

THE MANIPULATIVE USES OF THE DM CHA IN IRAQI ARABIC ORAL DISCOURSE: A DISCOURSE- PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the discourse- pragmatic functions the DM Cha performs in the Iraqi Arabic spoken discourse. It also finds out if there is any relation between the speaker's gender and educational background and the functions of the DM Cha in terms of the propositional content conveyed. Brinton's (1996) model of DMs functions is employed as a theoretical framework in identifying the pragmatic uses the DM Cha has at the textual and interpersonal levels. The analysis reveals that interpersonally, the DM Cha is shown to serve four extra micro-level functions including Astonishment, Indignation, Affection and Mockery. However, an extra textual function is added to the list wherein the DM Cha is employed to ask the addressee to provide extra information about the subject in point. Moreover, it is shown that neither gender nor education affects the functions of the maker at hand in terms of the propositional content expressed.

Keywords: textual functions, discourse markers, interpersonal functions, oral discourse.

INTRODUCTION

The majority of early studies as well as current work in discourse analysis and pragmatics focus on oral discourse as an indispensable channel of communication in human daily life. Axiomatically, to communicate orally, people need to construct discourse. Then, this indicates that people jointly cooperate to create discourse as a framework for information structure by means of which they negotiate and exchange their ideas, attitudes, emotions, beliefs and evaluations. Among the widely-used linguistic features of informal oral discourse that set it apart from the other formal spoken and written discourses are discourse markers (hence, DMs). Normally, in their conversational exchanges, interlocutors utilize a plethora of speech markers to tailor their ideas and facilitate the flow of their conversation. Hence, discourse markers as linguistic elements with "low degree of lexical specificity" and "a high degree of context- sensitivity" (Anderson, 2001: 40) come into existence to pragmatically perform their roles in oral discourse as coherence building and interactive devices.

Analyzed within a discourse- pragmatic framework, discourse analysis and pragmatics as complementary disciplines come into play to show us how language is processed by participants in their discourse to express a variety of attitudes, beliefs and emotions by means of DMs in particular. The former is taking the first step to sketch out a brief analysis of the way discourse markers are employed to contextually structure the ongoing talk. Concurrently, the latter appears in a later stage to lead us to analyze DMs "in terms of actual uses of the language" (AL-Masri, 1999: 7). In other words, it guides us to see the way interlocutors and context interplay to produce the contextual effect meant making use of DMs. Under this view, DMs allow us to get a better understanding of the way speakers structure their discourse, support their argument and fill in gaps in knowledge in such a way that cognitively stimulates the recipient to reach the optimal interpretation of the message conveyed and attain the speaker's intention with minimum effort.

Linguistic research on DMs has been rapidly developed and received a wide recognition in academic circles in the late 1980s (e.g., Schiffirin, 1987) whereby the study of DMs is well-documented as a “growth industry in linguistics” (Fraser, 1999: 931). Meantime, research on DMs has briskly broadened to serve as a “testing ground” (Bordería-Pons, 2008: 1354) for theorists within the disciplines of pragmatics and discourse analysis. This indicates that only recently, attention is oriented to DMs as a field worthy of research in spoken discourse in particular. Nowadays, the issue of DMs has become among the hot issues wherein this field is maturing with a wealth of bulky books and smaller-scale studies. Axiomatically, this is due to the significance of DMs as highly polyfunctional, coherence- based and comprehension-facilitating operators.

As pragmatic and contextualization cues, DMs seem to function mainly at two levels: textual and interpersonal. As regards to their textual job, Brinton (1996: 17) claims that DMs signify “a sequential relationship between the current basic message and the previous discourse”. That is, their role consists in connecting between the preceding (old) and the following (new) information, weaving it together into a meaningful organized discourse in such a way that explicates the speaker's intention and thus facilitating the hearer-interlocutor communication in spoken discourse. Hence, DMs are widely considered to be “the formal traces of enunciation [...] instructing the reader (hearer) about how the discourse was uttered” (Angermuller, 2014: 141). From interpersonal perspective, DMs frame the participation framework wherein each of the speaker and hearer is assigned his/her own role. Further, they allow speakers to explicitly express their beliefs, judgments and evaluations in addition to many other demands.

Prior research in the discourse- pragmatic domain suggests that seminal contributions have been made to examine the way DMs function as context- dependent markers. Among these contributions was that of Fuller (2003). Drawn on a corpus of two conversational contexts; viz, interview and conversation, Fuller (2003) developed a study to examine the use of the DMs 'well, oh, y'know, like, and I mean' by native and non- native speakers of English in terms of frequency. Comparing their use in both speech contexts, the researcher found that these markers vary in the rate of their use from one situational context to another. In the sense that native speakers were found to show an overwhelming preference for the DMs 'oh' and 'well ' in conversation which is not the case with non- native speakers. However, like and y'know are overwhelmingly used by native speakers within the context of interview.

Nazzal (2005) further addressed the issue related to the contextual uses and pragmatic functions of ' insha'allh' as used by Muslims. A considerable portion of the study was dedicated to highlight the significance of this discourse marker as a means of ascertaining one's religious, linguistic, and cultural identity.

Following, Clift and Helani (2010) accounted for the contexts within which 'inshallah' is utilized in spoken Syrian Arabic talk-in-interaction employing the conversation analysis as their framework of analysis. The data were elicited from a corpus of Levantine. Unlike Nazzal, their results revealed that 'inshaallah' can be utilized as a marker of hope for the future and topic- transition.

As a versatile marker, the multifunctionality of Okay has been proved by Gaines (2011) as well. Based on institutional discourse, the data of this study was collected from a corpus of an informal police officers interview. On the other hand, data analysis was conducted within the framework of conversation analysis approach. Unlike Heisler (1996) who identified Okay mainly as an acknowledgment, an agreement, a backchanneling and mitigating token, Gaines (2011) enumerates unexpected contrary functions Okay can cover depending on its position in conversational exchange. Analysis of data revealed that despite its frequent recruitment as

a solidarity and management device, , Okay was utilized to signal defiance and to express the 'insistence' meaning.

Within an Arab context, a seminal contribution has been made by Kanakri and Al-Harashsheh (2013a). The researchers exactly discussed the discourse marker (ʕadi) within the context of Jordanian spoken Arabic. Based on a corpus of 20 video-taped dyadic conversations with native speakers of the variety under scrutiny, the researchers signaled nine functions in relation to this marker; namely, consolation or mitigating , permission, disapproval , disappointment , contempt, courtesy, acceptance and indirect criticism or questioning.

Alazzawie's (2014) study, however, questions whether the lexical item 'yamawwad' has specific pragmatic functions to perform in the natural oral conversation context of Iraqi Arabic. To gain the answer, a study based on a corpus of dyadic conversations of informants who constitute the representative sample of the community under study was achieved. Seventeen varied functions were brought forth by the researcher in relation to this marker wherein it was utilized to mark the opening of a conversation, or to act as a marker of politeness, courtesy, request, warning, refusal, disappointment , hope and expectancy.

In another respect, Alazzawi (2015) developed a study similar to that of Kanakri and Al-Harashsheh (2013a), but in more detail and with a focus more directly on the Iraqi Arabic oral discourse. Unlike Kanakri and Al-Harashsheh who enumerated only nine pragmatic functions with regard to (ʕadi) as a discourse marker, thirteen functions were brought to the forth within the Iraqi Arabic context in Alazzawi's analytic study. In the context under scrutiny, the lexical item (ʕadi) was shown to give the pragmatic meaning of ' no worries, okay, how dare you? Yeah I hear you, or I've gone through the same thing myself ' among others. Interestingly, this cross- sectional study was based on data drawn from a corpus of recorded speech of the representative sample of the community in question.

