

Discourse Analysis and Pragmatic Functions of *A'fiah* in Jordanian Spoken Arabic

Oday Mohammad Alshorafat ¹

Lecturer,

University of Jordan, Jordan

Corresponding E-mail: alshorafat123@gmail.com

Mahmoud Ibrahim Nawafleh ²

Lecturer,

Ministry of Education, Jordan

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ABSTRACT

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The current study explores the pragmatic functions of the discourse marker *a'fiah* (عفية) in Jordanian spoken Arabic from a pragma-discourse perspective. This exploration was carried out through collecting data by means of face-to-face interviews with twenty-five Jordanian Arabic native speakers who were asked to employ such a discourse marker within a real-life context. The results of the study reveal that the discourse marker *a'fiah* was used to fulfill eleven pragmatic functions according to the context in which it occurred: to scold, to scorn, to show happiness, to make a threat, to express admiration, anger, blame, approval, disapproval, annoyance and surprise. They also reveal that expressing admiration was the most dominant function performed by *a'fiah* in Jordanian Arabic, while scolding, scorning, making a threat and expressing approval were the least dominant functions. These conclusions are supported by in-depth quantitative and qualitative analyses.

1. Introduction:

Language is an absolute necessity of social life since it is the merely individual's means of expressing their needs and desires. In other words, it is the human vehicle not only for interacting with others and exchanging ideas but also for conveying opinions, feelings and attitudes. Accordingly, it offers a significant number of linguistic devices that attain various functions across contexts in social communication such as criticizing, apologizing, threatening, complaining and many others. This indicates that every social situation has its own unique words, expressions and phrases. However, it should be noted that the same word or expression might be used in different contexts to serve different functions, i.e. to be interpreted differently in each social context. Hence, it can be said that interlocutors make their own language choices according

to the situation in which they are involved in so as to be able to establish social relationships with whom they are addressing.

Discourse analysis and Pragmatics are two interdisciplinary areas of study that pay particular attention to those context-dependent aspects of language. They are primarily concerned with the analysis of language in use, attending to the description of linguistic forms along with their purposes and functions (Brown & Yule, 1983, p. 1). To be more specific, discourse analysis is interested in the knowledge about language beyond the word, clause, phrase and sentence. It not only explores language patterns across texts but also examines the correlation between language and its social and cultural contexts (Paltridge, 2012, p. 2) – i.e. how people use language in real life to construct meanings, present different views and understandings and organize what they wish to say. Similarly, Pragmatics is concerned with the study of intended meaning made by a language user – speaker or writer – in the interactional context. That is to say, it looks beyond what an utterance, a word or a phrase might mean in isolation (literal meaning) and scrutinizes the implied meaning of that utterance, word or phrase and how it is constructed in the given context (Yule, 1996, p. 3).

Discourse markers (hereafter DMs), which are functionally related expressions, are frequently used in languages, and thus they have been the focus of an expanding body of linguistic research. That is, a significant number of studies have been found in the relevant literature which focus on either a whole range of DMs (see, for example, Schourup, 1985; Schiffrin, 1987; Fraser, 1988; Watts, 1989) or individual ones (see, for example, Lakoff 1973; Svartvik, 1980; Owen, 1981; James, 1983) across languages from different methods and perspectives. Nevertheless, in spite of this wide research interest, there is no general consensus reached on the definition of the term “discourse markers” (Jucker and Ziv, 1998, p. 2). Accordingly, a variety of terms have been suggested by scholars to refer to these linguistic units such as discourse markers (Schiffrin, 1987), pragmatic markers (Fraser, 1996; Brinton, 1996), discourse particles (Schourup, 1985; Abraham, 1991), pragmatic particles (Östman, 1981), pragmatic expressions (Erman, 1987) or discourse connectives (Blakemore, 1987).

