علامة الخطاب " ول " في اللهجة الاردنية

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تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى اختبار ما إذا كان التعبير "ول "يمكن أن يكون علامة خطاب في اللهجة الأردنية بالإضافة الى محاولة التحقق من الوظائف البراغماتية لهذا التعبير المستخدم على نطاق واسع استنادًا إلى سمات علامات الخطاب الأكثر شيوعًا.

المستخلص

أظهرت الدراسة أن " ول " هو علامة خطاب يمكن استخدامها لربط وحدات الخطاب بشكل جدير بالاهتمام. علاوة على ذلك، لا يوجد لهذا التعبير أي مساهمة دلالية. أيضًا، يظهر "ول "خارج البنية النحوية للجملة. إلا أن هذه الدراسة ترفض الادعاء القائل إنّ علامة الخطاب هي عنصر اختياري، لا سيما في الكلام الشفوي. فعند حذف علامة الخطاب، قد لا يتم نقل الرسالة المقصودة بالكامل. لذلك، ستفقد المحادثة وحدتها وتدفقها ووظيفتها الأساسية. ووجدت الدراسة أيضًا أن للتعبير "ول "استخدامات عدة تسهم بشكل كبير في تماسك الخطاب ونصه، بما في ذلك تلقي المعلومات والتعجب. كما أن التعبير "ول "يمكن أن يوظف للسخرية والتعبير عن الصدمة والتخفيف من الادعاءات المبالغ فيها وإظهار الخلاف مع المتحدث.

الكلمات المفتاحية: روابط الخطاب، اللهجة الأردنية، القواعد النحوية، "ول."

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The Discourse Marker '*wall*' in Jordanian Arabic

This study aims to test if *wall* 'wow' could be a discourse marker in Jordanian Arabic. This is crucial for legitimizing an endeavor to probe into the pragmatic functions of this widely used expression. Based on the most common features attributed to discourse markers in the literature such as connectivity, optionality, non-truth conditionality, weak clause association, and initiality (see Schourup 1999), the study showed that *wall* is a discourse marker. *Wall*, which tends to occur in the initial position of utterances, can be used to inextricably connect units of discourse. Furthermore, this expression does not contribute to the propositional content of the utterances. Therefore, *wall* does not have any semantic contribution. Also, *wall* occurs outside the grammatical structure of the sentence. The current study, however, rejects the claim that a discourse marker is an optional item, notably in oral speech. If a discourse marker is omitted, the message may not be fully conveyed. Therefore, the conversation will emphatically lose its unity, flow, and its core function in oral speech. The study also found that *wall* has several uses that profoundly contribute to discourse coherence and textuality, including information receipt and exclamation. It also encodes ridiculing, expressing shock, mitigating exaggerated claims, and showing disagreement.

Keywords: Discourse markers, Jordanian Arabic, grammaticalization, *wall.*

1. Introduction and Background

According to Brown and Yule (1983), discourse analysis and pragmatics are concerned with the analysis of language in use; both focus on the description of linguistic elements and their purposes and functions in a piece of spoken discourse. Schiffrin et al., (2001: 1) suggest that "discourse" has generally been defined as anything "beyond the sentence." This unequivocally means that discourse analysis is considered as the investigation of what is beyond a certain utterance, considering the correlation between both linguistic and nonlinguistic behaviors (cultural, knowledge, emotions) of context.

Discourse Markers (DMs, henceforth), such as the English *well, and, I mean, now, then, thus, in addition, and, because, but,* and the Arabic*ʔinʃallah* 'Allah's willing'*, ʕadi* 'normal, usual'*; adʒallakomu Allah*'Allah elevate you'; *hassa* 'now'; *tayyib*'okay, fine'; and *bass* 'enough'; are a basic tool at the disposal of speakers by which conversations are organized. Scholars have not agreed on a clear-cut and unified definition of DMs. various definitions have been posited to account for the linguistic properties, functions, and meanings of these items (e.g., Schiffrin 1987, Aijmer 2002). Schiffrin (1987: 31) defines DMs as: "sequentially dependent elements that bracket units of talk". Aijmer (2002: 1) argues that DMs are particles located at different places in the discourse and give important evidence to how discourse is "segmented and processed". It is noteworthy that DMs have been studied under several labels viz., discourse operators, (Redeker,1991) pragmatic markers (Schiffrin,1987, Fraser1999), andsentenceconnectives (HallidayandHasan,1976).

