

## Circumlocution in Iraqi EFL Learners' Written Contexts

Asst. Prof. Wafaa Mukhles Faisal

Asst. Prof. Dunya Muhammed Miqdad I'jam

[dunya.ijam@gmail.com](mailto:dunya.ijam@gmail.com)

Suha Hamadalla

[damahahus@gmail.com](mailto:damahahus@gmail.com)

### ملخص البحث

تتناول الدراسة الاطناب كاسلوب كلامي مستخدم بواسطة طلاب جامعتي بابل والقادسية كمتعلمين اللغة الانكليزية لغة اجنبية في المرحلة الثالثة في السياقات الكتابية تهدف الدراسة ايجاد الاسباب وراء استخدام الطلاب للاطناب، اكتشاف اي طلاب من الجامعتين يستخدمون الاطناب اكثر، تحديد النوع الاكثر استخداما للاطناب و اكتشاف اي من مبادئ (مبادئ) كرايس يتم اختراقها عندما يكون الاطناب حاضرا. لهذا تفترض الدراسة ان طلاب جامعتي بابل والقادسية يستخدمون الاطناب لتخطي الفجوات الموجودة في الكتابة، طلاب جامعه القادسية يستخدمون الاطناب اكثر من طلاب جامعه بابل ، الاطناب المعقد ضد السهل هو النوع الاكثر استخداما للاطناب و مبادئ الكميه والاسلوب يخترقان عند استخدام الاطناب. لتحقيق اهداف الدراسة، تقرير ادبي عن الاطناب سيقدم كذلك ستعتمد الدراسة التقرير الادبي كنموذج اضافي الى نموذج كرايس (١٩٨٩) دراسات في طرق الكلمات والتي بواسطتها سيتم تحليل الاطناب تداوليا، في النهاية، النتائج حققت الفرضيات.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الاطناب و السياقات الكتابية

### Abstract

The study deals with **circumlocution** as a used speech- figure by Babylon and Al- Qadisiya EFL university learners, at the third stage, in written contexts. It aims at finding the reasons behind their use of **circumlocution**, finding out which learners of these two universities utilize circumlocution more, pinpointing the most frequently utilized type of it and finding out which one(s) of Griceon- maxims is(are) violated when **circumlocution** is present. Hence, it is hypothesized that Babylon and Al- Qadisiya learners make use of **circumlocution** to overcome the gaps found when writing, Al- Qadisiya learners use more **circumlocution** than Babylon ones, complex over simple **circumlocution** is the most used type of **circumlocution** and the quantity and manner maxims are violated when using **circumlocution**. To achieve the study-aims, a literature review about **circumlocution** would be presented. Also, the study follows the literature review as a model with Grice's (1989) *Studies in the Way of Words* whereby **circumlocution** is analysed pragmatically. At the end, the conclusions verify the hypotheses.

**Key Words:** Circumlocution and Written Contexts.

### 1.Introduction

**Circumlocution**, as a figure of speech, refers to the use of a long number of words as an attempt to name an issue. It is so beneficial for students, especially for beginners, as they would face **circumstance** in which they cannot name something directly and, thus, use this strategy (Callus and Sykes, 2002: 101). To illustrate, "I am afraid I should have to disagree" is viewed as **circumlocution** (Wong, 2014: 299). Different classifications are found about circumlocution.

# Circumlocution in Iraqi EFL Learners' Written Contexts

Asst. Prof. Wafaa Mukhles Kazi

Asst. Prof. Dunya Muhammed Miqdad I'jam  
Suha Hamadalla

---

Accordingly, the study investigates this speech- figure as utilized by Babylon and A-Qadisiya EFL University at the third stage with its type. It aims at finding the grounds of **circumlocution**-use, finding out which university handles **circumlocution** more than the other with revealing the most penned type. So, it is hypothesized that Iraqi EFL university students use **circumlocution** to be online with the flow of communication, Al- Qadisiya students use **circumlocution** more than Babylon students, complex over simple **circumlocution** is the most used type of **circumlocution** and the quantity and manner maxims are the ones being violated when using **circumlocution**. The procedures being followed involve presenting an ample picture of **circumlocution**. Also, one- hundred papers of the students' answer in Novel in the academic year(2016- 2017) would be analysed according to the student's use of **circumlocution**. The model followed accords with the literature review presented about **circumlocution** with Grice's (1989) *Studies in the Way of Words* whereby **circumlocution** is analysed pragmatically.

## 2. Definition

**Circumlocution** is defined as circling way of speaking. In other words, it indicates the idea of talking around the topic rather than being direct. For this reason, the word-number, in circumlocutionary speeches, would be more than that of the direct way of speaking. Phrase like 'the kingdom of heaven', 'the Eternal One' and 'the Name' are seen as examples of **circumlocution** in Christianity and Judaism. People, there, think that it is better to circumlocute around the word God than to say it directly as anything related to 'God's essence' which cannot be explained straightly(Ramshaw, 1996:36).

