



# Pragmatic Markers in English and Arabic Religious Speeches: A Contrastive Study

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**ABSTRACT**

This paper attempt to approach PMs from pragma-discoursal view and conducts a contrastive analytical study in selected English and Arabic religious speeches; more specifically selected religious speeches of Imam Ali (PBUH) as representative of Standard Arabic language and Prophet Al-Maseh Ibn Maryam (PBUH) as representative of Standard English language. Supposedly, PMs are considerably adopted in any language according to Fraser (2005) “there is a class of lexical expressions in every language called pragmatic markers” (cited in Fischer, 2006:189). Notably, there is no consensus on the term PMs as linguistic and para-linguistic particles; hence many researchers have labelled those particles as discourse markers, connectives, and pragmatic markers ...etc. Mainly, those linguistic tools signal a relationship of elaboration, contrast, inference or temporality between adjacent messages. Fraser (2005:8) claims that they may appear in five syntactic categories: coordinate conjunction, subordinate conjunction, preposition, prepositional phrase and adverb. This study discusses the quali-quantitative results after examining Fraser (2005) model applicability on the aforementioned selected religious speeches by Imam Ali (PBUH) and Prophet Al-Maseh Ibn Maryam (PBUH).

**Key words:** *Basic Pragmatic Markers, Commentary Markers, Parallel Markers, Discourse Markers*

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## LITERATURE REVIEW

To cover preliminary pragma-discoursal scope, it is imperative to distinguish the relatively grey area of pragmatics as a toolkit of discourse analysis, as Cameron (2001 cited in Paltridge, 2012:38) argues “the relationship between linguistic form and communicative function is of central interest in the area of pragmatics and is highly relevant to the field of discourse analysis”. This approach is suitable to shed light on pragmatic markers because it studies the discourse structure of everyday life. Al-Sulaimaan (2010:11) remarks discourse as “it is a set of successive utterances produced by a speaker in the speech event”, and this discourse structure is modeled by cohesive devices that are widely found in coherent religious speeches. ‘PMs are markers which occur over the length of a bit of discourse, separating one “unit of talk” from a previous one (e.g. well, you know, so to speak, etc.)’.

Concerning medieval English texts, Brinton (1996:6) claims that contemporary PMs closely resemble the forms which are referred PMs at present time:

*‘These are short words or phrases such as u/dl, so, oh, you know, or I mean which are of high frequency in oral discourse. They are traditionally known as “fillers” (but*

*will be termed pragmatic markers in this work.’*

However in Arabic, Al-Batal (1994 cited in Bani Amer, 2014:24) pointed out that “connectives have received little attention by the Arab traditional grammarians since they limited their attention to the sentence boundaries”. This disregard provides the opportunity to Al-Batal to investigate PMs using Halliday and Hasan who regard a text as unified one. Al-Warraki and Hassanein (2002 cited in ibid) define Arabic PMs as ‘*adwatu alrabti*, discourse connectors’ as “a class of words such as articles, phrases or idioms which join words, phrases, clauses or sentences”. These relations can be:

*“Additive joins words or sentences which have functional or semantic relationships of similarity. And also, adversatives which join sentences and have contrastive causatives that introduce a justification or conclusion. Miscellaneous as well, they are members of this category are not listed under any of the above mentioned categories.”(ibid).*

## FEATURES OF ENGLISH PMs

Brinton (1996 cited in Jucker:1998:3) mentions a list of features for these cohesive devices. He provides that they are short and phonologically

reduced and their tone group is separate, also they are marginal forms which are difficult to place within traditional word class. In English language, they are syntactically restricted to sentence initial position; they occur outside the syntactic structure or loosely attached to it and often regarded as optional. Those markers' semantic feature withhold that they have little or no propositional meaning; and beside that they are regarded as multifunctional operating on several linguistic levels, textual and interpersonal levels, simultaneously. Also, they are feature of oral rather than written discourse and associated with informality. Stylistically, they are stigmatized and gender specific (ibid).