Schiffrin (1987) notes that “discourse marker” seems to be the most appropriate term since it can be used to refer to a wide range of linguistic items under a single conceptual umbrella, unlike other terms such as “discourse connective” – e.g. *so, therefore* – or “pragmatic expression” – e.g. *you know, you see* – which tend to be restricted in nature because they are used to refer to linking words and elements including more than one word respectively (Jucker and Ziv, 1998, p. 2). Thus, Schiffrin (1987, p. 31) defines DMs as “sequentially dependent elements that bracket units of talk”, pointing out that they can be sentences, propositions, speech acts and tone units which are dependent on the discourse structure in place of the syntactic structure such as clauses and sentences (Schiffrin, 1987, p. 40). Equally, Fraser (1990, p. 387)

states that DMs are linguistic items of various syntactic classes which have procedural meaning interpreted and determined by context, and they are used to indicate the potential communicative intentions of the speaker.

It has been observed in the literature that the study of DMs has received close attention and been the focus of the two interrelated linguistic fields of Discourse analysis and Pragmatics (Moore, 2007, as cited in Al-Khawaldeh, 2018, p. 114). It must be acknowledged that DMs are widely used in daily interactions among Jordanians, and therefore the present study explores the discourse analysis and pragmatic functions of a very common DM in Jordanian spoken discourse: *a'fiah* – whose literal meaning is “good health”. There have been, of course, several studies concerned with the uses of various discourse markers in Jordanian Arabic from a pragma-discourse perspective (see, for example, Al-Khalidy, 2017; Al-Khawaldeh, 2018; Alrousan et al., 2020; Hamdan and Rouza, 2020). However, there have not been, to the best of our knowledge, any studies interested in investigating the pragmatic functions of *a'fiah*. Accordingly, with this aim in view, the current study seeks to address the following questions:

1- What are the pragmatic functions of the discourse marker *a'fiah* in Jordanian spoken Arabic?

2- What are the most and least commonly occurring pragmatic functions of the discourse marker *a'fiah* in Jordanian spoken Arabic?

Wittgenstein (1958, p. 20) states that “the meaning of a word is its use in the language”. This suggests that, as already mentioned, a word may involve different meanings/interpretations based on the contexts in which it is employed. It has been noticed that Jordanians frequently use *a'fiah* in their daily conversations to make an array of meanings serving various illocutionary acts, which will be discussed in detail in Section 4. Hence, the researchers argue that such a discourse marker is multifunctional in Jordanian Arabic.

2. Review of Literature

It does need to be acknowledged that there are several studies conducted to explore the discourse analysis and pragmatic functions of different DMs in different spoken Arabic dialects. To exemplify, Mughazy (2001), Alazzawie (2015), Al-Rousan (2015) and Abdeljawad and Radwan (2016) investigated the pragmatic meanings, functions and uses of the DMs *wallahi* (an oath expression) in Egyptian Arabic, *ʕa:di* (corresponding to “okay”) in Iraqi Arabic, *maʕ nafsak* (literally means “with yourself”) in Saudi Arabic and *inzeen* (similar to “well”) in Arabian Gulf spoken Arabic respectively. However, the review

below only attends to some key studies which were concerned with the illocutions of various DMs in Jordanian Arabic in order to place the current study against this backdrop of relevant previous scholarship within the same spoken discourse.

Kanakri & Al Harahsheh (2013) carried out a study to examine the functions of the DM *ʕa:di* (meaning “normally”, “usually”) in Jordanian Arabic from a pragmatic point of view. They found that this DM is used to serve multiple functions according to the context in which it is employed: “to mitigate the effects of sad news, to ask for a permission to do something, to express the meaning of disapproval or rebuke, to show disappointment regarding a certain action, to express contempt, to express courtesy, to show acceptance, to save one’s face, to show indifference and to express an indirect criticism”.

Al Harahsheh & Kanakri (2013) also conducted a study to determine the pragmatic uses of the Jordanian spoken Arabic DM *tayyib* (which means “Okay” or “fine”). Their study revealed that this DM is deployed in Jordanian spoken discourses to perform several functions: “to mark backchannel with what precedes it, to mean stop or let us understand the matter, to show objection to what has been said, to introduce a new topic, to be used as a mitigating term for the disagreement force, to be used as a marker of challenge or confrontation, to signal the end of discourse, to send a message to the interlocutor to be patient, to give permission and to be used as gap fillers.”