## 3. Types of Circumlocution

The following categories are seen as types of **circumlocution**:

### 3. 1 Circumlocution's Classification of Meaning:

Depending on the meaning of **circumlocution**, two types of **circumlocution** can be categorized (Cracking the AP English Language & Composition Exam, 2016: 157-8):

**3. 1. 1 Subject Circumlocution:** or 'talking around a subject' can be used in different situations where the speaker might never utter his target but still uses hints about the topic such as the following:

1.

I understand that you guys are going to stay in tonight and watch a DVD, right? If so, since I've already seen that movie, I was thinking about maybe going downtown. It's a nice summer evening and all that, but it's still too far to walk, and I'll be with Nina, anyway, and she'd never agree to walk downtown. We were thinking that she could drive, but, unfortunately, Nina's parents are going out, so she can't take their car. I know that I forgot to put gas in your car last time that I drove to the mountains, but I learned my lesson. That won't happen again

(ibid.)

The roundabout speech illustrates a speaker who is, indirectly, asking his/her parents for lending him/her/ their car. He/she does not, at all, states his/her request but gives them hints to know his/her purpose(ibid.).

**3. 1. 2 Word Circumlocution:** or 'talking around a word'. In it, a word is said to be paraphrased and, consequently, the result would be a long number of words. This kind is used in composition

where one might think of being lengthy than being precise(ibid.). To illustrate, “ a big flying dinosaur with long wings and long tail” is used in lieu of “pterodactyl”(Logan, 2015 425).

### 3. 2 Barrass' Classification of Circumlocution:

Barrass (2005: 70- 3)divides **circumlocution** into three types:

#### 3. 2. 1 General over Specific (abstract over concrete),

**General circumlocution** goes in opposition with the economy of writing. Thus, some might be annoyed for such generalization. By contrast, **specific circumlocution** is more preferable such as:

2. (a)Life in Poland is difficult because the prices on many things are too high. (**General Circumlocution**).

(b)The cost of living of the Polish middle class families have nearly doubled over the last year due to the continuous rise in rent rates and food prices. (**Specific Circumlocution**). (ibid.)

This means that by general over specific **circumlocution**, sentences are prolonged.

#### 3. 2. 2 Paraphrase over Name

This type of **circumlocution** is used in situations where one cannot get the name which he aims at. As so, paraphrasing is used for the names that are paraphrased. Barras(ibid.)lists, in Table(1), a group of words with their circumlocutionary paraphrases. This idea is emphasized by Bain(1875: 72) who states that praphrase is viewed as types of **circumlocution**.

**Table1 : Words with their circumlocutionary paraphrasing.**

Circumlocution	Better English
In spite of the fact that	Although
A sufficient number of	Enough
At this precise moment in time	Now
At that point in time	Then
A greater length of time	Longer

### 3. 3 Classifications of Circumlocution in Learning

Two kinds of circumlocution can be found in the analysis of the foreign language learners. To put it differently, such types are used in learning a foreign language in which learners are faced with situations that they forget the exact word they target at. They are:

**3. 3. 1 Context-dependent Circumlocution:** this type can be found in situations where the learners are asked to describe or define different entities such as a picture. Dictionary-definitions are, also, considered as a species of this type. This type is characterized of being lengthy as more semantic features are used in description or definition( Garica, etal. , 2010: 159-160). For instance, “The well known well firm fleshed, smooth- skinned, round or oblong pome fruit of the trees of the genus Malus , varying greatly in size, shape, color and degree of acidity” is used for “apple”(Bloomfield, 1963: 140).

**3. 3. 2 Context-free Circumlocution:** it occurs in real life situations such as conversations or discussions. This type goes in parallel with paraphrasing as, in it, certain essential semantic features are chosen in a certain context( Garica, etal. , 2010: 159-160).

### 4. Circumlocution as a Device

# Circumlocution in Iraqi EFL Learners' Written Contexts

Asst. Prof. Wafaa Mukhles Kazi

Asst. Prof. Dunya Muhammed Miqdad I'jam  
Suha Hamadalla

---

**Circumlocution** is possible to be as several devices. Some of them are presented as follows:

## 4. 1 Rhetorical Device:

**Circumlocution** could be listed as a rhetorical device or a rhetorical strategy (Bloch, et.al., 2014: 119). In a such case, **circumlocution** refers to the employments of descriptive phrase in lieu of a name as to confirm the relationship among the phrase-items. To illustrate, phrases like: 'born of women' is used in place of 'human' (Crain, 2010: 25).

## 4. 2 Medical Device:

Doctors could tell their patients about the diseases through using appropriate ways and one of them is **circumlocution** (Chirban, 1994: 24-5). Likewise, **circumlocution** might be used by doctors. To put another way, as doctors do not want to scare or shock their patients, they would use **circumlocution**. For instance, instead of telling a patient that he/she has got cancer, it could be said more indirectly: "there is something but we need to do more tests to be sure", cells are "out of control" (Fainzang, 2015: 30-1).

