

The Role of Contextualization in the Interpretation of the Discourse Markers in Iraqi Colloquial Arabic

Lecturer Abed Khalaf Saleh □

**Department of English Language, College of Arts,
Tikrit University, Iraq**

E-Mail: abed_khalaf@tu.edu.iq

Mobile: +9647706633102

قواعد السياق في تفسير محددات الخطاب في العامية العراقية

م. عبد خلف صالح

جامعة تكريت - كلية الآداب - قسم اللغة الانكليزية

Abstract:

This research examines the pragmatic functions of the discourse marker "maykhalif" (It is OK/sorry) in Iraqi Colloquial Arabic. The study collected a corpus of dyadic conversations from natural discussions among native Iraqi Arabic speakers. Within the data many "maykhalif" were located. The findings reveal that the discourse marker "maykhalif" has various functions in terms of pragmatics in Iraqi Colloquial Arabic. The study's results are analyzed using the Theories of Speech Act and Politeness, focusing on the concept of illocutionary force conveyed through utterances in conversations. The findings indicate that "maykhalif" functions as a marker of politeness, indicating and/or softening various performative acts. Furthermore, the findings highlight a noteworthy relationship between the illocutions of "maykhalif" and its collocational patterns. Consequently, this study emphasizes the significant role of discourse markers in daily communication among Iraqi speakers, highlighting the importance of these markers for linguists and urging them not to overlook their significance. **Keywords: discourse markers, Iraqi Colloquial Arabic, "maykhalif", politeness theory, pragmatic function**

المخلص:

تسلط هذه الدراسة الضوء على الوظائف البراغماتية لعلامة الخطاب "ميخالف" الدارجة في اللغة العربية العامية العراقية. وقد جمعت الدراسة مجموعة بيانات من عدة محادثات ثنائية من المناقشات الطبيعية بين الناطقين باللغة العربية من العراقيين الأصليين. لقد تم تحديد عدة حالات من علامة الخطاب "ميخالف" ضمن البيانات، اعتمدتها الدراسة إطاراً لغوياً براغماتياً واعتماداً على أساليب البحث النوعية لمعالجة السؤال البحثي لقد أظهرت النتائج أن علامة الخطاب "ميخالف" تؤدي وظائف براغماتية متنوعة في العربية العامية العراقية. وبما أن الباحث استخدم نظرية اللباقة ونظرية فعل الكلام، مع التركيز على مفهوم القوة التوكيدية المعبر عنها من خلال العبارات في المحادثات فقد أظهرت النتائج إلى أن "ميخالف" تعمل كعلامة لللباقة، بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تسلط النتائج الضوء على العلاقة الملحوظة بين الأعمال الفعلية التي تميزها "ميخالف" وأنماطها الصرفية والتشابكية. وأيضاً لوحظ في هذه الدراسة الدور الهام لعلامات الخطاب في التواصل اليومي بين الناطقين العراقيين، مما يؤكد أهمية هذه العلامات لعلماء اللغة ويحثهم على عدم تجاهل أهميتها.

الكلمات الرئيسية: علامات الخطاب، العربية العامية العراقية، "ميخالف"، نظرية اللباقة، الوظيفة البراغماتية.

1. Introduction

A discourse marker is a lexical element used in written and spoken forms of language to indicate the flow of discourse. Their main purpose is to enhance coherence in conversations and clarify speakers' intentions, thereby aiding participants in managing their interactions. Discourse markers (DMs) primarily appear in conversations, linking various discourse units together (Fraser, 1990; Louwerse and Mitchel, 2003). For example, a research by Louwerse and Mitchell (2003) located a significantly higher occurrence of DMs in spoken versus written discourse, with informal contexts containing twice as many DMs as formal contexts. DMs are notable for their prevalence in spoken language, supported by empirical evidence (Altenberg, 1990). Their high frequency distinguishes DMs from other regular components of language DMs serve as metalinguistic or metadiscursive tools, organizing discourse content on multiple levels (Lenk, 1998a). DMs according to Aijmer (2002) are "optional elements functioning as signposts in communication, aiding the listener's interpretation of the utterance based on contextual clues" (Ibid:2). By referring to DMs as optional, Aijmer does not imply their insignificance; rather, she emphasizes the importance of approaching them from a pragmatic and discourse analysis perspective, rather than a purely semantic viewpoint. Linguists argue that DMs are grammatically optional and semantically empty, yet they possess pragmatic multifunctionality (Brinton, 1996) Discourse Markers significantly contribute to discourse coherence by linking units of discourse. They can establish local connections between immediately adjacent units of speech or global connections, indicating relation between units that are very far in the discourse or which has extralinguistic contexts (Lenk, 1998: 256). Furthermore, these markers aid communication and interpretation. The study of discourse markers has been ongoing since the 1970s. However, further research is still needed, particularly regarding the interpersonal and pragmatic significance of these markers (Qainbo, 2016). Iraqi Colloquial Arabic is abundant in discourse markers, yet they have received limited attention, especially in spoken Arabic. This study aims to explore the pragmatic functions of the discourse marker "maykhalif" (It is OK/sorry) in Iraqi Colloquial Arabic (IQA) and seeks to address the following question: What pragmatic roles does the discourse marker "maykhalif" serve in IQA?

2. Discourse Markers A discourse marker, as defined by Tannen, Hamilton and Schiffrin (2015), is a linguistic element that serves various functions in conversation, contributing to the coherence of discourse in all the cognitive, expressive, social and textual areas. These domains represent different facets of communicative knowledge or competence that individuals draw upon during interactive communication processes. Textual communicative competence involves producing and organizing linguistic forms to communicate meaning beyond individual sentences. The cognitive domain pertains to the capacity to express ideas and concepts through language. Expressive and social competences are interconnected, encompassing the capacity to communicate attitudes, carry out actions, navigate relationships, and exhibit individual and social identities. Hence, it is evident that discourse markers not only active at the textual level by linking discourse segments but also exert an impact on the affective, cognitive and social aspects of discourse. Pragmatically, a discourse marker, also referred to as a pragmatic marker (Aijmer, 2013; Simon-Vandenberg, 2006; Hansen, 2005), is a lexical expression that serves multiple pragmatic roles, indicating attitudes, intentions, or emotions of the interlocutors (Fraser, 1990; Schourup, 1999). However, a discourse marker is not an integral part of the propositional content of an utterance. In other words, it is a noticeable linguistic item that has minimal or no impact on the syntactic aspects of the proposition, but it does influence the pragmatic features of discourse.

