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Greeting Patterns in Jordanian Arabic
Omar Mohammad-Ameen Ahmad Hazaymeh

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Abstract

Greetings are one of the most important social phenomena. Every human society has various forms and ways of greeting. Jordanian society is governed by many social norms, which regulate the daily relations between its members. One of these norms is the patterns that Jordanians use to greet each other. The present study aims at studying the different greeting patterns that are used by people of Jordan. There will be a review of related literature and then the paper will present ways in which these greetings are formed in Jordanian Arabic . The paper will also study and analyze the different social factors that stand beyond using such patterns.

Keywords: Greetings, patterns, formation, factors for using greetings.

1. Introduction

One of the most important social and daily customs in any human society is greeting. Different spoken expressions of greeting are within the vernacular of any community

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and they have a high social position due to their importance in enhancing and promoting the relations between the society members. In this paper, there will be a discussion and an investigation of the greeting patterns that are adopted by people of Jordan in their everyday Arabic for different social occasions. The study will concentrate on the types of these patterns, their formation, and factors that stand beyond using them.

2. Review of Related Literature

Different studies have been conducted on greetings in various cultures. Ferguson (1967) considers greeting expressions as an example of "a politeness formula". He said that these expressions are used in different contexts. He also added that greeting expressions are important for their presence or absence in a certain context rather than the specific meaning their constituent parts convey.

Ibrahim (1983) uses the term "minor sentences" to refer to utterances of different types such as salutations, felicitations and invocations. He pointed out that salutations are used in order to show politeness and respect in order to have a lovely level of social discourse.

Lungstrum (1987) studied two paradigms for hailing in Kekchi (Mayan) in Pueblo Viejo, Belize. He discussed the nature and use of greeting in that particular culture in India. He found that the form of greeting that was used by people would indicate special social reference to the status of the speaker and addressee, the period of the meeting and the degree of friendliness.

Chen Song-Cen (1991) pointed out that greeting expressions form an important part of the polite language. He said that by greeting the speaker would indicate his attitudes toward the addressee or would start a conversation with him. He emphasized in his study on the expressions of greeting in China.

El-Hassan (1991) studied the linguistic etiquette at Jordanian shops. He aimed at investigating the Arabic patterns of speech that are used by Jordanian shopkeepers or shop assistant and their customers. He gathered data from a number of Jordanian shops using tape recorders. The researcher divided his paper into four parts:

1. Greeting on arrival.
2. Enquiring about the availability of goods.
3. Ordering (and paying) 4. Leave-taking.

He also mentioned different forms of greeting.

Al-Abdul Halim (1994) studied greetings in Jordanian Arabic that are used to create an intimate social relation between the speakers of this vernacular. As he pointed out data was collected from different places such as hospitals and universities. He concluded that there is more than one form for each greeting and that certain greetings are used among people more than other greetings. He also found that the relation between the speaker and the addressee affects the choosing of the suitable greeting as when students greet their doctors with longer greetings than doctors in order to show respect politeness towards their professors.

3. Types of Greeting Patterns

Different types and forms are used in Jordanian Arabic for greeting as the following.

3.1. Religious Patterns. The most prominent religious term of greeting in Jordan is assalamu a'laykum warahmatu illahi wabarakatuh, may the peace, mercy and blessing of Allah 'God' be upon you because it is the main greeting of Islam. This greeting might be shortened into various forms, which are also widely used in Jordanian Arabic such as assalamu a'laykum warahmatu illah, may the peace and mercy of Allah be upon you, assalamu a'laykum peace be upon you, salam, peace. The reply would also be by using these patterns with the Arabic conjunction ' wa, and '. Such patterns include wa a'laykum issalam warahmatu illahi wabarakauh, and may the peace, mercy and blessing of God be upon you, wa a'laykum issalam warahmatu illah , and the peace and mercy of Allah be upon you, wa a'laykum issalam, and may the peace be upon you and wa

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a'laykum, and also be upon you. The denotative meaning in the last form of greeting is that may the peace be also being upon you.

