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# CHARACTERIZATION AND STORY-TELLING WITH “GOLDEN HUMOR” IN GISH JEN’S *TYPICAL AMERICAN*

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## Abstract

*Typical American*, as Gish Jen says herself, is “tragicomic”, which has won her a reputation as “lighthearted” and “delightful”. It is also a typical example of “golden humor”---a specific kind of humor employed exclusively by some Chinese American writers. The characters in the text with “golden humor” possess such qualities as absurdity, inferiority, and marginality yet comic and extraordinary, these qualities being expressed in what they say--- the dialogue--- and what they do--- the action. As in story-telling, many writing techniques and strategies may be utilized such as parody, irony, pastiche, understatement, epiphany, open ending, etc. Utilizing “golden humor”, Gish Jen tells us a story of immigration, assimilation, and occasional tensions both inside and outside of the Chang family. Gish Jen’s intentional employment of narrative strategies in *Typical American* enriches the tradition of “golden humor” in Chinese American literature, through characterization and in story-telling, providing the readers with an optimistic view and a gleam of hope for a brighter and a better future.

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**Keywords:** Gish Jen; *Typical American*; “golden humor”; Chinese American literature

## **Introduction**

Gish Jen, known as a member of “ the Gang of Four” and “an emerging author” in the Chinese American literary circle (Trudeau, 1999), has published four novels till now, among which are *Typical American* (1991), *Mona in the Promised Land* (1996), *The Love Wife*(2005), *World and Town*(2010), and a collection of short stories *Who’s Irish?* (1999).

*Typical American*, as Jen says herself, is “tragicomic” (Matsukawa, 1993), which has won her a reputation as “lighthearted” and “delightful” (Gates, 1999). It is also a typical example of “golden humor”---a specific kind of humor employed exclusively by some Chinese American writers---as is observed by some Chinese scholars. In Jen’s own words, “It could be seen an Asian part of my sensibility, in the sense that it’s a very Asian thing to imagine that opposites go together. Yin-yang, sweet and sour. There isn’t the sense that something should be sweet or sour, one or the other.... In any case that Yin-yang quality certainly embodies a lot of these stories” (Weich, 1999).

Gish Jen’s strategic use of “golden humor” in *Typical American* serves as a typical example of the kind. The following parts of the paper will carry out a detailed analysis of the novel just from two aspects --- characterization and story-telling --- discussing “golden humor”, which is embodied in the story, in detail.

## **Differences between Black Humor and “Golden Humor”**

A term coined by a Chinese scholar, professor Zhang Ziqing from Nanjing University, “golden humor” is used exclusively by some Chinese American writers, and has its own features in characterization and in story-telling, distinguishing itself from other forms of humor(Zhang, 2000). The characters in the text with “golden humor” possess such qualities as absurdity, inferiority, and marginality yet comic and extraordinary, these qualities being expressed in what they say--- the dialogue--- and what they do--- the action. As in story-telling, many writing techniques and strategies may be utilized such as parody, irony, pastiche, understatement, epiphany, open ending, etc. With the use of “golden humor” in characterization and in story-telling, the writer provides the reader with an optimistic view about and a gleam of hope for a brighter and a better future.

Along with the discussion of “golden humor”, black humor as another notable and more frequently used type of humor in literature must be elucidated and clarified for the sake of comparison. In the history of world literature, black humor became more and more noticeable in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is strongly evident in modern American fiction from Nathanael West’s *A Cool Million* (1934) to Joseph Heller’s *Catch-22* (1961) and Kurt Vonnegut’s *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969), in which disturbing or sinister subjects like death, disease, or warfare, are treated with bitter amusement. Baleful or inept characters in a fantastic or nightmarish modern world play out their roles in a “tragic farce”, in which the events are simultaneously comic, brutal, horrifying, and absurd. Displaying a marked disillusionment and cynicism, it shows human beings without convictions and with little hope, regulated by fate or fortune or incomprehensible powers. In fact, human beings are in an “absurd” predicament. At its darkest black humor is pervaded by a kind of sour despair: we can’t do anything so we may as well laugh. The wit is mordant and the humor sardonic (Baldick, 1996).

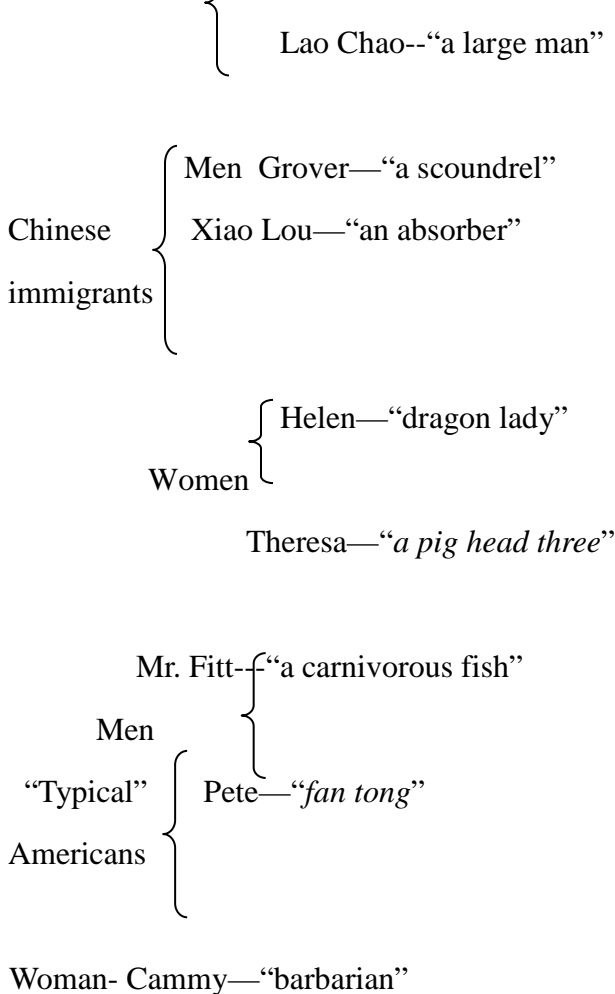
In contrast to black humor, “golden humor” as a brand-new kind of humor is frequently and exclusively utilized by Chinese American writers as a narrative strategy. “Golden humor” not only inherits from or draws on the experience of the essence of “absurdity” of black humor but also transforms and improves itself so that it is endowed with more optimistic spirit to exhibit the brighter, shining or golden facets of the Chinese American life.

### **“Golden Humor” Embodied in characterization**

*Typical American* narrates a story of three Chinese immigrants, Ralph Chang, Helen (Ralph Chang’s wife), and Theresa ((Ralph’s sister), as they pursue the American dream and struggle against the pressures of assimilation, greed, and self-interest. Both a comedy and a tragedy, the novel brilliantly turns the notion of what it means to be “typical American” on its head. As the three get involved in their American life (study, love, marriage, children, business, tenure), they try to understand their place in the American dream and just what it means to be a “typical American”.

The characters in *Typical American* are distinctly categorized into two kinds, the Americans and the Chinese immigrants, almost all of whom are labeled a nickname or something in one way or

another, each possessing a fairly vivid peculiarity, which presents a striking contrast. The following diagram suggests the classification: Ralph—“a doll”



All these vivid characters form a group of caricatures, reflecting Gish Jen’s intentional and flexible manipulation of “golden humor”. As the main character in the novel, Ralph is pictured as “a doll”:

Young, rotund. Longish hair managed with grease. A new, light gray, too dressy, double-breasted suit made him look even shorter than his five feet three and three-quarter inches. Otherwise he was himself--- large-faced, dimpled, with eyebrows that rode nervously up and up, away from his flat, wide, placid nose. He had small teeth set in vast expanses of gum; those round ears; and delicate,

almost maidenly skin that tended to flush and pale with the waxing and waning of his digestive problems. (Jen, 1991)

Originally named Chang Yifeng in Chinese, he obtains his English name “Ralph”, which means “wolf” or “a kind of dog” in English from Cammy, the Foreign Student Affairs secretary, who is delineated as a “barbarian” by Ralph. On his way to America, Ralph has six subsidiary goals, carefully listed. Two are resolutions to cultivate virtue and bring honor to his family. The succeeding four, culminating in a resolve to have nothing to do with girls, are abandoned without recall as Ralph comes to realize that he is alone, that he has journeyed “to the completely other side of the world”, when he immediately falls in love with Cammy.

With a name shared with Emerson whose ideas he lives out, and with mixed success and disaster, Ralph is “a thinker”, “a doer”, “an engineer” and “an imagineer” as well. To say he is “a thinker” and “an imagineer” refers to his habit of dreaming whenever he is faced with difficulties and doesn’t know what to do. The only thing he does on those occasions is to sink into his ridiculous and absurd dreams. In the second year of his staying in the US, he loses contact with his family--- his parents disappear, never to be heard from again--- which makes him “as mad as anyone”. He dreams of his family and his relatives, imagining his father being tortured, “His voice is faraway, a sound heard through a wall; yet the corners of his mouth crease and tear with effort. Pained, he blinks. His eyelids crackle like candy wrappers. We are dead” (26).

Ludicrously enough, the time when he forgets to renew his visa and has to work in a fresh-killed meat store, Ralph dreams about Pinkus, chairman of the department, while working in the store, “Sometimes at work, he’d see Pinkus step out from behind the chicken crates, apologetic. He’d see Pinkus kneel down beside him, offer to help with the plucking” (38).

Ralph’s habit of “imagineering” is illustrated more vividly when he is in the hospital looking after his sister Theresa after the car accident caused by him. Remorsefully and sorrowfully, he does nothing but “fingers the beads” to pray and resume his habit of “imagineering”:

Sometimes he watched unmoving Theresa, and saw her move again. He saw her walk and talk and read. Her saw her recite her lessons, he saw her tease the servants... how she swung, all tilt



and pivot, how she stretched up with her mitt and plucked balls from the air like a fruit picker... He watched her examine a patient, her authority impeccable. He watched her kiss Old Chao (285).

Theresa also plays an important role in the novel. Ralph is not alone in America for long. Jen quickly sets beside him his contrasting partner in the form of his older sister, Theresa, who escapes to America in the company of a school friend, Helen, and finds Ralph just in time to save him from suicidal despair over his lost country and family. Ralph responds to the coincidence with a comical, incredible feeling:

“Was miracle”... anyone could... hear in his voice all that the word meant to him--- rocks burst into blossom, the black rinsed from the night sky. Life itself unfurled. As he apparently, finally, deserved... Saved! Know- It- All in his arms! Impossible! (46).

Theresa’s appearance is both a grace and a curse. She saves Ralph from suicide and restores him to family life, sharing a flat with him and her school friend, Helen, whom he marries, but she also inadvertently renews family jealousies and quarrels. As Ralph calls her “know- It- All” (4), Theresa is “a paradigm of western influence gone wrong” in Jen’s words, “So smart, so morally upright, but she talked too much, in a voice that came from too far down in her chest, and she was *homely as a pig head three*, like her father. Drawn face, brown hair, big mouth, freckles” (47).

While Ralph struggles drearily to win tenure as a professor of mechanical engineering, a field he himself considers colorless, Theresa proceeds smoothly through medical school. Classified as homely and unmarriageable in China, she infuriates Ralph further by attracting his oldest Chinese friend, Old Chao, a married man, senior to him on the engineering faculty, until at the end of the story, she is made a victim in the car accident caused by Ralph.

Ralph’s wife, Helen, is a “typical” Chinese woman and the most traditional Chinese of the three, the “dragon lady” (241) as is described in the novel:

... around her, China... delicate feet. Sturdy calves. Slight figure overall. A contained way of moving... Shoulder- length black,

curly hair (a permanent). A heart- shaped face that, with its large forehead, and small mouth, and slightly receding chin, seemed to tilt forward. She had large eyes... shy... The considering type. Not a talker (56).

Helen embodies the traits of the ideal Chinese woman, and is, in all appearance, submissive to her husband. However, her outward fulfillment of the traditional role is merely a manifestation of a vanity that neither seeks to resist nor conforms to the role. Together with Grover, she cuckolds Ralph who is in the same house busily evading taxes in the basement, but controls her unexpected affair with Grover in the end for the sake of the whole family.

The antagonist, an American-born, self-made millionaire, Grover Ding, is “a scoundrel” in a word (116). At first admired by Ralph, loved by Helen and hated by Theresa, he represents the opportunities as well as the greed that America encourages. He personifies the good life, living luxuriously as a successful businessman, and also demonstrates the seamy side of business, as he widely uses fraud and deceit to achieve his aims. He seduces Helen, and cheats Ralph into a suspect business, which leads to almost the collapse of the Chang family. Here, Jen enacts a double subversion of “typicality”; notions of both “typical American” and “typical Chinese” are complicated by Grover, who, according to the prevailing definitions, is neither American by dint of his race nor Chinese by dint of his behavior.

The phrase “typical American” in the novel is derived from the comment “Typical Pete”, which is used by the Changs to mock their landlord Pete. Railing against Pete’s “typical Americanness”, Ralph calls him a “fan tong”, “(Pete)fly open, feet up on his legless desk, dog at the door, he’d often be thumbing through course catalogs, exchanging one for another, sometimes working through two at once... As if he could be an engineer! As if he could get a Ph.D.!” (66).

The Changs create the stereotypical American “other” by their playfully defensive recital of “typical American” characteristics, such as “typical American no-good”, “typical American don’t-know-how-to-get-along”, “typical American just-want-to-be-the-center-of-the-things”, “typical American no-morals!”, “typical American use-brute-force!”, “typical American just-dumb!” (67).

## **“Golden Humor” in Story-telling**

*Typical American* chronicles the bittersweet journey of Ralph Chang, a Chinese engineering student who comes to the U.S. for his doctorate, of his wife Helen and his sister Theresa. The Changs initially disdain the lack of tradition they describe as “typical American” behavior, but soon they are stir-frying hot dogs. They also fall under the spell of Grover Ding, an American-born “scoundrel” of free enterprise, who leads Ralph into a dubious fried-chicken business, seduces Helen and causes Theresa, the family loyalist, to leave home. The happy ending for the Changs comes not in abandoning the American dream but in finding a way to make it their own.