On the other hand, discourse analysis is employed as a theoretical framework to analyze the data obtained.

In a similar vein, a more comprehensive description of ' yaʕni ' was found in Alazzawi's (2016) study that highlighted the pragmatic meanings and functions of the lexical item at hand as one among a host of discourse markers commonly employed in conversational Iraqi Arabic. The study was based on a corpus collected from an interview conversation with the native speakers of the speech variety under scrutiny. The study adopted conversation analysis as a theoretical framework. In the light of the reported results, ' yaʕni ' was found to serve such functions as agreement; soften criticism, direct statements, and modification and clarification of information besides intentions.

More recently, Adai & Majeed (2020) delineated the contextual uses, distributional patterns and the pragmatic functions of the discourse markers ' dhile'e' and ' kadi' extensively utilized by youths in social media. The study results reported numerous functions these markers were found to fulfill in Iraqi Arabic depending on the construction in which they occur.

PROBLEM OF THE STUDY

A closer look at the literature reveals that the discourse-pragmatic research of DMs in Iraqi Arabic has received scant attention wherein the studies conducted in the area do not exceed the limits of the four research studies mentioned: three of them conducted by the same author; Alazzawi (2014,2015,2016) and that is introduced by Adai & Majeed (2020). Then, this suggests that it is only lately spoken discourse, in particular, has been brought to the forth as an area worthy of further investigation in itself. Hence, the need to achieve more research on DMs in Iraqi Arabic is deservedly justified here. Further, the study of variations in the use

of DMs in relation to such a social variable as gender and education are underlined by scarcity of studies in the context of Arabic studies in general and those of Iraqi Arabic in particular. So, the relation between the usage of the DM at hand in terms of function and the speaker's gender and educational level as sociolinguistic variables that constitute a vital part of the communication context also needs to be underscored.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The current research study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the discourse uses and pragmatic functions of the DM Cha at the interpersonal and textual levels of Iraqi Arabic oral discourse?
2. Do females differ from males in their uses of the DMs Cha in terms of its functions? and how they differ?
3. To what extent do people of well-educated class differ from poorly- educated people in their uses of the DMs Cha in relation to functions?

The study contribution to the field of linguistics

1. Due to the lack of the online accessible corpus in Iraqi Arabic, the current study can be of great help as a part of Iraqi Arabic spoken language corpus.
2. Concerning its pedagogical value for curricula-designers, due to the lack of Iraqi DMs in the textbooks and dictionaries available recently, curricula-designers can include the results obtained in the curricula to highlight the pragmatic value of DMs in oral discourse and in an attempt to facilitate and improve their comprehension and use in English language, on the other hand.
3. With regard to the sociolinguistic and anthropological domains, this study can be of valuable significance as it enables foreigners to have a better understanding of the norms of Arabic usage in Iraqi community.
4. Providing some insights into gender and education as social variables with respect to their uses and functional variation, this study further contributes to cross- gender understanding of DMs functions.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study is limited to provide a linguistic analysis of the contextual uses and pragmatic functions of the DM Chain Iraqi Arabic oral discourse, of Basra in particular. On the other hand, it investigates the correlation between this variable and the sociolinguistic variables of gender and education only. Further, the study touches on the use of the marker at hand by women and men whose ages range between 20 to 60. Additionally, this study disregards prosodic information as principal criteria for meaning discrimination and pragmatic functions.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was based on a corpus of informal face-to-face conversations supplemented by informal phone calls that took place among family members, friends and relatives. The study included 120 informants who are native speakers of Iraqi Arabic. The informants were divided into 60 well- educated informants (30 men+ 30 women) and 60 poorly- educated informants (30 men+ 30 women).

The sample of well- educated informants constituted (15) postgraduate students who joined the Master and doctoral programs for the academic year 2020-2021. It also included (45 out

of 82) third and fourth- stage students. All the educated informants were students at the department of English of College of Arts at the University of Basra.

On the other hand, poorly- educated informants represented (60 out of 150) people. This group of informants was selected to include (farmers, electricians, drivers, clean-up agents, guards, carpenters and plumbers) who work in the College of Arts at the University of Basra. All the informants live in Basra city center. To keep the data obtained authentic, the informants were not told about the DM intended to be investigated in their oral speech. The data were collected over a period of six months. About 51 hours, 20 minutes and 36 seconds of females/ males' casual conversations were audio- recorded using Sony IC Recorder, ICD-BX140 recorder type.

Remarkably, the topics involved in conversations were of every day concern. To check their validity, the excerpts intended to be used to investigate the pragmatic functions meant were given to a panel of jurors; three professors who are native speakers of Iraqi Arabic and who instruct English in the department of English at the university of Basra. The data obtained were analyzed within Brinton's (1996) theoretical framework employing qualitative method of analysis. The pragmatic functions of the DM Cha were investigated with reference to the two main levels of discourse:, the interpersonal and textual one. The interpersonal functions of the DM Cha are mainly meant to signal the speaker's attitudes, emotions, beliefs and evaluations, meanwhile, the textual functions are concerned with marking the discourse coherence and textuality.

Interpersonally, the DM Cha is too related to such functions as attention-getting, mitigating, hedging and backchanneling, in addition to indicating agreement, disagreement and emphasis. At the textual level, the DM is suggested to establish sequence relations, to mark relations of relevance, to initiate and close discourse, to mark topic/ participant change, to signal fore/ background information, to introduce/ close a turn and to serve as a verbal filler.

Discourse Markers: Nature and Function

According to Trujillo Saez (2003: 4), the term 'DMs' is preferred to other terminologies available in the field as it is “neutral between the function of connection” and the “way of leading the hearer towards a certain interpretation”. As a matter of fact, ' discourse markers' is a self-descriptive term. To be more specific, two components are in order here: discourse and makers.

They are discourse because they operate at the discorsal level rather than at the sentence level to "show connection between what is being said and the wider context", as Swan (1980:1) contends. This goes in line with Aijmir (2002:1) who argues that " Discourse particles are placed ...at different places in the discourse and give important clues to how discourse is segmented and processed"

That is, as coherence- building markers, they integrate discourse components linking up the upcoming proposition they introduce in (S2) to the preceding one included in (S1). Meanwhile, they are markers since their propositional meaning is generally elucidated with respect to "what they indicate or mark rather than what they describe" (Blakemore, 2002:1). Remarkably, though used in written discourse as well, DMs are commonly found in everyday oral discourse of informal situations (Brinton, 1996: 33-35).

Defining Properties of Discourse Markers

Among the unanimous characteristics that can critically provide a valid diagnostic test for membership among DMs class are the following:

1. Non- truth conditionality: DMs affect neither the truth nor the falsity of the discursive unit hosting them (Brinton, 1996: 35; Schourup, 1999:227).
2. Optionality: DMs are considered empty speech signs that are syntactically and semantically optional rather than mandatory items (Brinton, 1996: 33-35).
3. Initiality: Structurally, DMs are predominantly confined to a phrase/ sentence - initial position (Brinton,1996: 33-35) though some of them can be situated in a phrase/ sentence medial position with a very few of them are placed a phrase/ sentence final position (Purko, 2015:5).
4. Multifunctionality: Every DM has the potentiality to shift or multiply its role according to the position it engages in its context of use.
5. Phonological Independence: DMs are viewed as short linguistic devices whose pragmatic functions are closely correlated with the prosodic features that accompany their use (Redeker, 1991:11; Brinton 2008: 1).