### FEATURES OF ARABIC PMs

In Arabic language, Ryding (2005 cited in Al-Khawaldeh Et. al., 2014:203) argues that PMs are “pervasive feature of MSA” and they come from different syntactic forms such as conjunctions, particles, adverbs, and phrases. Also, PMs functions are: contrastive DMs ( e.g. *lakin*, لكن), similarity DMs (e.g. *wa*, و), addition ( e.g. *aydan*, ايضاً), causal (e.g. *besabab*, بسبب), temporal (e.g. *ainnama*, اينما), and topic shift (e.g. *fi heen*, في حين). Al-Kohlani (2010 cited in ibid) study examines the functions of PMs in opinion articles and remarks them as additive, contrastive,

inferential, explanatory and sequential. The study relies on two criteria: initial position occurrences of the host sentence and non-truth conditionality which contribute nothing to the propositional content of the host sentence. Also, Khalifa (2012 cited in ibid) argues that “the absence of DMs makes the process of understanding the text more difficult”, the pioneering researcher examines the coherence relations in Arabic texts in terms of implicit and explicit relations to address the role of signaling explicitly the relations among parts of the discourse.

### FRASER (2005) ADOPTED MODEL

According to Fischer (2006:189), this model classifies PMs into four types not syntactically but in terms of their semantic and pragmatic function. The first type is basic pragmatic marker; it signals the type of message which is illocutionary force of the speaker intends to communicate in the utterance of the segment i.e.:

- *I promise* that we will be on time.
- *Please*, take a seat.
- *My complaint* is that you are always late.

The second type is commentary pragmatic marker which signal a message separate but in the nature of the basic message; and its subtypes are: assessment

marker, manner of speaking marker, evidential marker and hearsay marker i.e.:

- Joe run as fast as he could, but *fortunately*, he arrived too soon.
- *Frankly*, I know what he is talking about.
- *Certainly*, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is the greatest teacher.
- *Reportedly*, the travel agency postponed the tour.

The third type is parallel pragmatic marker and its subtypes: deference marker and conversational management marker i.e.:

- *Miss*, you should listen.
- *Well*, it doesn't really matter anymore.

The fourth type is discourse marker and its subtypes are contrastive DM, elaborative DM, inferential DM and temporal DM i.e.:

- I slept late *but* I woke up early.
- He is smart *so* he passed the exam.
- I ate my food *and* had a cup of tea.
- I was on diet *until* today.

## FEATURES OF RELIGIOUS SPEECHES

McIntire (2009:17) describes religious speeches or oratory as a tradition that depends on the persuasiveness and

speaking ability of their renowned orators. It has rhetorical appeal to Allah and contains many religious idioms. Preachers appeals to the crowd intellect by constructing the logical sermons' argument, others emphasis on the emotional stirs i.e. mentioning Prophet Al-Maseh Ibn Maryam's (PBUH) sufferings. The adopted preaches may contain vivid depictions like heaven and hellfire. The lowering and raise of tone voice have the impact upon the crowd. Last but not least, Preachers demands are surely frightening people to repent or to take the path of righteousness in their life.

Rhetorical skill is intimately associated with leadership and is held for long time and by many religious leaders i.e. Prophet Muhammed (PBUH), Prophet Al-Maseh Ibn Maryam (PBUH), Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib (PBUH) and so many other significant religious preachers. Most speeches were documented by their followers or fellow religious practitioners. In Islam, oratory is a tradition by Imam Masjid and called (Khutba). Usually, it is held on Friday. The purpose of Khutba is narrated for spreading Islam teachings in Masjids as similar to the purpose of Christian's Sunday church speech which contains Prophet Al-Maseh Ibn Maryam (PBUH) teachings (ibid).

## Qualitative Discussion

Basically, the qualitative discussion is carried out using pragma-discoursal approach and inquires the frequency of PMs after the applicability of Fraser (2005) model. The selected religious speeches below detect and analyze PMs types and frequency.

### 1. Al-Ghara'a Speech by Imam Ali (PBUH)

The speech frame is Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib (PBUH) gives a speech to Muslims crowds in one of his preaches. The speech is divided into three parts. In the first part, the first paragraph begins using conversational management marker (alhamdulillah al lathi ala betawleh wa dana behawleh, الحمد لله الذي علا بحوله ودنا بطوله) to take the conversation floor with the faithful speech perceivers, establish interpersonal relation and attract their attention. Then, basic PM is adopted (ahmedoh, احمده) and other two PMs which are evidential marker (o'amen, اوامن) and temporal discourse marker (awalan, اوالا) to reflect a rhetorical effect that determine the type of speech. So it is seemingly followed by multiple use of elaborative discourse marker (wa, و) to convey rhetorical effect that remind the believers to be more attentive to the following words. There seems an implicit instruction behind this orated introduction which is mainly to

renew or restore Muslims vows to Allah and beliefs in Muhammad and his heavenly message.