3. Characteristics of Discourse Markers Linguists generally agree on the characteristics of DMs, and several key features have been identified. Firstly, one defining feature is that DMs often appear at the beginning of utterances as they frequently introduce upcoming discourse (Aijmer, 2002; Redeker, 1991). However, it should be noted that DMs can also occur medially or at the end of discourse (Fraser, 1993; Lenk, 1998; Müller, 2005). Secondly, DMs are more prevalent in conversations compared to written discourse (Brinton, 1996; Schiffrin, 1987). Thirdly, the use of Discourse Markers is optional (Brinton, 1996; Müller, 2005), as an utterance remains grammatically and semantically correct even without their occurrence. Schiffrin (1987: 31) states that "although markers often precede sentences, [...] they are independent of sentential structure. Removal of a marker from its sentence initial position, in other words, leaves the sentence structure intact". Discourse markers exhibit various characteristics across different linguistic levels. According to Brinton (1996), Discourse Markers, are short phonologically, and phonetically they are reduced forms of lexical items, forming a distinct tone unit. However, lexically, they derive from adverbs, adjectives, modal words, prepositions and verbs (Schourup, 1999). At the syntactic level, Discourse Markers are not obligatory and are often attached, separated loosely to the utterance. Thus they are not part of the sentence's syntactic structure (Schourup, 1999). Semantically, Discourse Markers are produced from lexical expressions and their propositional meanings are attached to them, which makes them become vague when used as Discourse Markers (Lenk, 1998). They do not contribute to the truth value of the propositional content in which they are employed. Sociolinguistically, Discourse Markers are associated with informality and are more commonly used in speech of women (Brinton, 1996). Lastly, DMs exhibit pragmatic multifunctionality, operating locally and globally in the discourse (Lenk, 1998; 1987; Schourup, 1999).

4. Different Methodologies for Studying Discourse Markers Various approaches employed to study the functions and uses of DMs. One approach is the integrative theories, which examine the behaviour of discourse markers and their impact on the discourse (Aijmer, 2013). This approach originated with Schiffrin's pioneering study on DMs (1988) and analyzes Discourse Markers within multiple interconnected contextual dimensions, including structure, semantics, pragmatics, and social aspects, to reveal their role in establishing and maintaining discourse coherence. Within this framework, Discourse Markers are considered lexical items with multifunctionality that play a crucial function in structuring and organizing discourse, and they possess indexical functions, indexing the speaker, the receiver, and the previous or next text unit. Another model for studying Discourse Markers is relevance theory, which was initially founded by Sperber and Wilson (1995) and applied to Discourse Markers by Blakemore (2002). The purpose or function of a Discourse Marker varies based on the principle of relevance, which guides the addressee in inferring the intended interpretation. Unlike the integrative model, relevance theory focuses on the hearer's perspective, viewing Discourse Markers as hints from the speaker to the receiver, allowing the receiver to choose an inferential way for interpreting the Discourse Marker according to the relevance of assumptions of the contextual situation. Another paradigm is proposed by Fraser (1996) which addresses the functions of DMs, distinguishing between propositional and non-propositional functions. Propositional functions is related to the truth-conditional content of the spoken unit and demonstrate the structural

linkage between the spoken units or discourse segments, where Discourse Markers may form an essential unit of the propositional meaning. Non-propositional functions, on the other hand, highlight the attitudes, emotions, intentions and feelings of the conversation's participants. In this case, discourse markers are not part of the main message, but they are used to indicate how the message is structured or how it should be interpreted. Fraser (Ibid) further categorizes DMs into four types based on the types of the messages they occur in: basic markers, commentary markers, parallel markers, and discourse markers, each serving different functions in relation to the basic message and preceding discourse. Another way to study discourse markers is to consider their meaning potentials, which are the range of possible meanings that a discourse marker can have in different contexts. This theory emphasizes the dynamic interaction between the Discourse Markers roles and the contextual features, asserting that Discourse Markers depend on the context. Unlike lexical items with stable meanings, Discourse Markers do not possess unchanged meanings but rather possess meaning potentials that are developed in specific usage situations. The theory of meaning potentials is a linguistic theory that explores the relationship between the meaning potential of a discourse marker and the context in which it is used. The meaning potential of a discourse marker is the range of possible meanings that the DM can have in different contexts. The context, on the other hand, refers to the situation in which the discourse marker is used, including the participants in the conversation, the topic of conversation, and the setting. The theory of meaning potentials argues that the specific meaning of a discourse marker in a communicative situation is determined by the context. This means that the meaning of a discourse marker is not fixed, but rather that it is negotiated by the participants in the conversation. For example, the discourse marker "well" can have a variety of different meanings, depending on the context in which it is used. In some contexts, "well" can be used to introduce a new topic, to express uncertainty, or to signal a change in the speaker's tone of voice. In other contexts, "well" can be used to apologize, to offer an explanation, or to soften a request Norén and Linell (2007).