Along with the difficulties of finding an accurate definition of DMs, inexorable conflicts of salient characteristics of DMs have colored the investigation of these expressions. Many scholars have designed different sets of diagnostic characteristics of DMs (e.g., Schiffrin 1987, Blakemore 1988, Brinton 1996, Fraser 1996, Schourup 1999). However, the most common features attributed to DMs that gain significant agreement in the literature include connectivity, optionality, non-truth-conditionality, weak clause association, and initiality (Schourup 1999). These characteristics, at least some of them, are necessary and sufficient set of requirements for classifying an expression as a DM.

Various approaches like Coherence Theory (CT) and Relevance Theory (RT) have been used to analyze the role of DMs in utterance interpretation. For Schiffrin (1987: 37), DMs are considered as "bracket units of talk. Sometimes those units are sentences, but sometimes they are prepositions, speech acts, tone units." To put it the other way around, DMs are linguistic devices used chiefly to produce coherent texts. Hussein (2009) reported that the coherence approach looks at DMs as devices that maintain coherence in the text due to their role in linking its units. Schiffrin (1987) argues that cohesive devices do not innovate meaning; they are used by speakers to guide hearers to find the meanings beyond surface utterances. On the other hand, RT analyses DMs. as tools to maximize relevance in communication. Moreover, Blakemore (2002), adopting RT, argues that the linguistic form of a sentence or an utterance potentially gives a number of possible interpretations. This means that a hearer or a reader should choose the relevant interpretive choice in a given context. Sperber and Wilson (1995) stipulate that in the process of interpreting utterances, the hearer needs to decode the message that has been encoded in the linguistic form and then come up with inferences or hypotheses about the speaker's intention.

DMs, connectives, and particles are considered hot topics in the studies within Arabic varieties. Jordanian Arabic (JA) is one of the least studied dialects pertaining to DMs. Kanakri and Al-Harahsheh (2013)investigated the pragmatic functions and translatability of the DM *Ťayib* and its cognate *Ťabb* (lit. okay, fine, good).The study revealed ten pragmatic functions for this DM: filling in a gap; giving permission; requesting patience; signaling the end of discourse; marking challenge or confrontation; mitigating or softening disagreement; introducing a new topic; showing objection; stopping for evaluation of the situation; and finally indicating acceptance or agreement. Hamdan and Abu Rumman (2020) investigated *yahummalali* as a discourse marker in Jordanian Spoken Arabic. The analysis of the data has uncovered nineteen different pragmatic functions for this DM. The most frequent pragmatic functions of *yahummalali* were disapproval, showing fear, signaling condemnation, and expressing disappointment. Jarrah et al., (2020) probed the discourse use of *ʔiʔa:n* 'now'. They stated that *ʔiʔa:n* does not mean *now.* Rather, it works as a connector of the previous and following subparts of the discourse. According to the corpus of the study, *ʔiʔa:n*

has grammaticalized discourse function that is different from its usual use as a deictic temporal signal. Such function plays a key role in organizing the ongoing discourse and facilitating the speaker-hearer communication. The study has provided evidence that *ʔilʔa:n* may be used as a discourse device to organize discourse subparts in that it connects the previous discourse with the following one, which in turn helps strengthen the coherence of the discourse or textuality. Al-kayed (2021) explored how *hassa* became a DM in JA and how it was grammaticalized. The functions of *hassa* were also investigated. The study discovered that the grammaticalization process created *hassa* 'now' from the phrase *hay ilsa:ʕah* 'this hour.' The study also discovered that the lexical meaning of *hassa* as an adverb meaning "now" evolved into a discourse marker with several functions. The study also revealed that *hassa* restricts the hearer's perception of words, allowing the hearer to achieve the best potential relevance.

Ennasser and Hijazin (2021) explored the pragmatic functions of *bas*. The study revealed that *bas* as a DM can be used to serve twelve functions: denying of expectation; making a repair; indicating insufficiency of information; returning to the main topic; signaling topic shift; showing a threat; mitigating a face-threatening act (FTA); indicating completion of cognitive process; and acting as a filler marker, directive marker, expressive marker, and modifier. Al-Rousan et al (2020) investigated the use of the DM *bas* (*Lit. But*) in JA. The study showed sixteen pragmatic functions of *bas*: initiating a topic, signaling topic change, closing a turn, ending a conversation, indicating speaker's hesitancy, mitigating Face Threatening Acts, making a correction, attracting hearer's attention, expressing restrictions and conditions, showing disbelief and indicating a question, providing interpretation, showing contrast, expressing regret, showing agreement, indicating emphasis, and finally filling in gaps in an interaction. They suggested that DMs play a key role in people's communication, and thus should not be ignored by researchers.