In the second paragraph, the following lines are discursive elaboration which adopts multiple uses of elaboration discourse markers (wa, و). The implicit instruction is to preach people to dedicate their lives in devotion to Allah's commands and remember his various blessings; and to the preach message that addresses the crowd as a type of persuasive attempt.

Furthermore, the third paragraph is introduced by elaborative discourse marker (fa ena, فأن), and a combination temporal discourse marker and inferential discourse marker (hata etha, حتى اذا) to incept a conditional phrase and which is followed by its success. Later, the speech is forwarded by adopting another elaborative marker (wa kathalika, وكذلك), hence the paragraph compilation is adopting multiple use of the elaborative marker (wa, و). Implicitly, the description of this paragraph holds a persuasive attempt that Muslims should be aware of this life reality, this part of speech instructs Muslims to the demise of life blessings and to take the righteous path as if life is already is demising.

Initially, the fourth paragraph adopts a combination of inferential and temporal discourse markers (hata etha, حتى اذا). Then, the following phrases contains assessment markers (sera3an, سراً), (ra3elan, رعيلاً), (samotan, صموتاً), (keyaman, قياماً) ad (safofan, صفوفاً). Least but not last, the speech is continued using conversational management marker (lakad, لقد), hence the whole paragraph discourse is unified by the multiple uses of elaborative discourse marker (wa, و).

Finally, the following five, six and seven paragraphs adopt conversational management marker (faya laha amthal sa'eda, فيها لها امثالاً صائبة), inferential discourse marker (lauw, لو), temporal discourse marker (leyaum, ليوم), and also the whole discourse is integrated by the multiple uses of elaborative discourse marker (wa, و). The implicit instruction is mostly about being aware from disobeying Allah's instruction and follows other purpose than praying to believe in Allah's words; and also to repent by taking righteousness path.

In the second part of the speech, the first paragraph shows multiple uses of elaborative discourse markers (wa, و) to connect the discourse segments. The second paragraph contains inferential discourse markers (elah, الا), and

elaborative discourse markers (fa hal, فهل) and multiple use of (wa, و).

The third paragraph is incepted by the elaborative discourse marker (fa hal, فهل), contrastive discourse marker (aw, او), conversational management marker (wa kad, وقد) and (kad, قد), and manner of speaking marker (awalastum, اولستم). The fourth and fifth paragraphs shows the use of contrastive discourse markers ( wa lam, ولم) and (lam, لم), and basic pragmatic marker (fa kafa, فكفى) along with three basic pragmatic markers (wa kafa, وكفى). The sixth paragraph includes temporal discourse marker (wa hatta etha, وحتى اذا). The implicit instruction of these last three paragraphs are recommendations to Muslims to be more thoughtful about their faith in Allah, and it is also a recommendation to abandon abominations if there is any and repent to be among the righteous side. The paragraphs adopt the elaborative discourse marker (wa, و) to connect the discourse segments and constrain its implicature.

The third part of the speech describes the essence of the good human morals. At the beginning of the first paragraph, the adopted marker is contrastive discourse marker (amm, ام) and followed by elaborative discourse marker (thoma, ثم), temporal discourse marker (hatta etha, حتى

إذا) in the second and third paragraphs. Moreover, the third paragraph also contains another elaborative discourse marker (ثم,thoma), temporal discourse marker (حتى,hatta). The fourth and fifth paragraphs include triple use of contrastive discourse marker (او,aw) and (ام,amm) and conversational management marker (الان,aan) and temporal discourse marker (وقبل,wa kabil). Mainly, the implicit instruction is that Muslims should fear this life turbulence and be more attentive to their mistakes since death is inevitable and Muslims should be aware living in the turmoil of the veiled destinies.

## 2. Prophet Al-Maseeh Ibn Maryam (PBUH) Speech

Prophet Al-Maseeh Ibn Maryam (PBUH) Speech is one unified discourse. The first lines is written adopting multiple use of elaborative discourse marker (and), multiple use of temporal discourse marker (then), assessment marker (exceedingly), multiple use of a combination of contrastive discourse marker and inferential discourse marker (but if), multiple use of inferential discourse markers (if), multiple use of contrastive discourse marker (but), conversational management marker (let your light so shine), multiple use of evidential discourse marker (assuredly). Those aforementioned first lines withholds instruction to faithful people who are favored by many blessings

for their deeds, it seems good tidings for those who continue following the righteousness path.