With her strategic use of golden humor, Gish Jen creates “an irresistible novel... suspenseful, startling, heartrending, without ever losing its discerning comic touch” (Entertainment Weekly). The following parts attempt at examining Jen’s strategic use of “golden humor” in story-telling from four aspects: irony, understatement, epiphany, and open ending.

## **Story in Narratology**

The term story seems to be so popular and controversial that it has long been widely debated though a unanimous opinion on it hasn’t been set up till now. Theorists fail to reach an agreement on story for the reason that it is regarded as “the lowest and simplest of literary organisms” and also “the highest factor common to all the very complicated organisms known as novels” (Forster, 1987). Some well-known dictionaries of literary terms even avoid supplying a definition of story for the lack of a generally accepted view and for fear of mis-defining, such dictionaries including M. H. Abrams’s *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (1971) and J. A. Cuddon’s *A Dictionary of Literary Terms* (1979), etc.

Although Aristotle never brought forth a complete and integrated definition of story, we may still extend his opinion about story by a few isolated words and phrases of his as mentioned in “Poetics”. Aristotle implied that telling a story was closely related to “the art of feigning”, which emphasized the fictional part of story in ordinary usage.

Percy Lubbock also touched on the subject of story though he didn’t offer a comprehensive argumentation with regard to the definition in *The*

*Craft of Fiction* (1921), in which he taught us to believe that “the art of fiction does not begin until the novelist thinks of his story as a matter to be shown, to be so exhibited that it will tell itself” (62).

In his *Aspects of the Novel*, E. M. Forster put forward his marvelous and distinguished explanation of story by comparing “story” with “plot”:

“The king died and then the queen died” is a story. “The king died, and then the queen died of grief” is a plot. ... Consider the death of the queen. If it is in a story we say: “and then?” If it is in a plot we ask: “Why?” That’s the fundamental difference between these two aspects of the novel (87).

He thus defined story as “a narrative of events arranged in their time-sequence”, which could only have “one merit: that of making the audience want to know what happens next” (Forster, 1987).

According to Boris Tomashevsky, a story “requires not only indications of time, but also indications of cause” that “may be told in the actual chronological and causal order of events.” The notion of the story, as he wrote, was “the aggregate of mutually related events reported in the work. No matter how the events were originally arranged in the work and despite their original order of introduction, in practice the story may be told in the actual chronological and causal order of events” (Lemon 66-8).

*Oxford Concise Dictionary of Literary Terms* (1990) describes the definition of story as “in everyday sense (is), any narrative or tale recounting a series of events. In modern narratology, however, the term refers more specifically to the sequence of imagined events that we reconstruct from the actual arrangement of a narrative (or dramatic) plot” (Baldick, 1996). Viewed from two different angles, this definition provides a relatively objective approach to the resolution of the problem. To sum up, in ordinary usage, similar to the definition of story in *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Literary Terms* for reference, story refers to happenings or events, either real or imaginary, which is regarded noteworthy of being told (cf. That’s a good/funny/ exciting story, etc.). Stories, whether fairy or oral folk, have a distinct structure, and a set of participants (characters) and series of events or actions. In narratology, however, story has come to be used by some theorists (e.g. Chatman) as a translation of the French term *histoire*, itself equivalent to the Russian formalist term *fabula*, which takes on a narrower meaning than in

ordinary usage. Bal made it clear that “a *fabula* (story) is a series of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by actors (characters)” (Bal, 1985).

### **Irony: Verbal and Dramatic**

As Nelson comments in *People, Typical American* is “a terrific novel... full of winning ironies” (1991). For the convenience of discussion, the irony employed in the novel may be roughly sorted out as verbal irony and dramatic irony.

Irony is found when the words actually used appear to mean quite the opposite of the sense actually required in the context and presumably intended by the speaker. It is “a subtly humorous perception of inconsistency, in which an apparently straightforward statement or event is undermined by its context so as to give it a very different significance” (Baldick, 1996). In literature, from the tragedy to the novel, irony may appear in various forms such as verbal irony, structural irony, dramatic irony, tragic irony, cosmic irony, and the irony of situation. This thesis will discuss verbal irony and dramatic irony that are used in *Typical American*.

Verbal irony is a statement in which the implicit meaning intended by the speaker differs from which he ostensibly asserts, or in another word, what is said is different from what is really meant. A famous instance of verbal irony is the opening sentence of Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*: “It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife” (1978).

Jen’s use of verbal irony is highlighted in Theresa’s engagement to a Shanghai banker’s son. Tall and “homely as a pighead three,” Theresa is considered unmarriageable in China; however, Jen narrates all these in extravagant and exaggerating words and repetition to bring about the ironical effect:

The female of the species performs her mating dance. This specimen carries her parasol on her left, toward the gate and her fiancé, though the sun inflames her right... A modern type... (50).

What if (the fiancé) he'd just come back from France, or Japan, sleepless with ideas, only to find that he'd been engaged to some sweet country miss? Of such fine family! What then? He'd sit down with his father, his mother. A capable girl, and so sweet-tempered... A capable girl, and so sweet-tempered, and so graceful! (51).

In the quoted lines above, repetition is made by Jen to further intensify the irony as the first sentence is repeated once again in the following several lines while "a modern type" is even repeated four times and "a capable girl, and so sweet-tempered" twice.

As to dramatic irony, the greatest feature of it is that it involves a situation in which the audience (reader) shares with the author knowledge of which a character is ignorant or, to put it in another way, that "the audience knows more about a character's situation than the character does, foreseeing an outcome contrary to the character's expectations, and thus ascribing a sharply different sense to some of the character's own statements" (Baldick, 1996).

Dramatic irony is heightened in *Typical American* by Ralph's ignorance but our knowledge of his wife's love affairs with Grover. Ralph is obsessed with his habitual "imagineering" schemes and plunges himself into the "typical American" entrepreneurial enterprise, which is proudly named "Ralph's Chicken Palace"--- the fast food business--- unaware of his wife's affairs. He is indulged in the pursuit of money as he covers the basement walls with motivational quotes: ALL RICHES BEGIN IN AN IDEA. WHAT YOU CAN CONCEIVE, YOU CAN ACHIEVE. DON'T WAIT FOR YOUR SHIP TO COME IN, SWIM OUT TO IT. FOLLOW THE HERD, YOU END UP A COW (198).

Yet ironically, while he locks himself in the basement busy with tax evasion, Helen and Grover carries on their liaison as Grover's presence pervades the room. While "wooing" Helen, Grover "tantalizes" the house with traces of himself, flooding Helen with ideas of cheap romance and infidelity. Such a barrage of American influences, all occurring within the presumably safe confines of their house, further disrupt the already unstable foundations of the Chang family.

## Understatement

Understatement, overstatement, and verbal irony form a continuous series, for they consist, respectively, of saying less, saying more, and saying the opposite of what one really means. Since verbal irony has been discussed in the preceding part, this part will concentrate on understatement used by Gish Jen while skipping over overstatement, which is not characteristic of the novel. Understatement, as defined in *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*, is "restrained statement in ironic contrast to what might be said: studied avoidance of emphasis or exaggeration" (Gove, 1996).

Jen once clearly expressed her preference for understatement in an interview when she said "I just prefer understatement" (Snell, 1991). Jen seldom touches on the issue of prejudice which puzzles the Changs since America allows the immigrants to create economic space but there is still a long way for them to gain access to the mainstream as is appropriately implied in the phrase "the intimate outsider" (Snell, 1991). The prejudice encountered by the Changs is addressed indirectly by her, but one of the few and most poignant moments is when Jen talks about baseball, the great American pastime, with understatement:

"We are family," echoed Helen. "Team," said Ralph. "We should have name. The Chinese Yankees. Call Chang-kees for short." "Chang-kees!" Everyone laughed.

Ball games became even more fun... "Let's go Chang-kees!" This was in the privacy of their apartment, in front of their newly bought used Zenith TV; the one time they went to an actual game, people had called them names and told them to go back to their laundry. They in turn had sat impassive as the scoreboard. Rooting in their hearts, they said later. Anyway, they preferred to stay home and watch. "More comfortable." "More convenient." "Can see better," they agreed (127-8).

The Changs become observers rather than participants in the great American pastime because of prejudice, though they describe the matter with a delicate touch instead of flying into a rage. Understatement is well embodied in their agreement that to stay home and watch is "more comfortable", "more convenient" and "can see better".

## Epiphany

Epiphany means “a manifestation”, which is used in Christian theology to signify a manifestation of God’s presence in the world. In modern poetry and fiction, epiphany has become a standard term taken over by James Joyce to denote the description of the sudden flare into revelation of an ordinary object or scene. Joyce defined an epiphany as “‘a sudden spiritual manifestation’ in which the ‘whatness’ of a common object or gesture appears radiant to the observer” (Snell, 1991).

Ralph’s revelation at the end of the novel is not the disillusionment of a Chinese nor an American, but simply a man confused by the complexity of the new context that surrounds him, thus he experiences the moment of epiphany, “What escape was possible? It seemed to him at that moment, as he stood waiting and waiting, trapped in his coat, that a man was as deemed here as he was in China” (295-6).

Ironically, Ralph’s disillusionment with the American dream comes by way of a very “typical” American realization, that “a man was the sum of his limits”, and his conclusion of it is that “America was no America”, indicating his rootlessness in America. In the end, he realizes that America is not the idealized version of itself: *Kan bu jian. Ting bu jian*. He could not always see, could not always hear. He was not what he made up his mind to be. A man was the sum of his limits; freedom only made him see how much so. America was no America (296).

## Open ending

A novel may be close ended with a definite resolution of the conflicts at the end of the story, or open ended when it provides no definite resolution but leaves room for the readers’ imagination. Realizing gradually the advantages of open ending, more and more writers are making use of it intentionally, among whom Jen is certainly a “typical” writer as far as her novel *Typical American* is concerned.

There is no redeeming quality or a sense of closure at the end of *Typical American*. Near the end of the novel, Ralph’s business fails, Theresa has been driven from home, and Helen nearly loses her marriage. When Grover contemptuously lets it slip to Ralph that he has been sleeping with



Helen, Ralph violently forces a confession from her, and in his rage, runs his car into the too prescient, too talented Theresa, nearly killing her in a moment he himself recognizes as half accident, half seized opportunity.

Rising from failure to despair, the novel then moves toward an open-ended possibility of renewal, as the Changs recognize the significance of family and faith. Ralph frees himself of the spell of Grover, and even considers giving up his fast-food business to return to teaching. Theresa, after a painful but liberating affair with Old Chao, decides to move into an apartment, stepping literally into the world. Even Helen, the most traditional Chinese of the three, controls her unexpected affair with Grover.

At the closure of the novel, Ralph lifts his hand in the snow to flag down a cab, his gesture both protesting and greeting. Ralph anticipates getting Theresa out of the hospital, restoring his failing marriage, recovering his morality. In this frozen moment, the novel ends without resolution, but with hope:

Outside, he realized that he should have called one (cab) from the apartment, but he was reluctant to go back in; to go back in would seem somehow to be making no progress. Instead, then, he raised his weighty arm... *shuo bu chu lai*. Who could begin to say what he meant, what had happened, what he'd done? And yet Ralph held his arm up in the snow all the same... (295-6).

## Conclusion

Gish Jen's intentional employment of narrative strategies in *Typical American* enriches the tradition of "golden humor" in Chinese American literature, through characterization and in story-telling, providing the readers with an optimistic view and a gleam of hope for a brighter and a better future. In *Typical American*, Gish Jen's strategic use of "golden humor" not only inherits from or draws on the experience of the essence of "absurdity" in black humor but also transforms and improves it so that it is endowed with more optimistic spirit to exhibit the brighter, shining and golden facets of the Chinese American life. With the use of golden humor, Gish Jen questions the definition of the so-called "melting pot" America, depicts the Chinese immigrants' struggle in pursuit of "the American Dream" through conflicts

and reconciliation, and discusses the Chinese American ethnic double cultural identity transformation and construction, with the hope of subverting the prejudice against ethnics in mainstream American Society.

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# ARABIC-TURKISH LOANWORDS: MODERNIZATION AND OLD-AGE MARKER AS FACTORS TO DECLINE

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## Abstract

The study attempts to shed the light on the hypothetical postulations that are based on empirical facts regarding the status of Arabic-Turkish loanwords<sup>1</sup>. It comes to refute the traditional proposal that loanwords are unchangeable and firmly established after they had been borrowed, modified and adopted the linguistic system of the target language. This view is, undauntly, assumed to apply in case of Arabic<sup>2</sup>. The study reports that linguistic and non-linguistic factors efficiently are leading to a remarkable decline to the use of most Arabic-Turkish loanwords. Linguistic modernization is the factor, reflected in social trends of prestige, cultural attitude, and media impact as dynamics of modernization that reduce the

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<sup>1</sup>. The use of the term loanwords instead of borrowed words is due to the current usage of the concept without neglecting that (borrowing) is as more inclusive to cover other linguistic sorts such as affix which has its role within the study. For more, see Al-Qinai (2001), who makes no substantive difference between the concepts of borrowing, loaning and adoption. However, the main purpose of th study may come to show the metaphor of the concept-borrowing and loaning- of not returning them back, but abandon them too.

<sup>2</sup>. I adopt the term (Arabic) to alternate between dialectal or colloquial and standard Arabic. I expect that majority of loanwords to be used in colloquial rather than standard. The speakers of Arabic have taken different attitude when confronted to Turkish words that have been entered to their language. They adopted lexicons and morphemes as well. For more, see Hockett (1958).

frequent use of such loans. The second factor is seen in old generation passing away. This status of old-age generation is attributed as a lexical marker- and undoubtedly maintainer- of these loans. This status of decline is, substantially, covered in classical and archaic words abandonment, including some Arabic –Turkish loanwords as marked by the old generation, while the young generation prefer to use more prestigious, modernized and standard forms even in dialectal and informal speech. These factors are directly associated with the decline and less use of Turkish loanwords in Jordan as well as Arab countries around.