It is worth mentioning that no study explored *wall* as a discourse marker in JA, hence the significance of the current study. More importantly, most of these studies have taken it for granted that expressions under investigation are true DMs without fully investigating their grammaticalization cycle or applying the defining characteristics of DMs on them. The main concern of these studies was, however, discussing the

semantic and pragmatic functions of these expressions. The present study, however, aims to check if *wall* is a DM in JA. This is crucial for legitimizing an endeavor to probe into the pragmatic functions of this connective expression in the dialect.

2. Methodology

The data encompass the spoken mode of communication. The study samples are collected from naturally spoken and spontaneous daily interactions among colleagues and friends (both males and females) at the researchers' workplaces, friends' homes, in addition to voice messages of native speakers of the targeted dialect. One hundred instances of *wall* were the subject of a thorough analysis. The main reason for choosing this sampling technique is that it represents individuals with diverse backgrounds. Conversations were recorded during storytelling events and natural conversations among communicators on different topics in JA. The interlocutors were informed that their conversations were being written and the collected data would be used in a linguistic study. The study observes the privacy and rights of the speakers and respects their choice in refusing the recording process of their speeches. All participants of the current study are native speakers of JA. The study applied the characteristics most commonly attributed to DMs as stated by Schourup (1999) to the potential DM *wall* that appeared in the conversations chosen for the study to prove that it is a DM. The study also incorporates discourse analysis to arrive at a logical analysis for the range of uses of the examined DM in addition to the functions it serves. As such, the next section presents this application in more detail.

3. Results

3.1 Grammaticalization of *wall*

According to Geurts (2000), Grammaticalization refers to a process by which a content word gradually changes to serve a grammatical function to achieve a special effect in a certain context. Hopper and Traugott (2003) also defined grammaticalization as the process of shifting a lexical item into a grammatical marker by one or more of four stages, including semantic bleaching, extension, decategorization, and phonetic reduction. Heine (2003) argues that semantic bleaching can be achieved when the

linguistic item loses its content meaning and starts developing new meaning(s). The process by which a linguistic item is used in new contexts is known as Extension. Decategorization can be defined as the process by which a lexical item loses some of its morphosyntactic features. Phonetic reduction is the loss in the "phonetic substance" of the lexical item (Ibid: 579).

It can be claimed that *wall* is the light shape of *wayl, walwala*, and *yuwalwilu* in Standard Arabic. In *maqayis al-lugha* dictionary (Ibn Faris 1946), the word *wall* consists of al-waw (w) and al-lam (l). It means weeping and relates to the voice of women crying; *al-walwalah* means weeping and the voices of women crying. It can be used in the past tense third person masculine *walwala* to mean *'woe to you',* and in the present tense *yuwalwilu.* Furthermore, it is used in one of the most famous Arabic poems *sawtu safiri al-bulbuli* in the past tense third person feminine singular ending *t*. The poetry reads as follows: *fa walwalat wa walwalat, wali: wali: ya: way Lali:*. Apparently, these uses convey one meaning, *Woe to me, oh woe to me*. In *Miriam Webster's* dictionary, the noun wail, which might have been borrowed from Arabic, means usually prolonged cry or sound expressing grief or pain. In addition, the verb *wailing* means to express sorrow audibly. Further, *woe* is an interjection used to express grief, regret, or distress.

In JA, however, speakers use *wall* to indicate dissatisfaction and mitigate exaggeration and exclamation, i.e., when someone is being surprised by someone or something he/she may use *wall ʕalaek*. '*woe* unto you'.

To extrapolate the meaning of *wayl* in the Holy Qur'an. It is worth mentioning that *wayl* appears many times to indicate a threat or warning imposed by Allah on those who disobey Him or by people among themselves. See some verses where this item has been used:

[ويل للمشركين] "**Woe** to those who associate partner with Allah" (Fusselat. Verse: 6)

[ويل للمطففين]. "**Woe** to those who give less [than due]" (Al-Mutaffifin. Verse: 1)

With the vocative particle ya: and *wayl* with the first-person plural, "ya: waylana:" [يا ويلنا انا كنا طاغين] "**Woe** to us" (Al-Qalam. Verse: 31)

Similarly, in English, the slang term *wow* is an expressive word used in exclamation, i.e., when someone finds a situation to be extremely annoying, surprising, astonishing, exhausting disappointing, or sarcastic (www.urbandictionary.com).