## 4. 3 Translating Device:

French, et.al. (1980: 327) point out that the association among languages, in translation, is always found due to the existence of **circumlocution**. More precisely, Verhaar (1990: 309) indicates that circumlocution is used as a means to get the meaning of a word from other languages while translating.

## 4. 4 Learning Device

**Circumlocution** is used by learners when they cannot recall an item. Therefore, they try to approximate the intended word through characterizing it. For instance, the 'owl' might be circumlocuted around as 'a bird that flies at night' (Oxford, 1996: 142).

## 5. Circumlocution and Griceon Maxims

Directly, Grice (1989: 26) proposes what is called Cooperative Principle, henceforth P.P. He thinks that it is the basis for any conversation. Literally, he puts it as follows: "Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose and direction in which you are engaged." Thus, there are certain maxims to be followed by conversationalists. Namely, they are: Quality, Quantity, Relation and Manner. By contrast, circumlocution violates the manner- maxim as in:

3.(A) What's Jim doing this Sunday?

(B) Trying to hit three sticks with a red leather ball as far as he can, or wandering around a green field.

B's response is unclear. He can simply say 'playing cricket' but he adds a kind of joking to his sentence.

(Goatly, 2012 : 232).

In addition, the manner- maxim is violated when circumlocution is at hand:

Miss X produced a series of sounds that correspond closely with the score of 'Home sweet home'.  
(Allot, 2010: 28)

In the above example, the speaker is implicating that the singing is not so well or 'suffers from hideous defect'. The sentence can be stated more briefly. On the other hand, no implicatures would be found when **circumlocution** is used in situations where offensive words are avoided.

Here, brevity and clarity are thought to be not cooperative, then, **circumlocution** would be used(ibid.).

## 6. The model

The model of the study is the literature review presented about **circumlocution** with its types and uses. Also, Grice's (1989) *Studies in the Way of Words* would be part of the model as **circumlocution** is analysed pragmatically.

## 7. Data Analysis

### 7. 1 Sample and Population

The data of the study would EFL third university learners from two universities: Babylon and Al- Qadisiya, College of Education/ English Department in Novel. A hundred- paper, for each stage, of their exams would be analysed according to their use of circumlocution when writing in the academic year(2016- 2017) as shown in the following table:

**Table2: Demography of the Study**

Babylon University	Al- Qadisiya University	Paper- Number
Third Stage	Third Stage	100

### 7. 2 Frequency of Circumlocution- Use at Babylon University

The frequency and percentage of **circumlocution**- use at the chosen universities could be seen below:

**Table 3: The Frequency of Circumlocution- Use**

The Subject	Third Stage		Total
Circumlocution	Freq	Percenta ge	
Babylon University	516	44.8	1151
Al-Qadisiya University	635	55.2	

It is clear the percentage of the Babylon third university learners' use is (44.8%) whereas it is (55.2%) at Al- Qadisiya learners. Hence, the latter ones utilize circumlocution more than the former for emphatic, clarity, etc purposes. The following passages would be explanatory ones through which instances would be illustrated starting from both universities.

Actually, there are grounds for this percentage. First, of all, learning a second language learning is uploaded as a difficult task at different levels(Gregg, 2009: 218). Learners would be influenced by their first language(Cook, 2003: 1). Broadly speaking, talking much is what characterizes Arabs(Smith, 2012: 132). Hence, Iraqi students majoring at English have been affected by their mother-language in using **circumlocution**. Consequently, they would use **circumlocution** in their answers.

Ryding (2005: 407) states that a merit in Arabic is its use of connectives that link among sentences such as 'and'. Accordingly, the outcome would be long sentences. To conclude, one can adhere to the idea that Arabic has a lot to do with its natives: it gets them used with much

## Circumlocution in Iraqi EFL Learners' Written Contexts

Asst. Prof. Wafaa Mukhles Kazi

Asst. Prof. Dunya Muhammed Miqdad I'jam  
Suha Hamadalla

---

talking, **circumlocution**. This speech figure is founded heavily in their writing-exams. In other words, such long sentences give rise to **circumlocution**, in particular, to complex over simple **circumlocution**. To illustrate, a student writes:

4.

When the master of the fact's school asked Sissy if the class has a lot of people(perhaps a thousand of people) and there is a lot of many in the class, and he asked her if the class regard as a good economy or not and if she regarded as a the winning girl or not, in the above piece of writing, two connectives are utilized: 'if' and 'and'. Each is used thrice. The student responses to the question as being affected in his mother language, resulting in producing such long sentence being connected with ifs and ands. This is so as his/her native's is distinct for its complex sentences. Alternatively, he/ she could be very clear in using short sentences but he/ she does not. An illustration from Al- Qadisiya university is the following:

5.The writer is want to give idea when write the novel (Hard Times) and discussed the live in victorican age and can give in careful idea about the classroom in the school of Mr. Gradgrind because the colour was black to reflect the education at this time which represented facts because it is importance and not imagination, fancy or enjoyment....