Another study was undertaken by Al-Ghoweri (2016) who explored the contextual meanings and pragmatic functions of the DM *aʕalakom Allah* (which means “may God elevate you”) in Jordanian Arabic. This study found that Arabic Jordanian speakers make use of this DM “when they talk about animals, impure places and reprehensible situations.”

Al-Khalidy (2017) reports on a study whose aim was to investigate the discourse analysis and pragmatic meanings of the DM *ta:lʕ* in Jordanian Arabic as used in TV comedy series. The data analyzed consisted of some YouTube videos ranging from 15 to 45 minutes. The researcher found that *ta:lʕ* is deployed to serve eight different contextual meanings: going, going out, hearable, to appear, to look like, to share, ascending and from now on.

Another study was carried out by Al-Khawaldeh (2018) which was directed at scrutinizing the illocutionary acts of the DM *wallahi* (an oath expression) in Jordanian spoken Arabic. A corpus of eight hours of spoken discourse was gathered, including face-to-face and cell phone conversations. The study found that the DM *wallahi* is multifunctional in the sense that it was deployed to fulfill ten functions: to introduce an acceptance, an apology, a threat, and a compliment, and to serve as a request softener, a marker of elaboration, a continuer, a marker of confirmation, a marker of complying with a request, and a filler marker.

Another study was conducted by Alrousan et al. (2020) to explore the pragmatic functions of the DM *bas* (whose literal meaning is “but”) in Jordanian spoken Arabic. A corpus of 24 dyadic conversations with male and female native speakers of Jordanian Arabic was put together, which involved 93313 words including 113 instances of the DM *bas*. The authors found that the DM *bas* in Jordanian spoken discourse is multifunctional involving multiple pragmatic uses: to initiate a topic, to signal topic change, to close a turn, to end a conversation, to indicate speaker’s hesitancy, to mitigate Face Threatening Acts, to make a correction, to attract hearer’s attention, to express restrictions and conditions, to show disbelief and indicate a question, to provide interpretation, to show contrast, to express regret, to show agreement, to indicate emphasis and to fill in gaps in an interaction.

Hamdan and Rumman (2020) report on a study which looked at the illocutions of the discourse marker *Yahummalali* in Jordanian spoken Arabic. They collected a list of 50 scenarios which featured *Yahummalali* based on their experience and knowledge of this DM and its associated contexts in Jordanian society. Results of the study demonstrated that *Yahummalali* is used to serve 19 pragmatic functions: “viz., expressing dismay and disapproval, fear, condemnation, disappointment, mitigating exaggerated claims, wishing, expressing sadness, regret, dissatisfaction, shock, making threats, ridiculing, expressing anger, jealousy, desperation, surprise, sarcasm, indecisiveness and doubt or uncertainty.”

The studies cited above are of immediate relevance to the present study in terms of exploring the contextual meanings and pragmatic functions of discourse markers within Jordanian spoken Arabic discourse. However, they only reported qualitative findings and did not involve any quantitative findings. Therefore, as far as we are aware, the methodology employed in this study is original in seeking to examine the pragmatic uses of the DM *a’fiah* in Jordanian spoken Arabic through both quantitative measures and qualitative observations.

3. Methodology and Theoretical Framework

The current study drew on the concept of DMs introduced by Fraser (1999, 2006, 2009) who reported that every DM “(1) has a core meaning which can be enriched by the context; and (2) signals the relationship that the speaker intends between the utterance the DM introduces and the foregoing utterance (rather than only illuminating the relationship...)” (Fraser, 1999, p. 936). The researchers, thus, maintain that *a’fiah* features a core meaning – i.e. to wish someone good health. Nevertheless, from a pragmatic perspective, it has a wide range of meanings on the basis of the context in which it is used – this will be demonstrated at an appropriate point below. Accordingly, in order to explore the pragmatic functions and uses of this DM in Jordanian Arabic, a multifaceted approach has been employed in this study, taking into

account discourse analysis, coherence analysis, conversation analysis and Fraser's (1999, 2006) grammatical-pragmatic framework which concentrates on determining DMs and their grammatical status.

