Sociopragmatic Analysis of Agreement in Jordanian Arabic and American English.

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Obeidat, Manar F. A

Abstract

This study investigates the pragmatic features which typically characterize the language function of 'agreement' in a corpus of material representing spontaneous social conversational Jordanian Arabic (JA) and American English (AmE). It specifically has aimed at identifying the most recurrent realization patterns of the types and strategies that express and/or inquire about agreement.

The corpus of the study consists of seventeen hours of video-taped interactions, selected from three Jordanian Arabic shows and three American English films as well.

The study has found that agreement is realized in JA and AmE through a dense use of utterances or expressions that can be divided into different categories based on their semantic components. Agreement expressions in JA and AmE are classified into seven types that are common among the two varieties' native speakers; these types are the emphatic, unemphatic, partial or qualified, upgrade, token, reluctant, and the...
pseudo-agreement ones. However, the study has found that the AmE responses exhibit two extra types of agreement that are not found in JA; these are the same-evaluation and the downgrade agreements.

Furthermore, the findings have revealed that agreement is expressed in JA and AmE via a multitude of strategies such as endorsements, nonverbal responses, repetition, assertion, compliment responses, corroboration, drawing conclusions, boosters, sharing experience and claiming common grounds, expressing agreement enthusiastically, and expressing agreement with regret. Moreover, the study has found that native speakers of JA utilized two additional strategies exclusively; these are the use of conversation alignments and using expressions denoting a sense of faith and/or indicating religious status.

Key Words:

Speech act, Agreement, (Socio)Pragmatics,
Jordanian Arabic, American English, Politeness.