In the above piece of writing, the learner pens a lengthy sentence through using connectives like 'because', 'and', etc. Although there are other alternatives of stating the idea shortly, this circumlocutionary path is favoured as he/ she is Arabic.

An else back for such frequency use of **circumlocution** is its usefulness. It is so beneficial for students as they would face circumstance in which they cannot name something directly and, thus, use this strategy(Callus and Sykes, 2002: 101). As such, students resolve to circumlocute around the entity they aim at:

6.This system found a lot in societies that have a lot of levels when society have poor people. This means that when some people want to marry, the laws not allows him to marry another women. So, when Stephen married and his wife became a drunk woman, the laws not allow him to marry another woman because he will go to prison for years and when he love Racheal, be cannot marry her because the law cannot allows to him...

In that quotation, the learner finds it difficult to explain what he/ she intends at. Thus, he uses more words than needed to clarify his/ her view- points. He/ she wants to declare the idea that laws, at that time, side but with the rich. Corruption reaches to the court. Put differently, money is the ruler: everything is materialistic, even the laws which are supposed to be equal among people. Thus, Stephen could not marry his beloved and divorce his drunk woman because he is poor, he cannot pay money to the court. Then, it seems that the learner has lost the key words of his idea and starts to circumlocute about the answer intended. Other illustrations from Al- Qadisiya university as: : '...the characters in the novel presented groups of people. Every one related to groups like Mr. Bounderby and Stephen...'. The student by this utterance means the word 'archetype' or 'representative' but he/ she does not know it, then, such a circumlocutionary craft solves the trouble. Another stance of this kind is: 'Sissy and her father lived in the place of fan and enjoying. They dressed clothes for laugh of people...'. In that utterance, the student aims at writing the word 'circus' but such a word is not found in his/ her performance, so, **circumlocution** is used to clarify that idea.



Other learners, at both universities, produce utterances like: 'in addition', 'at first', 'in particular', 'generally speaking', 'in the wrong way' etc. Such utterances could be abbreviated into shorter ones: 'firstly', 'particularly', 'generally' and 'wrongly', respectively. This might be attributed to the idea that in exams, students think but of writing. Although they might use such unnecessary words, they would not realize themselves. Furthermore, students, who find themselves at lost, they resolve to write in details as to picture their answers clearly. To illustrate this case, the following utterance is jobbed for that thing: '.....Sissy say to Louisa that she failed in fact of school...' In that piece of writing, the student misapplies the verb 'say', resulting in using unneeded word 'to'. Supposedly, the verb 'tell' could be a good substitute for the first mentioned verb. He/ she does so because of his ignorance of that verb.

Moreover, **circumlocution** is utilized by learners as a try to highlight or emphasize something. In other words, when they think that an idea is important, they apply **circumlocution**. Bain( 1875: 72) writes that wordy language is signified for different objectives such as importance and emphasis. Thus, as **circumlocution** goes in line with wordy language, it is used for the same intention. To picture more clearly, consider that example: a phrase like: '...the school of facts...' is widely used by the learners. If coming to interpretation, naturally, it is normal that the school is of facts. Yet, at the time of Industrial Revolution, schools are dedicated but for facts: students learn nothing but facts. Another instance from Al- Qadisiya university is: 'the school of fact'. Generally speaking, it is normal that facts are taught at school but the students want to emphasize the idea that schools at that time concentrate but on facts and there is no mention to else concepts like imagination or fancy. Also, the learners write: 'It is a novel of society..'. Simply, the learners could write: 'It is a social novel' but the lengthy track has been aided to emphasize the idea that the novel deals but with society: no other matters would be covered.

Likewise, there are some notions which are better expressed by circumlocutionary phrases. This is so as the umbrella is art, Literature. The latter is known for its employment of beauty. Schildgen(1997: 23) adheres to that idea, connecting beauty with literature. He pens: "Literature is beautiful writing.....Literature is a luxury, as anything that is merely beautiful which is a luxury". This is related to the divers' written works of literary works like poetry, novel, play, etc. Being with the same sail, Casson(2011: 9) reasons that the much writing would be better when twisted with creativity. Consequently, there might be a demand to decorate the words said about literary works, even at exams. Thus, learners beautify their answers circumlocutionarily as a helper to parallel the topic they are sinking in. Then, long number of words would be the product. To pencil, the following sentence is circumlocutionary: 'She is the girl of imagination.' Herein, the phrase 'the girl of imagination' could be said to be beautiful as it attracts somebody's eyes when first glanced at it.