The current study argues that *wall* might have developed from *walwala* by the grammaticalization process. It can be proposed that the lexical item *walwala* has undergone the phonological reduction process, and it developed into *wall*. Furthermore, the lexical item *walwala* has evolved to be a DM serving several pragmatic functions by semantic bleaching and extension processes, (see section 4).

3.2 Diagnostic Characteristics of *wall* as a DM

Some characteristics are used in the literature to check whether an expression is a discourse marker or not. These tests include *Connectivity*, *optionality, non-truth-conditionality, weak-clause association,* and *initiality* (Schourup, 1999). The following subsections tackle each one of these characteristics separately. To enrich the discussion, some illustrative examples from the corpus of the study are provided.

3.2.1. Connectivity

Connectivity is conceived in three different ways: (1) contributing to inter-utterance coherence (Levinson, 1983); (2) marking boundaries between verbal activities; and (3) implying relations between two textual units (Maschler, 1994). According to Fraser (1996), the relationship between units within discourse can be described by DMs. Schifrin (1987) described DMs as cohesive devices because they exhibit unity between utterance units.

According to Schourup (1999), DMs can be used to connect units of discourse or utterances. Several connectors can be employed in the conversation to link its units to enhance the coherence of the conversation. The aforementioned arguments proved that DMs serve as connectors between units of discourse. Jarrah (2013) suggests that DM acts as an inter-connective rendering of the speech in which it appears as one unit. The conversation in (1) below explicates this.

(1)

[Context]: A man inquiring about the price of car parts. The following conversation takes place:

A: *law samaħ−it ha:y ʃu: sʕir−ha:*

if PFVplease2SGMthisF what price−itsF

What is the price of this item, please?

B: *xamsi:n*

Fifty

A: *xamsi:n marrah wahd−ah* **wall** *ʕala ae:ʃ ya radʒul*

Fifty time one−F! **Wow**! For what VOC man?!

Fifty, upfront and no haggle! **Wow**! Why is that man?!

In (1), Speaker A uses *wall* at the beginning of the second utterance to express astonishment and dissatisfaction. According to Schiffrin (1987:31), "The beginning of one unit is the end of another". In this case, *wall* can be considered a DM serving as a pausing point in the conversation to show dissatisfaction about what has been said. This means that *wall* marks the boundaries between the verbal activities in the oral speech. Fraser (1996) claims that DM can indicate the relationship between the main message and the previous discourse. It can be claimed that *wall* connects the textual unit (the unexpectedly high price of this car part) which is the reason for this use, with the second one which is an objection and astonishment. Thus, the DM *wall* serves as an inter−connective that renders the text in which it appears as one unit.

To further elaborate on the above point, it can be claimed that the DM *wall* lacks conceptual content (as such found in words like *a book*, *a car*, etc.) for the simple reason that it is difficult for JA native speakers to give an exact meaning or interpretation of *wall* in isolation; on the other hand, the DM *wall* constraints the interpretation of the discourse in which it occurs depending on its location in the utterance. It can be concluded that *wall* is an expression that can generate different interpretations: dissatisfaction contradiction, and objection. Blakemore (2002) explains that the DMs serve the function of limiting the hearer to a possible interpretation of

utterances. Brinton (1996) suggests that the main function of DMs is to express the relation of an utterance to the prior utterance or the context.

3.2.2 Non-truth Conditionality

Many scholars (e.g., Schourup 1999, Fraser, 1996, Blakemore 1988) suggest that DMs contribute nothing to the truth conditions of the proposition expressed by an utterance, but to mental interpretation. DMs do not show any semantic content which can affect the propositional content of the utterances. Therefore, the deletion/insertion of a DM does not supposedly affect the overall meaning of an utterance. DMs seem to serve several functions in conversation. Jarrah (2013) suggests that non-truth conditionality is an essential component by which it distinguishes DMs from other items.

In (2) below, Speaker B utilizes *wall* to start his conversation as a means to express his exclamation and as a reaction to the prior assumption.