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**Keywords:** Arabic, decline, loanwords, modernization, Turkish

### **Introduction**

Since the sixteenth century, the Othman Empire ruled Arab countries in both Africa and Middle East. This ruling continues up to the beginning of the nineteenth century. During the era, cultural influence has had its impact on Arab society. Jordan as well as other Arab countries have undergone Turkish ruling, incorporated some Turkish words in both colloquial and formal variety of Arabic. However, during that time, Arabic has loaned some Turkish words of military, proper names, names of plants, equipment, food items, functional linguistic words, and morphological forms such as adjectival suffixes<sup>3</sup> that indicate profession. This can be seen as in table (1):

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<sup>3</sup>. This sort of loaning is known as functional, related to morphemes that perform a particular function in the structure such as لي -li and جي -gi. These loan suffixes function as profession indicators that are added to original Arabic words such as coffee waiter in which (gi) is added in final position to coin the name of the man who prepares and serves coffee.

Turkish	Arabic	Meaning
belki	بلڪي	perhaps
kubri	كوبري (in Egyptian dialect)	bridge
oda	اوضه (in Egyptian dialect)	room
aywa	ايوه	Affirmative reply (yes)
Boza	بوظه	Ice-cream
kahvece	قهوجي	Coffee waiter
shawish	شاوئيش	solder
duğri	دغري	straight

Table 1: Turkish loanwords in Arabic

Some of these loanwords have been adopted by Arabic society and linguistic system, widely used in most dialects, and became integrant part of its structure and literature. On the other side, some other words were widely used till the mid of the twentieth century, and have been abandoned and declined<sup>4</sup>. Therefore, I expect to other word to encounter the same situation in future.

In fact, looking deeply to the historical structure of these loanwords, one may claim that not all of these words are originally Turkish, but rather, they are observed to be originally borrowed to Turkish from Arabic, and have undergone certain morphological change<sup>5</sup>. Then they were loaned by Arabic speakers in a semi-cyclic process as Turkish words. The process seems as in stage- figure (1):

<sup>4</sup>. I noticed that some of these words have acquired the identity of Arabic such as ( paşa, topuz, Tencere). On the other side, some words are observed to be a part of the previous literature and rarely used such as pastırma- jerked meat and bayram -feast.

<sup>5</sup>. With a little difference, it seems that such words have undergone a new process of clipping by adding a new morpheme at the final part of the modified word as in( jamu) from (jameil) and (Jalu) from (Jaleil). The phenomenon strengthens the term loan as relevant to our study in the sense that a language loaned some words to another might at certain point of time to get them back.

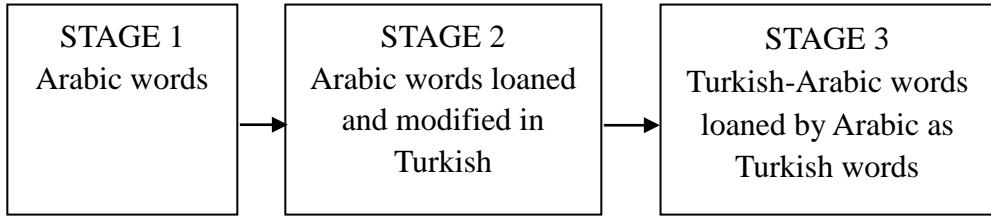


Figure 1: shows the stages loaning of Arabic-origin Arabic-Turkish loanwords

The linguistic modification to loanwords is represented by phonological aspect as pertinent with morphological properties that have had an impact on the attitude of native speakers of Arabic. They felt and observed the oddness of the new form of Turkish in use. Further, they were conscious to the etymological property of such words. Discrepancy of speakers' attitude could be a motive for certain and intended linguistic change. Some other words bear uncivilized properties when they are used especially by speakers. For instance, the word (evet) in Turkish has been modified into (aywa) in Arabic to mean (yes). This Turkish alternative term to Arabic (Naʿm) shows a sort of disloyalty to Arabic. Moreover, the selection of such term is said to be marked uncivilized and primitive in informal context.

In fact, Arabic loanwords in Turkish have not been used as they are in Arabic. For instance, the name of the prophet (Muhammad) has been modified into (Mehmmed) for a particular reason which for some seems purely linguistic. That is, such intended modification was to avoid using Prophet Muhammad name by people when they are abusing and insulting as to be prohibited according to Islamic rules. However, it seems that such attitude of the religious name resulted into anomalous loans to speakers of Arabic, and has never adopted as they are in Turkish. This draws a picture that loaning comes to fulfill the need of language but not to increase the bulk repertoire with unnecessary words.

The idea is that certain loanwords have been adopted due to the necessity to call new items. This loaning, obviously, have had a consonance with Arabic linguistic system and cultural context. Thus, what consolidate the existence of Turkish in Arabic, and the tendency to accept and use Turkish words seems to stem from the fact that such words have carried new object to the Arabic circumstantial world. Items that have never been known and found in Arab society such as names of food and equipment might be the most prominent that have had much opportunity for loaning. In contrast,

some Turkish words have been rejected due to exceeding the level of acceptance. Nowadays, we notice that some of the words which are still circulated and being sensed as original words of Arabic, and some are declining and approximately might vanish in future.

In contrast to the long period of ruling, Turkish did not affect in Arabic as expected. Presumably, and according to the era of ruling, there should be more loanwords than the existed number. See Holes (2004: 307). Further, there was a limited impact observed in dialectal and colloquial rather than in standard Arabic as Ugli (2012) says that “*the Turkish words started enter to Arabic, and the few entered to Standard Arabic Dictionaries, but the more entered the colloquial dialects of Arabic*”(p. 9). Thus, we further can say that the resistance of Arab intellectuals, who in a reaction to rejection the Turkish ruling, refused to incorporate Turkish words within the formal literature of Arabic. The political decision of the Turkish Empire towards replacing Arabic by Turkish could be taking as an essential motive for Arab society disaffection with Turkish. The status has been reflected in less loans and use of Turkish. This socio-cultural phenomenon comes to support Sapir’s (1920) quotation:

*Are there resistances of a more intimate nature to the borrowing of words? It is generally assumed that the nature and extent of borrowing depend entirely on the historical facts of culture relation; that if German, for instance, has borrowed less copiously than English from Latin and French it is only because Germany has had less intimate relations than England with the culture spheres of classical Rome and France. (p. 208)*

The major motives to low extent of loaning are mentioned in the quotation in cultural, historical and linguistic perspectives those which have their own impact to the nature and level of loaning. The cultural motive can be seen in the resistance of the intellectuals at the time, and their preference to protect Arabic and Islamic identity. The linguistic motive appears in self-dissatisfaction of some linguistics categories, seemingly anomalous to the Arabic linguistic system. Linguists instead followed the Germanic approach when the process of loaning words from Turkish considered a threat to Arabic identity and nationalism. Therefore, they relied on other Germanic linguistic formulation to form new lexicons as mentioned by Sapir (1921) that:

*Latin-German words like kredibel “credible” and French-German words like “reussiere” “to succeed” offered nothing that the unconscious*

*mind could assimilate to its customary method of feeling and handling words. It is as though this unconscious mind said: "I am perfectly willing to accept kredibel if you will just tell me what you mean by kred-." Hence German has generally found it easier to create new words out of its own resources, as the necessity for them arose. (p. 208)*

This linguistic motive has an impact to some way the acceptance of Turkish words in Arabic. This motive goes simultaneously with new inventories that were unknown to Arabs. On the other side, Arabic linguistic system is assumed to delimit loaning as in modifying prophet Muhammed name. Thus some Turkish words have been heard by Arab society as odd to be adopted. However, the cultural-historical stance of the Turkish Empire is represented in the political decision that had been taken by Atatürk with his (Kamalian Revolution) in order to revive and preserve Turkish nationalism from foreign inputs. This step has been considered by some Turkish linguist as a (Language Revolution), ordered to purify Turkish from foreign words. The revolution has taken the following procedures to enrich Turkish language:

1. Lexicology: They started writing dictionaries such as (Turkish Dictionary) by Hussein Kadem (1924).
2. Reviving: The Turkish linguists searched in ancient books for things that have no modern Turkish names, and listing these words in order to use them in current Turkish.
3. Generation: They generate rules for new words, and added suffixes to them for the purpose of forming new ones.
4. Compounding: As the process of merging two words together that includes foreign words in order to Turkishizing them.

This policy of the Empire to purify Turkish has had an impact to the countries that have been ruled by. Consequently, Turkish words entered into dialects of Arabic. Undoubtedly, some have taken the form of standard even with the effort of intellectuals to maintaining Arabic pure from foreign words. As said earlier, the effort and resistance of Arab Educated Movements were observed in the minimal impact of Turkish words in Arabic. They strongly believed that Arab Nationalism maintains the dogma that the border from western Morocco to the Arabian Peninsula must be united by one linguistic and cultural background. This nationalism encompasses other two essential concepts namely, Arabism and Islamism, which have integrated intrinsic relationship. See (Miller 2003).



## **Turkishizing Movement**

The concept (Türkçeleştirme) is used to refer to the endeavor of the Turkish rulers represented by Touranic Policy of the Union and Progress Committee (1889-1906) aimed to Turkishizing the entire aspects of Turkey, including the ruled Arab states. The policy involves replacing Arabic with the Turkish. The project started with official schools which were dominated by the ruler. The Turkish tried to officially legitimize Turkish in law, army, education and journalism of bi- side -Turkish and Arabic. Journalism Turkishizing has appeared in some common and main newspapers such as (Alwqa'e) in Egypt and Al-wzeraa in Baghdad. Hence, with such step, people were imposed to learn Turkish in order to get a job in such fields.

The official decision of the empire might be unconscious to the estimated consequences of Turkishizing Arabic, which absolutely has been interpreted by Arabs to undermine and conceal the identity of Islamic culture represented by Qur'an as written in Arabic. This policy was not based on logical and objective vision in the sense that replacing Arabic by Turkish could be seen as unthinkable turn which consequently could produce different sorts of challenge. One reason to this idea is based on the belief of Arabs in all classes that replacing Arabic by Turkish means a further loose of land and grants legitimization to the ruler. Therefore, they intentionally used to resist by all means and ways to the Turkish policy. Arab society, and particularly, educated people were all conscious of the fact that using Turkish officially means a legitimacy and credit for a long ruling.

## **Arab Resistance**

Despite the attitude of the Turkish Empire, which represented by imposing Turkish to Arab countries, but, as said earlier, there were some efforts of refusal by the elite of educated to Turkishizing Arab societies. Obviously, Arabic was the language of education regardless the efforts of the rulers and several tokens of adoption Turkish. Arab arising movements against the policy of Union and Progress Committee represented in establishing some organizations such as Qahtanian Committee (1909). As a response to the Turkish policy, certain Arab movements emerged such as the Arabic Young Committee (1911) in Paris, and Decentralized Management Party (1912). All Arab sorts of resistance were calling Arabic to be the official language. The linguistic opposition to the policy was observed in the lexicographer refusing to insert Turkish words within Arabic dictionaries in

spite of the large number of words of objects that do not exist in the Arab linguistic raw material at the time of ruling.

Accordingly, as due to the previous state of affairs, we see how Turkish majorly is restricted to dialects of Arabic but not in the Standard. Lexicography was one of the means to purely revive Arabic against the foreign loan words. One of the remarkable efforts against Turkishizing policy has been done by *Butrus Al-Bustani* (1883-1919) in his dictionary (*Muhit Al-Muhit*). The dictionary has been composed on the basis of ancient dictionaries such as (*Al-Muhit*) for Al-Fairouz Abadi. In his effort, Al-Bustani tried to rely mainly on Arabic sources for new ideas and objects in a step that was interpreted as a deep consciousness to purify Arabic from foreign sources. The same procedure has been already adopted by the ruler under the name of (Kamalian Revolution) relying on ancient manuscripts, books and document as means to purify Turkish. However, the limitation of Turkish to Arabic could be attributed to several reasons which held consensus among scholars of both sides. One is that, being the language of Qur'an, and replacing it with Turkish is believed to be a step to undermine, obliterate and destruct the religious identity of Arabs. The same tendency corresponds with the Arab cultural and historical pride, which had been seen as inviolable. This was the public attitude of the project of Turkishizing enterprise. On the other side, the intellectuals, thinkers and linguists attitude appeared in refusing Turkish as a school medium of teaching, publishing books and journals in Arabic exhibiting the heritage and in abdicated identity as a rejection to the entire ruling in all aspects.

That is, with such scenario, Turkish words were due to the previous analysis to be limited in Arabic. But the decline of use in recent decades and current stage is assumed to have different factors. The two factors of the less use and the speculated decline of the Turkish loan words seems plausibly efficient and identical with language evolution as will be explained in the next section.

## **Hypotheses**

Arabic loanwords from Turkish could be classified into three types. The first one is that those which have been abandoned since long time. The second type is those that have acquired a formal property like Arabic vocabulary, and are being used by most of Arab speech community. So they are firmly used and undistinguished from Arabic terms. They can be standard

in particular context. Loosely speaking, no persuasive explanation to why they have got this property over others? The third type is that those which are probably declining<sup>6</sup> from varieties of Arabic. In this work, I assume that the second type of loanwords have had crossed the stage of borrowing and became loanwords in Arabic dialects, adopted and definitely used as originally stemmed from Arabic source. On the other side, some Turkish Arabic loanwords that are reflected in the third type are in decline from the use due to the following factors:

1- Language modernization as a reasonable and rational impact, linguistically represented by certain formula as a reflex to advance of education and media impact of language change. Globalization is a sort of standardization. The later provides with a modernization to the social trend which involves language. The social phenomenon has intensive impact and considered as an outcome of language decline according to Hieber (2012). This state gives speech community the prestige of having a real language according to Garvin (1995:16). Arabic society in Jordan and other countries<sup>7</sup> as well are affected by mass media for the purpose of prestigious position which can be manifested via style and spoken form of language. This state of affairs, leads absolutely to abandon some of the archaic<sup>8</sup> -seemingly unfavorable- expressions including some Arabic-Turkish loanwords as felt to characterize speaker's identity as illiterate or immoderate. From this perspective, there appeared a tendency to a hyper-correcting for a prestigious individuals and societies that seek for more recognition via imitating a higher dialect and selecting vocabulary and expressions of high-level societies.