3.2. Rural Patterns. Certain greeting patterns are related to the farmers who used to work from the sunrise until the sunset in their fields. When someone visits them while they are plowing or harvesting, he would greet them with patterns as a'la'afyah May you have good health, sah badanuh May your body is healthy, sah badanak May your body be in health, sah badanhum, May your (for a group of farmers or workers) bodies are healthy. Other patterns are quwwah power, qawwak May you have a power, ya'teek ila'fyah May Allah give you the good health. The replies would be Allah ea'afeek May Allah give you the power too or qweet May you have a strong body. Such patterns are not only limited to farmers but they also extended to be used as patterns of greeting for any one who does a hard job that needs a power and strong body so the greeter would greet such people seeking good health for their bodies so that they can work and perform their hard missions.

3.3. Morning / Evening. A number of expressions have been used as patterns of greeting in Jordanian Arabic. They are based on the two words sabah 'morning' and masa'a 'evening'. One would greet another person whether he knows him/her or not with one of the following greetings sabah ilkhear good morning, masa'a ilkhear good evening. Other patterns are also formed such as sabah ilnoor a lighten morning, masa'a ilnoor a lighten evening. Moreover, certain kinds of flowers are used with the words sabah 'morning' and masa'a 'evening' to have greeting expressions in Jordanian Arabic. Such greetings include sabah ilward the morning of roses, sabah ilyasmeen the morning of jasmine, masaa' ilward the evening of roses, masaa' ilful the evening of Arabian jasmine, masaa' ilward wilyasmeen the evening of roses and Arabian jasmine, masaa' lqrunful the evening of carnation and masaa' ilful wilyasmeen the evening of Arabian jasmine and jasmine. These flowers are used in order to form a good and beautiful term of greeting that shows the respect, intimacy and love of the speaker towards the addressees. Other greetings are derived from the two words sabah 'morning' and masaa' 'evening' such as sabhu. i.e. have a good morning, sabhu bilkhear have a good morning, sabbihum good morning for all of you, sabbahak allah bilkhear May

Allah make your morning full of welfare. Other similar expressions include sabhak I wish you a good morning, ysa'id hal sabah May your morning is a happy one, massihum bilkhear good evening for all of you, massak allah bilkhear may Allah make your evening full of welfare, massak bilkhear may 'Allah' make your evening a good one, masseeku bilkhear I wish a good evening for all of you.

3.4. English Patterns. A limited number of English greeting expressions have found their easy way in Jordanian Arabic. These greetings are mainly used among the young and close friends. They were assimilated in Jordanian Arabic due to mass media (English movies and serieses on Jordanian and neighbouring TVs), and direct contact with English native speakers through living, working and studying in English-speaking countries. Such English greetings include hello, hi, good morning, and welcome.

3.5. The Words 'Marhaba and Ahlan'. The Arabic words marhaba and ahlan 'welcome' are among the regular greetings in Jordan. All Jordanians with no consideration for age, gender, social class or position use them. Different forms are derived from these words such as marhaba greeting, marhaban greeting, marhaba'n' biiku greeting everybody. In addition to these forms, Jordanians use other greeting expressions which are accompanied with certain numbers in order to show the intimacy of the greeter towards those being greeted such as marhabtean two greetings, meet marhaba, one hundred greeting, a'shar maraheb ten greetings, marhabtean wunos two greetings and half. They also use the expression maraheb greetings which means greeting with unlimited number.

Other greetings are hala wemaraheb greeting and greeting, ahlan greeting, ahlan wa sahlam most greeting, ahlean greetings, ahlean wesahlean two greetings, halalta ahlan wawatea'ta sahlam your are most welcome, hala welcome, hala wemaraheb many greetings, yah ala Oh, welcome.