(2)

[Context]: Two friends talking about an award-winning TV show.
A: *ib-tʕraf   innu: dӡa:ʔizit ʔil-hilim   ʔil-marrah hay   maliyoon   du:lar*
Q-$_{IPFV}$know$_{2SG.M}$ that   award the-dream   the-turn   this $_{INDF}$ million   dollar
Did you know that the Dream award this time amounts to one million dollars?
B : ***wall***   *maliyoon   du:lar la: la:*
Wow! $_{INDF}$ million dollar no no
(Oh, wow! One million! No, no way.)

It can be claimed that *wall* does not affect the truth conditions of the utterance in which it is used. Thus, when *wall* is removed as in (2.a), the utterance initiated by *wall* assumes that the speaker indicates surprise and refuses the prior assumption (which is the big amount of the award) is neither changed nor altered by *wall* deletion.

(2.a)

maliyoon   du:lar   la: la:

INDF million dollar no no

One million! No, no way.

3.2.3 Weak-clause Association

Brinton (1996: 34) claims that DMs occur "either outside the syntactic structure or loosely attached to it". In this regard, Al-Kohlani (2010) suggests that this feature concerns the separation of DMs from their host sentence in terms of syntactic structure. According to Jarrah (2013), DMs do not affect the syntactic markers of words in the sentence in which they occur. In other words, DMs are essential elements that serve a key role in the process of utterance production, but the insertion of DMs does not affect the syntactic structure of the utterance. However, DMs tend to occur outside the structure of an utterance. They serve a significant function in oral speeches. Moreover, they facilitate the process of understanding the intended meaning of the utterance by the hearer. The following example illustrates this diagnostic test.:

In (3), *wall* is located outside the structure of the utterance.

(3)

[Context]: At the workplace, an employee talking to his co-worker and asking him for help. Consider the conversation between them:

A: *ya: xu: -y   ya: ħa: mid   bidd-i: aħ ki:*

VOCoh brother-my VOCoh Hamid (proper name) IPFVwant1SGIPFVtalk1SG

maʕ ʔis-safa:rah   ʔil-biritʕa:niyy-ah   ʔaʕtaðir

With   the-embassy   the-British$_{FI PFV}$apologize$_{1SG}$

Hamid, my brother, I need to talk to the British Embassy to apologize)

B: ***wall*   *ya: zalameh kull-hum   kilimt-ain miʃ   ʕa:rif   tħ ki:*

wow! VOCoh man all-(of)-them word$_{DU}$ NEG PTCP knowing   IPFVtalk$_{2SG}$

Wow! Man, they are nothing but a few simple words; don't you know how to say them?

In the example above, *wall* is located outside the structure of the utterance: *ya zalamah kulhum kilimtain. miʃʕa:riftiħki:* which indicates that the insertion of *wall* does not affect the syntactic structure of the utterance. In other words, *wall* does not change the word order of the utterance in which it occurs. It can be readily noticed that the DM *wall* is used by Speaker B to ridicule his colleague's weak personality.

3.2.4 Initiality

According to Schourup (1999), most DMs are possible in the initial position, and many occur in this position and this appearance makes a communicative sense before the interpretation of the utterance. It can be readily noticed that the DM *wall* is located in the initial position of the utterance by Speaker B.

(4)

> [Context]: Two students talking about exam results:
> **A**: *ma: ħada: raħ   yindʒaħ   f–il–ʔimtiħa:n   ɣayr ʔami:ra*
> NEG anybody will $_{PFV}$pass$_{3SGM}$ in–the–exam   except Amira (proper name)
> No one will pass the exam but Amira.
> **B**: **wall**   miʃ   l–aha   ʔid–daradʒah
> **Oh,** NEG   for–this the–extent
> Not to such extent!

Hansen (1997) suggests that DMs introduce the discourse texts they mark. In the example above, Speaker B uses *wall* to mitigate A's exaggerated assumption (no one will pass the exam, but Amira). Such use indicates that the hearer (speaker B) wants to introduce another opinion against the previous claim.

(5)

> [Context]: Two colleagues at their work, the following conversation takes place:
>
> **A**: *xalasˤ   bidd-i: ʔagaddim   ʔistiqa:lt-i:*
>
> *Xalasˤ IPFVwant1SGIPFVsubmit1SG   resignation-me*
>
> That's it; I am going to submit my resignation.
>
> **B**: ***wall***   *layʃ   tˤayyib*
>
> **Oh,** why   one might wonder
>
> Why is that?