2. Decline of Arabic-Turkish loanwords from the daily use can be attributed further to old generation passing away. This assumption is based

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<sup>6</sup>. I used the expression here not to mean a total or an entire vanish of words, but rather the low tendency for no longer use of particular linguistic Turkish loans. The fact is that such words will still survive but in the written literature or for some requirements at certain social need of particular contexts.

<sup>7</sup>. The paper will mention the same stance in neighboring countries that have undergone Turkish ruling, loaned words from, and maintain the same assumption of such loans decline. Thus, beside Jordan, countries as Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Algeria and Egypt have received the same interview questionnaire that has been designed for Jordanian respondents.

<sup>8</sup>. The concept of archaic words and expressions can involve both Arabic and Arabic-Turkish words.

on the observation of the interview questionnaire that old people of both males and females know and use these words well. Generally, these loanwords are marked by elders. This fact permits to speculate that such generation of over 60 years old death will show a remarkable decline of this sort of loanwords. Obviously, there is a tendency among some educated old generation equivalent to the young tendency to use much elevated style. In doing so, the practice ensures avoiding less prestigious vernacular forms. However, in spite of the this fact, there are some Turkish words in Arabic, which are maintained equivocally in the mind of the old, and the probability of transition of such words to the present and coming generation is not asserted, and replacing them with available equivalent modern words is more prospective.

The couple factors that are listed above can be seen to have salient impact on the destiny of such loans in Arab speech community. The factors with respect to the sorts of Turkish loanwords can be divided into internal and external as advocated by Labov (1994). The internal-motivated decline is manifested by the type of loanwords that have been abandoned in earlier stage of Turkish ruling. In spite of this declaration, I assume that the internal structure of these Turkish words in Arabic has a significant role in decline due to its oddness and primitiveness as some respondents declared. On the other side, the externally-motivated decline is guided by social considerations that can be seen clearly in both hypotheses that are aforementioned.

The significant variable in this questionnaire interview is age. Thus, other variables such as gender may have no remarkable impact on the results. Both masculine and feminine respondents have equivalent responses towards the use of these loans. However, education as a variable is expected to have a significant impact in both the young and elders. It is assumed to assemble the negative view for using these loans for both groups of age-respondents.

## **Methodology**

In this work, I collected some Arabic-Turkish loanwords from different sources in Jordan and countries in neighborhood. I resorted to data collection from the elders and who still remember the story of Turkish ruling to Arab world. From this perspective, we can say that age is the essential respondents' property that has its significant role enlightens the work. I prepared a questionnaire for data collection to measure the level of

hypotheses speculation of such loans vanish and decline, which in fact is based on the attitude of respondents from Turkish loanwords use in Arabic in their communication with the community.

### **Questionnaire**

The questionnaire adopted in this work has been designed on the basis of selecting random sample of respondents from Arab countries of Jordan, Palestine, Syria, Algeria, Egypt and Iraq, which have been ruled by Othman Empire, therefore, have loaned words from the empire. In countries rather than Jordan, I circulated the questionnaire to friends there, instructed them of how to record the data, and write down any further significant observations. The questionnaire includes ten questions conducted in the form face to face interview with the respondents who are mainly from different areas in these countries for both old (from 60-above) and young (18-27). The set of questions came to find the validity of the assumptions and level of the continuous trend upon abandoning Arabic-Turkish loans from the use, which leads absolutely to decline.

The questions are designed to check the difference that already expected to appear between the elder and the young. In particular, they are in two main forms: some have been structured to check if the respondents are familiar with the word. For instance, they have been asked if they know words such as shawish (solder), Kazma (shovel) and ma<sup>ʿ</sup>ash (salary). The further form of questions takes the structure of (Choice) which comes to ensure the attitude of each group from the use of the loans. In this respect, a question such as (would you prefer to reply by na<sup>ʿ</sup>am or aywa?) and (Do you prefer to use kabout or jackiet?) are said to be asked to see the respondents reliable attitude from the loans and give a quantitative percentage for both groups as shown in result section below.

### **Result**

As shown in table 2 below, the result of the statistics of interview questionnaire comes to prove the theoretical part as mentioned earlier. Obviously, there seems a tendency to abandon the so-called archaic Arabic words. Once again, this tendency involves Arabic-Turkish loanwords in all of the countries that have been ruled by Turkish Empire according to the question-response and observations recorded from respondents. The table shows a correspondence with the assumptions that appears with the expected

results of high percentage tendency of elders to use the loans which provides with reliable evidence to decline after their death. On the other side, the young show low tendency as a response of language modernization as explained in the second hypothesis previously. In spite of this consistent outcome, there, in fact, some exceptions as will be explained later.

Country	No. of Respondents	Result in Percentage			
		Support less Use		Support Use	
		Young	Old	Old	Young
Jordan	50	48%	4%	46%	2%
Palestine	50	45%	6%	44%	5%
Syria	50	44%	8%	42%	6%
Algeria	50	47%	14%	36%	3%
Egypt	50	42%	17%	33%	8%
Iraq	50	40%	24%	26%	10%
Average	50	44.33%	12.16%	37.83%	5.66

Table 2: shows the result of the questionnaire analysis of the interviews

In both of respondents' categories, the streams of the significant outcomes as seen in the table can be said to support our assumptions aforementioned. Modernization as essential impact carried by young generation and to some extent by old also proves the linguistic shift from the Turkish loans to modern and more elevated style of words. The estimated result seems in the young attitude of the entire raw of countries of 88.66% who do not tend to use the Turkish loanwords in Arabic in both formal and vernacular forms of Arabic. This state reveals how attitude of the present and upcoming future generation will approximately result into Arabic-Turkish loans decline. The 11.33 % of respondents who tend to use the expressions that contain such loans is restricted to non-educated and non-modernized young who live in rural areas.

The table shows, on the other side, that old age respondents' attitude is rationale. The analysis of their answers to the questions produces 75% as who perform usage to these loans. This reflects and supports the presumption that they as loans-markers will probably play a central role to decline the use with time-passing. Furthermore, the significant observation seems in 23.66% of old age people who do not prefer to use such words. They are observed to be either conscious of the necessity to use more prestigious expressions that do not involve odd uncivilized words or they are educated and living in

modern civilized society in which primitive non-elevated style of speech is seen as odd and highly criticized. The table might have non-correspondence due to the percentage of each group- old and young- with reference to the data received. However, in fact, each country has different attitude, and idiosyncrasy for using such loans. For instance, some Iraqi and Egyptian respondents' responses show a positive tendency to use Arabic-Turkish loans as a part of daily life, which psychologically attributed to the proud of preference to use their own distinguished dialects, or they can be characterized as traditionalists who advocate preserving heritage in all aspects and perspectives.

### **Remarks**

The negative attitude towards the use of Arabic-Turkish loans can be mainly attributed essentially to the fall of the Othman empire. See Crystal 2000: 68. This fall led inevitably to destabilize the words loaned, which consequently yields decline of the temporal, restricted and mostly vernacular Arabic-Turkish loans. The state of affairs shows that the lack of written official records has had its substantial impact of such rapid decline.

A further observation that can be noticed from the conducted interview-questionnaire in Syria is that the geographical neighboring has its impact on the respondents of north Syria. Those respondents have been seen to show a positive tendency to maintaining Arabic-Turkish loanwords in their daily language style. This state can be attributed to the impact of the Turkish speech community on northern Syria cities such as Aleppo.

The results from both respondents' categories -old and young- show that there is a conscious knowledge towards Arabic-Turkish loans. This consciousness imposes to avoid them especially in formal use. However, in certain scenes, particularly, old-to-old context of communication there seems a possibility to use such loanwords. Moreover, in informal unconscious way of communication, there seems also a tendency among those who are familiar with such words to insert them within the raw of speech communication.

### **Do words really decline?**

The history of languages proves in evidences the fact of language death and loss. This, in turn, can be seen in words to have the same state of decline due to the less use and entirely undocumented linguistic heritage.

From the results of the questionnaire, there can be seen a consensus among the respondents to adopt a similar form of language practices across the Arab world. This form is taking the modern urbanized style and requires abandoning the traditional rural styles. The state of affairs tells that words can die when intergenerational language transferring stopped or interrupted, or other language differences emerged to the children. Thus, many individuals of the current generation have a strong tendency to substitute their personal valuations which involve language. They have intrinsic tendency to replace and assimilate more modern language style that no more spoken by them before. Thus, our style of speech is different from our grandparents' style. They have not adopted and get used to the same way we receive modern society aspects of speech. This inevitably encodes that the style of our grandparents is charged with Turkish loanwords will not exist no longer and hence accelerate Turkish loanwords decline.

## **Conclusion**

The anticipated result of the questionnaire, in the research, can be said to go side-by-side with linguistic view regarding Arabic-Turkish loanwords decline. The percentage of each country gives an indication to modernization and elders as lexical markers to be dynamics to loans decline. Modernization, here, comes as interpretation to the substantial issue that the rise of the middle class can be claimed to be the engine of language evolution. The state here is interpreted in middle class seeking for social value stereotypically assimilated the upper class which operates currently as the trigger to language evolution and style change. What is, generally observed in modern societies of Arab world -which all are covered by mass media that improves regularly the spoken style of the community- is that individuals consciously upload self-monitor to their speech style, trying to reflect a modern style approximately imitates upper and standard form of Arabic and empty of the odd Arabic Turkish loanwords.

However, in spite of the positive result as expected, there seems a possible way by which such loans can be revived through memorizing folklore. In such scenario, traditional films can play essential role since they are performed in Arabic dialects that encode vernacular form that involve Arabic-Turkish loanwords. Form the other side, we can say that despite the low phonological symmetry of these loans, but some are firmly and to some extent formally used in Arab world-life. This can be attributed to the lack of



Arabic equivalent or substitute lexical concepts- during the Othman ruling- to the new items entered from Turkish into Arabic.

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# **SOME FEATURES OF THE OCCUPATIONAL REGISTER OF THE INDUSTRIAL AREA IN IRBID, JORDAN**

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## **Abstract**

The present study aims at highlighting the register of the Industrial Area in Irbid. It is mainly devoted to investigate a number of speech acts in the Industrial Area namely, greetings, naming/addressing, thanking, saying farewells and taking oaths. It is based on data collected from the researchers' own daily observations and informal interviews with a number of informants in the Industrial Area. Moreover, data were collected from one spare-parts shop owned by the second author's family. The results show that the Industrial Area in Irbid has its unique register that fall under occupational registers. It is a tough register with apparent low prestige and a hidden masculine covert prestige. The researchers argue that knowledge of this register may protect customers from being cheated and overcharged by mechanics and spare-parts shops owners.

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**Keywords:** Register, speech acts, industrial area, covert prestige

## **Introduction**

In essence sociolinguistics tries to answer questions related to language choices, such as who speaks to whom, how, when, why and where? (See Trudgill, 1974; Gumperz & Hymes, 1972 and Hudson, 1980). It argues that in addition to linguistic competence and performance (see Chomsky,

1965) that every speaker should possess in order to speak a language, he/she should also possess the so-called communicative competence (see Hymes, 1972, 1974). According to Hymes, meaning is determined by the community that speaks the code or language. He argues that any communication involves: Setting; Participants; Ends; Act sequence; Key; Instrumentalities; Norms of interaction and interpretation; and Genre. These components are often acronymed SPEAKING (see Hymes, 1974).

Sociolinguists argue that any successful speaker should possess, in addition to linguistic competence and performance, a certain social knowledge that enables him/her to use the correct style of language in appropriate settings. This knowledge is often referred to as 'verbal repertoire'. This term refers to the knowledge by which a speaker is able to use the correct style for different occasions or places (Trudgill, 1974). For example, when I speak to my mother, I use a certain style, and when I speak to my boss, I use another, and so on and so forth. Those styles that are appropriate for different occasions are called registers (Trudgill, 1974). These registers could be related to many factors, such as occupation (driving, teaching, military, engineering, medicine, car repair, etc.), subject matter (atomic power, chemistry, physics, etc.), domains (university lecture, mosque, industrial area, wedding party, etc.), and the context of the speaker spoken to (friend, enemy, boss, etc.). Registers also vary according to the way they are communicated; for example, written registers are often more formal than oral ones.

The register used in the Industrial Area in Irbid is a unique one. It is related to both 'occupation' and 'physical settings or domains'. As the second author's family owns a shop for car spare parts at the Industrial Area in Irbid, we can say that the register of the Industrial Area has its own features and any outsider to the area can be easily identified from his/her register. More often than not, people coming to repair their cars in the Industrial Area try to imitate the register used in the area but fail. They do so in order to get good deals on spare parts and/or labour.

## **The Industrial Area in Irbid**

### **Location**

The governorate of Irbid occupies the northwestern part of Jordan. The Industrial Area in Irbid is in the northeast of Irbid city. It is located along Yaziji Street and borders Bishra to the east and Huneina to the west.

## **Ownership**

The ownership of all shops and workshops in the Industrial Area in Irbid belongs to the Municipality of Great Irbid. All shops and workshops in the area are rented via the Municipality.

## **The Emergence (History)**

The Industrial Area in Irbid was established in Irbid City Centre in 1967, but moved to the North-East of the city in 1971 where it is still located. It started as a small area with few shops and has been expanding ever since.

## **Shops**

The number of shops and workshops in the Industrial Area in Irbid is currently 2852. However, the number constantly changes with time as almost every month a new shop/workshop opens and another closes (Great Irbid Municipality Info Centre). Most of the shops and workshops are made of concrete. However, in the heart of the area there are a number of old hangers that are used to sell used spare parts. Those hangers were erected in 1979.