The Discourse Marker under Scrutiny

Like other dialects, DMs are typically used by Iraqi people in their daily speech situations to fulfill a host of pragmatic functions. The DM Cha is one of the DMs that are widely used by Iraqi people in their oral discourse. Müller-Kessler (2003:643, 645) acknowledges that this speech particle dates back in its origin to the Mesopotamian Aramaic deictic particle 'ka'. Interestingly, this marker is the predominant hallmark of the vernacular language used by Mesopotamian people who live in the southern part of Iraq in particular (Hassan, 2016: 47, 53). Ingham (2000: 128) claims that this Mesopotamian marker seems to be the characteristic feature of the marshland citizen's dialect. She further elaborates, stating that this marker in particular has "no equivalent in Arabian dialects" (1982: 87). As opposed to Ingham's stance, it has been alleged by Holes (2001: 447) that the DM Cha shows an affinity to the discourse particle 'ka' (e.g., "ka-hiyya yāya, 'here she comes now') frequently employed in the Arabian Gulf spoken Arabic of the Bahraini and Kuwaiti people (Johnstone, 1967: 92).

Regarding its place of occurrence, the DM Cha preponderantly occupies sentence/ utterance initial position (Ingham 1973: 550). As a discourse coherence, attitude and commentaries marker, the DM Cha is habitually used with no specific meaning in dialogues and daily interactions (Aijmer 2002: 33). Concerning its polyfunctionality, the DM Cha can be used to perform numerous pragmatic functions (Aijmer, 2002: 22) whereby its nuances of meaning and pragmatic functions alter according to the context of use and the speaker's communicative intention. Cha can, for instance, be used to provide an explanation or a justification or to robustly support the already existing assumption (Aijmer, 2002: 36). Ingham (1973: 550, 38) adds that speakers may use Cha in their speech as an attention getter and focus- marker as well.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Functions of the of the DM Cha at the Interpersonal Level

Acting as an attention- grabber and a focus-marker too, the DM Cha is sometimes employed by well- educated informants like teachers in their talk as an involvement marker to catch their student's attention to perform a certain speech act, as exemplified below.

Example (1)

نسيت اكتب الواجب. الطالب

چا لا تنسى ! : ا د

I forgot to do the homework. Cha (be careful), don't forget (I urge you)!

This conversational exchange takes place between a teacher and his student who told his teacher about his obliviousness of doing the assignment he was required to do. Within this conversational context, Cha comes to prove its polyfunctionality as a DM wherein it appears to fulfill three functions simultaneously represented by emphasis, attention-getting and mitigating. In the sense that Cha is mainly utilized by the teacher during his speech act for emphatic purposes and as an attention-getter to impart the message that the student must take further care, obviate forgetting and be committed to what has been requested to do.

As a softener, Cha prefixes the teacher's sentence to lessen the confrontational implication yielded by an imperative, giving it the form of a request instead. Simply, the pragmatic value of Cha as a mitigator cannot be belittled whereby the teacher's command is introduced as a request rather than as a threatening act; an act that "infringes on the hearer's need to maintain his /her self-esteem and be respected" (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 65).

Though it has its pragmatic value, the DM Cha within this situational context is optional in terms of semantic and syntactic senses. That is, its removal does impact neither the propositionality (veracity or falsity) nor the grammaticality of the sentence it introduces. Under this account, Cha has nothing to add to the semantic/ informational content of the sentence in point wherein the sentence can be done without the DM Cha to express imperative; (I argue you to not forget), thus, keeping both its meaningfulness and well-formedness. Accordingly, the data conveyed in both 'la: tansa!' and Cha 'la: tansa!' are still semantically and pragmatically similar though not exactly identical. However, it is worthy to mention that 'optionality' is considered a nonsensical property with reference to the pragmatic value of the DM wherein the sentence turns to be blunt and impolite in case Cha is omitted from its hosting constituent.

However, Cha is abundantly employed by poorly-educated men in their speech to serve as an attention-grabber and to locate emphasis on certain points in discourse, as illustrated in the following example:

Example (2):

ح ا: چا انت ذخرننا واحنا كلنا آنتنومس بيك (نفتخر)

Ha: Cha (see, behold), you are our hope, and so proud of you.

Axiomatically in any conversational situation, there should be a speaker and a listener whom the speaker intends to appeal his/ her attention to what is being said. In this conversational situation, a poorly-educated participant who works as a clean-up agent is talking to the head of English department who rewarded him on the anniversary of the University day for his distinguished efforts. Here, Cha prefaces the participant's speech carrying the meaning of (see, behold) to attract the boss' attention to the propositional content of the message the clean-up agent intends to convey to him. Cha is employed to serve as an interactional device associated with the speaker's positive emotional stance and attitude to indicate the speaker's feelings of gratitude towards his boss and to express 'sociability' by showing that they all appreciate him. Specifically, the message is oriented towards the boss to call his attention to the fact that they all (as workers) appreciate his generous behavior as a noble man and respect him as a director.

Further points or further discussion could ensue and be brought up by poorly-educated women whereby the DM Cha is recruited in their speech to local emphasis in discourse and act as an attentional cue for the listener.

Example (4):

!وينچ يا يمه؟ صارلي ساعه اصيح. چا يا الله يا يمه مشينا

MA: My dear, where have you been? I have been calling for you since an hour. Cha (see, behold!) We have already left.

As an interactive marker and a message-oriented device , Cha accompanies the participant's speech while talking to her daughter whom she has been waiting for a while to orient her daughter's attention to the message intended to be highlighted; that is, to hint to urgency of the situation. Simply, she uses Cha to direct her daughter's attention to be ready as soon as possible since she had already left.

As "conversation requires a delicate balance between the satisfaction of one's own needs and the satisfaction of other's needs" (Schiffrin, 1987: 100), among the very basic contributions of the DM Cha is its use to signal agreement. As an interpersonal marker and intimacy signal, Cha is employed in some exchanges to grease the relations and reduce social distance between the speaker and hearer. This is typically performed when Cha initiates the recipient's turn to signify agreement with the assumption introduced in the prior turn. In this concern, the DM Cha is found to be overwhelmingly recruited in the poorly- educated men's speech to fulfill such a function, as in the following:

Example (5):

خالي احنا راح نروح چم يوم لبغداد وما راح نروح لببيت الباشا , يعني نأجر فندق ونغد بيه

ح.ا: چا خوش. آني همتين اروح وياكم

Uncle, we will go to Baghdad for some days, and we will not go to the Basha's house. We will ask for a hotel for rent.

Ha: Cha khosh (great / fine), I'm going with you.

Evidently, in his speech exchange with his nephews who suggested travelling to Baghdad and staying there for a while, the participant prefixes his turn with the DM Cha as a response marker carrying the core meaning of (good/ fine) to index his agreement with his nephews' previous proposition, reinforcing his solidarity with his interlocutors.

The DM Cha was also observed to be appointed in poorly- educated women's speech to imply their harmony with the already existing assumption, as illustrated below:

Example (6):

خيه ،خلي نروح للسوك بسرعه ونرجع من وكت حتى نلحك نطبخ الغدا من وكت

ت.س: چا خوش. خلي نروح لعد

Dearest sister, let us go to the market, and get back home to cook lunch as early as possible.

T: Cha (It is OK), Let us go, then.

In a phone call, the participant is talking to her neighbor who suggests going to the market and coming back as quickly as possible to prepare lunch early. The participant initiates her speaking turn with the DM Cha as a response marker to economize and signal consent with the assumption held by the previous speaker. Obviously, the DM Cha is implanted in such a situation to reinforce the cooperative aspect and involvement.

