Parliamentary Elections Announcements in Jordanian Newspapers: A Sociolinguistic study

By:
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Bachelor of English Language and Literature, Yarmouk University, 2006

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of Master of Arts (Linguistics) in the Department of English, Yarmouk University, Irbid, Jordan

Supervisor:
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Acknowledgements

First, I would like to extend my thanks to my supervisor professor Yousef Bader for his guidance as well as for his invaluable comments and suggestions, which have enabled me to arrive with this research study to a level that will helpfully measure up to the standard of academic research.

I would also like to express my regards to the committee members: Prof. Faris Al-Mushgabah, Dr. Mohammad Al-Badarin, and Dr. Rasheed Al-Jarra. Special thanks go to the staff of the English department in general and those who taught me in particular.

Last but not least, my deep appreciation goes to my family for their support and encouragement.
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### Phonetic Symbols

#### Consonants

<table>
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<th>Arabic Sounds</th>
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<td>b</td>
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<td>t</td>
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<td>o</td>
<td>Voiceless interdental fricative</td>
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<td>j</td>
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<td>Voiceless pharyngeal fricative</td>
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<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>walad (ولد)</td>
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<td>wa:Had (واحد)</td>
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<td>mabru:k (مبروك)</td>
<td>Back long rounded vowel</td>
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<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>bint (بنت)</td>
<td>Front short high vowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>fi:</td>
<td>Front long high vowel</td>
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</table>
Abstract

Parliamentary Elections Announcements in Jordanian Newspapers: A Sociolinguistic Study. By: Amani Al-Refa‘i. Master of Arts, Department of English Language and Literature, Yarmouk University, Irbid, 2009. (Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Yousef Bader)

This study investigates the linguistic and paralinguistic features that construct the parliamentary elections announcements (PEAs) in Jordanian newspapers as a written text from a sociolinguistic perspective. Through announcements, the candidate can tell the readers that he wants to be a member in the parliamentary house. Moreover, many social, political and religious messages are promoted through the announcements. These messages are encoded in form of mottoes and expressions that are employed as a means to get the attention and persuade the readers.

The data for this study are collected from the two leading newspapers in Jordan Al-Rai and Ad-Doustor. The number of PEAs are 105; 97 are for men and 8 are for women. Data analysis is based on the descriptive method and on comparing the research findings with findings of other related studies.

PEAs are not randomly constructed, they are written in the light of the social, religious, and political codes that rule Jordanian society. For example, tribal terms, Quran verses, Islamic trends and patriotism attitudes are utilized. Not only the lexical features are taken into consideration, but also the non verbal features are involved in PEAs' design as indicative features that, sometimes, are more expressive and informative than the verbal text can do. For example, images of Jordanian flag, shared hands, and a well-built wall are used to support the written text and make it more attractive and expressive.

The study shows that the components of PEAs are divided into two main parts: obligatory and optional features; each one includes linguistic and paralinguistic features. These features are indicators of the social, educational, and economical background of the announcer. In turn, PEAs can tell something about Jordanian habits, norms, and values like offering food, and appealing to relatives and friends. The inseparable relationship between religion and society is also shown through utilizing certain Quran verses, Islamic expressions or by raising certain mottoes where the Islam is the focus.
PEAs serve as one channel of communication between writer and reader (candidate and voter); the communicative functions of the PEAs are not only to tell that someone wants to be a member in the parliamentary house, but also to promote attitudes and ideas, persuade the readers, and ask for support. Moreover, PEAs convey the interactional function of language in that they maintain social relations like solidarity and support.
Chapter One

Introductory Background and Related Literature

1.1 Introduction

In election campaigns, parties and candidates have to focus on how best to get their message across to the voters who can affect the election process. The candidates tend to use different methods for persuading voters like establishing headquarters for public meeting in which the candidates can directly speak to the electorates. Other possible methods used in such occasion are displaying posters, advertising in the national newspapers, campaigning through a local party website, and contacting by letters and telephone. (Harrison and McSweeney, 2005)

Advertising in newspapers is so familiar to the readers who do not usually pause to think about its nature. Announcement is a form of daily discourse which addresses a huge number of readers. An announcement is not just a promotion of a certain branded product, but it can also promote a certain idea in a text which tends to capture the attention of an individual, group, or organization. The writer of the announcements tries to establish his point of view through processing language with respect to the reality of the situation. In turn, the reader has to decode the intended massage or the central idea, (Angela, 1998).
Parliamentary elections announcements (PEAs) in Jordanian Newspapers have a large audience in the country in contrast with other comparison means, since newspapers are relatively cheap, and they are very easy to be passed from hand to hand. Through advertising, candidates tend to present the audience about their attitudes and policies. The present thesis aims at describing the language of PEAs in its social context. It will look for the communicative functions of the PEAs in newspapers and the influence of socio-cultural factors on their linguistic content.

Language is indissolubly linked with society as well as human behavior and the social factors are inevitably reflected in language (Dowens, 1998). No one can give appropriate interpretation for a language without realizing the social ideology that certain individuals or groups adopt.

"it is difficult to see adequately the functions of language, because it is so deeply rooted in the whole human behavior that it may be suspected that there is little in the functional side of our conscious behavior in which language doesn't play its part. (Sapir 1933:62)."

Sociolinguistic study aims in principle to discuss the linguistic situation of a language in a certain speech community according to such
social factors as class, gender, ethnic group and so on. It also explores
the role of language in shaping our social relationships as part of
everyday encounters and looks at the ways of interpreting the world as
shaped by the system and the patterns of the language. (Montgomery,
1995)

Hymes (1997: viii) suggests that sociolinguistics deals with three
themes which construct its basic fundamentals. They are the following:
1. There is a mode of organization of language which is a part of the
organization of the communicative conduct in a community, whose
understanding requires a corresponding, new mode of description of
language.

2. The recognition of this mode of organization leads one to recognize
that the study of language is a multidisciplinary field (i.e. a field to which
other disciplines such as sociology, folklore, education...are
indispensable).

3. The study of this mode of organization leads one to reconsider the
bases of linguistics itself.

Downes (1998) also indicates that language varies according to
number of factors which, sometimes, intersect in particular cases and in
very subtle and complex ways in a speech community. These factors are:
geographical space, stratification, social network, sex, ethnicity and age.
Language not just varies according to who we are, but also according to