## **Services**

The main service that the Industrial Area offers is repairing cars and providing all sorts of spare parts either used or brand new. Car repair workshops include: 1) car electricians, 2) car mechanics, 3) car body repair and painting, 4) car computer checks, 5) steering balance, 6) car glass repair and 7) exhaust repair. Moreover, it offers car care services, such as car-wash stations, oil services, tyres repair, car condition check, car accessories, etc. The Industrial Area in Irbid contains a number of factories, such as nails, screws and building wires factory, FINE tissues factory, coal factory, plastic recycling plant, scrap plant and an ice-cream factory. Moreover, there are a number of coffee shops, groceries, kiosks, popular restaurants, and DIY shops. In the past, the Municipality of Great Irbid provided some free toilets, but they had to close them as they were turned into abomination areas. They were closed and then rented as shops and workshops. In the middle of the Industrial Area, the Municipality of Great Irbid has built a midsize mosque. It has a number of toilets and a wide abolition area. Not surprisingly, those toilets are privately rented and run by a member of the public who takes care of their cleanness for a small fee. Other mosques in the Industrial Area have

adopted the same practice and rented their toilets privately to prevent them turning into abomination areas. Other services in the area include: cars' scaling, Civil Defense Centre, Police Kiosk, Irbid Municipality Office, used cars sales garage and a bank (a branch of the Bank of Jordan).

### **Workers' Qualifications**

According to Great Irbid Municipality Info Centre, the qualifications of the workers in the Industrial Area are:

1. Mechanics: Most mechanics are not educated; some of them are illiterate.
2. Spare parts sales: Most of those who work in brand new spare parts sales are educated. However, most of used spare-parts salesmen are not educated.

It is worth noting here that 100% of the workers in Irbid Industrial Area are males. Even the police kiosk is run by males. This is due to the fact that work in the Industrial Area is tough and physically demanding. Also, it is not safe for females to work in the area.

### **Statement of the Problem and Significance of the Study**

As we mentioned above, the register of the Industrial Area in Irbid is a unique one and deserves to be studied. As will be shown later, one of the prominent features of life and language in the Industrial Area is impoliteness. Due to the tough jobs and the nature of the shops in the area, workers have to show that they are tough persons via rude and impolite language. In fact, one of the main features of the 'register' of the Industrial Area is the heavy use of expletives. To the best of our knowledge, no one has attempted to study this register. Some studies on loan words have hinted to some words used in the Industrial Area (cf. El-Khalil, 1983, Kailani, 1994 ) and few studies on translation also hinted to some words used in the Area (cf. Okour, 1997) but no thorough analysis has been made of the 'register'. Therefore, there is a gap in the literature in this area and the present study intends to fill this gap. The results of this study will contribute to the literature of sociolinguistics in general and to the study of occupational registers in particular.

### **Objectives and instruments**

The main objective of this study is to examine the 'register' of the Industrial Area in Irbid. However, this study does not intend to study every

aspect of this register. It specifically aims to study the register of the Industrial Area in Irbid in relation to a number of speech acts, such as greetings, farewells, thanking, naming (nicknaming) and taking oaths.

The data collection procedure is threefold. As a spare part salesman, the second author is the main informant of the register. In addition, tape-recorded interviews are used to collect data. Thirdly, over a period of one year, the second author has observed and registered all sorts of natural occurrences of some speech acts, such as greetings, farewells, thanks, taking oaths, etc.

### **Selected Review of Related Literature**

Trudgill (1974, p. 104) states that “the *occupational situation* will produce a distinct linguistic variety. Occupational linguistic varieties of this sort ... are likely to occur in any situation involving members of a particular profession or occupation.” The occupational registers are often different from each other in vocabulary. This can be either by using different lexical items or different senses (meanings) of the same lexical items. For example, the word ‘pitch’ has a special sense (meaning) in the register of football (Trudgill, 1974).

Juaro, Suleiman and Adamu (2013) investigate the occupational register used by soldiers in the barracks in Nigeria. An English language usage survey of “100 soldiers in the 23 Armoured Brigades, Gibson Jalo Cantonment, Yola was made and language use by soldiers was examined to discern whether such use are linked to and constrained in their Sociolinguistic Contexts by the educational qualification of the soldiers ” (p. 71). Data analysis has focused on the syntactic, stylistic and lexical features of the discourse. The findings show that “the language used by soldiers in the barracks is not only an effective and convenient tool for institutionalised occupational communication, but also a reflection of the educational realities of the soldiers” (p. 71).

Moore (2014) tests Halliday’s (2002) register theory and Hasan’s (1984) cohesive harmony analysis, to “illuminate how habitual patterns of language make meat-eating and factory farming seem natural” (p. 59). Data consist of four texts: an award-winning animal welfare campaign (Animal Australia), ‘Sage and Red Wine Pork Sausages’, ‘Fact File’ from Animals Australia and an excerpt from “The Sheep Pig”, a children’s story with a pig as a central character. She concludes that:

*while such genre-bending clearly aims at bypassing reader defences, the text's real achievement is to combine semantic features whose co-occurrence is normally blocked by the cultural-linguistic system, allowing it to project a sophisticated food identity for readers and construe a social identity for the recipe 'ingredients' (pigs), realized largely through bizarre cohesive harmony (p. 59).*

Ayeomoni (2005) analyses the political register of the political elite in Nigeria. Data come from the public speeches of a number of Nigerian politicians while addressing hot political issues. The findings indicate that the register of the political elite in Nigeria has a number of unique linguistic features. For instance, there is a "preponderant use of simple declarative sentence typology that is balance and complete in components" (p. 166).

Lewandowski (2013, 2014) studies the register of football and suggest that it might be a useful tool for studying patterns of variation. He pinpoints the main features of the register of football and lists some of its sub-registers, such as football rules and regulations; on-field communication; match reports; live television football commentary; live radio football commentary; and minute-by-minute reports.

Mellinkoff (1963) studies Legal English as a specialised occupational register that is often referred to as 'legalese'. He traces the history of this register and identifies some of its linguistic features. Similarly, Tiersma (2005) traces the historical development of legal English and explains some of its features that make it very difficult to comprehend by non-specialised readers, such as specialised vocabulary, wordiness, redundancy and lengthy complex sentence structure. As a result of its complexity, a movement emerged that called for simplifying this register. It was called the Plain English Movement and started as a consumer movement (see Schane, 2006).

Sometimes specialised textbooks are written to teach specialised occupational registers, for example Zhu & Gyorffy (1991) and Allum (2012) offer textbooks on Medical English that are intended for the use of non-native speakers of English who work as medical doctors in English-speaking countries. Also, they target students at medical schools who are not native-speakers of English.

Okour (1997) evaluates the translatability of some terms of the register of 'car parts' from English into Arabic. The findings obtained from a questionnaire reveal that

*60% of the names of car parts have been borrowed and Arabicized. Out of these borrowed names, 45% of them have been linguistically borrowed without any alteration, whereas 55% have been altered and adapted to the sound system of Arabic. The results also show that only 16% of the Arabic formal translation equivalents are actually used in Jordan, whereas 24% of the names of car parts are colloquial and of French origin (p. iv).*

Al-Asal & Smadi (2012) detect Arabicisation techniques in the register of 'University Lectures' in two Arab universities. The findings obtained from an observational checklist show that "the usage of the Arabicized scientific terms in JUST [Jordan University of Science and Technology] is higher in frequency than in the UD [University of Damascus], and the usage of the Arabic equivalents in the UD is higher in frequency than in JUST" (p. 15).

Darwish (2010) investigates the influence of the Peace Treaty between Jordan and Israel on the register of political journalism in the Jordanian newspapers, namely the way of referring to the other party prior and after the peace process. The findings reveal that the peace process has had a significant impact on Arabic journalistic language. For instance, "negative names that were regularly used to refer to Israel at the beginning of the Arab-Israeli conflict have gradually disappeared from the Jordanian press giving rise to new positive to neutral names" (p. 191).

Darwish and Bader (2014) examine the religious register of Jordanian Arabic and how it can be used to identify the religious affiliations of the speakers. The data have been obtained from both authors' personal observations, informal interviews, Jordanian TV, public speeches and university lectures. The findings reveal that Jordanians depend on linguistic and non-linguistic cues to "identify the religious affiliations of others. They also admitted that sometimes not knowing the religious affiliations of others might result in the inappropriate use of language in some situations, such as offering condolences, giving advice, etc." (p. 76).

### **Speech Act Theory**

In 1962, J. L. Austin introduced the notion of speech acts. He argues that when we speak, we actually perform certain acts. These acts are termed locutionary acts, illocutionary acts, and perlocutionary acts. The difference



between the first two acts is similar to the difference between speaking and doing. For example, when someone utters an imperative sentence like “Leave”, he/she utters a sequence of phonemes that travel from his/her mouth to the hearer’s ears. These phonemes form a word that has a specific form with an implied “you” that means “depart”. This is the locutionary force of the utterance which is part of the rules of the language, i.e., grammar. Any intentions in the mind of the utterer are often referred to as the illocutionary force. For example, the above-mentioned utterance has the force of “directing” someone to do something, i.e., requesting or ordering. When the hearer complies and leaves, then that effect (i.e., leaving) is the perlocutionary force of the utterance (Meyer, 2009).

Although there are three forces/acts in the theory of speech acts, the term ‘speech act’ is often used to refer only to the ‘illocutionary act’, i.e., the speaker’s intention (Meyer, 2009). This use is a consequence of how John Searle (1979) sees and discusses speech act theory. To Searle, a speech act emphasises the beliefs and intentions of the speakers. In this respect, Searle (1979) classified the illocutionary speech acts into five categories:

1. Assertives/representatives: they are acts that commit the speaker to the truthfulness of the utterances. These are statements, such as: “I live in Irbid”.
2. Directives: they are acts that make the speaker respond by acting, i.e., doing something, such as: orders, requests, commands, advice, etc. For instance, “Write a sentence” is a request from the speaker to the hearer to act by writing a sentence.
3. Commissives: they are acts that commit the speaker to some acts in the future, such as: promises, oaths, etc. For instance, “I promise to buy you a phone” is a commissive speech act in which the speaker commits himself/herself to do a future action.
4. Expressives: they are acts by which the speaker expresses his/her emotions and attitudes, such as: congratulations, excuses, thanks, greetings, farewells, etc. For example, “I thank you very much” is an expressive speech act that demonstrates the speaker’s emotions and gratitude.
5. Declaratives: they are speech acts that can bring “a change in the state of affairs”, such as: naming, baptism and pronouncing someone husband and wife. For Example, if a minister says: “I now pronounce you husband and wife”, then the act of marriage is done (Meyer, 2009, p. 50).

## Greetings

Greetings are one type of speech acts that fall under “Expressives” in Searle’s (1979) classifications mentioned above. When a speaker greets someone else, they express their emotions and attitudes towards the other. The type of greeting used between two persons can lead us to the type of relationship they have, i.e., good, bad, close, distanced, etc. Moreover, some greetings can tell the hearers information about the speakers: their social class, educational level, age, gender, etc. In the Industrial Area, greetings are often used as clues towards the status of the speakers and how to deal with them and consequently charge them fairly or overcharge them for the service given.

Greetings in the Industrial Area vary according to the relationship between the participants, but there are general terms that can be used with strangers. If a spare-parts shop owner/worker wants to greet someone he meets for the first time, he may use one of the following: *ahla w sahla* ‘welcome’, *tfaDDal 9ammi* ‘come in uncle’, *halaakhoy* ‘hello brother’, etc. However, if a shop owner/worker wants to greet someone known from outside the Industrial Area, he may use the following: *halabilghaali* ‘hello dear’, *halabkhaali* ‘hello uncle’, *hala m9allim* ‘hello master/dominie’, *keefakyamaan* ‘How are you man?’, *hala w ghala doctor* ‘hello dear doctor’, *zamaanhalgamar ma baan* ‘long time no see’, *halayaaba* ‘hello father’, *halaakhoy* ‘hello brother’, *halamuhandis* ‘hello engineer’. The latter greetings vary depending on the status of the addressee and the way he looks, i.e., his appearance and his clothes. Nevertheless, colleagues in the industrial area use more rude/intimate greetings: *sabaaHelkheeryahaamil* ‘good morning vagabond’, *marHabayakundara* ‘hello shoe’, *salaam yaHaawiyih* ‘salam rubbish container’, *salaam yakalb* ‘salam dog’, *gawwakyaHuthaalih* ‘hello trash’, etc. Some taboo obscene terms might also be used to greet intimate friends. Those are restricted between very intimate friends and colleagues and mark social attachment to the area. In such obscene greetings solidarity supersedes power and other status relationships (see Trudgill, 1974 for explanation of power and solidarity). It is worth-noting that obscene greetings are used more by uneducated shop owners/workers, mechanics and other workers. Moreover, age sometimes plays a role in using obscene greetings, i.e., participants of the same age might use them more often than participants from different age groups. All in all, the relationship and the

time of knowing and working together in the Industrial Area determine the amount of use of such apparently obscene greetings.

When a customer comes to the Industrial Area and uses very polite greetings with shop owners/workers or mechanics, he is often identified as an easy hunt or prey and they might overcharge him. On the other hand, if he uses less polite greetings, such as: *marHaba m9allim* ‘hello master/dominie’, *salaam yakbiir* ‘salam big/great’, *salaam yaHajji* ‘salam old man’, *salaam yalHabiib* ‘salam darling’, *salaam yaghaali* ‘salam precious’, *gawwakkhaal* ‘hello maternal uncle’, *salaam siidi* ‘salam sir’, *salaam yaaba* ‘salam father’, he is often identified as an experienced customer and they might not overcharge him.

### **Naming and Addressing**

Naming or addressing people in general is a speech act that can fall under both declaratives and expressives in Searle’s (1979) classifications. People address each other with different names and social honorifics that express their emotions and attitudes towards them. In the Industrial Area, addressing outsiders, of course, differs from addressing insiders. Outsiders may be addressed by one or more of the following: *khaal* ‘maternal uncle’, *9ammi* ‘paternal uncle’, *doctor* ‘doctor’, *ghaali* ‘precious’, *muhandis* ‘engineer’, *m9allim* ‘master/dominie’, *hajji* ‘old man’, *akhoy* ‘my brother’, *elHabiib* ‘darling’, *elTayyib* ‘kind-hearted’, *elmuHtaram* ‘respected’, *nuwwarah* ‘blossom/light’ and *sheekh* ‘sheik’, *mudiir* ‘boss’, and *ustaathi* ‘teacher’.