The following lines are composed using inferential discourse marker (unless), multiple use of inferential discourse markers (therefore), multiple use of temporal discourse marker (before) and multiple use of temporal discourse marker (first), multiple use of contrastive discourse markers (neither) and (nor), multiple use of inferential discourse marker (because), multiple use of elaborative discourse marker (also), multiple use of assessment marker (maybe), conversational management marker (only), multiple use of manner of speaking markers (openly), multiple use of inferential discourse markers (if therefore). These markers are used to connect a discourse that reflects implicit instructions which is to follow the commandments of Allah. These commandments are the same as Prophet Mosah commandments and this is a reassuring that Prophet AL-Maseh Ibn Maryam has come to complete the messages of prophets who preceded him and thus those commandments are a must to his faithful followers.

Again, the latter lines are crafted using inferential discourse marker (either), multiple use of contrastive discourse markers (or), multiple use of contrastive discourse markers (yet), conversational



management marker (now), temporal discourse marker (today), a combination of contrastive discourse marker and inferential discourse marker (if), and inferential discourse marker (even so). The implicit instruction that kingdom of Heaven is not for those who choose to hate rather than love however it is difficult sometimes, thus it is imperative to faithful people to embody the ten commandments without hypocrisy when it is difficult to take the righteousness path. It shows that the road to kingdom of heaven is no easy and nor impossible but is surely cheer shed

by Allah, thus heaven is what should a person seek and to be sure not to be infidel person.

### Quantitative Discussion

After the qualitative variables were discussed, the quantitative indications are conducted to support this inquiry with fine grained conclusive interpretations. The percentages comparison of PMs' frequency in the chart (1) below refers to the fact that Arabic religious speech has scored higher percentage than English religious speech percentage.

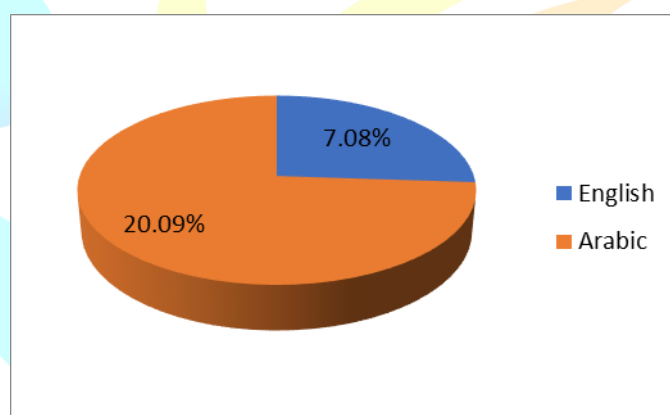


Chart (1) Comparison between Percentages of English and Arabic PMs' Frequency

Firstly, Arabic BMs frequency scored (%0.3) which is higher than English ones which are (%0.0) as Apparent in chart (2). Secondly comparing English and Arabic CMs, English CMs are (%0.5), it seems English ones scored higher than Arabic ones which their percentage count is (%0.2). Least but not last, parallel markers of English language scored (%0.0) less than Arabic Par. Ms which their percentage is (%0.5). However, Arabic DMs percentage of frequency is (%15.9) higher than English ones that scored (%7.3).