5. Pragmatic Functions of Discourse Markers

Previous researches have extensively explored the pragmatic functions of DMs in conversations, which are context-dependent (Fraser, 1999; and Schiffrin, 1987). According to Brinton (1996), Discourse Markers, at the pragmatic level, have a variety of functions and are not merely optional or superfluous. Firstly, Discourse Markers play a crucial role in maintaining coherence in spoken discourse by connecting the current turn with previously mentioned ones (Lenk, 1998; Schiffrin, 1987). Fraser (1999) notes that DMs signal the relationship between the introduced segment (S2) and the preceding segment (S1). Secondly, DMs establish connections between neighbouring and non-neighbouring words, indicating linkage between discourse turns (Schiffrin, 1987). They assist the receiver in understanding what is intended by the speaker. Additionally, Discourse Markers can show the limitations of discourse, marking where a conversation would start and finish (Schiffrin, 1987). Discourse markers can be divided into two categories: local and global. Local DMs primarily show intersentential relationships, highlighting the propositional meaning of sentences and marking transitions between sentences. For example, the discourse marker "however" can be used to introduce a contrast, or the discourse marker "in addition" can be used to add a new piece of information. Global DMs signal relationships between larger discourse units, such as introducing new topics, facilitating turn-taking, and marking the opening or closing of a conversation. For example, the discourse marker "well" can be used to introduce a new topic, or the discourse marker "okay" can be used to signal that the speaker has finished talking. The functions of DMs can also be categorized as either textual or interpersonal. Textual functions of DMs include initiating and closing discourse, capturing the hearer's attention, serving as fillers or turn holders, indicating topic shifts, signalling information status (old or new), repairing discourse, and marking sequential dependence. Interpersonal functions of DMs encompass expressing attitudes, confirming shared assumptions, demonstrating understanding, requesting confirmation, expressing politeness, and responding to preceding discourse. The use of DMs is a complex and nuanced topic, and there is still much that we do not know about how they work. However, the research that has been done so far suggests that DMs play an important role in the way that we communicate. They help us to structure our thoughts and ideas, to manage turn-taking, and to express our intentions in a clear and concise way (Aijmer, 2002; Schiffrin, 1987; Brinton, 1996).

6. Methodology

6.1 Design

The present study's data analysis is based on the theoretical framework of Austin's Speech Act Theory and further elaborated by Searle (1969). The functions of the discourse marker under investigation are

classified according to Searle's categorization of illocutionary forces, which refers to the different potential speech acts performed by the speaker through utterances. The objective is to analyze the roles of "maykhalif" and its patterns of occurrence, as well as investigate any possible relationship between its functions and its collocational characteristics. To achieve this goal, the current paper adopts an approach of qualitative linguistic analysis that focuses on describing and exploring the phenomenon in real situations and contexts, in lieu of solely relying on analyses based on frequency (Perry, 2005). Qualitative research can also expand the range of interpretations of the marker under investigated, thereby enhancing the depth of its analysis within the theoretical framework guiding the study (Duff, 2008). Additionally, the descriptive and exploratory design enables us analysing of how a certain lexical item is employed in a real situation by investigating instances in their contextualized use.

6.2 Data Collection

This research involves a corpus of many dyadic conversations in Iraqi Colloquial Arabic. These conversations were collected by the researcher. The participants were all Iraqi university students. Perry (2011) argues that studies with purposeful, convenience sampling are not of little value. In fact, he suggests that these studies can be easily replicated with other samples, which can help to determine whether the findings are repeatable. This is important because it allows researchers to have more confidence in the results of their studies. O'Keeffe, Clancy, and Adolphs (2011) add that in research of pragmatic nature, there is no need for a large corpus. A small corpus can be just as valuable, as long as it is representative of the target population. This is because the researcher can easily have access to the entire contextual details of the corpus, which can be used for both qualitative and quantitative purposes. A small corpus can be more manageable and easier to analyze than a large corpus. It can also be more representative of the target population, as it is less likely to be biased by factors such as age, gender, or socioeconomic status. In conclusion, Perry (2011) and O'Keeffe, Clancy, and Adolphs (2011) argue that studies with purposeful, convenience sampling and small corpora can be valuable in research of pragmatic nature. These studies can be easily replicated and analyzed, and they can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the data.

6.2 Data Analysis The data analysis process involved recording and transcribing the entire conversations in which the discourse marker under investigation, "maykhalif," was found. To address the research questions, Concord, a program within WordSmith Tools, was employed to generate concordance lines for each occurrence of "maykhalif." Concordance lines present "maykhalif" surrounded by textual contexts, allowing for the identification and the interpretation of its functions. The pragmatic function of a word or phrase can be influenced by the situational context in which it is used. This is especially true for words or phrases that have multiple pragmatic functions, such as the word "maykhalif." For example, the word "maykhalif" can be used to express a variety of pragmatic meanings, such as permission, request, or suggestion. However, the specific pragmatic meaning of "maykhalif" will depend on the situational context in which it is used. If paralanguage and body language played a role in assigning a specific pragmatic meaning to "maykhalif," it is important to consider these factors when analyzing the word's pragmatic function. For example, if the speaker said "maykhalif" with a smile on his face, this would suggest he was making a request rather than giving a command. After classifying the different pragmatic functions of "maykhalif," it is necessary to conduct a detailed analysis of the concordance lines for each function. This will help to identify the collocational behavior within each function, if any.

6.2.1 Apologizing and Sympathizing The Discourse Marker "maykhalif" can be used to mark apologizing and sympathizing. It can be used to express regret or sorrow for something that has happened, or to offer comfort or support to someone who is experiencing difficulty. For example, if someone accidentally bumps into you and says "maykhalif," they are apologizing for their mistake. Or, if someone is feeling sad and you say "maykhalif," you are offering them your sympathy. The word "maykhalif" can also be used in a more general sense to express understanding or compassion. For example, if you are listening to someone's story and you say "maykhalif," you are letting them know that you understand what they are going through. The word "maykhalif" is a versatile word that can be used in a variety of ways to express apologizing, sympathizing, understanding, and compassion. It is a valuable word to know if you are learning Arabic, as it can help you to communicate more effectively with native speakers. Apologizing and sympathizing are both speech acts that are used to express regret or sorrow for something that has happened. However, they have different pragmatic functions. Apologizing is a negative-politeness device. This means that it is used to address the face needs of the hearer, who may feel offended or embarrassed by the speaker's actions. When apologizing, the speaker is essentially saying, "I am sorry for what I did. I did not mean to offend

you." Sympathizing, on the other hand, is a positive-politeness device. This means that it is used to achieve solidarity with the hearer. When sympathizing, the speaker is essentially saying, "I understand how you feel. I am here for you." In Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, negative politeness is used to reduce the threat to the hearer's face, while positive politeness is used to increase the solidarity between the speaker and the hearer. Lakoff (1973) also discusses the difference between apologizing and sympathizing. She argues that apologizing is a face-threatening act, while sympathizing is a face-saving act. This means that apologizing can put the hearer's face at risk, while sympathizing can help to protect the hearer's face.