In (5) above, *wall* is used by speaker B to start his speech. He uses *wall* to express his surprise at hearing that A is going to submit his resignation. Speaker B uses *wall* in the initial position of the utterance to indicate that he recognized the information of speaker A completely. It is worth noting here that *wall* serves the meaning of the English interjection *oh* in this case. Schifrin (1987: 91) claims that *oh* functions as an information receipt that marks a speaker's receipt of new information.

3.2.5. Optionality

Brinton (1996) argues that DMs are optional rather than obligatory. This idea is based on two assumptions: Firstly, if a DM is omitted, the overall meaning of the speaker's utterance is still available to the hearer (Schourup, 1999). Secondly, the removal of a DM does not alter the grammaticality of the sentence in which it occurs (Fraser, 1988). DMs are essential parts of the meaning discourse (Jarrah, 2013). The present researcher argues that DMs are obligatory elements of oral speech rather than optional. Consider the following conversations:

(6)

> [Context]: Speaker A telling his friend about how bad his day was. The following conversation takes place:
>
> **A**: *ʔil–yo:m   kull–u: nakad   ʔu–masˤa:yib   dʒadd   ʔil–yo:m miʃ yo:m*
>
> The–today   all (of)–it annoyance and–trouble ₚₗ   really   ₐᵣₜ today NEG day
>
> The day today has been full of annoyance and troubles; really it is such a bad day!
>
> **B**: **wall**   layʃ   ʃu: sˤayir   maʕ–ak
>
> **Oh**!   **Oh**!   Why?   What (was) happening with–you?
>
> **Oh**!   **Oh**!   Why is that? What happened to you?

In the example above, there are two potential levels of analysis:

In the first level, speaker B uses *wall* twice in the initial position of the utterance to indicate that he recognized the information of speaker A completely, that such a day is not an ordinary one. That means speaker B agrees with A's assumption. The process of confirming the information is employed to strengthen the assumption. Speaker B's answer has strengthened the existing information and has indicated that he is still paying attention. His reply also signals an encouragement to speaker A to go on. In this regard, the DM *wall* can be considered as a continuer marker.

In the second level, Speaker B introduces a question after *wall* to signal that the old assumption is strange, and he is surprised by hearing this utterance. At the same time, Speaker B opposes A's assumption and urges him to speak about what has exactly happened during that day. Accordingly, Speaker B's utterance could be interpreted as such, "I do not agree with you since today is such a good day". Sperber and Wilson (1995:45) suggest that the cognitive environment of the hearer influences the hearer's environment and helps the hearer determine the sort of cognitive effects to be derived. The cognitive effects could strengthen the existing assumptions or contradict the assumption and that may lead to the elimination of the previous information. Concerning strengthening it can be divided into two kinds: dependent and independent strengthening. In the former, the strength of the conclusion depends on both the added assumption and the current context. In the latter, a conclusion is "independently implied by two different sets of premises" (Sperber & Wilson, 1995: 112). DMs "have a core

meaning, which is procedural, not conceptual, and their more specific interpretation is 'negotiated' by the context, both linguistic and conceptual" (Fraser, 1999: 931). It can be claimed that the strength of certain assumptions in human cognition may be affected by the occurrence of the same information which is built on a distinct set of assumptions. Moreover, the strength of the conclusion is greater than the strength of every set of premises.

The context provided by Speaker B when using *wall* guides the hearer to interpret the speaker's intended meaning which can be claimed that B means it is supposed that the day is good but, according to A, there is something wrong to let A says such words. In the example above if *wall* is omitted, and then B's intended message could not be conveyed completely. Moreover, the DM will lose its core function in oral speech. The analysis of the data showed that the use of DMs in oral speech is important to convey the speaker's intended meaning and to avoid misunderstanding by the hearer.

It can be concluded that the optionality feature cannot be generalized to all DMs in all conversations. DMs do not serve syntactic or semantic functions, but they serve a key role in producing a well-formed utterance that can be understood by the hearer which is a pragmatic function. This means if a DM is omitted, the optimal interpretation will be lost. Therefore, the hearer could not be guided to the optimal interpretation which is the main function of the DMs. As a result, the current study thoroughly rejects the idea that DMs are optional elements, particularly in oral speech.