3. 6. Silent Greetings. Jordanians use certain body movements and gestures as greetings in their daily life. Hands, fingers, eyebrows and head form the tools for these greetings. In many cases such movements and gestures are used as forms of greeting

when the one being greeted is far away or that the greeter is driving a car or any vehicle and passing near a person that he may know or not . Also such gestures might be accompanied by one of the expressions that are mentioned previously in order to give assurance for the greeting and to reflect the intimate feeling of the greeter towards the one being greeted .Many people would raise their hands particularly the right one with their palm is completely opened to greet others. Others would raise their forefinger as a greeting when they are driving and cannot left their hand of the steering wheel. Besides these gestures, Jordanians use their eyebrows and head to have greeting. They raise their eyebrows up or move their head with a little movement backward.

3.7. Miscellaneous. Other greeting patterns are also used in Jordanian Arabic such as keaf ilhal how are you, keafak how are you, shlunakhow do you do, hayyak allah may God greet you, Allah yehayeek may Allah greet you, hayyak allah webayyak may God greet you a lot, hayyak webayyak may God greet you a lot.

The one who wants to greet a person that he meets him/her for the first time would use such expressions. Other greetings are tehya weddoom may you live and last for a long time, tahyyati waashwaqi my greetings and yearnings, tahyyati my greetings, meet wardeh one hundred roses for you.

Expressions as kefak ilyaom how are you today, keaf asbaht how is your morning, keaf akhbarak how is your news, shu akhbarak what is your news and shu u'luumak what is your news are also used.

4. The Formation of Greeting Patterns. The greeting patterns are formed in Jordanian Arabic as the following.

1. Many of these patterns are composed of two nouns such as sabah likhear 'good morning'.
2. Certain greetings are formed of a verb followed by a noun as ysa'id sabahak 'may your morning is a happy one'.
3. Some greetings consist of one noun as marhaba 'welcome' or salam 'peace'.

4. A number of greetings consist of a preposition followed by a noun as a'la ila'afya 'have a good health'.

5. Certain patterns of greetings are composed of the Arabic vocative particle ya 'Oh' with a noun after it as ya marhaba or ya ahlan Oh. welcome.

6. Some greeting expressions are formed by using a number with a noun such as meet marhaba one hundred greeting.

7. It is also worth mentioning that a considerable number of greetings are derivative ones as 'sabhu', which is a derivative, form of the word sabah 'morning'.

5. Factors Affecting the Choosing of Greeting Patterns

Certain social factors play a considerable part in choosing the expressions of greeting in Jordan.

5.1. Environment. A number of greetings are related to the rural region where farmers work for a long time in their fields. People would greet them with patterns that reflect the desire to have strong and healthy body for them. The expressions that are used in this environment would include qwwah 'a'la ila'fya

5.2. Islam. It is the religion of the great majority of Jordanians and as a result, people use the main greeting of Islam assalamu a'laykum warahmatu illahi wabarakatuh.

5.3. Education. It is noted that educated people use expressions as sabah ilkhear good morning, masaa' ilkhear good evening and they try not to use common expressions as massa' ilful the evening of Arabian jasmine.

5.4. Media and Contact with the west support the spread of some English greeting expressions as hello.

5.5. Relations. The type, depth and intimacy of relation between members of the society affect the choosing of the greeting expressions in Jordanian Arabic. To greet a

close friend it is accepted to use the English greeting expression hello or the Arabic one marhabtean two welcomes but it is not accepted to greet people with high positions such as professors, ministers, princes or the king with such greetings. Patterns such as ahlan wasahlan most welcome, assalamu a'laikum peace be upon you, sabah ilkhair good morning are most welcome and accepted among others to greet such people.

6. Conclusion

Patterns of greeting have a prominent role in enhancing and promoting relations among people. In Jordan, they are very important and such importance is embodied in many expressions and forms that are used for greeting. These expressions are of different types and they are formed in various ways. It is hoped that this simple paper will shed light on this sociolinguistic phenomenon and it is hoped that it will open the door for other similar studies.

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