3.1 Data Collection

So as to collect the data required for the present study, the researchers interviewed twenty-five Jordanian Arabic native speakers in different public places such as shopping centers, bus stations, parks, cafes and restaurants. They felt that this number of participants ideally suited for the objectives of the study and could provide insightful conclusions. Participants were first advised of the nature of the research study and its main objective, i.e. to explore the pragmatic functions of the DM *a'fiah* in Jordanian spoken Arabic. They were also informed as to confidentiality requirements whereby their identities would remain anonymous. They were then asked to provide a situation in which they use the DM *a'fiah* in their daily conversations or employ it in a real-life context. Once the interviews, which lasted for approximately 5 minutes each, had been completed, the researchers collected 25 situations.

3.2 Participants

The participants in this study were 25 Jordanian Arabic native speakers, ranging in age from 25 to 45. They were male and female Jordanians who were selected randomly from different cities across Jordan. The researchers anticipated that such a sample would be able to produce real-life situations using the DM *a'fiah* since they would be familiar with it.

3.3 Data Analysis

As discussed above, the methodology employed in this study drew on multiple analyses, including discourse analysis, coherence analysis, conversation analysis and pragmatic analysis of the DM *a'fiah* in Jordanian Arabic. It considered insights from both qualitative and quantitative perspectives. More precisely, it carried out a qualitative examination to explore the pragmatic functions of the Jordanian spoken Arabic DM *a'fiah*, supplemented by a quantitative examination to identify the frequencies of these functions. The analysis of the data was conducted as follows. The first step in the analysis process involved quantitative findings as to the frequencies of the pragmatic functions of the Jordanian spoken Arabic DM *a'fiah*, followed by qualitative findings which provided a detailed account and exemplification of each function. The real-life situations collected for this study, which included the DM *a'fiah*, were first introduced in their original language, i.e. Jordanian Arabic. They were also transliterated and then translated into English.

4. Results and Discussion

As previously outlined, the current study is concerned with exploring the pragmatic functions of the DM *a'fiah* in Jordanian Arabic and determining frequencies of each function. Analysis conducted on the data revealed that *a'fiah* was multifunctional deployed to serve eleven pragmatic functions: to scold, to scorn, to show happiness, to make a threat, to express admiration, anger, blame, approval, disapproval, annoyance and surprise. It also revealed that expressing admiration was the most commonly occurring pragmatic function performed by the DM *a'fiah*. This will be discussed at length below.

4.1 Quantitative Findings

Frequencies of each pragmatic function per every five real-life situations	
Expressing admiration	1
Scolding	0.2
Scorning	0.2
Showing happiness	0.6
Making a threat	0.2
Expressing anger	0.6
Expressing approval	0.2
Blaming	0.4
Expressing disapproval	0.8
Expressing annoyance	0.4
Expressing surprise	0.4

Table 1: Frequencies of each pragmatic function served by the DM *a'fiah*

What stands out in Table 1 is that expressing admiration is the most frequent illocutionary act performed by the DM *a'fiah* – one instance per every 5 real-life situations, the second most frequent function being expressing disapproval – 0.8 for every 5 real-life situations. The functions of showing happiness and expressing anger come third with 0.6 instance per every 5 real-life situations, followed by the functions of blaming, expressing annoyance and expressing surprise all with 0.4 instance per every 5 real-life situations, and then the functions of scolding, scorning, making a threat and expressing approval all with 0.2 instance per every 5 real-life situations.