Halting with Literature, in addition to its beauty, it needs much writing. Literature, specifically novels, need much talking as they deal with different stories, characters, emotions, etc. This is vivid in the amount of papers found in the books of novels. For this reason, much writing and description are needed: something which entails **circumlocution**. The questions in literary works are considered as subjective since the answer depends on the examinee's perception of the intended writer's idea. This turns to require a tactic mind. Horton(2006: 216) describes subjective questions like 'learner-dependent' as the answer is up to the testee to the

## Circumlocution in Iraqi EFL Learners' Written Contexts

Asst. Prof. Wafaa Mukhles Kazi

Asst. Prof. Dunya Muhammed Miqdad I'jam  
Suha Hamadalla

extent that such questions might be named as open- response- questions in which the answer is up to the learner's thoughts. Also, such questions suit compositions exams as they need wordiness. Self- judgment is the corner-stone of these questions. Thus, one can conclude that the students write much as the question is subjective, attempting to be admired by the tester in order to up his/ her mark. A depict is as follows:

7.The school of Gradgrind depends on facts and only the facts and Mr. Gradgrind want from students to learn the facts only and nothing else. So he did not want imagination just facts. This system was cruel and not well so that Dickens criticized the system because it is not useful to the students because they learn no emotions or feeling but facts and life became difficult life and not from love. People tired of the system of life because facts were not enough to live in a good life.

This answer is circumlocutionary. The testee makes his best to express the corruption at the time of the Industrial Revolution. Hence, the testee is free to write what he/ she finds appropriate. Here, the student has chosen to write about the corruption found at school. He/ she wants to declare that schools, at that time, are corrupted. Facts are important but not to the extent of factualizing everything, leaving more beauteous shapely entities like love, imagination, fancy, etc. The following instance is related to Al- Qadisiya university students:

8.In the novel 'Hard Times', the write of it gives us a representation of his views when he criticized the society and the problem which the people suffer from it and give examples to this problems. In the beginning the education system was not good in the Victorian Age and the school of Mr. Gradfrind teach people or children facts only and imagination and emotion not allowed. The society of cocktown, The author of the novel critics the society of that town which is not natural and the people in this town are like dead and it polluted because of the smoke of the factories and there is no life in it. There is no role for women because they deprived from their rights to be educated or taught her children and the women do what the husbands tell them to do. The relation between the owners of the factory and the workers was very bad because the rich people do not take care of the poor people. The marriage was made for money because Louisa married Mr. Bounderby for money and he was older than her. The cocktown was very dirty and smoky because of the factory. In addition the author critics the thinking of people at that time, people think of only money and they try to collect it in any way. This reflected the tradition at the Victorian Age.

### 7.3 The Used Types of Circumlocution

The following table shows the used types of circumlocution with their frequencies and percentages:

**Table 4: The Used Types of Circumlocution**

	Babylon University		Al- Qadisiya University	
	Freq	Percentage	Freq	Percentage
Word Circumlocution	128	24.8	185	29
Paraphrase over Name	123	23.8	120	19
General over Specific	25	4.8	75	12



Complex over Simple	231	44.8	230	36
Subject Circumlocution	9	1.8	25	4
Total	516	100	635	100

It is vivid that the most used type at Babylon university is complex over simple **circumlocution**(44,8%). Certainly, this is reasonable. As declared earlier, Arabic is interesting for its use of connectives, something which is reflected in its natives' writings. Thus, Arabic students majoring at English use connectives like 'and', 'because', 'who', 'which', 'but', etc ,intensely. In addition, students might use such connectives to keep their ideas. However, such connectives might be used as the students could not express their competence briefly. Such phenomenon urges the students to use connectives as a way out of the impasses. Furthermore, such use could be attributed to the idea of memory. To put it differently, it happens that, at exams, some items are lost if not written at the time of their presence, thus, students choose to be complex in his/ her answer as an aid of writing the pieces of information needed for the question-answer. Consider the following learner's answer:

9.In this chapter, Sissy says to Louisa that she feld in facts of school and when the teacher asked her about the nation progress and she answered the wrong answer and when he asked her about the five thousand of people can be nation progress and she say that she does not know anything about them whether they are progress or not. And when he asked her about the thousand million of people who are in the journey and many of them are drooped, how the percentage of that for people and she said that she not know.

Herein, the learner has overused and. He/ she does that as the result of being as a native of another language, Arabic, which is known for such use. Normally, English uses and when linking two sentences. Yet, the student wants to be clear in the answer by combining sentences together. For instance, the start of the passage is general and then it is specified. The learner aims at being well designed. He/ she wills to write that 'when the teacher asked her, she answered him wrongly', then, he/ she is being detailed about the teacher-question and Sissy's answer. Complex over simple circumlocution comes, again, in the first turn at Al- Qadidiya university(36%). It is so as the students write lengthy sentences. Such writing seems to be widely influenced by the learners' mother language, Arabic. The following piece of writing holds this type of circumlocution: 'The relation between Louisa and Mr. Bounderby is very bad because she did not like him but she married him because her father and brother want to be more rich in this marriage...'. This utterance is lengthy. Actually it is a circumlocutionary one as connectives are overused, specifically, the connective 'because'.