6.2.1. 1 Apologizing

1. مخالف، ما شفتك لمن دخلت الصف 1

1. Sorry, I didn't see you while I was entering the classroom. In this conversation, a student apologizes to his teacher for screaming while entering the classroom, as he did not know that the teacher is already in the classroom while entering the classroom. The word "maykhalif" can be used to mark the illocutionary act of apologizing. It does this by communicating reluctance to impinge upon the recipient's negative reaction. In other words, the speaker is expressing that he did not mean to offend or upset the hearer. The word "maykhalif" is derived from the Arabic word "maykhalif," which means "to leave." When used in the context of apologizing, it can be translated as "I did not mean to offend you" or "I apologize if I have caused you any offense." In the context of the sentence, the student is using the word "maykhalif" to apologize to their teacher for something he said or did. The student is expressing that he did not mean to show disrespect to his teacher, and that he is sorry if his words or actions caused any offense. The use of the word "maykhalif" in this context is an example of negative politeness. Negative politeness is a strategy that is used to reduce the threat to the hearer's face. In this case, the speaker is using the word "maykhalif" to express their regret for any offense that he may have caused, and to minimize the impact of his apology on the hearer's face. The student's use of the word "maykhalif" is also an example of how language can be used to express cultural values. In Arab culture, it is important to show respect for one's elders and teachers. The use of the word "maykhalif" in this context is a way for the student to express their respect for their teacher, and to apologize for any offense that they may have caused. When "maykhalif" expresses an apology, it demonstrates its tendency to serve as a marker at the beginning of a clause, allowing the speaker to provide a justification for their actions or the events that have transpired. However, it has also been used at the end and in the middle of a clause.

2. مخالف، أستاذ والله راحت عليه نومة

2. I overslept; I swear by Allah. Sorry teacher!

"maykhalif" may emerge as a standalone marker:

3. الطالب: أستاذ، انت تجي متأخر للدرس
الأستاذ: مخالف

3. Student: Teacher, you always come late to the class

Teacher: sorry Moreover, when expressing apologies, "maykhalif" tends to be paired with the phrase أنا أسف/أنا آسف (I am sorry), indicating a clear intention to apologize. This particular combination appears in 21 instances of "maykhalif" within this specific category. It is worth noting that this collocation can occur both before and after "maykhalif." This pairing of "maykhalif" with أنا أسف/أنا آسف (I am sorry) could be seen as evidence of the speakers acknowledging their negative impact on the listener and seeking forgiveness in order to alleviate the negative emotions being experienced (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

4. الأستاذ: مخالف عيني، اسفين كعدناك من النوم.

4. Sorry dear for waking you up.

Intriguingly, when indicating an act of apologizing, "maykhalif" appears to frequently collocate with a discourse marker, such as "bas." In these instances, "bas" follows "maykhalif." The Arabic word "maykhalif" can be used to signal politeness on the interpersonal-management level. It does this by expressing the speaker's desire to avoid causing offense or inconvenience to the hearer by softening the impact of the utterance it accompanies, thereby serving as a face-saving, attenuator function. The collocation of these two discourse markers, both indicating politeness, is intriguing because it may arise in situations where there is a significant threat to one's face or self-image, compelling the speaker to emphasize their act of apologizing in order to address an extremely embarrassing or unpleasant situation. However, further investigation is required for this collocation, as it has only appeared in a limited number of examples.

5. الطالب: مخالف أستاذ، بس والله كعدت متأخر لأن البارحة الليل كله اني اشتغل.

5. Student: Sorry, teacher, but I swear by Allah, I worked the whole last night.

In this sentence, a student is apologizing to his teacher for being very late for the class. It seems that the student was extremely embarrassed to be late.

6.2.1. 1 Sympathizing

6. الطالبة: ميخالف محمد، إن شاء الله تمر هاي الأيام على خير

6. Student: I am sorry for what you are going through, Mohamed. I hope that these days pass peacefully.

In this sentence, a fellow student expresses empathy towards her friend as he has been facing certain difficulties. This sentence is a way of expressing sympathy and support to someone who is going through a difficult time. The word "sorry" expresses the speaker's regret for the other person's situation. The phrase "inshallah" is an Arabic expression that means "Allah's willing." It is used to express hope or a wish. The phrase "may these days pass peacefully" expresses the speaker's hope that the other person's difficult time will end soon. One noteworthy finding regarding the usage of "maykhalif" to convey sympathy is its tendency to be repeated by the speaker. One possible reason for this occurrence is that the speaker intends to show solidarity with the listener in the challenging situation they are facing, with the aim of making them feel better. This aligns with Lakoff's (1973) third politeness rule, which emphasizes the goal of promoting positive emotions. The repetition of "maykhalif" may amplify its positive impact on the listener. In some cases, the speaker repeats the word "maykhalif" three or four times in a single utterance. This repetition can be interpreted in a number of ways. One possibility is that the speaker is simply emphasizing the word, perhaps to express their sincerity or their desire to be polite. Another possibility is that the speaker is using repetition to create a certain rhythm or effect in their speech. It is also possible that the repetition is simply a habit of the speaker's. Without more context, it is difficult to say for sure why the speaker is repeating the word "maykhalif." However, the repetition is likely to have some communicative function, whether it is to emphasize the word, create a certain rhythm, or simply out of habit.

7. الطالب: ميخالف ميخالف أحمد، تهون ان شاء الله.

7. Student: I am sorry Ahmed, everything will be OK. Another notable finding from the data is that the word "maykhalif" tends to collocate with the term of endearment "حبيبي/حبيبتي" (my darling). This means that the two words often appear together in the same utterance. The collocation of "maykhalif" with "حبيبي/حبيبتي" suggests that the two words are semantically related. In other words, they share some meaning in common. One possibility is that the two words are both used to express affection or endearment. For example, someone might say "maykhalif حبيبي" to express their love for their partner. Another possibility is that the two words are used to express politeness or respect. For example, someone might say "maykhalif حبيبتي" to a teacher or elder to express their respect for them. This collocation has occurred in the examples and reinforces the act of sympathizing conveyed by "maykhalif." As an expression of intimacy between the participants, it strengthens the sense of empathy and, consequently, promotes solidarity. Interestingly, in most instances, this collocation appears after "maykhalif," and the repetition of "maykhalif" remains prevalent. In many sentences, "maykhalif" is duplicated after the collocation.