Yet, in a conversation, one interactant does not usually accept/ agree with what is mentioned by the other. Then, this suggests that the DM Cha may be used to fulfill an adversative function to echo the sense of objection or disagreement as well. Hence, this marker may be

employed in the speech of poorly- educated men to reflect divergence from the already existing propositions, as shown below.

Example (7):

ع ل: التذكره مات السينما بيش؟

..ما عليك سهله سهله علي

ع ل: سهله عليك شنو

اچا , انا جايبك مناك ليجاي تصرف علي انت

A: How much the price of a cinema ticket?

Take it easy. It is on me.

A: Oh, take it easy? Be on you?

Cha (Excuse me, I request you to change your mind). Come on. You've accepted to join me in this travel, and want to bear costs!

In a phone conversation, the participant is talking to his friend whom he did not see for a while and whom he asks to accompany him to the cinema. The participant asks his friend about the cost of the cinema ticket since he did not go to the cinema since a long time. The participant's friend informs him that there is no need to ask about the cost since he will pay him the money of his ticket instead. On his part, the participant prefaces his sentence with the DM Cha to signalize difference of opinion; that is, to voice his refusal/ objection of the assumption proposed earlier by his friend. Simply, it seems as if the speaker wanted to say 'Excuse me, I request you to change your mind', and so, asking for further thought and argument.

To provide converging evidence, the attitudinal use of Cha related to disagreement is also attested in another context offered by poorly-educated women, as follows:

Example (8):

ام ا : سعر التصريف كلش صاعد! چا ليش هيچي ؟ هذا ظلم

The US\$/IQD exchange rate is too high. Why is it like that? Terrible!

In this scenario, Cha provides another informative and communicative intention. While the emphasis is first placed on picturing miserable status quo in Iraq; unexpected raising in the exchange rate of the dollar that left its deleterious impact on all aspects of life, the economic side in particular, Cha prefaces an interrogative clause to voice the speaker's attitude towards the proposition mentioned earlier. That is, by virtue of Cha, the focus is shifted to evoke the inference that the participant is extremely shocked by the unfair and unusual status quo in Iraq. In particular, it expresses the participant's disagreement/ disapproval of the unexpected raising in the exchange rate of the dollar that made her, as a worker with a little salary, upset and annoyed.

The flexibility and multifunctionality of the DM Cha in spontaneous speech have been proved wherein the DM Cha was used unconsciously to express hedging as well. The scenario offered by poorly- educated men could represent the case in point.

Example (9):

. الاب : يعني ما راح تساعدني وتنظف السيارة اليوم

الابن: لا

الاب : چا وين تروح اليوم. اشوفك بالبيت

W: Hey, you! Aren't you going to lend me a hand in cleaning inside the car today?

Son: No.

W: Cha (Then), where are you heading to? May I catch you at home?

This exchange takes place between the participant and his son whereby the former asks the latter, who was playing football in the street at that time, to help him wash his car. Upon the son's refusal to perform the act requested to do, Cha prefaces the participant's speech oriented to his son accompanied with a threatening tone to echo the sense of indirect threat. That is, Cha pragmatically provokes the interpretation that the participant hints to the son that he has to expect something bad as soon as he comes back home.

As a hedging device, the DM Cha turns up in the poorly- educated women's speech to serve the same role as well, as shown below.

Example (10):

اس ا : چا وين! چا وين اهلنا

Sa: Cha, Where? Our families, beloved?

In fact, " Cha wen! Cha wen ahalnnah! " is a beautiful Iraqi song that reports the separation of lovers. The story has happened in the Iraqi countryside, which is full of injustice and gossip against love relationships and lovers, no matter how innocent and pure it is. The song narrates the event of two Iraqi lovers who inhabited the countryside and who were separated because of one of the informer's talebearing.

In line with the unfair Arab habit, whoever was revealed to have a love story, she and her family would be the object of contempt and insult by the clan. Moreover, they are compelled to leave their district because love among these clans is viewed as a disgraceful and forbidden act. So, this saying was uttered by the beloved girl blaming and criticizing her clan, siblings and close friends who left her off in such hard conditions.

Interestingly, Cha was found to be repeatedly uttered by the poorly- educated women often with a sigh and high intonatioal tone to act as a hedging marker of mild/ implied criticism. She addresses them as if she wanted to say ' I am greatly shocked. How could you do that !'. Simply, Cha as a hedging is employed to avoid the risk of direct confrontation with those who are criticized.

Viewed from another angle, the DM Cha also appears to serve the role of a mitigating device as well. In the sense that Cha is repeatedly uttered by poorly- educated women often with a sigh and high intonatioal tone as a means to mitigate/ reduce the speaker's psychological burden. It explicitly mirrors the women 's psychological state or agonizing feeling of disgruntlement and helplessness. Uttered wrathfully and decisively, Cha prefaces the women 's utterance accompanied with an exclamation mark as a substitute to a question mark to help the women release the internally agitating sentiment of indignation; the feeling that broke her down.

It is worthy to mention that though optionality is among the characteristics of DMs that set them apart from their homophones, it does not seem to work on such occasion. That is, as a topic orientation marker, Cha initiates the speaker's utterance to constitute a part and parcel of its hosting constituent composition that negatively affects the message intelligibility whenever it is removed. Pragmatically speaking, its deletion typically renders a regular question simply asked to provide information about a place.

Among the other functions suggested, the pragmatic function of mitigating has also been shown to come into play when the DM Cha has been recruited in the poorly- educated men's speech.

Example (11):

ياربنتي ظليت عايش بره وما رجعت للعراق. كان ما شفت كل هذا الضيم

م. ح: چا بعد اللي صار صار. هذا قضاء الله وقدره

I wished I had stayed there, not back to home country (Iraq). If I did so, I could not have seen such grievance.

M: Cha (forget it). Let bygones be bygones. It's your destiny.

This excerpt is a part of a phone conversation taking place between the participant and his cousin who was living abroad and who came back to Iraq since three years ago. His cousin expresses his regret for not completing a specific behavior or act in the past. On the other hand, he uttered his sentence with a sigh to echo his sentiment of distress and sadness about the tragic and bitter status quo that Iraq is going through nowadays wherein poverty, misery, death and insecurity prevail in the country to entangle most Iraqis if not all. Taking the situational context during which the speaker uttered his speech into consideration, Cha prefixes the participant's construction to pragmatically introduce its hosting utterance as a comment on a specific behavior or act that the speaker regrets for not completing in the past. To be more specific, as a commentary pragmatic marker, Cha is pressed to service to raise the speaker's morale and so, to mitigate his feeling of self-blame, annoyance and disappointment especially because of inability to change or achieve something that seems to be inaccessible nowadays.

Among the other interactional functions that are closely related to Cha in speech is that of tentativeness. As one form of hedging or vague language, tentativeness is viewed by Alami et.al. (2012: 209) as a synonym of hesitation, doubtfulness and reservation. It is worth mentioning that none of the poorly- educated men involved in the study reflect this function in his speech. Put it differently, as one forms of speech that indicates a high level of politeness, this form of language seems to be the pivotal feature of the speech produced by poorly- educated women rather than men. This can be due to the fact that women tend to be more conservative, hesitant, tactful, and indirect in their speech than men. The following example illustrates the interactional function in process.

Example (12):

ها تحبينه؟

!.طو: چا غير ابن عمتي

Then, you love him! Aren't you?

T: Cha, isn't he my cousin?

This exchange takes place between the participant and her cousin whom she asks whether she is in love with her brother. In her speaking turn, the participant prefaces her utterance with Cha as a response marker by virtue of which she seems to be more reservative, tactful and indirect in her speech. That is, it seems as if she wanted to convey the message that she is unwilling to speak about her personal issues and so she tries to avoid answering such embarrassing questions as possible.

