance "What about going to meet a doctor ?" advised Jack". So, advising as a speech act in Arabic can be expressed by using direct imperative "al-amr" form صيغة الامر المباشر. Advising is used after the following words 'always دائماً, never لا' in Arabic, we use 'Laa, لا'. For example :

7- يا رجل لا تتأخر لمصلحتك
Don't be late for your own good .
Irsheid (2018:574)
In the previous example, the addresser 'speaker' starts his imperative negation with the addressing form يا رجل O, man followed by imperative "al-amr" الامر with the negative particle 'Laa لا' which means 'Do not' with the imperfect / present tense زمن المضارع in the verb تتأخر ' titaxxar / be late'. The addresser 'speaker' finishes his advice by using the words 'limaslahtak / لمصلحتك' which means it is good for you. Using such expressions reflect that the addresser 'speaker' cares for the listener and he advises him to be early next time.

7.7 Request : الطلب / الالتماس

Searle (1969:71) describes demand as "trying to get the addressee to do something". Smith (1970:123) asserts that demand is similar to 'ask' except it is more polite. Whereas Wierzbecka (1987:51) asserts that in making request the addresser 'speaker' wants something but it is impossible to be achieved with no help of the addressee 'listener' and the addresser tries to say what he wants others to perform in a less direct method. For Batahir (2008:68) the imperative for requesting operates between two persons of equal social position. The request as a speech act in Arabic is achieved by using direct imperative .For example :
8- اسكت , بالخاطر الله !
For God's sake , keep silent !

9- ناولني هذا القلم
Hand me this pencil .
In first example, the addresser 'speaker' uses the utterance بالخاطر الله which means for God's sake to less the power of command. While in the second example, using of imperative "al-amr" الامر is that it must be achieved in equal to equal exchange and there is no obligation (Al Quraishy , 2019:13) .

7.8 Honoring : الاكرام

The imperative verb فعل الامر in Arabic can be used in order to show 'Hospitality' or 'Honoring' the 'listener', if the speaker is of higher position or rank than the 'listener'. Al – Samara'ee (2003:409) defines honoring is to welcome the visitors and quests in friendly way or to treat and associated with others kindly. He states that honoring as a speech act in Arabic is achieved by using direct imperative الامر المباشر . Look at the following examples:

10- كُلْ ! البيت بيتك .
Eat ! make yourself at home !

The addresser 'speaker' begins his imperative sentence by using direct imperative verb اكل , فعل امر مباشر 'eat' and he finishes his words with affirmative expression البيت بيتك 'make yourself at home' to express intimacy and solidarity to the visitors. The following example from Holy Quran as in the verse 46 Surah AL- Hijir 15.

11- Enter there 'paradise' in peace and security .
Al- Samara'ee (2003:409)

7.9 Equality : التسوية

The imperative "al-amr" الامر in Arabic can be used to convey the meaning of equality. In stylistic concepts, equality denotes to the issue when two components are administered by law. According to Al –Samara'ee (2003:410) equality means do the action or do not do which means in Arabic "تفعل او لا تفعل" as shown in the verse 53 Surah Al-Taubah 9:

12- Say spend willingly or unwillingly it will not be accepted from you.

This verse denotes to the equality in the eye of God if you spend willingly or unwillingly. He will not agree it (ibid)

7.10 Supplication : الدعاء

According to Al- Samara'ee (2003:409) the imperative "al-amr" الامر has another function which is called supplication or invocation. The imperative in Arabic could be pointed to give the supplication meaning rather than that of obligation. It can be shown if the (listener) has a higher position than the speaker. Supplication is to call upon a higher power of God to sustain , help , inspiration (English Dictionary Online). Such function in Arabic is achieved by using direct imperative الامر المباشر . The following example from the Holy Quran in the verse 5 Surah Maryam 19 :

13- So give me from yourself an heir.