. Word **circumlocution** comes and occupies the second turn at the aforesaid universities. Its percentages are: (24.8% and 29%) at Babylon and Al- Qadisiya universities, respectively. . It is so because such type aids in describing characters when wanted as in the following illustration:

10.Mr. Bounderby was a wealthy. He is rich man, he was the important character in the novel. He is a friend of Mr. Gradgrind and he married his daughter. Mr. Boundery build himself by

## Circumlocution in Iraqi EFL Learners' Written Contexts

Asst. Prof. Wafaa Mukhles Kazi

Asst. Prof. Dunya Muhammed Miqdad I'jam  
Suha Hamadalla

---

himself as he said to Mr. Sparsit. Mr. Boundery who treated the workers in the factory bad and give them not much money...

In the above piece of writing, the student is trying to write the full description of that character. Such a description is utilized through the use of **circumlocution**

This type, as stated earlier, is widely used in essay- exams. This is so as the students think that it is better to write more (Cracking the AP English Language & Composition Exam, 2016: 158). Hence, they have used to define words. For instance, consider the following piece of writing:

11.....but Sissy cannot success in the school of facts because she is an imagination girl, she liked fancy, love and her dog and the circus. She failed in school because she did not answer the questions of Mr. Gradgrind....

Here, the examinee defines the character Sissy, even if the question is not about such a character. Yet, he/ she does so, thinking that it is better to define when faced for being lengthy in writing and to indicate to the tester that he/ she has mastered the topic well. Again, such use of word **circumlocution** could be attributed to Arabic. It is aforesaid that Arabs have used to talk a lot. Thus, when writing, the same thing might be found, writing much. However, such use of word **circumlocution** could be attributed to the idea that some questions require such use as when the student is asked to write about a certain entity whether animate or inanimate.

Then, the third used type of **circumlocution** is paraphrase over name at the two universities but with different frequencies and percentages as shown in table(4). This type is utilized when certain fixed expressions are being paraphrased. They are paraphrase because they might be forgotten by the learners. Thus, they tend to paraphrase them. To illustrate, such phrases are like: 'in the beginning', 'at first', 'it appears that', 'at the end', 'in general', 'in particular', 'in addition', 'entered to his house', 'to marry again', 'to get rid of his drunk woman', 'in the course of that time', 'it seems', 'in the middle', 'to be in a more clear way', 'more than that', 'in the school', 'in the house', 'in the factory', etc are used by the student while they could be restated briefly as: 'starting', 'firstly', 'apparently', 'finally', 'generally', 'particularly', 'additionally', 'entered his house', 're-marry', 'to divorce', 'meanwhile', 'seemingly', 'in between', 'to be clearer', 'above that', 'at school', 'at house', and 'at factory', respectively.

Coming with the fourth used type of **circumlocution**, general over specific **circumlocution**. Its percentages of use are (4,8% and 12%) at Babylon and Al- Qadisiya universities, respectively. Before all, learners are advised, in learning, to start writing from the general idea up to the specific. Hence, such type of circumlocution is found. Accordingly, the students' writing of that kind could be viewed well as they are applying what they have been taught. To illustrate, the following piece of writing contains such type of **circumlocution**:

12. The novel is sever satire and criticism of the system at that time. The novelist is against the industrial revolution so, he wrote these characters to criticize them not in a good way. At that time, every system was corrupted and the system of life. The philosophy of utilitarian is representative by Mr. Gradgrind's where children are frightened rather than being taught. Also, in this novel the novelist want to say that life is not merely facts and it is impossible to live without love or emotion and also the writer criticizes the educational system and considered if failed because he thinks that children need love and emotion rather than facts. Dickens also criticizes the relationship between the owners and the leaders. He also criticizes the divorce law

through the character of Stephen Blackpool. This man could not divorce his bad wife to remarry his angel Racheal because he was poor. The industrial revolution which leads to many things which are building factories and urbanism which the movement from countries to cities. It corrupted everything. This leads to poverty, sickness because of increasing of pollution.

Herein, the examinee does general over specific **circumlocution**. At first, he starts with a general sentence containing information like 'system', 'corruption' and 'time'. After that, specification is found. For instance, the examinee states which time, system and corruption are meant, Thus, he/ she is moving from the general to the specific. Another illustration from Al-Qadisiya university is:

13.The characters of the novel were representative. These characters presented groups of people. Mr. Bounderby and Mr. Gradgrind present the class of money or the rich people. Stephen and Sissy presented the working class because they were poor. Bitzer related to the middle class, he was a worker but had money. The presentation of them was criticized by the writer of the novel because the industrial revolution divided the society...