Insiders can be named all sorts of names and nicknames according to the educational level and the relationship between the addresser and the addressee. For example, standard names include: *muhandis* ‘engineer’, *m9allim* ‘master/dominie’, *khabiir* ‘expert’, *khaal* ‘maternal uncle’, *za9iim* ‘chief’, *9ammi* ‘paternal uncle’, *jiddi* ‘grandfather’, *akhoy* ‘brother’, *yaaba* ‘father’, *maan* ‘man’, *kbiir* ‘big/great’, *9gaali* ‘my headband’, etc. Interestingly, mechanics often use very rude names to address very close colleagues. Strangely, the closer the relationship, age, and educational levels are the ruder the names get. Such rude names and nicknames include: *haamil* ‘vagabond’, *kundara* ‘shoe’, *haffaayih* ‘slippers’, *zannuubah* ‘flip flop’, *daabbih* ‘animal’. Moreover, some obscene and taboo terms are sometimes used to refer to very close colleagues.

## Farewells

Farewells fall under “Expressives” in Searle’s (1979) classifications mentioned above. When speakers say farewells to others, they express their emotions and attitudes towards them. The type of farewell used between two persons can lead us to the type of relationship they have, i.e., good, bad, close, distanced, etc. Moreover, it can tell us information of how their encounter took place, i.e., bad farewells hint to bad encounters and so on and so forth.

In the Industrial Area, farewells vary depending on the addresser and the addressee and the way the encounter (service-payment-satisfaction) went. If the customer was satisfied and paid for his service promptly, then the farewells would often be positive, such as: *Allah ma9ak* ‘may Allah be with you’, *Allah yiyassiramrak* ‘may Allah make your way’, *ma9essalaamih* ‘goodbye’, *khaliinanshuufak* ‘let us see you again’, etc. If, however, things did not work out smoothly, i.e., the customer was not satisfied by the service or did not pay for the service in full and kept bargaining, then the farewells would often be negative, such as *darbySud ma yrud* ‘May you go and not come back’, *Allah la yijiibak* ‘May Allah not bring you again’, *Allah la yiraj3ak* ‘May Allah not bring you again’, *Allah la ybaariklak* ‘May Allah not increase his givings to you’, or a faint *halahala* ‘welcome, welcome’.

Within the insiders, saying farewells differs according to the profession. For example, spare-parts shop owners often use more polite farewells than mechanics. This is due to the fact that shop owners are often more educated than the mechanics and other workers. Shop owners are often educated people who have invested in the Industrial Area or government workers who have retired and invested in a spare-parts shop in order to kill time and make some money. Most of the mechanics, on the other hand, are uneducated individuals who have left school or who have been expelled from school at an early age. Therefore, when mechanics say farewell to each other, they often use very rude phrases in order to mark their belonging to the tough masculine community. For example, rude farewells such as the following are common between the mechanics: *gal9a tigla9ak* ‘May you go and not come back’, *Allah la yijiibak* ‘May Allah not bring you again’, *Allah yookhthak* ‘May Allah take you away’, *darbtSudd ma trudd* ‘May you go and not come back again’, etc. Again, some obscene farewells are sometimes used between very close colleagues.

Generally speaking, most face-to-face farewells used by people in the Industrial Area to address outsiders, i.e., customers, are positive and call them to come back again. They often contain an invocation of Allah to protect the customer and bring him again. On the other hand, non-face-to-face farewells vary according to the situation, but they are mostly less positive than face-to-face ones.

### Thanking

Thanking falls under “Expressives” in Searle’s (1979) classifications of speech acts. When speakers thank each other, they often do so in order to express their gratitude to the addressees. Like other speech acts in the Industrial Area, the way a customer says ‘thanks’ may determine whether he is going to be cheated and overcharged or not. For example, if a customer overuses very high-class and polite expressions of ‘thanking’ during the service, the mechanics may infer that he belongs to a rich class that is able to pay more and that is more distant from their own; therefore, more often than not they may decide to overcharge him or even charge him for a fake or unnecessary service. However, there are expressions that are polite and tough at the same time, such as: *shukranyakbiir* ‘thanks big/great’, *shukranyamaan* ‘thanks man’, *shukranyalHabiib* ‘thanks darling’, *shukranyagalbi* ‘thanks my heart’, etc. Such expressions of thanks, send a message to the mechanics that the customers belong to the same working-class as themselves and that they have experience with life in the Industrial Area; therefore, they may feel reluctant to try and cheat or overcharge them.

Within the Industrial Area itself, spare-parts shop owners and the mechanics often use the following expressions of thanks with the customers after a satisfactory encounter/business: *shukranyaTayyib* ‘thanks kind-hearted’, *shukranya9ammi* ‘thanks paternal uncle’, *shukranyakhaali* ‘thanks maternal uncle’, *shukranyasheekh* ‘thanks sheikh’, *shukranyakbiir* ‘thanks big/great’, *shukranyamaan* ‘thanks man’, *shukranyagalbi* ‘thanks my heart’, *9ala raasi* ‘lit. on my head = thanks’. These expressions are also used between the mechanics and the spare-parts shop owners. Nevertheless, some mechanics whose relationships are very close and whose ages are very close often use obscene expressions of thanks in order to mark their belonging to the tough speech community at the Industrial Area.

## Swearing or taking oaths

Swearing or taking oaths fall under “Expressives” in Searle’s (1979) classifications of speech acts. However, because they commit their doers to the truthfulness of what they swear about, they can also be considered “Commissives”. When someone swears or takes an oath, he/she does so in order to convince the others that what is said is true. Jordanians often swear by Allah (*wallah*), Allah’s life (*wiHyaat Allah*), God (*wrabbi*), God’s life (*wiHyaat rabbi*), prophets (*winnabi*, *wirrasuul*, *wmoHammad*), prophets lives (*wiHyaatinnabi*, *wiHyaatelrasuul*, *wiHyaatMoHammad*), Quran (*wilquraan*, *wilmisHaf*), honour (*wsharafi*), relatives lives (*wiHyaatummi*), relatives honour (*wsharafkhawaati*), etc. Interestingly, Islam and Christianity discourage swearing and taking oaths a lot. Moreover, Muslims are not allowed to swear by anyone but Allah. Nevertheless, in reality Muslim and Christians Jordanians do swear a lot by Allah’s (God’s) name and by others as stated above. In the Industrial Area, swearing by Allah, God and other persons or things is rampant by Muslims and Christians and people of other religions. This is due to the fact that there is no trust between the customers and the mechanics or spare-parts shop owners.

Generally speaking, spare-parts shop owners swear by Allah (*wallaahi*), Allah’s life (*wiHyaat rabbi*), Allah’s might (*w9izzit Allah*), God (*wrabbi*), God’s life (*wiHyaat rabbi*), God’s might (*w9izzit rabbi*). A small percentage of shop owners use a less standard phrases of swearing, especially when not telling the truth, such as: *wghalaatak* ‘by your dearness’, *biduunHilfaan* ‘without swearing’, *wraHmitaboy* ‘by the memory of my late father’ (used when the father is still alive as a way round the lie), *wsharafukhti* ‘by the honour of my sister’ (used when the addresser does not have a sister as a way round the lie), etc.

On the other hand, the mechanics’ phrases of swearing are more ‘slang’ and less standard, such as: *wsharafkhawwati* ‘by my sisters’ honour’, *w3ardh khawaati* ‘by my sisters’ honour’, *w3ardh ummi* ‘by my mother’s honour’, *wiHyaatelkhubiz* ‘by the bread’, etc. Other taboo phrases are also used by some mechanics with each other and with the customers, such as *wiTTalaaq* ‘by divorce’ (Muslims are advised not to swear by the holy bond of matrimony as ‘divorce’ is a speech act that can be performed verbally or can be bound to the truthfulness of a statement).

## Conclusion

All in all, we can safely say that standard speech acts inside the Industrial Area are often less polite than those outside. This may be due to different factors. Firstly, almost all workers at the Industrial Area are not educated and hence belong to lower social classes. Secondly, all workers are males and hence covert prestige might be at work (covert prestige refers to a special type of prestige set by speakers who want to belong to a certain group, ethnicity, or speech community). Thirdly, jobs at the Industrial Area are tough and require less politeness in order for the workers to survive. Fourthly, most of the workers wear dirty clothes during work due to its nature, this might reflect on the way they feel and talk. Fifthly, lack of governmental supervision, inspection and censorship might have played a role in shaping the general rude and manipulative atmosphere in the Industrial Area. Sixthly, lack of religion and morality might have nurtured such rude language in the Industrial Area.

There are many implications for the benefit of the outsiders who read this study. From the long experience of the second author as an insider at the Industrial Area, we can argue that the insiders listen carefully to the way customers talk in order to infer their social status. They are vigilant to the way customers dress, behave and talk. From the moment a customer greets them, they listen carefully and other things are decided upon the way they perceive him. For instance, if a customer came to a mechanic smartly dressed and spoke politely using very polite greetings and overused prestigious phrases of thanks, there is a good chance that the mechanic would identify him as a possible prey. In other words, there would be a good chance that the mechanic would fake some problems in the car and ask him to go and buy some unnecessary parts from another allied spare-parts shop owner. In this case, the mechanic would ask him to tell the spare-parts shop owner that “Mechanic x sent me to you and he wanted those spare parts”. To the insiders, this is a code that the customer is an easy prey. Consequently, the customer would be overcharged for unnecessary spare parts and the mechanic would steal the old genuine parts (which do not need to be replaced) with new commercial and less reliable ones. In this case, the customer would go home happy and the mechanic would go and collect his share from the spare-parts shop owner after he has charged the customer for fake service and stolen his genuine working parts which he in turn would sell back to the spare-parts shop owner as used genuine parts.



Hence, customers are advised to be vigilant about the way they speak in the Industrial Area. They must use less prestigious phrases of greetings, thanking, addressing, swearing, etc. In other words, they should try to show the mechanics that they are experienced customers and that they come from similar social classes. Only in this way, they might avoid being overcharged or charged for fake services.

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# COMPARATIVE LITERATURE IN CLASSROOM: A MODEL

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## **Abstract**

Many questions arise in understanding the texts produced in different locales within the bigger ambit of world literature. It is here, the need arises for applying various modes of enquiry in understanding them. Comparative literature can become a common platform for understanding different cultures and literatures. The present paper is a modest attempt towards introducing the concept of comparative literature to a fresh learner and then scaling the literatures of two different contexts (Dalit and African American) together for practical purposes. A model is proposed for discussing comparative literature in classroom Thus it becomes an authentic and unique research bringing theory and practice together.

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**Keywords:** Comparative literature, Dalit Literature, African American Literature, A model

## **Introduction:**

The world, today, has wonderfully come closer .The patterns of liberalization, privatization and globalization have inspired the people ,across the globe, towards an increasing trend of co-operation and intervention, not only in political and economic spheres but also in culture and its various artifacts especially literatures .We are so open to the identity and opinion of the other that the nouns like culture ,history, literature ,English etc. that have been used grammatically in singular , are popularly accepting the plural form today.

In such a scenario where many agents of civilization ply together at the same plank and at the same time, naturally, there emerges an urge to compare and contrast, and a need and scope of putting language and literature at par under comparative literature. The present paper is a modest attempt towards introducing the concept of comparative literature to a fresh learner and then scaling the literatures of two diversified contexts together for practical purposes. Thus it becomes an authentic and unique research bringing theory and practice together.

### **Comparative Literature: A Brief Introduction**

The Concept of Comparative Literature relates to the ideas of Goethe. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe in his project of the "world literature" (*Weltliteratur*) chalked out the framework of Comparative Literature. Transylvanian Hungarian Hugo Meltzl de Lomnitz's ,the founding editor of the journal *Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum* (1877), Irish scholar H.M. Posnett, the writer of *Comparative Literature* (1886) are among the founding fathers of this branch of human knowledge. The Russian Formalists find Alexander Veselovsky also as one of the founders. Comparative Literature in the words of Henry Remak is "the study of literature beyond the confines of one particular country, and the study of the relationships between literature on one hand and other areas of knowledge and belief, such as the arts (e.g. painting, sculpture, architecture, music), philosophy, history, the social sciences, (e.g. politics, economics, sociology), the sciences, religion, etc., on the other. In brief it is the comparison of one literature with another or others, and the comparison of literature with other spheres of human expression." (Henry Remak, 25)

The modern times expects certain new connotations from Comparative literature which is beautifully elucidated by Haun Saussy :

The premises and protocols characteristic of [comparative literature] are now the daily currency of coursework, publishing, hiring, and coffee-shop discussion. ... The 'transnational' dimension of literature and culture is universally recognized even by the specialists who not long ago suspected comparatists of dilettantism. .. Comparative teaching and reading take institutional form in an ever-lengthening list of places. ... Comparative literature ... now ... is the first violin that sets the tone for the rest of the orchestra. Our conclusions have

become other people’s assumptions. (Haun Saussy, *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization*, 24).

It will not be an overstatement if we call comparative literature as the UNO of literatures.

In the present paper, a model is being proposed for discussing comparative literature in classroom . Various steps are given in a sequence:

**Step 1: Recapitulation:** After a brief introduction of the concept of Comparative Literature , the following rubric will be given to the learners. For a better understanding of the concept and attaining the maximum level of SLOs, before taking this exercise in the classroom, the learners shall be advised fore hand for studying the concept, nature and development of comparative literature with the help of authentic references in print and on web.

**Rubric 1: Comparative Literature: Conceptual Understanding**

Note: Select the most appropriate option that matches the statement given in the 1st column from those given in the 2<sup>nd</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> columns, in each of the following :

Time: 20 Minutes.