As one of the strategies of active listenership, backchanneling is proposed by Brinton in her framework to be the last interpersonal function involved. This function is revealed to be

echoed by the DM Cha in the speech of both; the poorly- educated men and women recipients. Beginning with the poorly- educated women's speech, the example follows illustrate the function in point.

Example (13):

..... قبل اسبوعين انصبت بكورونا و

وا : چا، الله يساعذك على كل هالمعاناہ

..... الطبيب وصاني اكل اطعمه معينه ولازم

I have been infected by Covid-19 for two weeks and

W: Cha (Sorry to hear that). May Allah heal your suffering.

Doctor (physician) has recommended that I shall eat certain foods and must

In a phone conversation, the participant talks to her colleague at work who has been already infected with COVID19. While talking, she tells the participant about her suffering with this disease. Interrupting her colleague's speech turn, the participant prefaces her feedback with Cha to hint to her colleague her involvement in the communication and that she is perfectly getting the information received, asking her addresser to go further.

similarly, the DM Cha also appears in the speech of poorly- educated men to serve the role of backchanneling or feedbacking.

Example (14):

يا اخي اموري كلش تعبانہ والبيت راح يطيح علينا . امس رحنت للبنك استلف قرض حتى اصلح البيت وما قبلوا ينطوني و

او: چا فعلا ورطه

. بعدين، رحنت لابن عمي واستلفت منه مبلغ از غير اكر اسدده خلال سنه ان شاء الله

Listen bro. I live hard times, and the house where we live is about to collapse on us. Yesterday, I paid a visit to a bank for a loan to get the house repaired. They refused to pay me and

A: Cha (I see, understand), no doubt, it is a big dilemma.

Later, I went to my cousin for a small amount of money. I could repay within a year, God willing.

In a conversational exchange occurs between the participant and his colleague at work, the participant's colleague keeps on telling him about the bad and hard conditions he confronted at those days. During their talk, the recipient represented by the participant interrupts his colleague's speaking turn beginning his utterance with the discourse Cha as a feedback or backchannel marker to convey the message that he follows his colleague's train of thought and manages to digest the information got. As if he wanted to say " come on, I get what you say", I am following you.

In addition to the macro-level functions mentioned earlier, some micro- level functions come into play within the context of Iraqi Arabic oral discourse forming the so- called dialect-specific functions. Such extra pragmatic tasks include indignation, astonishment, affection and mockery. To begin with, the naturally occurring instances produced by poorly- educated men have been first examined to show the manner the Cha is recruited to voice their attitudinal stance of indignation in their speech.

Example (15):

ح. ا: چا (تنهیده), سلام الله على ايام زمان

H: Cha/ Oh (Sighs), I wish the old times would get back now.

Cha prefixes the participant's sentence and uttered with a released sigh to echo the speaker's sentiment of anger or annoyance provoked by what is perceived as unfair; the tragic and bitter status quo that Iraq is going through nowadays wherein poverty, misery, death and insecurity prevail in the country to entangle most Iraqis if not all.

Example (16):

. چا (تنهیده), الصين ما يحچون بيها . الصين ذبوا علينا وما يحجون بيها. والله وداعتج

Cha/ Oh (Sighs). You know? Chinese people do not talk about it. They have caused a big trouble, and we are living with and suffering it. I swear by God. Believe it or not.

However, this excerpt is taken as a part of an interview conducted by one of the local Iraqi broadcasts with a poorly- educated women at her working place, the university, to ask for her opinion concerning COVID19. As an interactive marker, Cha accompanies the participant's speech while talking to the interviewer to voice the speaker's extremely strong feeling of anger or resentment towards China, which, in her view, spread the disease all over the world for inhumane purposes, leaving the countries of the world, especially those of the third one, suffer from the most severe conditions in the sectors of health and economy in specific.

The micro- level function of astonishment is brought to the fore as another dialect- specific job that was found to be performed by the DM Cha in the speech of poorly- educated men and women alike, as exemplified below:

Example (17):

!م ز: چا ليش ما گيليتلي عن المشكله! احاجيك

Mz: Cha (Come on!) Why haven't you told me that? Tell me, I argue you!

This conversational exchange takes place between the participant who works as a guard at the department of English and his colleague whom he is responsible of. Cha prefixes the participant's interrogative clause, and is followed by an exclamation of surprise to voice his feeling of strong astonishment or shock, seeking a plea for his colleague's unusual behavior. In the sense that it is used simply to reverberate the participant's feeling of astonishment when being informed that there was a problem that he was not told about before by his colleague, asking the latter to provide a pretext for such an unanticipated conduct. It is as if he wanted to say 'What made you so dare to behave in such a way!'

Example (18):

حبوتج وين چانت؟

! ف ض: چا عlish ما تساليها

Haven't you had a grandmother? Is she alive?

F: Cha (Come on!) Why don't you ask her?

As a thumb of rule, the DM Cha was found to index astonishment whenever used to accompany an interrogative clause. It is really the case that is noticed in the speech of poorly- educated women as well. In a conversation occurs between the participant and her mother, the participant's mother asks her about the place the participant's grandmother went for. As a

response to her mother's question, the participant initiates her interrogative clause with the DM Cha to index her feeling of surprise towards her mother's unexpected question.

In English, such a usage could be equal to saying ' I am really surprised! why did you ask me? Go and ask her herself. Interestingly, within this situational context, the DM Cha comes into play to assert its pragmatic value as an interactional device whereby its removal would simply render an unpleasantly rough question instead of expressing a mild surprise.

Another fascinating pragmatic sub-function the DM Cha also serves to convey in the Iraqi Arabic oral discourse is that of affection, as realized in the speech of poorly- educated women and men.

Example (19):

! ح م :يا بعد عيني يا يمه. چا شعدي غير چ

H: How dearly I love you, mom. Cha (my beloved), I can't live such a life without you, mom!

Within their kind remarks, poorly- educated mothers typically utilize Cha to serve as an interactive marker charged with the meaning of ' my beloved' to express their sentiments when addressing their family members or dear persons. In particular, it is recruited to get the listener's attention to the gentle feeling of fondness or liking others have for them. This function is attested by Aijmer (2002: 48) who is of the opinion that as interactional means, DMs are pressed to service to fulfill "a phatic function in the discourse, underlying the interactive structure of the conversation". More specifically, employed within this conversational context, Cha acts as a approximator carrying the " the interactive effect of softening the tone and building up interpersonal closeness with the interlocutor" (Fung 2003: 97). On the other hand, it satisfies other's interpersonal need of being beloved and estimated.

Example (20):

ك ش: بويه ادخل داخل. اخاف من الشمس الحمره تجوي دماغك

.چا غير چبدي ينچوي لو صار عليك شي. يابعد اهلي

K.: Beloved father, please come on in. I am afraid you might get sunstroke.

(Low in spirits) Cha (my beloved), I would go mad if you get hurt, my beloved father.

In this excerpt, the DM Cha is pressed to service in the speech of poorly- educated men to reflect the same function manifested earlier. Here is a conversation between poorly- educated father who recommends his son who is trying to fix his bicycle outdoor at that time to go indoor so as not to get sunstroke. Drawn on communicative context, Cha initiates the father's statement carrying the sense of (my beloved) to voice and boost his affection towards his son. It is necessary to point out that such sentences are always interpreted metaphorically/conceptually rather than literally.

Cha is also observed in the context of interactional functions typically employed for humorous or emphatic effect to raise the issue of mockery; irony or sarcasm as one form of indirect criticism.