At first, the student hints that the piece of writing would be about the characters of the novel. Then, the presentation of the characters is made. So, the student is being circumlocutionary in his/ her writing.

The last used type is subject **circumlocution**, at both universities. It is not used heavily. This type is used when talking about something without naming it directly. By contrast, Arabs are known that they are direct in their speech. Thus, such tiny use might be attributed to the fact that the learners are influenced by their native language. To picture, consider the following instance:

14.....Everything in that town was in bad way, the people, the animals, and the whether. The people worked all the time hard to live and they are not happy. They took not much money for much work. They were workers in Mr. Bounderby's factory and he treated them very bad. They have no feelings and love. The writer wants to criticize that situation of the workers because there was no rights for them at the industrial revolution.

Although not written, the examinee might want to write that 'the workers are dehumanized because of money'. Thus, the word 'dehumanization' is functional if found in that answer. Yet, the examinee circumlocutes around it. He/ she might forget it, then, such circumlocutionary utterance is produced. Probably, he/ she does not prefer to use such word in his/ her answer because of its denotation. The following instance is from Al- Qadisiya university:

15.Louisa and Tom lived like machines, they treated with no love. Mr. Gradgrind took Sissy to live with them. Mr. Bounderby said to Mr. Gradgrind he wanted to marry Louisa. She was younger than him but his father told her to marry him. Louisa married him but she did not love him. Mr. Boundery made Tom work in his factory and Mr. Gradgrind a parliment. This marriage is not succeed because they do not love one another.

In the above paragraph, the student is trying to say that the marriage of Mr. Bounderby and Louisa is but beneficial as it is based on no emotions or feelings. It is a deal- like- marriage. Such circling around the subject gives up to **circumlocution**.

### 7.5 Griceon- Maxims Violation

First, of all, it has been penned that Paul Grice has proposed the Cooperative Principle. Certain maxims are to be followed in any address by its participants in order to move smoothly. Namely, they are: quantity, quality, relevance and manner. In brief, such maxims entail that

## Circumlocution in Iraqi EFL Learners' Written Contexts

Asst. Prof. Wafaa Mukhles Kazi

Asst. Prof. Dunya Muhammed Miqdad I'jam  
Suha Hamadalla

one's contribution should be informative, true, relevant to the topic, clear and brief. By contrast, as a speech-figure, **circumlocution** is defined as the use of more words than needed when identifying a concept, idea, etc. Accordingly, **circumlocution** goes in opposition with half of Griceon maxims. In particular, once this speech figure is outlined, the quantity and manner maxims are violated. To put it differently, the quantity maxims entails that one's contribution should be as informative as required. Neither more nor less words are to be used. Again, the manner- maxim presupposes that one should be clear, avoids obscurity and brief. **Circumlocution** is not in line with them as wordiness is what characterized it. This means that whenever **circumlocution** is used, two of Griceon maxims are violated. Hassan(2011: 46) and Goatly(2012: 232) agree that **circumlocution** results in violating the maxims of quantity and manner, respectively. The frequency of the maxims- violation would be multiple of circumlocution- use as seen below:

**Table5: Frequency of Griceon- maxims Violation**

The Subject	Circumlocution		Violation of Griceon- Maxims		Violation of Griceon- Maxims	
	Third Stage		Quantity		Manner	
	Freq	Percentage	Freq	Percentage	Freq	Percentage
Babylon University	516	44.8	516	50	516	50
Al-Qadisiya University	635	55.2	635	50	635	50

The table shows that the frequency of Griceon-maxims at Al- Qadisiya university is more than that of Babylon university as circumlocution is handed in the former university more than the latter one. More specifically, the frequency of the violation of the quantity maxim at Babylon university is(516) and equals the violation of the manner- maxim at the same university. At Al- Qadisiya university, the violation of the quantity maxim is(635) and it is the same frequency for the manner- maxim- violation. To illustrate, the phrase 'passed away' is used by students majoring at English. The phrase could be replaced by a word, having the same meaning. The word 'died' would be a good replaced one. Hence, as the student uses unneeded word, he violates the maxim of quantity. As so, the student does not achieve brevity, resulting in violating the manner-maxim. Additionally, as the latter maxim invades obscurity, the phrase 'passed away' is not known by all the students, then, the same maxim is violated. Another example is: 'He is a rich and a wealthy man. He had much money but he drunk. He drinks a lot....'. Herein, the ideas of 'being rich' and 'drink' are repeated through using **circumlocution**. There is no need to do so as the participant's words are clear and informative. Yet, he/ she chooses to uses more words and be lengthy. In turn, such use violates the maxims of quantity and manner as the

participant uses more words than needed: something which goes in contrast with the quantity maxim. Again, as the participant is lengthy, he/ she violates the maxim of manner.