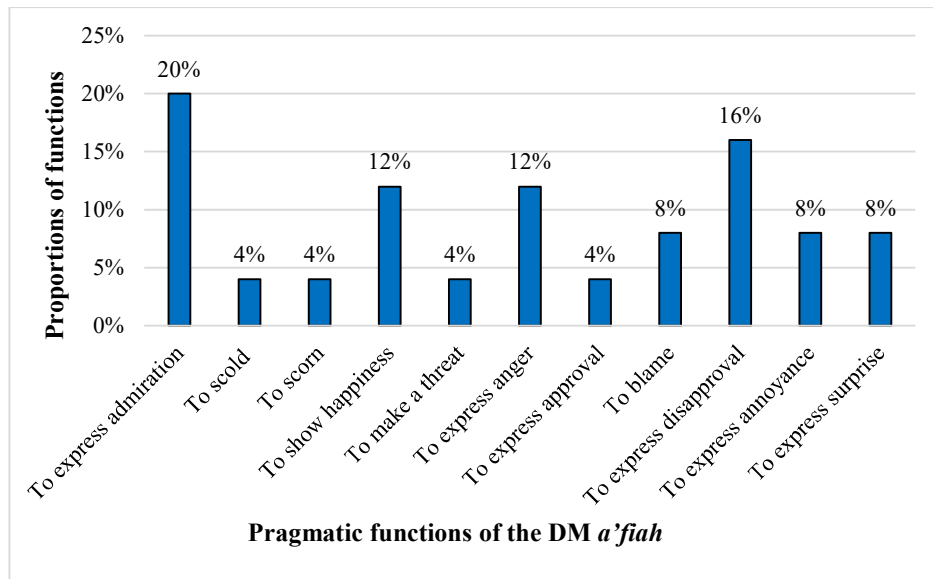


Figure 1: Proportions of each pragmatic function served by the DM *a'fiah*

With respect to proportions, Figure 1 shows that expressing admiration is the most predominant pragmatic function served by the DM *a'fiah*, accounting for 20 percent of the total number of the collected real-life situations. The function with the second-high percentage is expressing disapproval which involved in slightly more than 15 percent. Scolding, scorning, making a threat and expressing approval come last with all just under five percent.

4.2 Qualitative Findings

Turning now from purely quantitative findings to a more qualitative orientation of the specific pragmatic functions fulfilled by the DM *a'fiah* in Jordanian Arabic with a view to examining their communicative implications. Due to space constraints, only one illustrative example of each illocution will be discussed below.

As outlined above, the DM *a'fiah* in Jordanian Arabic is deployed to serve 11 pragmatic functions as follows:

1. Expressing admiration

Arabic text
عليهم. بس سمع محمد إنه قادة الدول العربية وشعوبها هبوا لمساعدة لبنان اللي تعرض لانفجار قوي، قال: عافية
Transliteration
bas samʕ Mohammad innah qa:dit addual alʕarabia waʃʕubiha hau limusaʕdit lebnan alli tʕaradʕ linfizar qawi qa:l ʕfiah ʕalahum.

Translation

When Mohammad heard that the leaders of the Arab countries and their people rushed to help Lebanon that had a strong explosion, he said: *a'fiah* on them.

The above example illustrates that *a'fiah* is used to express admiration. More specifically, it demonstrates that the speaker admired the leaders of the Arab countries and their people who hurried to provide assistance to Lebanon that had a strong explosion. That is, the action taken by the Arab leaders and their people towards the disastrous blast occurred in Beirut has compelled the speaker's admiration. Accordingly, from the speaker's perspective, Lebanon should have obtained relief from Arab leaders and their people who did not disappoint him, and were as helpful as he expected.

2. Scolding**Arabic text**

أخبر خالد أبيه: أنه جاب بالإمتحان علامة 2 من 10 فقال له أبوه: عفية.

Transliteration

ʔxbar xalid ʔbi:h innu ʒa:b bili:mtihan ʕlama iθnain mi ʕaʃrah fqa:l luh ʔbuh *ʕfiah*.

Translation

Khaled told his father that he got 2 out of 10 in the exam, so his father said to him: *a'fiah*.

We notice here that the pragmatic meaning made by *a'fiah* is to scold somebody for doing something wrong or unacceptable. To wit, in the above situation, the father spoke to his son angrily, disapproving his low grade in the exam by means of *a'fiah*. In other words, the son was berated by his angry father on account of his poor performance in the exam.

3. Scorning**Arabic text**

شاف علي مجموعة من الشباب يفحطوا بسياراتهم فقال لهم: عفية.

Transliteration

ʃa:f ʕali maʒmuʕa mi aʃʃabab jfahtun bisyatatihm fqa:l luhum *ʕfiah*.