1.	Comparative Literature is	a comparative literary work	a literary work in two languages	a specific discipline	literary phenomenon across the literary systems, languages and cultures
2.	Comparative Literature is	useful in publishing	useful in advertising	useful in librarianship	useful in publishing, advertising and librarianship
3.	Comparative Literature Includes the study of	orally transmitted literature	written literature	performed scripts	all kinds of dynamic, contextual literature including oral, written or performed ones
4.	Nature of Comparative Literature is	rigid	flexible	cursory acquaintance with great texts	referential
5.	Purpose of Comparative Literature is	to equip with methodologies of reading	to equip & train in the application of reading methodologies	to develop skills and insights regarding a particular	to develop ability to establish a particular purview

			to cultural texts	discipline	
6.	Comparative Literature establishes	relationship between art and culture	relationship between science and religion	relationship between literature, music & painting	relationship between Literature on one hand and other areas of knowledge, beliefs, all forms of art, sciences, religion, etc., on the other
7.	Comparative Literature is -	contextual study of world literature	consensual study of world literature	stipulative study of world literature	simulative study of world literature
8.	Comparative Literature is continuously connecting	a poem with dance	a film with novel	photography with essay	all the earlier options
9.	The term Comparative Literature is often exchanged with	history play	world history	world literature	cultural studies
10.	ICLA is	a society	a journal	a magazine	an association
11.	Modes involved in Comparative Literature are	inquiry through literary movements	investigation through history, theory and genre	understanding cultural significance and engagement in reading copious books	all the earlier options
12.	Comparative Literature is	transnational interdisciplinary and responsive humanities	a dialogic establishment	explorations of our past imagination	diverse human condition

Score \_\_\_\_\_ Out \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ 12.....  
 Signature/Name .....

**Note for the Teacher**

After twenty minutes the teacher shall read out the correct answers and the learners shall match their responses (The correct answers of the

Rubric1 are given as Appendix 1). Accordingly the learners shall evaluate their level of performance under the following criteria:

Score 10-12: Excellent

Score 8-10 Satisfactory

Score less than 8 Revision Required

If 90% learners reach satisfactory level the class should proceed for Step 2.

## **Step 2: Comparing Dalit Literature and African American Literatures**

In this task we shall evaluate the common traces and trajectories in Dalit and African American and literature. Under the preparatory activity the learners shall be refreshed with their previous knowledge of Dalit and African American and literature .

### **Dalit Literature : A Brief Introduction**

The term "Dalit literature" was used in 1958 for the first time during the first conference of *Maharashtra Dalit Sahitya Sangha* being held in Bombay (Mumbai). Inspired by the thoughts of thinkers like Jyotiba Phule and Bhimrao Ambedkar ,Dalit literature sketches the plight of the Dalit ,a historically deprived class of society in Indian social system. It is a major branch in contemporary India literature. Beginning in the Marathi language, the Dalit literature became popular in various Indian languages like Hindi, Telugu, Kannada, Tamil etc. Its presence on literary scene is visible in the post 1960 era. Dalit literature has become popular in English studies through translation of the major Dalit texts from Bhasa literature into English, and by original Dalit writing in English as well. Dalit literature can be compared with African –American literature in the depiction social exclusion, segregation, injustice, and various forms of tortures. Mohandas Naimishrai, Om Prakash Valmiki , Namdev Dhasal, Daya Pawar, Sharankumar Limbale, Sanjay Vitthal Baviskar, Madara Chennaiah ,Bama are some of the popular Dalit writers in India.

### **African American Literature: A Brief Introduction**

The term African American literature is used for the writing of the Americans of African descent. These writers focus on social discrimination, slavery, exclusion, inclusion, social justice, black feminism and many other similar issues in particular. It is around 1970 that the African American literature has emerged as a significant branch of literatures written in

English. It carries a rich African heritage , and also many tropes from African folk and cultural tradition.

In recapitulation part Rubric 2 will be given to the learners.

**Rubric 02: Comparing Dalit Literature and African-American Literature**

**Note:** Fill in the blanks selecting suitable options from the box:

Pedagogic, Repulsive, Abominable, Ethnification, African American, Hegemony, Equality, Liberty, Embryonic state, Africans, America, White denizens, African- American literature, Racial discrimination, Fraternity/reality, Varna ,India, Dalit issues, both the literatures ,reality

A comparative study between African American and Dalit literature can be particularly.....1.....as far as their forms are concerned. As far as the character of this comparison is concerned, both African American and Dalit literature are .....2.....and .....3.....While attempting a comparative study between African American and Dalit literature, there is a general pressure towards assimilation among various communities of the world, however there is always a risk of increasing.....4.....in the minds of people of different culture. Both ...5.....and Dalit literature have raised voice against the.....6..... of the established class. Both African American and Dalit literature advocate .....7.....and .....8.....In comparison to Afro-American literature, Dalit literature is in its .....9.....African American literature is by the.....10.....who were brought to .....11.....by the .....12.....as slaves to work on the plantations. The initial goal of .....13....was to abolish slavery which later turned into a struggle against .....14..... African -American literature has therefore, taken a shape from an expression of art to an expression of.....15..... Dalits were the victims of.....16..... (class) system that prevailed in ...17.....for centuries. The literature on ...18 ..is known as Dalit literature. A comparative study of ...19 .. establishes them as two different .....20..... yet similar when it comes to share equality, freedom and brotherhood in asserting their identity against the establishment of their respective society.

Score out of 20: ..... Name &  
Signature:.....

### **Note for the Teacher**

After twenty minutes the teacher shall read out the correct answers and the learners shall match their responses (The correct answers of the Rubric 2 are given as Appendix 2). Accordingly the learners shall evaluate their level of performance under the following criteria:

Score 15-20: Excellent

Score 10-15: Good

Score 8-10 Satisfactory

Score less than 10 Revision Required

If 90% learners reach satisfactory level the class should proceed for Step 3.

### **Step 3: Scaling the common traits**

Now we shall analyze two poems by two major poets from the literatures in question .These are “White Paper” by Sharankumar Limbale and "Negro" by Langston Hughes.

Sharankumar Limbale’s “White Paper”, addressing the plight of Dalits in India, shows strong similarities with “Negro” as far as the motif is concerned. In this poem the narrator demands the fundamental rights as a human being. It shows the plight of the Dalit class in India. They have been deprived of their human rights for ages .The poet writes, “I do not ask/for the sun and/moon from your sky/your farm, your land,/ your high houses or your mansions/I do not ask for gods or rituals,/castes or sects/or even for your mother, sisters, daughters./I ask for/ my rights as man.”(“White Paper”, Sharankumar Limbale).The poem is a vivid portrayal of the emotions emanating from the downtrodden class called Dalits. The Dalits have lived their lives in utter inhuman situations. The views of noted Dalit writer Om Prakash Valmiki are appropriate to share here. In *Joothan*, his Autobiography, he shares with the readers, “My village was divided along lines of touchability and untouchability. The situation was very bad in Dehradun and in Uttar Pradesh , in general ,at time when I saw well-educated people in a metropolitan city like Bombay indulging in such behaviour, I felt a fountain of hot lava erupting within me”(95).

The Dalits were not only deprived of their fundamental rights as a human being but also they were supposed to be a demeaning object rather a grave pollutant. To quote again the lines of Sharan Kumar Limbale, “Each



breath from my lungs/sets off a violent trembling in your text and traditions/your hells and heavens/ fearing pollution./Your arms leapt together/to bring to ruin our dwelling places./You'll beat me, break me,/loot and burn my habitation/But my friends!" ("White Paper").

The second work taken for the purpose is "Negro" by Langston Hughes. The plight of the African American has been successfully translated by the poet. Hughes begins the poem, "I am a Negro:/Black as the night is black,/Black like the depths of my Africa." ("Negro", Langston Hughes) The emotion intensifies in the lines: I've been a slave:/Caesar told me to keep his door-steps clean./I brushed the boots of Washington." ("Negro", Langston Hughes).

But the obstacles created by the unfavorable colonizing forces are challenged by the courage and vigor of the protagonist who makes a realization in the words: "I've been a worker:/Under my hand the pyramids arose./I made mortar for the Woolworth Building./I've been a singer:/All the way from Africa to Georgia/I carried my sorrow songs./I made ragtime./I've been a victim:/The Belgians cut off my hands in the Congo./They lynch me still in Mississippi." ("Negro", Langston Hughes). These assertions prove him a master of all. His personality is proved to be a perfect blend of finer sensibilities and finer traits at par.

Langston Hughes belongs to the group of the poets of Harlem Renaissance of the 1920's. He has supported the associates of the Harlem renaissance who were expressing the racial pride through art, music, and literature. "Negro" is a true portrayal of the history of African Americans who have gone through the phase of trials and tribulations. The race has been portrayed to be comprising slave, workers, singers and victims who had suffered many forms of discrimination and exclusion. Thus it becomes a moving poem which shows the trails and travails that the African-Americans have braved throughout history. The poet gives a vivid description showing the torture on the masses and becomes a saga of the pain and exploitation of the downtrodden not only in a specific country but across the human civilization in different parts of the globe.

If we compare the plight of human being as reflected in both the poems in question, it is deplorable. Both the situations simply make the mockery of the very first article of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, which proclaims that, "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should

act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood” (‘Universal Declaration of Human Rights’, 1)

### **Conclusion**

Many important questions arise in understanding the texts, produced in different locales within the bigger ambit of world literature. It is here, the need arises for applying various modes of enquiry in understanding them. Comparative literature can become a common platform for understanding different cultures and literatures. The present model will certainly contribute to it.

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## **Appendix 1**

### **Answers**

#### **Rubric A: Comparative Literature: Conceptual Understanding**

1. Literary Phenomenon across the literary systems, languages and cultures
2. Useful in Publishing, Advertising & Librarianship
3. All kinds of dynamic, contextual Literature including oral, written or performed ones
4. Flexible
5. To equip & train in the application of reading methodologies to cultural texts
6. Relationship between Literature on one hand and other areas of knowledge, beliefs, all forms of art, sciences, religion, etc., on the other
7. Contextual Study of World Literature
8. All the earlier options
9. World Literature
10. An association
11. All the earlier options
12. Transnational interdisciplinary and responsive humanities

## **Appendix 2**

### **Answers**

#### **Rubric B**

1. Pedagogic
2. Repulsive
3. Abominable
4. Ethnification
5. African American
6. Hegemony
7. Equality
8. Liberty
9. Embryonic state
10. Africans
11. America
12. White denizens
13. African- American literature
14. Racial discrimination

15. Fraternity/reality
16. Varna
17. India
18. Dalit issues
19. both the literatures
20. reality

# THE VALIDITY OF GRAMMATICALITY JUDGMENT TASK ON SAUDI EFL LEARNERS

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## Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to shed light on the validity of the controversial data-gathering tool Grammaticality Judgment Task on measuring the grammatical competency of Saudi EFL learners. Despite the widespread use of GJT in SLA research, it is surrounded by a great deal of criticism. The present paper is part of a larger study investigating the acquisition of past verb forms by Saudi EFL learners. Thirty-six Saudi EFL learners took part in the study and were divided into three groups as follows: guided-planning group, semi-guided planning group, and control group. The task used in the study consisted of twenty test items: 10 control test items, and 10 experimental test items. The results did not reveal significant statistical differences between the three groups. Also, the results did not reflect the actual grammatical competency of the participants.

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**Keywords:** GJT, SLA, EFL

## Introduction

Grammaticality Judgment Task (GJT) is a widely used tool by researchers in the area of Second Language Acquisition SLA. In this task, L2 learners are presented with a set of sentences and they are required to identify the grammatically deviant sentences. GJ Tasks are conducted to: (a) assess the speakers' reactions to sentence types that only occur rarely in spontaneous speech; (b) obtain negative evidence on strings of words that are not part of the language; (c) distinguish production problems (e.g., slips, unfinished utterances, etc.) from grammatical production; and (d) isolate the structural properties of the language that are of interest by minimizing the

influence of the communicative and representational functions of the language (Schütze, 1996). However, some concerns have arisen regarding the validity of GJT. GJT can be influenced by extra grammatical factors, the link between metalinguistic judgments and grammatical knowledge is not clear, and there is a lack of control techniques (Tremblay, 2005). Another concern about the validity of GJT is that learners may base their judgment on extraneous factors, such as sentence complexity or semantic irregularity (Ellis, 1991).

The present study investigates the validity of Grammaticality Judgment Task on Saudi EFL Learners. The investigation focused on the past verb forms and aspects. The paper is part of a larger study investigating the acquisition of past verb forms by Saudi EFL learners. Furthermore, it will bridge the gap in the literature by focusing the study on Arabic speaking learners.

## **Background**

The use of Grammaticality Judgment Task (GJT) goes back to the late 70's and early 80's (Bialystok, 1979; Gass, 1983; among others). Since then, GJT have been widely used by researchers as a data-collection tool to test theoretical claims (Tremblay, 2005). Grammaticality judgments (GJT) comprise one (although definitely not the sole) kind of metalinguistic function, or objectification of language. Alternatively stated, the one means of objectifying language is to declare if a provided sentence is suitable or not. Grammaticality judgments comprise intricate behavioral operations that have to be applied carefully and with complete comprehension of their restrictions (Chaudron, 1983; Cowan and Hatasa, 1994; R. Ellis, 1991, 2004, 2005; Gass, 1994; Goss, Ying-Hua, and Lantolf, 1994; Loewen, 2009; Mandell, 1999).

A considerable amount of research has been carried out inside the arena of second language employing grammaticality judgments. For instance, the grammaticality judgment task is mainly a decoding task within which two stages are concerned in resolving to refuse or acknowledge a provided sentence. Primarily, learners have to translate the sentence in some manner. Secondly, they have to establish if it conforms to the sequences of English as signified by their interlanguage. Alternatively stated, a learner has to endeavor to match the sentence using an internalized linguistic structure.

A great amount of SLA studies have employed grammaticality

judgment tasks (for an early review of these see R. Ellis, 1991a) as a means of quantifying L2 learners' knowledge. It is apparent that the preferred technique of exploring L2 explicit awareness as a conscious knowledge comprises the grammaticality judgment feat. Currently there is considerable literature on GJT. Following the reviews of Chaudron (1983) and R. Ellis (1991a) of GJT studies, several supplementary researches have been done (e.g., Bard, Robertson, & Sorace, 1996; Cowan & Hatasa, 1994; Davies & Kaplan, 1998; Gass, 1994; Goss, Ying-Hua, & Lantolf, 1994; Leow, 1996; Mandell, 1999). These researches have been specifically targeted at exploring the legitimacy and dependability of GJTs.