Example (21):

ها ولك شعندك؟

.ا ت:جاي اسلم عليك

.انت موش البارحه سلمت علي ولك. انا عندي شغل, ما فارغلك

ا ت: چا انت شنو با الاسيوع مره يسلمون عليك؟

Hey you (in a scornful tone), what's up?

A: I am up to say hi to you.

Didn't you say hi to me yesterday, boy (disfavorably)?! I am a bit busy, and no time to spare to talk to you.

A: Cha (I see), you get once-a-week greeting? I guess.

In a brief chunk of dialogue takes place between a participant who is a poorly- educated man and his neighbor, the neighbor asks the participant about the reasons beyond his visit at that day. The participant tells him that salutation is the main motivation beyond his visit; a matter which is strongly opposed by the neighbor. He tells the participant that there is no need to greet him daily since he is very busy and does not have a time to waste. As a response, the participant prefaces his sentence with the DM Cha charged with a negative sense to inferentially activate an implicature related to irony; that is to indicate sarcasm as one form of criticism.

The speaker indirectly ironizes the behavior of those holding high posts and who identify themselves as very important persons whom we could see or greet only once a week or even once a month. In this sense, Cha reinforces the speaker's cynical negative attitude towards the proposition introduced by his listener.

On their part, poorly- educated women are also found to recruit Cha in their speech to perform the same function.

Example (22):

انا اختاريت امج من دون نسوان السلف كلها لوليدي لان معدلته ونويده وبننت اصول

!ف ت: حبوبه، چا اشوفچ كلش تحببها وتعاملبها زين

I have chosen your mother among all village women to be my sweetheart son's wife. As she comes from a noble family, tidy and unparalleled.

F: She is obedient, easy-going. Cha (I see), Here is the reason you love her so much, and keep her very close to you.

Here is an exchange taking place between a poorly- educated participant and her grandmother. Their discussion revolves around the good qualities that the participant's mother has, and that made the grandmother satisfied with her to be the only candidate chosen to be her son's wife. Taking the context of use as a parameter, her saying does not sound to go in line with her cruel treatment. That is, what is on the surface differs radically from what is expected to be. So, on her part, the participant introduces her clause by the DM Cha with a contemptuous language and followed by an exclamation mark to index the social function of indirect mockery. Done in a lighthearted and gentle way, Cha is employed as an interactive means to ironize the grandmother's contradictory behavior. That is, this can be interpreted as equivalent to 'your saying is met with ridicule since your action signifies the opposite to your saying'.

Functions of the DM Cha at the Textual Level

Within the textual domain, the whole story has been given another turn of the screw. In their textual functions, DMs are used only to perform a "sequencing function of relating syntactic units and fitting them into a textual or discourse context" as Stubbs (1983: 68) contends. Under this view, DMs are both connective and continuative. In the sense that they logically and thematically glue the discourse subparts and ideas together, leading to the spontaneity of discourse and the whole discourse comprehension. Brinton (1996) opines that as structural

and topic management devices, DMs are operative within the frame of six functions; viz, signaling transitions (opening/ closing a frame, topic switch, turn taking), acting as a verbal filler and information indicator in addition to tracing sequence or relevance relations.

As shown, one of the possible justifications for the use of DMs in talk is their utility in topic management to signpost transitions across discourse boundaries; that is, to open or conclude a topic in conversations. This function has been succinctly attested in the colloquial dialogues of both poorly- educated men and women. It is worthy to mention that as an emphatic marker, Cha is recruited in speech as an opening marker to intensify the interrogative force of its hosting clause. In this regard, the following situations represent the case in process.

Example (23):

چا اشلون؟ Come on! I do. Am I mistaken?

چا انا هسه شسوي؟ Tell me, you! What shall I do now?

چا يکولون مالچ/ مالک کيف؟ Come on! They might say what's wrong with you?!

چا ليش؟ Come on! Why?

چا شترديني اکلچ؟ Again! What am I supposed to tell you? Let me know. Come on, say it. ? !

However, extra natural instances are brought to limelight to provide further converging evidence with reference to this function.

Example (24):

ح: ا: چا لو تدرې منو اجالنا اليوم وشسوي. خلي اسولفلك

Ha: Cha (Hey) Let me brief you on those who paid a visit to us, and their deeds! Let me commence my talk.

In a telephone conversation conducted between a poorly-educated participant who works as a guard at the university and his colleague at work who was absent at that day, the participant tells his colleague about what happened at that day. Equivalent to the informal introductory markers 'Hey' and 'Y' know what?' utilized in casual English conversations, Cha prefaces the participant's communicative act to flag the beginning of conversation bringing his conversation as whole into focus.

Example (25):

زه: چا لوتعرف هذا البيت شگد عزيز عليه. هذا بيت جدك. يعني اني صرت بيه وخالك هنا هم صار وهنا تربينا

Z: Cha (Hey, Say, man ...) You don't know how much I do adore this house. It's your grandfather's house? Let me tell you? You were born here, as well as your uncle (from your mother's side). We were raised up. All, here.

This scenario is a part of a conversation taking place between a poorly-educated participant and her son while paying a visit to her father's old house and wherein they decided to live later on. She told her son some information about his grandfather's house whereby she and his uncle were born and brought up. Rendered as (Hey, Say, man...), the participant initiates her speech with the DM Cha wherein she is licensed to start her topic appealing her son's attention to the importance of the information conveyed. It is as if she wanted to convey her son the message that you have to be accustomed to living here since it is the place of my happy memories.

Example (26):

..من دخلت شراکه ویه هذول الجماعه لهسه وانا اطلع من مشكله وادخل بمشکلہ ثانيه. ابد ما ارتاحيت

ج م: چا فضاها وخلصنا

As the time I have come into partnership with those people (in a scornful tone), I have encountered endless series of troubles. Terrible! Still getting in troubles.

J: Cha (Come on!) You should come into an end, yourself, as soon as possible. Get rested.

This excerpt is a part of a phone call taking place between a poorly- educated participant and his son who tried to picture to his father how bad and askew the people with whom he got a partnership. In an attempt to prevent his son from talking in any topic else related to theme at hand, the participant begins his utterance with Cha carrying the meaning of (Oh, my son!) to flag his discomfort asking his son to end the conversation and not to complain any longer. Interestingly, the conversational constituent at hand, Cha (Come on!) You should come into an end, yourself, as soon as possible. Get rested, is commonly used by the Iraqis within the context of their oral discourse whenever they desire a topic closure.

Example (27):

گولي يومين روچه ويومين جيه ثلث ايام عند ابوهم. موش كافي هذا اسبوع؟

ن و: خيه، انت عيش تتكلمين! ما تعرفين؟ الطريق هم بعيد

وانت تعرفين كلش زين، ثلثتيايم روچه يالله تكفيهم وثلثتيايم رده وهم يالله تكفيهم. وثلثتيايم عند ابوهم. عيش شايله هموم الدنيا على راسج؟

چا يا خيه خلصنا عاد

N.: Come on beloved sister. It seems you stupid. Do not you know? Destination is far away. Isn't it?

You know pretty much that a three-day travel and three-day travel back home is a bit sufficient, then they need to stay with their father. Stop thinking do much about life worries and sorrows.

Cha (Dearest sister, zip it). We have got entirely tried of life.

This scenario is a part of a conversation occurred between a poorly educated participant women and her close friend at work. The participant's friend tells her about her surge of anxiety because of her two sons who went to Baghdad since about a week and have not come back yet. The participant expresses her astonishment towards her friend's exaggerated behavior. She tells her that she does not need to be so anxious about her sons. It is very normal to be so late to come back home since Baghdad is far away from Basra. Further, there, they stay with their father who has been in Baghdad for about ten years. Recognized as a potential closing device, the participant begins her speech with Cha as an emphatic marker to imply her intention to close the topic of concern.