Translation

Ali saw a group of youngsters drifting their cars, he then said to them: *a'fiah*.

It is observed in the context under consideration that *a'fiah* is employed to scorn for somebody. To clarify, the speaker (Ali) displayed total contempt for the youth because of their appalling behavior, which is car drifting.

4. Showing happiness

Arabic text
جاء صدام علامة عالية في التوجيهي فقال له أبوه: عفية.
Transliteration
ʒa:b s ^ʕ ddam ʕlama ʕali:h fi ʔttawʒihi fqa:l luh ʔbuh <i>ʕfiah</i> .
Translation
Saddam got a high grade in the Tawjihi exam, and then his father said to him: <i>a'fiah</i> .

We note that the pragmatic function performed by *a'fiah* in this context is to indicate happiness. That is, the speaker (the father) deployed *a'fiah* to express that he is pleased with his son's performance in the exam. In other words, the son has made his father happy by virtue of his high grade.

5. Making a threat

Arabic text
شاف حسن ابنه يدخن فقال له: عفية.
Transliteration
ʃa:f hasan ʔbnah judaxn fqa:l luh <i>ʕfiah</i> .
Translation
Hasan saw his son smoking, then he said to him: <i>a'fiah</i> .

The data under analysis revealed that *a'fiah* can be utilized to make a threat to someone who has done something wrong. As we can see in the above example, Hasan used *a'fiah* to threaten his son who was smoking. This signifies that this behavior is unacceptable by the father, and hence the son will be administered a punishment.

6. Expressing anger

Arabic text
بس عرف خالد إن بعض الدول العربية تقوم بمساعدة إسرائيل اللي تعرضت لحريق كبير قال: عفية.

Transliteration
bas ʕrif xa:lid inna bʕdʕ alʕrabiah taqum bimusaʕdit ʔsrael ali tʕradʕt lihariq kabir qa:l <i>ʕfiah</i> .
Translation
When Khaled knew that some Arab counties are helping Israel to put out a large fire, he said: <i>aʕfiah</i> .

Aʕfiah can also be used to serve the pragmatic function of expressing anger. This occurs when a person sees or hears something unacceptable either socially or religiously. As observed in the context given above, the speaker (Khaled) made use of *aʕfiah* in order to show his anger over some Arab countries' reactions towards the fire that blazed Israel. This suggests that from the speaker's point of view, the Arab countries should not have accommodated Israel with any assistance.

7. Showing approval

Arabic text
بس محمود شاف ابنه يساعد إمراه عجوز في شيل أشيائها قال له: عفية.
Transliteration
bas Mahmoud ʃa:f ʔbnah jusaʕid ʔmra:h ʕʒwz fi ʃal ʔʃiaʔha qa:l luh <i>ʕfiah</i> .
Translation
When Mahmoud saw his son helping an old woman to carry her stuff, he said to him: <i>aʕfiah</i> .

It was also found when analyzing the data assembled for this study that *aʕfiah* can be applied to show approval. This takes place when a person has a positive opinion of someone owing to their moral acts. As evident in the situation at issue, Mahmoud (the father) used *aʕfiah* to thoroughly approve of his son who has noticed an old woman struggling to carry her own belongings, and thus coming to her assistance.

8. Blaming

Arabic text
قالت مريم زوجة محمد لزوجها إنها ضيعت خاتمها قال لها: عفية.
Transliteration
qa:lit Mariam zawʒt Mohammad lizawʒiha annah dʕiʕt zatamah qa:l lha ʕfiah.
Translation
When Mariam, the wife of Mohammad, told her husband that she lost her ring, he said to her: <i>aʕfiah</i> .

The analysis conducted also revealed that *aʕfiah* is used to serve the illocutionary act of blaming. This meaning is made when a person thinks that somebody has performed something wrong or is responsible for something bad occurring. This is illustrated in the above situation where the speaker (the husband) put the blame for the ring loss on his wife via the DM *aʕfiah*.