Here, the addresser 'speaker' is the messenger Zakaria who is in a lower rank than the addressee 'listener' . So, showing inequality in ranks, "al-amr" الامر the imperative must not be taken as real with obligative power .

7.11 Education by instruction : التأديب

Batahir (2008:69) states that in Arabic the imperative can be used to show the meaning of refining or educating. The speaker directs the listener to do something with the aim to improve his manners of behavior. Look at the following example:

14- Boy, pronounce the name of God and eat with your right hand.

7.12 Choice : التخيير

In Arabic, the imperative 'al-amr' الامر can be interpreted, depending on the text as giving the listener to choose between two things or more (Matloub and Baseer , 1999:126). In other words, he has freedom. As shown in the following example:

15- تزوج هند او اختها
Marry Hind or her sister .

7.13 Obligation : الالزام

Here, The imperative "al-amr" الامر operates in a text where it expresses an obligation. It is obligatory upon the listener to fulfill the activity (Atiq , 1985: 69). The listener exercises his power to get the listener to do something . As shown in the verse 19 Surah Al- Baqara 2:

16- Keep prayer , pay the welfare tax worship along with those who bow their heads.
 Irving (2003:7)

7.14 Drawing Attention:

According to Cambridge Advanced Learner's Online Dictionary mentions that the concept "Drawing Attention" can be used in order to attract attention or interest. It is an action which communicates a command; it can be considered as a directive like requests and orders. Considering "drawing attention" as a speech act in Arabic denotes communication by the use of direct imperatives , interrogatives , affirmatives and prohibitions . For example :

17.a- . دير بالك عيني , الطريق مسدود
Look ! It is a closed- end .
17.b- عيني الطريق مسدود.
It is a closed-end.

In (17.a) above , the speaker is passer-by who is walking in the street and the driver is about to go to a street with a closed-end . In order to draw the driver's attention who is unaware of the road , the passer-by utilizes the affirmative utterance شكله الطريق مسدود "It seems that it is a dead-end" . In (17.b) above he tries to say something "Never drive in" , thus indirectly expressing the act of speaking to show a command in this specific situation.

Depends on the speech acts theory and since "words are as strong as actions", what the passer-by says can be as effective as what he performs" . In both above examples , the passer-by indeed performs an action of command which means that the speaker wants the driver not to enter that closed-end road (Al-Hamdeh, 2013: 29)

7.15 Discipline :

A person is disciplined when they are taught to act in a controlled manner, sometimes by receiving harsh punishment. Consider the following examples :
18.a – يا ابني يا حبيبي احترم اخاك الكبير.
O, Darling, Respect your elder brother .

18.b – لا تقاطع اخاك الكبير .
The addresser is a father whose little son interrupted his older brother as he is talking during a family gathering . In (18.a) above, the addresser utilizes the direct imperative verb "احترم / show respect to" and the object "اخاك" . In (18.b) above, the addresser conveys his command by using the negative imperative particle Laaلا . However, because the word 'discipline' is thus regarded as one of the most inherently face-threatening acts of speaking since it is one of prohibitive imperative utterances that communicate prohibition and indicate an abrupt or impolite order to cease an action (Al-Hamdeh , 2013: 25).

CONCLUSIONS :

The current study has devoted that in Arabic imperatives communicate different pragmatic functions base on text and the significance of pragmatic meanings in human communication. The invisible sense is displayed only through the context in which the imperative utterance is utilized . Depending on the speech situation, this study has offered fifteen "imperative pragmatic functions of mood" in Arabic namely: Permission , insult , humiliating , incapacitation, threatening, advice and guidance, request, honoring, equality, supplication, education by instruction , choice , obligation , draw attention and discipline . The linguistic selections for instance the ordering of words in the imperative have important role in representing and interpreting the invisible sense of the imperative in Arabic based on two aspects the situation and linguistic context. The selection of the semantic form in communicating imperatives in Arabic is based on the status of the interlocutors. For example, the speakers who communicate their imperatives to persons of higher status refer not to utilize direct imperatives .

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