Backchannels in Jordanian Arabic

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of Master of Arts (Linguistics) in Yarmouk University

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December 2007
Abstract

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Backchannels are the verbal and non-verbal signals by the listener to the speaker without the latter’s giving up the floor. Backchannels constitute an essential and integral part of the linguistic scene in Jordanian Arabic. This study sheds light on the importance of backchannels in everyday use of the language. It also attempts to offer a clear definition of backchannels in the light of illustrative examples from the collected data.

Besides, the study discusses the types and functions of backchannels in Jordanian Arabic giving illustrative examples. Besides, it handles the impact of backchannels on speakers since they are fundamentally used to signal messages to them.

A statistical description is given to show the frequency of backchannels. This description provides evidence of how social factors such as gender can affect backchannels frequency in language. Part of the statistical description is designed to show how different functions and types of backchannels vary in their
occurrence frequency in conversation. The researcher found that backchannels affect communication and so they should be considered integral part in conversation. Backchannels should be given special attention if we are to understand communication comprehensively.