The main construct validity matter concerns what is quantified by a GJT. What sort of awareness do learners utilize when they judge a sentence's grammaticality: implicit knowledge, explicit knowledge or some sort of combination of the two? As observed by Birdsong (1989), "metalinguistic information [from a GJT] are comparable to cheap hot dogs: they are made up of meat but considerable other ingredients as well" (p.69). Unexpectedly, this is a matter that numerous SLA researchers utilizing GJTs are unable to address. Nonetheless Sorace (1996) clearly accepts the challenge:

"It may comprise an additionally intricate job [than is true of native-speaker judgments] to resolve on the sort of norm consulted by learners within the procedure of making a judgment, especially within a learning setting that encourages the growth of metalinguistic awareness. It is a challenge to see whether subjects disclose their thoughts or what their thoughts should be". (p. 385)

Alternatively stated, it may be theorized that when learners are requested to determine the grammaticality of a sentence quickly, they may be more inclined to depend on implicit awareness. However, if they are provided with time, they are capable of acquiring controlled access to explicit awareness. Sorace, too, suggests that a timed process is required to ascertain that the assessment draws on tacit as opposed to metalinguistic awareness. Ellis and Han's (1998) research reinforces this standpoint. They established that measures taken from a time and untimed GJT version of the same GJT factored out individually. Within a principal-components evaluation, the timed GJT loaded on the similar aspect as an oral production assessment, while the untimed GJT loaded on the similar factor as a metalingual-comments score. Ellis and Han noted these two factors as explicit and implicit awareness correspondingly. DeKeyser (2003)

nonetheless offers a cautionary word, observing that time pressure does not assure a measure of implicit awareness. As observed previously, it is feasible that several learners may develop comparatively automatized explicit awareness, which may also be appraised subject to time pressure. Additionally, it is not true that explicit awareness will be implemented by learners if they have the time to do this. They may still opt to depend on their implicit awareness. Certainly, they may be required to, (or instead, to guess) if they do not have the required explicit awareness to assess the grammaticality of a specific sentence. R. Ellis (1991b) and Goss et al. (1994) established that although there may have been the chance to contemplate a judgment, learners at times selected to answer immediately. At best, we may then state that an immediate judgment may more likely mirror implicit awareness, and a deferred judgment may indicate explicit awareness.

Additionally, there is the question of the manner in which to operationalize timed and untimed judgments (i.e., the period of time provided for implementing a judgment). A GJT possibly concerns three main processing functions:

1. semantic processing (i.e., comprehending the significance of a sentence)
2. noticing (i.e., seeking to determine if something is officially wrong with a sentence)
3. reflecting (i.e., contemplating what is wrong regarding the sentence, and probably, the reason for its incorrectness)

An additional challenge associated with the judgment of sentences as being ungrammatical or grammatical is associated with whether the learners really judge the particular structures intended for them to judge by researchers, or alternative structures included within the test sentences. This challenge may be addressed if learners are requested to show or rectify what they believe to be ungrammatical within the sentences. Nonetheless, it is unclear if this improves the legitimacy of a GJT as a measure of explicit awareness. In researches concerning L1 metalingual awareness, the capability to repair sentences at a considerably early age (4years) is observed as mirroring a tacit awareness of the rules of language as opposed to a conscious knowledge. Gombert (1992), states that it mirrors “episyntactic” as opposed to “metasyntactic” conduct. Indeed, children subsequently apply conscious awareness to rectify ungrammatical sentences, but obviously the capability to carry out such a function utilizing tacit awareness does not



vanish. Time may once more be anticipated to comprise an essential aspect; requested to show or rectify a mistake online, L2 learners may be anticipated to depend more on their implicit awareness, while if provided sufficient time, they may have the chance to utilize their explicit awareness.

The dependability of the GJTs employed in specific research has additionally been questioned. Birdsong (1989) highlights the hazards of reaction bias (e.g., an overall inclination to deem sentences as ungrammatical). R. Ellis (1991b) documents three studies within which the similar GJT was dispensed to L2 learners within a single week. The learners altered 22.5%, 31.0%, and 45% of their judgments from one test to the next. Ellis asserts that the GJTs could have been undependable, as the awareness of the L2 learners was not certain, resulting in them inconsistently applying a different set of techniques for providing judgment. Only one of these techniques concerned applying explicit awareness in the state of pedagogical regulations of differing precision. Ellis' translation has been supported by alternative researches that have explored the manner in which learners reach judgments (e.g. Goss, Ying-Hua and Iantolf, 1994). Additionally, learners of L2 have been seen to utilize a greater range of tactics contrasted to native speakers when completing a GJT (Davies and Kaplan, 1998).

In conclusion, as stressed by Birdsong (1989), among others, a GJT does not offer an immediate window for observing the linguistic aptitude of learners, but rather comprises a performance that is inclined by a variety of aspects. The possibility of a GJT offering a measure of explicit awareness may be raised if (a) learners are provided time to assess sentences and to rectify ungrammatical sentences, (b) reactions of learners to the ungrammatical sentences on the assessment (or the sentences that have been considered ungrammatical by the learners) are contemplated individually from their reactions to the grammatical sentences, and (c) the uncertainty of learners in assessing individual sentences is considered.

## **Methodology**

### **Participants**

Thirty-six Saudi students from different universities in the UK participated in this study. They were all adult males and females who had completed a one-year general English language course in the UK as a requirement to achieve the sufficient English language proficiency level. Their average score in IELTS were between 5.0 and 6.0. The participants

were studying different disciplines, and had lived in the UK for more than two years. The nature of the study was explained to the participants and they signed a form giving their consent to take part in this study. The participants were divided into three groups:

**Guided-Planning Group** consisted of twelve participants with different levels of English language proficiency (judged by their IELTS scores). The guided-planning group was provided with a detailed explanation about the task. Participants in this group were asked explicitly to focus on the past verb forms and they were provided with example. The guided-planning group was also given guidance and time to plan their answers prior to the task to get positive reflection on the participants' performance (Willis & Willis, 1988).

**Semi-Guided Planning Group** consisted of twelve participants with different levels of English language proficiency (judged by their IELTS scores). The semi-guided planning group was also provided with detailed instructions and the participants were asked to pay attention to the past verb forms but no examples were provided. The participants in this group were also given time to plan their answers before engaging with the task.

**No-Planning Group** This was a control group consisting of twelve participants with different levels of English language proficiency (judged by their IELTS scores). The group received general instructions about the task with no further details or planning time.

### **Test Items**

The task included 20 test items: 10 control items, and 10 experimental items. The items were presented in a counterbalanced order. All the test items were formulated in the past tense including three aspects: past simple, past progressive, and past perfect because the task was part of a larger study investigating the acquisition of past verb forms by Saudi EFL learners.

Generally, the control test items were simple, because they served as a comparison point for the experimental items (Bullock et al., 2005). In contrast, the verbs in the experimental items were manipulated because they were the focus of the study.

### **Procedure**

The task was conducted in many cities in the UK and at different

times because the participants were assembled from different cities in the UK. The participants sat for the tasks individually, and occasionally in groups for the GJT when I travelled to meet a group of participants. I gave the participants an introduction regarding the aims and purpose of the research and the tasks they were about to undertake. The first task given was the Grammaticality Judgment Task. The participants were given a list of sentences and they were asked to determine whether they were grammatically correct or incorrect. The same task was repeated after eight weeks to find out if the instruction on using the past verb forms had taken place (Schmitt, 2010).

As mentioned earlier, the GJT used in this paper was part of a larger study carried out to investigate the acquisition of past verb forms by Saudi EFL learners. The participant sat for the tasks individually, and occasionally in groups. Each participant was given a brief introduction about the purpose of the study. The participants were given a maximum of 10 minutes to plan their answers and provide their judgment. The same task was repeated in eight weeks' time.

The Participants were instructed to base their judgment on their intuition and whether they would, or would not, use the sentence in normal situations. To avoid rejecting sentences "on the basis of prescriptive rules of English", the participants were instructed not to reject a sentence because they might know a better way to deliver the same meaning (Tremblay, 2005 p.144). For this purpose, guidance and examples were provided before engaging with the task.

## Results

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) between groups was conducted to compare the results from Grammaticality Judgment Task 1 (GJT 1). Looking at table (1) below, the analysis shows no significant results between the three groups: guided-planning group, semi-guided planning group, and no-planning group [ $F(2, 33) = 0.512, p = 0.604$ ]. However, the participants from the guided-planning group showed better performance in their initiative judgment on task items ( $M = 4.33, SD = 1.155$ ) than participants from semi-guided group ( $M = 3.92, SD = 1.832$ ) and no-planning group ( $M = 3.75, SD = 1.288$ ). In other words, the null hypothesis of meeting the assumption is true as no significant results emerged between the three groups from the Grammaticality Judgment Task 1 (GJT1).

Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig.
Guided-planning group	4.33	1.155	0.604
Semi-guided planning group	3.92	1.832	
No-planning group	3.75	1.288	

Table (1) shows the One-way ANOVA results for the GJT

The same analysis was repeated on the delayed test Grammaticality Judgment Task 2 (GJT2), which was given to the same participants of the three groups eight weeks later. This time, the results yielded a slight significant change between the groups [ $F(2, 33) = 3.317, p = 0.049$ ]. Again, the participants from the guided-planning group showed better performance in their initiative judgment on task items ( $M = 4.83, SD = 1.115$ ) than participants from semi-guided group ( $M = 4.33, SD = 1.557$ ) and no-planning group ( $M = 3.58, SD = 0.793$ ).

Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig.
Guided-planning group	4.83	1.115	0.049
Semi-guided planning group	4.33	1.557	
No-planning group	3.58	0.793	

Table (2) shows the One-way ANOVA results for the delayed GJT

A Post Hoc Test and a Complex Contrast Test were employed on Grammaticality Judgment 2 (GJT2) to find out which group caused the significance. I selected the Tukey HSD Post Hoc Test for this purpose to determine which group made the difference in the results. The guided-planning group was compared to the other two groups (semi-guided planning and no planning) and the results from the complex contrast test showed that guided-planning group was significantly different in terms of their performance in the delayed grammaticality judgment task at ( $p = 0.047$ ). However, the Tukey HSD test showed nothing significant between the guided-planning group and the semi-guided planning group ( $p = 0.568$ ), and between the semi-guided planning group and the no-planning group ( $p =$

0.288). Nonetheless, the statistical significance occurred between guided-planning group and no-planning group  $p = 0.039$ . See table (3) below.

(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
GP Group	SGP Group	.500	.489	.568	-.70	1.70
	NP Group	1.250*	.489	.039	.05	2.45
SGP Group	GP Group	-.500	.489	.568	-1.70	.70
	NP Group	.750	.489	.288	-.45	1.95
NP Group	GP Group	-1.250*	.489	.039	-2.45	-.05
	SGP Group	-.750	.489	.288	-1.95	.45

Table (3) Tukey HSD Post Hoc Test to determine which group caused the significance

When looking at table (4) below, we can see the gain scores for the guided planning group and the semi-guided planning group are convergent, guided-planning group score 6 points more in the delayed test where the semi-guided planning group scored 5 points. However, the gain score of the no-planning group is very disappointing at it came to (-2). In other words, the no-planning group performance in the grammaticality judgment delayed test, as expected, had fallen back.

Group	GJT1	GJT2 (Delayed)	Gain Score
Guided Planning	52	58	6.00
Semi-Guided Planning	47	52	5.00
No-Planning	45	43	-2.00

Table (4) shows the gain score form the delayed GJT

In summation, there were no statistically significant differences among the three groups in the first GJT  $p = 0.604$ . The delayed GJT, however, showed a slight significant change in the performance of the three groups  $p = 0.047$ , which was expected as the delay time was only eight weeks and the same procedure of guidance and planning was conducted

## **Discussion**

The objective of this paper is to test the validity of GJ on Saudi EFL learners with a focus on the past verb forms. The test included 20 items: 10 control items, and 10 experimental items. The test items were presented in a counterbalanced order. The instructions were very specific and clear, and the participants were allowed 10 minutes to produce their judgment. The results revealed that the participants failed to intuitively determine whether a sentence was correct or deviant from a grammatical perspective. It has also shown that participants lack the ability to assign the correct temporal reference when reporting an incident in the past tense.

Despite the slight significant change in the delayed test, the results indicated that guided-planning and semi-guided planning did not make any significant change in the informants' performance, and the results were, generally speaking, convergent. Although the sample was relatively small, the results indicate that Saudi EFL learners face problems when using the past tense in English.

The target from using the grammaticality judgment task was to measure the intuitive judgment of the participants to the extent that they believed the sentences to be grammatically acceptable. However, the results show that the participants from the three groups were unable to make that clear judgment. That said, the two groups were given guidance and a chance to plan their answers. The same test was repeated eight weeks later on the same groups, and the results this time came with a slight statistical significant change (see table 2). Although the null hypothesis was rejected on the delayed test  $p = 0.049$ , the performance of the guided-planning group and semi-guided planning was approximate, and the significance was made by the performance of the no-planning group (see table 4).

## **Conclusion**

GJT is one of the widely used tools for Metalinguistic data for SLA research. However, the controversy about GJT is escalating and a great amount of research was conducted to test the validity of this tool (Ellis, 1991; Gass, 1994; Sorace, 1996; White, 2003; Tremblay, 2005). As Tremblay (2005) points out, a concern arises in the literature is the extent to which GJT actually reflects grammatical competence. The finding of this study comes in alignment with this concern and questions the validity of GJT

in measuring grammatical awareness as shown by the statistical significant differences in performance between the two encounters of GJT. Schachter (1989) suggest that learners reject sentences not because they are ungrammatical but because they pose processing problems for them. By the same token, Ellis (1991) suggests that learners “may base their judgment on their existing interlanguage or on what they think the target language norms are” (p.164). Given these suggestions, the complexity of the experimental test items affected the performance of the participants and maybe led them to reject those items.

To sum up, this study makes a potential contribution to the literature on investigating the validity of GJT on Saudi EFL learners. Despite the criticism, GJT is an essential tool for gathering metalinguistic data in the area of SLA. However, as highlighted by Ellis (1991) and Tremblay (2005) among others, careful design and administration of GJT is required to make efficient and reliable.

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