### 8. Conclusions

It is concluded that:

1. Iraqi university learners utilize **circumlocution** for different purposes:

a. as a communicative tool.

b. politeness.

c. emphasis.

d. clarity.

e. decoration.

f. euphemistic- ends.

2. Al- Qadisiya learners use **circumlocution** more than the learners of Babylon university. This verifies the first part of the second hypothesis.

3. Complex over simple **circumlocution** is the most used type of **circumlocution** at both universities. This verifies the second part of the second hypothesis.

4. The quantity and manner maxims are the ones being violated when using **circumlocution**. This accords with the third hypothesis.

### References

Allot, N. (2010). **Key terms in Pragmatics**. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Bain, A. (1875). **English Composition and Rhetoric: A Manual**. New York: Appleton and Company.

Barrass, R. (2005). **Students Must Write: A guide to better writing in coursework and examinations 3<sup>rd</sup>**. London: Routledge.

Bloch, H; Calhoun, A; Cerquiglini-Toulet, J; JKüpper, J; Küpper, J and Patterso, J (eds). (2014). **Rethinking the New Medievalism**. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Bloomfield, L. (1963) **Language**. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.

Callus, M and Sykes, J. (2002). **English Elements 3, Teacher's Notes**. Germany: Hueber Verlag.

Chirban, J. (1994). **Ethical Dilemmas: Crises in Faith and Modern Medicine**. Boston: University Press of America, Inc.

Cook, V(ed). (2003). **Effects of the Second Language on the First**. Sydney: Bilingual Matters LTD.

**Cracking the AP English Language & Composition Exam**. (2016). New York: TPR Education IP Holdings.

Crain, J. (2010). **Reading the Bible as Literature**. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Fainzang, S. (2015). **An Anthropology of Lying: Information in the Doctor-Patient Relationship**. London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

French, P; Uehling, T and Wettstein, H. (eds.). (1980). **Midwest Studies in Philosophy: Studies in Epistemology**. Vol. v. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota.

Garcia, M; Ribera, P ; Costa, A, Garcia, M; Garcia, P; Iglesias, A; Pozo, M; and Rodriguez, C (eds.). (2010). **Interacció Comunicativa I Ensenyament De llengües(Communicative**

## **Circumlocation in Iraqi EFL Learners' Written Contexts**

**Asst. Prof. Wafaa Mukhles Kazi**

**Asst. Prof. Dunya Muhammed Miqdad I'jam  
Suha Hamadalla**

---

**interaction and language instruction**) . N.p.: Giel Group D'interacció I Ensenyament De llengües.

Goatly, A. (2012). **Meaning and Humour: Key Topics in Semantics and Pragmatics**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gregg, N. (2009). **Adolescents and Adults with Learning Disabilities and Adhd: Assessment and Accommodation**. New York: The Guilford Press.

Grice, P. (1989). **Studies in the Way of Words**. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Hassan, B. (2011). **Literary Translation: Aspects of Pragmatic Meaning**. Chapman Street: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Horton, W.(2006). **E- Learning by Design**. San Francisco: A Willy Imprint.

Logan, K.(2015). **Fluency Disorders**. America: Plural Publishing.

Oxford, R. (ed.). (1996). **Language Learning Strategies Around the World: Cross-Cultural Perspectives**. Hawai'i: University of Hawai'i Press.

Ramshaw, G. (1996). **Liturgical Language: Keeping It Metaphoric, Making It Inclusive**. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press.

Ryding, C. K(2005). A Reference Grammar of Modern Standard Arabic in

[https://books.google.iq/books?id=hF\\_P3UpKZMkC&pg=PA407&dq=Arabic+use+of+connectives+by+Ryding%5C&hl=ar&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwim\\_7qAhqbWAhVEvhQKH5sDw0Q6AEIJDAA#v=onepage&q=Arabic%20use%20of%20connectives%20by%20Ryding%5C&f=false](https://books.google.iq/books?id=hF_P3UpKZMkC&pg=PA407&dq=Arabic+use+of+connectives+by+Ryding%5C&hl=ar&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwim_7qAhqbWAhVEvhQKH5sDw0Q6AEIJDAA#v=onepage&q=Arabic%20use%20of%20connectives%20by%20Ryding%5C&f=false)

Schildgen, D. B(ed). (1997). **The Rhetoric Canon. America**. Wayne State University Press.

Smither, L. E(2012). **Brazilian Evangelical Missions in the Arab World: History, Culture, Practice and Theory**. Eugene: Pickwick Publications.

Wong, P. K. L. (2014). **Dreaming across Languages and Cultures: A Study of the Literary Translations of the Hong lou meng**. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Van Dijk, T. A. (2000). Parliamentary debates. In R. Dins Wodak & T. A. Van Dijk(ed). **Racism at the top: Parliameentary discourses on ethnic Issues in six European states**. Australia: Drava Verlag.