4. Discoursal Functions of wall as a DM

The data analysis showed that the DM *wall* is an essential tool not only for constructing well-formed discourse but also conveying bidirectional messages in the speaker-hearer communication process. The following section illustrates these functions.

4.1 Information receipt, continuer marker:

To express the realization of prior information, native speakers of JA employed the DM *wall*. Furthermore, as in (7) below, the speaker is encouraged to continue his speech by the employment of *wall*:

(7)

[Context]: A husband conversing with his wife and giving vent to his feelings.

A: *ʃakl-i: bidd-i: ʔabi:ʕ   ʔis-sayya:ra: xalasˤ*

Seems   IPFVwant1SGIPFVsell1SG   the-car   enough

It looks like I am selling the car.

B: **wal!** *layʃ*

Oh!   Why?

Ma: ðˤal   ħulu:l   wa-la: ʔaʃia:ʔ

NEG IPFVremain3SG.Msolution_{PL}   and-NEG   thin g_{PL}

Can't you find other solutions or nothing else?

According to Schifrin (1987) *oh* functions as an information receipt that marks a speaker's receipt of new information. This is true for *wall* '*oh*' in this conversation. Speaker B (the wife) begins her utterance with *wall* to show that she fully understands speaker A's supposition. Then, after a little pause, Speaker B asks, "What is the reason for A's decision?" emphasizing that this is not a usual decision. It can be claimed that B's response is in line with the existing information and thus it indicates that she is still paying attention to the flow of A's speech. This employment of *wall* signals an encouragement to speaker A to go on in his speech. Based on that, it can be claimed that *wall* serves as a continuer in this dialogue. According to Schegloff (1982:85) "continuers" provide a way for another interlocutor to continue speaking and signaling that the speech is in progress yet.

4.2 Expressing shock, disagreement:

As a DM, *wall* appeared in JA speakers' daily speech communication, to express their shock upon hearing unexpected news. They also use *wall* to draw the listener's attention to what they are about to say, as in (8)

(8)

> [Context]: A man inquiring about the price of potatoes.
>
> **A**: *law   samaħ–it   hay   el–batˤaːtˤa   ʃuː   sʕir–haː*
>
> if $_{PFV}$please$_{2SGM}$ this$_F$ the–potato   what   price–its$_F$
>
> What is the price of this   potato, please?
>
> **B**: *xamsah*
>
> Five
>
> **A**: ***wall***   *ʕala ʔaeːʃ   maʕha lahmah*
>
> **Wow**!   for what   with its   meat?
>
> **Wow**! Why is that! Does it come with meat in it?

In the previous example, speaker A uses *wall* to express shock at hearing the unexpectedly high price of this sort of potato. Pragmatic markers may also be a means to achieve "conversational continuity"(Brinton, 1996: 31). It can be noticed that the speaker uses *wall* in the initial position of his utterance to attract the hearer's attention to what is going to be said. Therefore, he sarcastically continues speaking to show disagreement with the previous information which is the reason for this use.

4.3 Exclamation marker, expressing surprise

As in (9) below, the speakers of JA utilize *wall* as an exclamation marker in response to something inadmissible they hear:

(9)

> [Context: A passer–by hearsa street vendor selling vegetables at a time it was snowing.
>
> ***Wall*** *ħadaː   bibiːʕ   xudˤrah   fi–h–al–dʒaw*?!
>
> **Oh, this** $_M$ **(is)** $_{IPFVsell3SGM}$ vegetable $_{PL}$ in–this–the–weather
>
> **OMG**! Look, he is selling vegetables in such terrible weather conditions!

The speaker utilizes *wall* to initiate his speech. This way of talking implies that the speaker is reacting to unfavorable information. Accordingly, *wall* in (9) functions as a

marker of exclamation, astonishment upon hearing someone selling things while it is snowing. The provided utterance by the speaker while using *wall* guides the hearer to interpret the speaker's intended meaning which might be stated to denote that no one should be undertaking such a job on such a snowy day.

4.4 Ridiculing

The analysis of the data showed that speakers used *wall* to ridicule somebody for doing something. The subsequent example illustrates that.

(10)

[Context]: At the workplace, an employee talking to his co-worker and asking him for help. Consider the conversation between them:

A: *ya: xu: –y*   *bidd–i:*   *atardʒim*   *haðo:l*

VOCoh brother–my   IPFV want₁SGIPFV translate ₁SG these

My brother, I need to translate these.