Relevant to the function of management of topic transition is turn taking. Definitely, this line of reasoning calls for the necessity of bringing to the fore the fact that the sequence of turn taking or moves of talk ordering is fundamental and a prerequisite to any communicative act to be achieved successfully. Generally, based on turn- order principle in talk, only one participant has to take the floor at a time while the others have to listen. Then, this necessitates shedding light on the devices that govern or regulate turn exchange among participants in any on- going talk.

In this concern, Levinson (1983: 365) postulates that DMs are among the linguistic devices that are "explicable in relation to the turn-taking system". On her part, Schiffrin (1987) also points out to the structural role of some DMs in organizing roles among participants within the participation framework. Trillo (1997: 4) further adds that within the course of talk, "there

are markers which serve to organize the turn-taking system". Akin to other DMs, Cha has its structural role to play in turn-taking organization when talking takes place among interlocutors.

Example (28):

والله المحلات الجديده اللي بنوها بالمعقل محلات درجه اولى وخوش شغل جاي تشتغل.

ا د: چا صح اني ما رايح الها بس سمعت بيها. يكولون فايژه باستفتاء المحافظه هالسنة المرتبه الاولى. تريد الصدگ، تستاهل والله.

I swear by Allah (the Almighty) that the new shops established in al-Maaqal district are first-class shops, and they are doing well.

Ad: Cha (see/ listen), I have heard about, but haven't been there yet. It is said that such shops got number one in a referendum administrated by the governorate this year. Undoubtedly, they deserve it.

Ad: Cha (see/ listen), though I have never been there yet, I have heard about their quality by other people. It's said that they occupied the first stage in the government's quality poll for this year. Actually, they deserve it.

This excerpt is a part of conversation occurred between a poorly- educated participant and his colleague at work. The talk revolves around the quality of the stores built recently in Al-macqal; one of the prosperous suborns in Basra. Within this situational context, the initial use of Cha has a two- fold function. First, it indicates that its user has come to realize that the other interactant has completed his turn and he is ready to yield the floor to him. Second, it has the potential to signal that its user has more to say. That is, it indexes its producer's intention to claim the next turn for the sake of keeping his speech turn and preserving the continuity of speakership. In brief, Cha prefaces the participant's turn to help him hold the floor to voice his evaluation and judgment concerning the stores built recently.

Example (29):

الحكومہ يردونا نشيل من هذا المكان لان شنهي ما يردون دواب المعدان بحوطه بغداد.

زه : چا وين ترحون؟ موش هاي ارض الله صرتوا وتصورتوا عليها.

You know the government want us leave this place, because, as you might know, they abhor seeing animals of Ma'dan people (dwellers of marshlands) on the walls of Baghdad.

Ze: Cha (Then), where are you heading to? It is a free land, here you were born and raised up.

This scenario is a part of a phone call taking place between the participant who is a poorly-educated woman and her brother who lives in Baghdad. He tells his sister about the government's decision to displace them. What has been evidenced is that as a turn-entry means, Cha is definitely recruited to signalize the turn transition. That is, Cha is the first expression produced by the participant to express her desire to make a turn transition to offer her informational contribution and voice her attitude concerning the government's decision.

Also, pertaining to the DM at hand is the pragmatic function of a verbal filling. In linguistics, a filler or a sign of temporary pause is a word or phrase used by participants in conversation to signpost that they have paused thinking for some cognitive problems confronted but have not finished speaking yet (Tottie, 2016: 97). So, known as pause fillers, hesitation markers and gap-fillers, DMs can be employed within the course of the on-going talk to serve specific purposes. As a filler, the DM may be deployed to provide a solution to some cognitive problems faced while talking.

That is, it is used to give the listener the impression that the speaker is in need of further time to rethink and to reformulate his/her own ideas so that s/he can determine what to say next. It also has the advantage of helping the speaker to avoid silence so as s/he be able to keep holding the floor without being interrupted by the other participant. Under this view, delivering the collateral messages constitutes the prime concern of the filling markers.

The corpus scrutinized revealed that Cha is employed by both poorly- educated men and women in the course of their exchanges as a filling device to imply that the addresser " has not finished and is not ready to yield the turn" (Fung, 2003:106). That is, as a continuer, Cha has been found to be predominantly recruited to aid the speakers continue in their speech so as to keep holding the floor rather than being used as a delaying means for thinking purposes, as illustrated below across a number of exemplars.

Example (30):

متغرب وعایف ابنک وبيتک حتی تروح بالغربه، ولك شنو بویه

ا ح : چا انت ما تشوف حالي. چا هذا حال حالي. چا ياخويه انت تعرف انا رجال مو مال تخام. چا انا رايح اتغرب ..واتعذب چا لاجل سعدون وامه. چا ياخويه جم دوب اظل بيتي فارغ ما عندي بس اداين

You live the life of expatriates, leaving your son and family behind you. What such a miserable life you are about to live, my beloved son!

A: Cha (Come on, man!) Haven't you seen the bad life I have been living?! As you could see! I live a terrible life, and on the route of leaving home, suffering, for the sake of Sa'doon and his mother. Dearest brother, shall I keep myself and family on the margins of life? Not capable of meeting family needs, and owing monies to others, always!

This excerpt is a part of an exchange occurred between a poorly- educated participant and his colleague at work. The talk revolves around the participant's intention to leave his work at the university and to go abroad for working since the salary he gets does not satisfy his family needs. Operating at the individual turn-taking level, Cha is employed abundantly and simultaneously without even a pause by the participant as a temporary device to escape silence and to expand in his talk. So, it has a critical role in connecting his ideas in a way that is make it easy for the listener to get the intended message and with a less effort. Specifically, it echoes the speaker's intent to keep his role of speakership; his desire to not yield his turn to the other.

Example (31):

ه ي: يا خيه , جا السوق مليان بضائع اشكال والوان والله وداعتج. چا احنا موش فقرا. هو العراق ابو الخير. اكثر من ايام الحصار. ما صار هيچ. شنو هسه الناس ما عده خبز تاكل والسوك متروس. چا هما التجار اللي يديرون السوق. چا وين الحكومه عنهم. چا هي الحكومه تحاسب بس الفقرا. چا بس الله المعين

Ha: Beloved sister. Cha(Listen!), Markets are full of goods, of different types and brands. Cha (Let me tell you sister), and swear by God, we are not poor. Never! Iraq is a wealthy healthy country. If you could remember sanctions times in 1990s. Nothing occurred like what is going on nowadays. Don't people have food to eat?! Markets, thanks God, are full. Cha (Definitely), traders run markets. Cha (Come on!) Where is the government? The government only enforce laws on the poor. Allah is He Whose help is sought.

This excerpt is a part of conversation taking place between a poorly- educated participant and her relative. The participant is talking about the status quo of Iraq. She describes the maximum degree of abject poverty that entangle most Iraqis nowadays because of the government's carelessness, leaving the market under the control of the sluttish merchants. As

it is the case in the above- mentioned situation, the overwhelming use of Cha by the same speaker within the same speaking turn is simply meant to avoid turn transition.

As far the pragmatic function of topic-switch, no mention or even a reference is made in the data analyzed related to the function at hand. In the sense that none of the participant uses Cha to shift from an old topic to a new one. This may be attributed to the fact that all participants focused on the use of Cha to keep the continuity of their speech and maintain their role of speakership rather than shifting their attention to a new topic.