8. طالب: ميخالف حبيبي ميخالف

8. I am sorry for you, my darling, I am sorry. The vocative particle "يا" (pronounced "ya") is a particle that is used to address someone directly. It is often used in conjunction with the name of the person being addressed, or with a term of endearment. In the data, the vocative particle "يا" is often found immediately following the word "maykhalif." This suggests that the two words are often used together to express affection or endearment. For example, someone might say "يا حبيبي, maykhalif" to express their love for their partner. Or, someone might say "يا أستاذ, maykhalif" to express their respect for their teacher. The frequent occurrence of the vocative particle "يا" in conjunction with the word "maykhalif" suggests that the two words are semantically related. In other words, they share some meaning in common. One possibility is that the two words are both used to express affection or endearment. Another possibility is that they are both used to express politeness or respect. The frequent occurrence of the vocative particle "يا" in conjunction with the word "maykhalif" is a valuable finding for researchers who are interested in the pragmatics of Arabic. It suggests that the two words are used in similar contexts and that they share some semantic meaning. This finding can help researchers to better understand the way that Arabic is used to express affection, politeness, and respect.

9. ميخالف يا أحمد، شي صار وخلص.

9. **Do not worry about it, Ahmed, it happened and that is it.** The discourse marker "maykhalif" is a versatile word that can be used in a variety of ways, including expressing sympathy. In the context of sympathizing, the data has shown a tendency for the word to be used as a clause-initial device. This means that it is often placed at the beginning of a clause, as in the examples given. However, there have also been instances where the word has appeared as both a clause-medial and clause-final marker. The speaker's tone of voice when using "maykhalif" to indicate both apologizing and sympathizing consistently exhibits a rising intonation. This means that the speaker's voice goes up in pitch at the end of the word. This rising intonation is thought to be a way of expressing uncertainty or hesitation, which is often associated with apologizing and sympathizing. The rising intonation of "maykhalif" when used to express sympathy can be interpreted in a number of ways. One possibility is that the speaker is simply unsure of how to express his sympathy, and the rising intonation is a way of signalling this uncertainty. Another possibility is that the speaker is trying to be polite and respectful, and the rising intonation is a way of showing this politeness. Whatever the reason, the rising intonation of "maykhalif" when used to express sympathy is a distinctive feature of the word. It is a way of signaling uncertainty, politeness, or hesitation, all of which are important aspects of sympathizing.

6.2.2 Paying Tribute The illocutionary function of paying tribute is relatively uncommon in the dataset. However, when it does occur, it is used as a negative-politeness strategy. This means that the speaker is using the word "maykhalif" to signal their intention not to impose something on the listener. The use of "maykhalif" to convey this act is focused on mitigating the acknowledgment made by the speaker that he has burdened the listener in a particular situation. This is supported by the presence of the verb يُتعب (to tire somebody out or to put a burden on somebody) as a collocate preceding or following "maykhalif". When the situation has concluded, the verb is used in its past form, while in ongoing situations, the imperfect form of the verb is employed. For example, if someone has helped you with a task, you might say "maykhalif, asif ta'abtak" (I hope I didn't tire you out). This would be a way of expressing your gratitude for his help, while also mitigating the acknowledgment that you have burdened him. The use of "maykhalif" as a negative-politeness strategy is interesting because it suggests that the word can be used to express a variety of pragmatic meanings. In this case, it is used to express gratitude and to mitigate the acknowledgment of having burdened the listener. The use of "maykhalif" as a clause-medial and clause-final marker is also interesting. This suggests that the word can be used in a variety of syntactic positions. In some cases, it may be used to introduce a new topic, while in other cases, it may be used to conclude a topic. Overall, the use of "maykhalif" to express the illocutionary function of paying tribute is a complex and interesting phenomenon. It suggests that the word can be used in a variety of ways to express a variety of pragmatic meanings.

10. أحمد ممكن تساعدني اشيل الميز، ميخالف اتعبك وياية.

10. **Ahmed, please. I am sorry for troubling you, could you please help me carrying the table.**

11. ميخالف تعبتك معاية، شكرًا جزيلًا.

11. **I really appreciate your help. I'm sorry to have put you to so much trouble.** The examples provided above demonstrate how the use of "maykhalif" expresses the speaker's respect or admiration for the listener, emphasizing his actions or deeds. Interestingly, it is noteworthy that the term "مشكور/مشكورة" (thank you) has appeared three times in the discourse preceding "maykhalif." As a native speaker of Iraqi Colloquial Arabic, I have an intuitive understanding that this could be a frequent collocation with "maykhalif" when expressing tribute or appreciation. However, it is essential to conduct further research using a larger corpus to validate this observation. By expanding the analysis to a broader range of texts, a more comprehensive understanding of the usage patterns and collocational tendencies of "maykhalif" can be achieved.

6.2.3 Illocutions of Directives Directives are a type of speech act that involves the speaker's attempt to get the listener to do something. Directives can be used to ask, request, demand, or even order someone to do something. The choice of directive will depend on the context in which it is used. For example, if the speaker is talking to a friend, he might use a more informal directive, such as a request or a question. However, if the speaker is talking to a stranger or someone in a position of authority, he might use a more formal directive, such as an imperative or a demand. Directives are an important part of communication, and they can be used to achieve a variety of goals. For example, directives can be used to attract someone's attention, to get someone to do something, or to give someone instructions. Among these illocutionary forces, the use of "maykhalif" ranks second based on the data. Within this category, "maykhalif"

demonstrates variations in its usage across different illocutionary acts, serving as a politeness device to mitigate the various performative aspects of directives. Due to the varying degrees of power associated with performative utterances of directives, they can potentially threaten the face of the listener. Consequently, it becomes necessary to alleviate their impact by employing conventionally polite strategies (Brown & Levinson, 1987). If directives are expressed bluntly, they may hinder effective communication in a conversation. Thus, the recurrent use of "maykhalif" as a mitigation marker in the context of directives is evident based on the data examined in this study. According to Lakoff's (1973) model of politeness suggests that speakers should avoid imposing on the listener and provide them with the opportunity to decline or opt out. This is because politeness is a way of showing respect for the other person and their autonomy. The use of a politeness particle like "maykhalif" to soften the impact of directives is therefore expected from speakers who follow the principles of politeness. Within this category, the analysis reveals that "maykhalif" is associated with the following pragmatic meanings:

- Please or excuse me, serving as a polite request for someone to do something or asking for something.
- Sorry, used as a polite way to ask someone to repeat something that was not heard or understood correctly.
- Forbidden, as a means of forbidding someone from doing something.