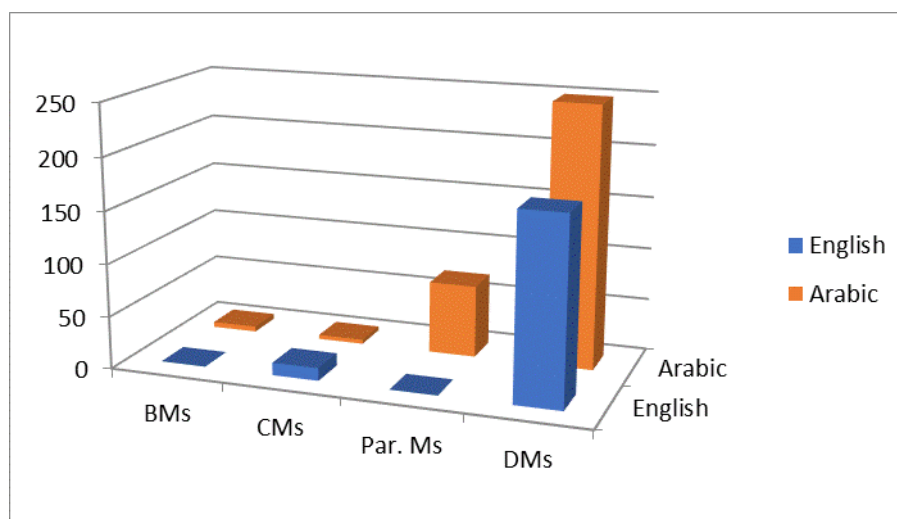


Chart (2) Statistics of Superordinate PMs types

As part of the carried quantitative analysis before, Arabic BMs, as part of the PMs subtypes analysis, frequency scored (%0.3) which is higher than English ones which are (%0.0) and also Apparent in the following chart (3). Also, English AM percentage is (%0.2) more than Arabic which indicated a percentage of (%0.0). Unlikely Both of Arabic and English MOS frequency scored (%0.0) whereas Evid. Ms percentage scored (%0.2) and Arabic Evid. Ms frequency percentage scored (%0.0). Also, both of Arabic and English frequency percentages for DEF. Ms scored (%0.0).

Concerning the superordinate DMs' subtypes, CMCs percentages for English scored (%0.0) less than Arabic ones which scored (%0.5) whereas Arabic CDMs scored (%0.7) less than English ones which scored (%14.3). Evidently, Arabic IDMs scored (%0.5) less than the English ones, the English IDMs scored (%1.8). Lastly, Arabic TDMs scored (%0.5) more than English TDMs which scored (%0.2).

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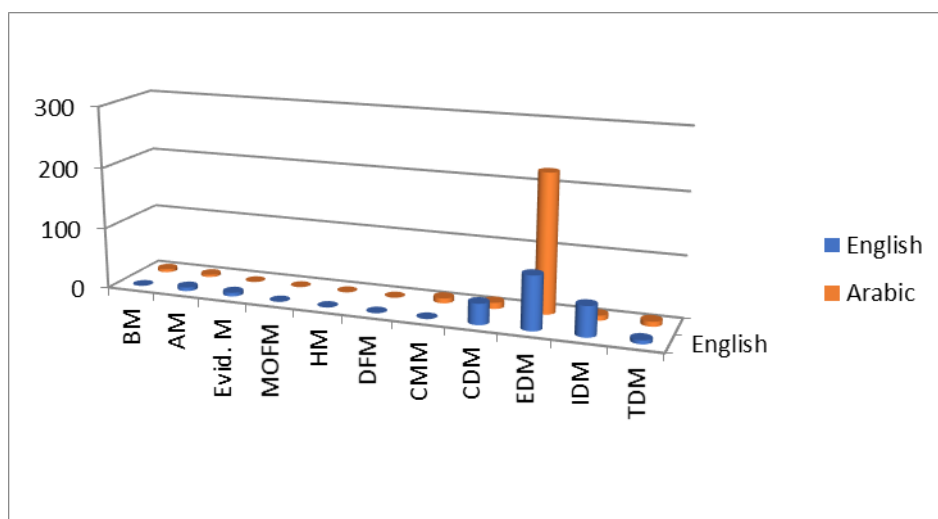


Chart (3) Statistics of PMs' subtypes

## CONCLUSION

In the light of the results obtained, the study concluded the following:

1. Standard Arabic exhibits higher frequency of PMs because it allows for more coordination and subordination than English.
2. One leads to the fact that Imam Ali Speeches are more rhetorical and eloquent as his speeches are

operative of more than one level i.e. micro and macro levels.

3. The longer the sentences, the more complex the discursial relations that need to be tied with PMs
4. English CMs exceed the Arabic ones due to the nature of data because Prophet Al-Maseh Ibn Maryam interacts with people in conversations unlike Imam Ali (PBUH) who delivered sermons.

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الرضي الشريف. نهج البلاغة. ج. 1. ج. 2، و هو ماجمعه الشريف الرضي من كلام أمير المؤمنين الإمام علي بن أبي طالب.