As an information indicator, Cha may preface the speaker's speech to signalize the speaker's intention to provide his/ her interlocutors with new information that has not been known before, as exemplified below:

Example (32):

شخبار حامد؟

اد: چا غير سوى عمليه لعينه بالشمال الاسبوع الفات. هو هسه الحمد لله زين. يلبس مناظر مسويهم

What about Hamid? Any news?

A: Cha (Oh, my brother) Haven't heard? He underwent a surgery for one of his eyes in the North Part of Iraq last week. Currently, he is fine, thanks God. He put on glasses.

This scenario is a part of phone call conducted between a poorly- educated participant and his colleague at work. The participant's colleague asks him about their other colleague, Hamid who was absent for a while. Remarkably, Cha prefaces the participant's utterance to give the indication that the speaker desires to provide his recipient with some information that he did not know before, Hamid's surgery operation.

Example (33):

سولفيلي على شغله ابنج ماهود

ن و: يا خيه، چا غير طردوه من الشرطه. اخذوا هدوم الشرطه منه وطردوه

Beloved sister, brief me on a matter occurred to your son, Mahoud.

N: Cha (Oh, beloved sister) What shall I tell you? He was dismissed from the police. Even his police uniform was withdrawn. Now dismissed.

In the case here, a dyadic conversation is conducted between a poorly- educated participant and her neighbor who asks her about her son's affairs. Cha initiates the informant's utterance to imply that new information is offered by its producer; the dismissal of her son out of the police.

Marking relevance and sequential relations comes into play within the textual domain to be the last macro- level function offered. This function is succinctly elucidated by Fraser (1999: 22; 2006: 194) who postulates that DMs often occupy " S2 sentence-initial position in a S1-S2 combination...[to] signal a semantic relationship between the two sentences". Simply, when related to this function, Cha is geared towards tracing " how the different segments are ordered and related to each other" (Fung, 2003: 104). The corpus analyzed illustrates the function in process.

Example (34):

!اسمع صوت استكايين. چا وين الجاي؟

I am smelling tea. Cha (so), May I have a cup of tea?!

!اجانا خطار. چا وين الجاي. Guests are received. Cha (so), tea is needed please.

Typically, these utterances are produced by both poorly- educated men and women, especially the old ones whenever they have guests. That is, as soon as the speaker's guests arrive, he/ she asks others to bring tea as soon as possible. As a DM, Cha works at the ideational (informational) level of discourse structure to control the flow of conversational exchange among the participants involved in discourse. In the sense that as a structural marker, it is used to signal the discourse textuality and coherence.

As a cohesive device, Cha is positioned initially for configuring and organizing the idea structure in point so that it can be easily attended by recipients of information and with less effort. Interestingly, Cha has the function of So within this context of use to constrain the direction of relevance between the two propositions involved in the ongoing talk. It is by virtue of Cha as a procedural means, a coherence relationship is established between the proposition introduced earlier in discourse and the upcoming act. That is, the message conveyed in the upcoming act (asking the other interlocutor for bringing tea as soon as possible) is deemed coherent/ relevant as a consequence with relevance to the premise expressed by the preceding utterance (hearing the clattering of tea cups/ the arrival of guest). Hence, a coherent relation is set between the two speech acts involved wherein the interpretation of the former conjunct is closely related to the latter interpretation. Put simply, it is by virtue of Cha, "X leads me to say Y". Then, "My evidence for X is Y" (Johnstone 2002:205).

It is worthy to mention that this sentence could be uttered by a speaker to literally mean what is said. On the other hand, it may be used metaphorically to leave the utterance open to another interpretation, which is of sarcasm as one forms of criticism. Within the sphere of this context, Cha is used as a connector to have the function of but . In the sense that, it is forcefully contrastive in nature. Specifically, it echoes the sense of denial of expectation wherein one's words appear to be in flat contradiction with his/ her actions.

As a proverb, it is equivalently compatible with ' I hear banging, Cha (but) I don't see grinding'; a lot of noise for no use. That is, we may hear great banging/ clattering of tea cups (great number of pompous words), but no grinding / tea; no (effective or real actions) can ever be seen. It is a traditional proverb used to refer to a politician or a person holding an administrative post wherein all his power is set in his tongue; whose words are louder than his actions. Simply, it is meant to convey the message that we have heard your portentous words so far, but (Cha), nothing concrete is seen up to now.

Example (35):

اد: البارحه زرنا حافظ بيبيتهم چا مسوي عمليه من اسبوعين

Ad: Yesterday night, we paid a visit to Hafidh's house Cha (because) he underwent a surgery two weeks ago.

In an exchange occurred between a poorly-educated participant and his colleague at work, the participant tells the latter about his visit to their friend who had a surgical operation since two weeks ago. Taking the context of use as a parameter, Cha prefaces the participant's sentence to textually signify 'a sequential relationship between the current basic message and the previous discourse' (Fraser, 1990: 383).

Axiomatically, Cha is pressed to service to fulfill the function of because. As a relevance marker, Cha is employed to signal the reason beyond the behavior done earlier, in addition to establishing coherence. Having the function of because, Cha triggers an inference that is based on the cause and effect logical relation, signaling its hosting utterance; Cha (because) he had a surgical operation since two weeks ago, as a cognitively plausible reason beyond the speech act done earlier; visiting Hafez at their house. As such, it narrows down the inferences

expected, guiding the listener to recognize the earlier discourse unit, e.g., visiting Hafez's home , as a consequence.

The DM Cha also has the advantage of indexing the speaker's need for further explanation concerning the issue under discussion. Asking for extra information is, thus, the subsidiary dialect-specific function that was revealed to be performed by Cha within the context of Iraqi Arabic oral discourse in particular.

Example (36):

شلونج يمه ؟

م ح: چا, يکولون مالچ کيف ؟

Lovely mother, how are things with you?

Ma: Saddened to hear that you are not in mood! Cha (What's up), mother?

This brief dialogue has taken place between a poorly educated participant and his mother who looks tired and upset. Having the function of (what), Cha is employed in this context to indicate that the speaker is asking for extra explanation about the matter in concern. That is, beginning the participant's speech with Cha implies that the participant aspires for further information about his mother's state. Interestingly, in its emphatic use as an opening marker, Cha seems to play the same role in such contexts as those below.

Example (37):

چا اشلون ؟ Then, how?

چا انا هسه شسوي ؟ Let me know? What shall I do?

چا يکولون مالچ/ مالک کيف It is said you are not in mood. Are they mistaken?

چا ليش ؟ Come on. What's wrong? What's happened?

چا شتردينني اکللچ ؟ What am I supposed to tell you?

CONCLUSION

Due to the importance of DMs in " demarcating discourse coherence and their potential for indexing social relationships" (Bolden, 2008: 102), the current research study was achieved to show which functions are related to the DM Cha when employed by Iraqis in their spoken discourse. The study results revealed that a set of micro- level functions were found to be performed by the marker at hand with its interpersonal and textual categories in addition to the macro-functions proposed by Brinton (1996) in her model. In terms of its interpersonal class, the DM Cha was shown to serve four extra functions including Astonishment, Indignation, Affection and Mockery. However, an extra textual function was added to the list of the sub-functions suggested wherein DM Cha was employed to ask the addressee to provide extra information. Hence, the manipulation of the DM Cha has been proved. As for the impact of the speaker's gender and level of education on the usage of the DM Cha in terms of function, it was exhibited that neither gender nor education affects the usage of the marker at hand concerning its functions. In the sense that the two opposite sets of informants were found to use the DM Cha in relatively similar situations to convey the same propositional content. After all, further investigations are recommended to validate the conclusions drawn from this study with reference to other DMs and social variables like age and class.

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