The use of "maykhalif" in these contexts is a way of showing respect for the listener and their autonomy. It is a way of saying, "I don't want to impose on you, but I would appreciate it if you would do this for me." Or, "I'm sorry to bother you, but could you please repeat that?" Or, "I'm not sure if this is appropriate, but I would like to ask you to stop doing that." The use of "maykhalif" is a way of being polite and considerate of the other person. It is a way of showing that you value his time and his autonomy.

6.2.3.1 "maykhalif" as Requesting Tool

The utilization of "maykhalif" as an attenuator in the act of making a request may be attributed to the tendency the speakers to instinctively employ softeners at the beginning of their requests, thereby avoiding the potential threat to the listener's negative face through coercion. Through the use of an attenuation device, the speakers intend to reduce any potential burden on the listener and grant them the autonomy to decide whether or not to comply with the request (Brown & Levinson, 1987). This strategy is implemented to demonstrate politeness and respect for the listener's agency in making a choice. The employment of an attenuation device serves as a strategic linguistic tool to mitigate the imposition and maintain a harmonious social interaction. It allows the listener to have a sense of control and autonomy in responding to the request, promoting a cooperative, respectful, and dynamic communication.

ميخالف، تتركني شكك دقيقة بوحدى 12

12. Please, leave me alone for a couple of minutes. In this sentence, a boy is requesting his brother to give him some space for a few minutes as he is upset about a difficult situation he experienced. In this context, "maykhalif" serves as a performative hedge, diminishing the force of the requesting action (Wilamová, 2005). As evident in this concordance extracted from the corpus, the predominant sentence structure in which "maykhalif" appears is the imperative form. This aligns with expectations since the imperative sentence type is commonly used for making requests in language. Interestingly, half of the instances where "maykhalif" is used to attenuate the request are found in the imperative form. However, a closer examination of the concordance lines reveals that both declarative and interrogative sentence types have also been employed to convey the performative nature of requesting with the inclusion of "maykhalif". This observation highlights the versatility and flexibility of using "maykhalif" in different sentence structures to achieve the desired communicative effect. While the imperative form is the most prevalent, the presence of "maykhalif" in declarative and interrogative sentences suggests that speakers can adapt their language to various speech acts and rhetorical strategies when employing this performative hedge. Further analysis of the corpus and exploration of diverse discourse contexts would enhance our understanding of the nuanced usage patterns of "maykhalif" in relation to requesting acts.

6.2.3.2 "maykhalif" as Imploring Tool

The reason for categorizing these acts separately, despite sharing semantic and syntactic characteristics with the type of requesting acts, is that "maykhalif" is accompanied by pitch of the speaker's voice goes down at the end of a sentence, unlike the ascending intonation used in requesting acts. Additionally, the phrase "لخاطري" (for my sake), which emphasizes the imploring nature, is sometimes utilized in conjunction with "maykhalif" in this particular subclass of acts. The speaker introduces the request proposition at the beginning of the utterance, while the linkage between "maykhalif" and "لخاطري" (for my

sake) occurs later in the discourse. This is a result of the recipient displaying unwillingness to comply with the request or explicitly expressing their reluctance.

مخالف، تعال لخاطري 13.

13. Please, come for my sake.

6.2.3.3 "maykhalif" as an Asking Tool

In this type of performatives, the Arabic word "maykhalif" can be used as both a clause-initial and a clause-final politeness marker or performative hedge. This means that it can be used at the beginning or end of a sentence to mitigate the force of a request or to express politeness. The use of "maykhalif" as a clause-initial politeness marker is more common in the corpus. This is likely because it allows the speaker to signal his intention to be polite from the outset. However, the use of "maykhalif" as a clause-final politeness marker is also common, and it can be used to emphasize the speaker's politeness or to soften the force of a request. The use of "maykhalif" as a performative hedge is also interesting because it suggests that speakers are aware of the potential for requests to be perceived as impositions. By using "maykhalif," speakers can mitigate the force of their requests and make them more likely to be accepted. This usage aims to soften the directness of the question, making it more palatable and acceptable to the listener.

مخالف تكولي انت منو لو سمحت؟ 14.

14. Could you please, tell me who you are? In Iraqi Colloquial Arabic, the word "maykhalif" can be used to express a variety of pragmatic meanings, including politeness, respect, and deference. However, in some situations, the use of "maykhalif" can also be used to express anger or discomfort. This is because the word "maykhalif" literally means "I hope I do not offend you." However, in some contexts, this can be interpreted as the speaker being sarcastic or passive-aggressive. For example, if someone says "maykhalif," but their facial expression and tone of voice suggest that they are actually angry, then the listener is likely to interpret the statement as being sarcastic. The use of "maykhalif" to express anger or discomfort is often seen as a way of indirect communication. This means that the speaker is not explicitly stating his anger or discomfort, but he is hinting at it through his use of language. This can be a way of avoiding conflict or of trying to save face. It is important to note that the use of "maykhalif" to express anger or discomfort is not always intentional. Sometimes, the speaker may simply be using the word in its literal sense, without realizing that their facial expression or tone of voice is suggesting otherwise. However, in other cases, the use of "maykhalif" to express anger or discomfort is intentional. This is often seen as a way of being passive-aggressive or of trying to manipulate the listener. Ultimately, the interpretation of the word "maykhalif" will depend on the context in which it is used. However, if the speaker's facial expression and tone of voice are neutral, then the listener is likely to interpret the statement as being polite or respectful.