9. Indicating disapproval

Arabic text
سمع أبو مالك إنه 6 رجال من أبناء قبيلته بدهم يترشحوا للانتخابات النيابية وإنهم مش متفقين على مرشح واحد فقال لهم: عفية.
Transliteration
smiʕ abu ma:lik inna sit riʒal mi ʔbtaʔ qabilatuh bidhum jtraʃʃahu lalinbixabat anniabiah winnahum miʃ mitafqin ʕa muraʃah wahid fqa:l luhum ʕfiah.
Translation
Abu Malik heard that 6 men from his tribe intended to nominate themselves for the parliamentary elections and that they did not agree on a single candidate, so he said to them: <i>aʕfiah</i> .

According to the examination carried out on the data collected, *aʕfiah* is also deployed to indicate disapproval. This is achieved when a person holds a negative view about someone or their actions. As demonstrated in the context in question, the speaker (Abu Malik) used *aʕfiah* to disapprove of the behavior of the six men 6 of his tribe in relation to parliamentary elections since they were in total disagreement over who should be the tribe's candidate to stand in the elections.

10. Signaling annoyance

Arabic text
بس عرف محمد اللي يحضر لامتحاناته النهائية إن أخته وأبنائها الستة، بدهم يجوا يبيتوا عنده ليلة، قال: عفية.
Transliteration
bas ʕrif mohammad alli jhdʕr limtihanatuh annihaʔiah inna ʔxtuh w banatiha assti bidhum jzibu ʕinduh liliah qa:l <i>ʕfiah</i> .
Translation
When Mohammad who was preparing for his final exams had known that his sister and her 6 children wanted to come over and spend one night with him, he said: <i>aʕfiah</i> .

It was also found that *aʕfiah* is employed to make the pragmatic meaning of showing annoyance. This is accomplished when something happening makes somebody feel angry or annoyed. As we can note in the above situation, the speaker (Mohammad) was preparing for his final exams, and thus he did not want anyone to cause him disturbance. However, his sister and her six children decided to pay him a visit which rendered him irritated. Accordingly, he used *aʕfiah* to express that irritation.

11. Expressing surprise

Arabic text
قال محمد لصديقه محمود إنه جارهم خالد باع سيارته وداره واختفى فجأة فقال له محمود: عفية!
Transliteration
qa:l mohammad li sʕadi:quh inna za:rahum xalid baʕ sai:aratih wdarah wxtafa fazah fqa:l luh Mahmoud <i>ʕfiah</i> !
Translation
Mohammad said to his friend Mahmoud that their neighbor Khaled sold his car and house, and suddenly disappeared. Then, Mahmoud said to him: <i>aʕfiah</i> !

Based on the in-depth analysis undertaken, *aʕfiah* can also be deployed to express surprise in which a person sees or hears an unexpected incident. This is exhibited in the context provided above where the speaker (Mahmoud) used *aʕfiah* to indicate that he was astonished by the abrupt disappearance of his friend's neighbor after selling his car and house.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The present study has closely examined the use of *a'fiah* as a DM in Jordanian spoken Arabic, employing a mixed method of both quantitative and qualitative analyses so as to obtain more concrete evidence of the pragmatic functions attained by this DM. This careful examination has demonstrated that *a'fiah* is highly context-dependent and multifunctional, conveying a plethora of pragmatic meanings: expressing admiration, scolding, scorning, showing happiness, making a threat, indicating anger, signaling approval, blaming, expressing disapproval, showing annoyance and indicating surprise. It has also showed that the most commonly occurring pragmatic function served by *a'fiah* in Jordanian Arabic is expressing admiration, whereas the least commonly occurring pragmatic functions are scolding, scorning, making a threat and expressing approval.

The study recommends that further research needs to be conducted on the use of *a'fiah* in Jordanian spoken Arabic in more authentic contexts such as TV series. Since *a'fiah* is not only used in Jordanian spoken Arabic, the study also recommends that future research may investigate the illocutionary meanings made by this DM in other Arabic spoken discourses such as Syrian, Iraqi and Arabian Gulf. These recommendations are made to investigate whether this DM serves similar, different or further pragmatic functions, make findings on its use more reliable and enable stronger claims to generalizability to be made.

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