B: ***wall***   *kull–hum*   *kilimt–ain*   *miʃ*   *ʕa:rif*   *tiʕmal–hum*

wow!   All–(of)–them   word DU   NEG PTCP knowing   IPFVdo₂SG

Wow! They are nothing but a few simple words; don't you know how to translate them?

In (10) above, it may be noticed that the DM *wall* is employed by Speaker B to ridicule his colleague for being too weak in translation. Some scholars (e.g., Brinton1996, Blakemore 2002) suggest that the primary function of DMs is to limit the receiver to a possible interpretation of utterances and to facilitate the relation of an utterance to a prior one or a context.

4.5 Mitigating exaggerated claims

Speakers of JA employed *wall* to mitigate exaggerated claims. This employment of *wall* makes it clear that the speaker has a different view against what he hears, and he denies the previous assumption.

(11)

> [Context]: Two students talking about exam results:
>
> **A**: *ma: ħada: raħ   yindʒaħ   f-il-ʔimtiħa:n*
>
> NEG anybody will_PFV pass_3SGM in-the-exam
>
> No one will pass the exam.
>
> **B**: ***wall***   *miʃ*   *l-aha*   *ʔid-daradʒah*
>
> ***Oh,*** NEG   for-this the-extent
>
> Not to such extent!

The employment of *wall* by speaker B in (11) above is to mitigate A's exaggerated assumption (no one will pass the exam). This use indicates that the hearer (speaker B) has another opinion against this claim and thus felt that A has gone quite too far away when he talked about the exam. Therefore, Speaker B uses *wall* not only to mitigate A's exaggerated claim but also to deny the previous information.

4.6 Showing disagreement and cancelation

Native speakers of JA utilize *wall* to indicate disagreement as well as to cancel previous information, as shown in the following example:

(12)

> [Context]: Two co-workers at the workplace talking about the lab test results of their colleague.
>
> **A**: *ʃrifit*   *ʔinnu:*   *natidʒit*   *ħassan*   *i: dʒabiyyeh*
>
> _PFV know_2SG.M   that   result   Hassan   positive?
>
> Have you heard that Hassan's lab result came back positive?
>
> **B**: ***wall***   *bass*   *kayf*   *imdawim*
>
> **wow,** but   how   _PTCP present. st. work?
>
> Wow, but how come he is at work?

In (12) above, Speaker B utilizes *wall* not only as a gap filler but also to gain time and process A's assumption in his mind. This path attracts the hearer's attention to what is

going to be said, and then B's assumption contradicts the previous information creating a contextual effect. This type of contextual effect, according to Sperber and Wilson (1995: 114) is "a contradiction between new and old information". It leads to removing the false information. If any two propositions contradict each other and their strengths can be compared, then human cognition will try to search for the "evidence for or against one of the contradictory assumptions" (Ibid: 115). In this case, a contextual effect is achieved, and the old information (A's assumption) is canceled by B's proposition. Moreover, it can be noticed that the DM *wall* is used as an opening marker to indicate that B disagrees with A's assumption.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study found that the DM *wall* has several uses that profoundly contribute to discourse coherence and textuality, including opening markers, mitigating exaggerated claims, information receipt markers, ridiculing, exclamation markers, expressing shock, and showing disagreement.

Using the common features of DMs, the study proved that *wall* is a DM. The analysis of the data showed that *wall* can be used to inextricably connect units of discourse. Furthermore, *wall* tends to occur in the initial position of utterances. In addition, this DM does not contribute to the propositional content of the utterances. Therefore, *wall* does not have any semantic significance. Additionally, *wall* occurs outside the grammatical structure of the sentence. The current study rejects the idea that DM is an optional element, particularly in oral speech. The researchers argue that DM is an obligatory element of oral speech rather than optional. If the DM is omitted, then the message cannot be conveyed completely. Therefore, the conversation will emphatically lose its unity, flow, and a DM will lose its core function in oral speech. The study revealed that the use of a DM in oral speech is undoubtedly important to convey the speaker's intended meaning, and to avoid misunderstanding by the hearer. Moreover, the results showed that *wall* as a DM serves several other functions which include opening marker and disagreement. They can also serve to strengthen a discourse, to exclaim, to cancel assumptions. In addition, *wall* shows relationships between segments of speeches like enhancing coherence.

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