6.2.3.4 "maykhalif" as a Tool for Advising, Directing, Insisting and Suggesting In these four categories of directive performatives, the syntactic structure of the utterances containing "maykhalif" remains consistent. All sentences take the form of an imperative, where "maykhalif" can appear either at the beginning or at the end of the clause. The categorization of "maykhalif" within these performatives is determined by the specific situation in which it is used. In advising, directing, and suggesting "maykhalif" is uttered with a falling pitch. However, in the act of insisting, it is pronounced with a rising intonation. Although this may seem to contradict the attenuating function of "maykhalif", it is still justifiable. The rising intonation is employed by the speaker to convey his insistence in response to the listener's extreme refusal of request or an offer.

6.2.3.4. 1 "maykhalif" as a Directing Tool

In directing acts, the speaker usually provides instructions to the addressee on how to complete a task or achieve a goal. This can involve giving step-by-step instructions, providing clarification, or offering suggestions. The goal of directing acts is to guide the addressee through a process so that they can complete the task or achieve the goal successfully.

ام فيصل: فيصل، كافي طففي السيارة و تعال صار نص ساعة مشغولة! 15.

أبو فيصل: لا يا بابا لا، مخاليف مخاليف، هو الفيترجي كال لازم ساعة تبقى السيارة مشغولة.

15. Faisal's mother: Faisal, please, turn the engine off and come over here. It has been running for half an hour.

Faisal's father: No, no. Please, please. It should be running for an hour, the mechanic said.

6.2.3.4. 2 "maykhalif" as an Insisting Tool

The use of "maykhalif" in this way can be seen as a way of being polite or respectful. It shows that the speaker is not trying to force the addressee to do something that they do not want to do. However, it can

also be seen as a way of being persistent. If the addressee declines the offer or request, the speaker can use the word "maykhalif" to soften the blow and to try to get the addressee to reconsider. For example, if the addressee says "no, I don't want to go to the movie", the speaker could say "maykhalif, I understand. But if you change your mind, let me know." This shows that the speaker is not taking the addressee's rejection personally, and that they are still open to the possibility of going to the movie with them. The use of "maykhalif" in this way can be an effective way of getting the addressee to reconsider his decision. It shows that the speaker is not trying to force him to do something, but that he is still interested in doing something with him. This can be a way of building rapport and of getting the addressee to feel more comfortable saying yes in the future. However, it is important to use "maykhalif" in the right way. If it is used too often, it can start to seem insincere. It is also important to be aware of the context in which the word is being used. If the addressee is already feeling pressured, using "maykhalif" may not be the best way to get them to reconsider their decision. Ultimately, the use of "maykhalif" is a way of mitigating the gravity of an insistent speech act. It can be used to be polite, respectful, or persistent. However, it is important to use the word in the right way and to be aware of the context in which it is being used.

16. الام: يا ابني الكولا مضرة ببيك ممنوع تشرب بعد.

الابن: ميخالف ميخالف.

16. Mother: No Coca-Cola anymore, it is not good for your health.

Son: Please, please [Coca-Cola]. In the given scenario, a boy expresses his desire for Coca-Cola, emphasizing his fondness for it. However, his mother persists in denying him access to it. In this particular situational context, "maykhalif" is pronounced with a noticeably rising pitch. Repeating "maykhalif" in this context serves to reinforce the notion of insistence.

6.2.3.4. 3 "maykhalif" as a Suggesting Tool

17. الام: ابني هذولة من سوريا، اشلون تريد تأخذ منهم!!

الابن: يمه ميخالف شوفي بالأول البنت و بعدين احكمي

17. Mother: They are from Syria. How can you even think of marrying someone from their family?

Son: Please [wait and] meet the girl first, and then make a judgment. In the given scenario, a woman expresses her disagreement with her son's desire to marry a woman from Syria. However, the son suggests that his mother should reserve judgment until she has met the Syrian woman. In this context, "maykhalif" serves the purpose of suggesting an alternative course of action or viewpoint. "maykhalif" can be translated as "let's see first" or "wait and see." It is used to suggest withholding judgment or making a decision until more information or experience is available. The son is asking his mother to give the Syrian woman a chance by meeting her before forming an opinion.

6.2.3.4. 4 "maykhalif" as an Advising Tool

18. ابوك و غلط عليك، ميخالف كوم بوس راسه واطلب منه يسامحك.

18. Your father has insulted you. However, there is no need to take it personally. He is your father!

Please, go and kiss his head, and ask him for forgiveness. In the given situation, a woman advises her son to approach his father, who had insulted him earlier, and seek forgiveness. She emphasizes that there is no lasting harm caused by the insult and reminds him of their familial bond. The son is encouraged to show respect and humility by kissing his father's head as a gesture of reconciliation. In this specific context, "maykhalif" is pronounced with a noticeably rising pitch. It is used to reinforce the notion of advising and suggesting a specific course of action. "maykhalif" can be translated as "let it go" or "don't take it personally." It is often used to advise someone to overlook or forgive a certain offense or wrongdoing. In this scenario, the mother is urging her son to approach the situation with understanding and seek reconciliation with his father.

6.2.3.4. 4 "maykhalif" as a Forbidding Tool Here is an instance of "maykhalif" marking the forbidding function, which limits our ability to fully understand its behaviour in such a context. However, a few notable findings can still be observed within this subcategory. Firstly, "maykhalif" is consistently pronounced with a distinct lowering pitch. Secondly, it is predominantly employed by a high-ranking figure to prohibit or forbid a low-ranking figure person. This dynamicity between the interlocutors may help explain the rising pitch used with "maykhalif". Although the specific relationship between the speakers is not examined in the present study, it aids in our comprehension of this particular usage of "maykhalif".

19. لا ممنوع تدخن بالباص، هسة نصل ودخن بالمحطة. ميخالف.

19. It is forbidden to smoke in the bus. You cannot smoke until we arrive the station. I'm sorry. Additionally, "maykhalif" has been observed to occur at the end of a negative sentence when

mitigating the act of forbidding. This placement typically happens after a bus driver has provided a clear explanation to the passenger regarding the reason behind not allowing smoking on the bus. "maykhalif" can be translated as "cannot" or "not allowed." In this context, it signifies the prohibition of smoking on the bus. The bus driver is informing the passenger about the rule and apologizing for any inconvenience caused. The usage of "maykhalif" at the end of the sentence adds emphasis to the prohibition and indicates that there are no exceptions or allowances for smoking until the destination is reached.

Conclusion

This study provides an analysis of the pragmatic functions of "maykhalif" as a DM in Iraqi Colloquial Arabic. It investigates the behaviours of "maykhalif" and their relationship to its associated functions. The examples used in the study consists of conversational exchanges that represent various characters from different daily life situations. It has been proved that "maykhalif" serves as a multifunctional hedge, reducing the impact of utterances and showing politeness towards the addressee. It functions as a politeness marker across four types of speech acts. "maykhalif" is used to apologize, sympathize, and pay tribute. In directives, it mitigates various acts such as asking, imploring, requesting, directing, advising, suggesting, insisting, and forbidding. In commissives, "maykhalif" softens acts of refusal, disagreement, declaration of intention, as well as indicating agreement when used in specific phrases. Finally, in assertives, "maykhalif" attenuates acts of asserting and informing. The study also finds a strong linkage between the functions of "maykhalif" and its position, sentence category, and collocational behaviour. These findings suggest that the illocutionary force conveyed or attenuated by "maykhalif" influences its syntactic and collocational features.

References

- Aijmer, K, Foolen, A., & Simon-Vandenbergen, A. (2006). Pragmatic markers in translation: a methodological proposal.
- Aijmer, K. (2002). English Discourse Particles: Evidence from a corpus. Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Aijmer, K. (2013). Understanding Pragmatic Markers: A Variational Pragmatic Approach. Edinburgh University Press.
- Altenberg, B. (1990). Spoken English and the dictionary. In Svartvik 1990, 193–211.
- Austin, J. L. (1962). How to Do Things with Words (Vol. 75). Oxford [England]: Clarendon Press.
- Blakemore, D. (2002). Relevance and linguistic meaning: the semantics and pragmatics of discourse markers (Vol. 99.). Cambridge; New York; Cambridge University Press.
- Brinton, L. J. (1996). Pragmatic Markers in English: Grammaticalization and Discourse Functions (Vol. 19). Germany: De Gruyter Mouton.
- Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1987). Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage. Cambridge University Press.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2007). Research Methods in Applied Linguistics: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methodologies. Oxford; New York, N.Y; Oxford University Press.
- Duff, P. (2008). Case study research in applied linguistics. Boca Raton, FL: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Fraser, B. (1990). An approach to discourse markers. Special Issue: "Selected Papers from The International Pragmatics Conference, Antwerp, 17-22 August 1987," 14(3), 383–398.
- Fraser, B. (1996). Pragmatic markers. Pragmatics. Quarterly Publication of the International Pragmatics Association (IPrA), 6(2), 167–190.
- Fraser, B. (1999). What are discourse markers? Journal of Pragmatics, 31, 931–952.
- Fraser, B. (2006). Towards a theory of discourse markers. Approaches to Discourse Particles, 1, 189–204.
- Hansen, M. B. (2005). A dynamic polysemy approach to the lexical semantics of discourse markers (with an exemplary analysis of French 'toujours').
- James, A. (1983). Compromisers in English: A cross-disciplinary approach to their interpersonal significance. Journal of Pragmatics, 7(2), 191–206.
- Kwong, L. (1989). The Cantonese utterance particle la and the accomplishment of common understandings in conversation. Papers in Pragmatics, 3(1), 39–87.
- Lakoff, G. (1973). Hedges: A Study in Meaning Criteria and the Logic of Fuzzy Concepts. Journal of Philosophical Logic, 2(4), 458–508.
- Lenk, U. (1998a). Discourse markers and global coherence in conversation. Journal of Pragmatics, 30(2), 245–257.

- Lenk, U. (1998b). Marking Discourse Coherence: Functions of Discourse Markers in Spoken English. Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.
- Louwerse, M. & Mitchell, H. (2003). Toward a taxonomy of a set of discourse markers in dialog: A theoretical and computational linguistic account. *Journal of Discourse Processes*, 35 (3), 199-239.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: an expanded sourcebook* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Müller, S. (2005). Discourse markers in native and non-native English discourse (Vol. new ser. v. 138.; new series, 138.;). Amsterdam; Philadelphia; John Benjamins Pub.
- Norén, K., & Linell, P. (2007). Meaning potentials and the interaction between lexis and contexts. *Pragmatics. Quarterly Publication of the International Pragmatics Association (IPrA)*, 17(3), 387–416.
- O’Keeffe, A., Clancy, B., & Adolphs, S. (2011). *Introducing pragmatics in use* (1st ed.). London; New York; Routledge.
- Perry, F. L. (2005). *Research in applied linguistics: becoming a discerning consumer*. Mahwah, N.J: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Perry, F. L., Jr. (2011). *Research in Applied Linguistics: Becoming a Discerning Consumer*, 2nd Edition. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.
- Qianbo, L. (2016). A Case study on the pragmatic use of discourse markers. *Canadian Social Science*, 12 (11), 106-113.
- Redeker, G. (1991). Linguistic markers of discourse structure. *Linguistics*, 29(6), 1139–1172.
- Schiffrin, D. (1987). *Discourse markers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Schiffrin, D. (1988). *Discourse markers* (Vol. 5.). Cambridge; New York; Cambridge University Press.
- Schiffrin, D., Tannen, D., & Hamilton, H. E. (2001). *The Handbook of discourse analysis*. Oxford; Malden, MA; Blackwell Publishers.
- Schourup, L. (1999). Discourse markers. *Lingua*, 107(3), 227–265.
- Searle, J. R. (1969). *Speech acts: an essay in the philosophy of language*. London: Cambridge University Press.
- Sperber, D., & Wilson, D. (1986). *Relevance: communication and cognition*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Tannen, D., Hamilton, H. E., & Schiffrin, D. (2015). *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*. US: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Wilamová, S. (2005). *On Expressing Negative Politeness in English Fictional Discourse*. Ostravská univerzita, Filozofická fakulta.