

A Study of Assertives in Arabic Supervisor – Student Interaction

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Relatively, little is known about assertive speech acts that the supervisors employ to communicate with their research students. In addition, it is unknown whether assertives can help determine the supervisors' mode of interaction across the stages of the supervisory process and the dominant mode throughout the entire process. The present study seeks to investigate the supervisors' use of the assertives while presenting their oral feedback. The study traces the supervisors' use of the assertives throughout the stages of writing the thesis. Also, it aims at finding if assertives, can be used to identify the mode of interaction at each stage and the dominant one employed by the supervisors throughout the entire process. The study adopts an eclectic model that combines two parts. The first part is based mainly on Searle's (1979) assertives. The second part comprises Heron's (1976) six-category intervention analysis. The data has been approached qualitatively; in addition, some instruments from the quantitative method are used, such as percentages, figures, and some mathematical statistics, to explore the correlation between the assertives under-study and the supervisory mode of interaction. The data analysis concludes that assertive speech acts can be used to determine the supervisors' mode of interaction throughout the various stages of the supervisory process and identify the dominant mode of interaction across the entire supervisory process. Besides, the findings show that the authoritative mode is the dominant mode of interaction employed by the supervisors throughout the various stages of the supervisory process.

Key words: Speech acts, Supervision, Modes of interactions

دراسة أفعال الكلام الاخبارية في حوارات المشرف والطالب في اللغة العربية

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المستخلص

نسيباً، لا يُعرف الكثير عن أفعال الكلام الاخبارية التي يستخدمها المشرفون للتواصل مع طلابهم الباحثين. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، من غير المعروف ما إذا كان بإمكان الافعال الإخبارية المساعدة في تحديد نمط تفاعل المشرفين مع طلابهم عبر مراحل العملية الإشرافية بالإضافة لتحديد النمط السائد خلال العملية الإشرافية بأكملها. تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى دراسة استخدام المشرفين لأفعال الكلام الاخبارية أثناء تقديم ملاحظاتهم الشفوية اثناء الجلسات الإشرافية. كذلك تسعى الدراسة الى تتبع استخدام المشرفين لأفعال الكلام الاخبارية خلال مراحل كتابة الرسالة ومعرفة إمكانية استخدامها لمعرفة النمط التفاعلي الذي يستخدمه المشرفون في الحوار مع الطلبة خلال مراحل العملية الإشرافية والنمط السائد خلال العملية الإشرافية ككل. تستخدم الدراسة الحالية نموذج تجميعي مكون من جزأين. يعتمد الجزء الأول بشكل أساسي على أفعال الكلام الاخبارية لسيرل (١٩٧٩) ويشمل الجزء الثاني على النموذج التفاعلي لهيرون (١٩٧٦) ذو الست فئات. تم تناول البيانات بشكل وصفي ؛ بالإضافة إلى ذلك، يتم استخدام بعض الأدوات من الطريقة الكمية ، مثل النسب المئوية والأرقام وبعض الإحصائيات الرياضية، لاستكشاف الارتباط بين أفعال الكلام الاخبارية وطريقة التفاعل الإشرافية. أظهرت نتائج الدراسة ان أفعال الكلام الإخبارية ممكن ان تستخدم لتحديد النمط الإشرافي للمشرفين عبر المراحل المختلفة للعملية الإشرافية بالإضافة لتحديد نوع النمط الإشرافي الغالب خلال العملية الإشرافية ككل. كما بينت الدراسة ان النمط التسلطي هو النمط السائد الذي يعتمد المشرفون اثناء الجلسات الإشرافية بمراحلها المختلفة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: أفعال الكلام ، الإشراف ، أنماط الحوار

1. Introduction

Education entails learning to gain a broader understanding and knowledge in several fields that may be utilised in the daily life. Postgraduate studies, in particular, are helpful in developing both the individual and the society in social, economic, cultural, etc., areas. Gaining a postgraduate degree is the result of an academic process where the supervisor and the research student interact throughout many sessions over the stages of writing-up the thesis. During these interactions, the supervisor employs assertive speech acts to convey his/her intentions to his/her research student. The use of this speech act can affect the mode of interaction adopted by the supervisor during the supervisory meetings.

2. Problem of the Research

Postgraduate supervision has recently attracted many scholars' attention in different fields such as social and behavioral sciences, instructional science, discourse analysis, etc. However, studies that explored postgraduate supervision approached it differently, and of course, they adopted a variety of theoretical frameworks such as conversational analysis approach, critical criticism and the role of supervision in increasing learning. The current study adopts an entirely new approach of analysis viz a pragmatic approach.

The choice of this topic was explicitly motivated by the following: first, relatively little is known about Searle's assertives the supervisors employ to communicate with research students, and the frequency of this speech act throughout the various stages of the supervisory process. To the best of the researchers' knowledge, no previous study has investigated the supervisors' use of assertives, as supervision is still a blurry area that takes place behind closed doors. In addition, it is unknown whether assertives can help determine the supervisors' mode of interaction across

the stages of the supervisory process and the dominant mode throughout the whole process.

3. Aims of the Research

The present research aims at:

- a. Identifying and describing assertives related to the topic in the study sample.
- b. Tracing the changes in the supervisors' use of assertives throughout the three stages of the supervisory process, i.e. beginning, middle and final.
- c. Identifying the dominant mode of interaction throughout the various stages of the supervisory process.

4. Significance of the Research

The current research can hopefully provide a pragmatic model for analysing supervisors' utterance and detecting the supervisory mode of interaction employed by the supervisors throughout the various stages of supervision as such model is completely neglected in language study.

5. Data Collection and Analytical Procedure

The sample of the study comprises twelve supervisory groups, i.e. each group consists of a supervisor and a research student. The groups are chosen from three departments at the College of Education for Humanities/University of Mosul for the academic year 2020-2021. The data were collected by audio recording three meetings for each supervisory group (at the beginning, middle and final stages). After transcribing all the recordings, Mayring's (2000) analytical procedures for deductive qualitative content analysis are followed to figure out the unit of analysis. The units of analysis are selected based on the existence of Searle's (1979) assertives.

6. Searle's Taxonomy of Illocutionary Acts

Searle (1969) built on Austin's (1962) of systematising the ideas Austin presented. Searle's insights have a significant impact on the theory of speech acts. Five types of illocutionary acts are identified by Searle (1979); these are assertives, directives, commissives, expressives and declaratives. Searle's speech acts are divided into sub-categories regarding the illocutionary force of each speech act type. The sub-categories are then distinguished as direct and indirect based on the number of illocutionary forces each speech act express. The present study explores Searle's direct and indirect assertives, (henceforth ASs) in postgraduate supervisory interactions.

The illocutionary point of ASs is related to the speaker's commitment to express his conviction about the truth of a proposition content of his utterance. The direction of fit of this category is words to worlds. The psychological state expressed is a *belief* that fits to state of affairs in the world. According to Searle (1976, p. 13), ASs have the illocutionary force of suggesting, complaining, stating, deducing, insisting, explaining, swearing, asserting, claiming, reporting, concluding, prohibiting and boasting.

Yule (1996, p. 53) entails that this type of illocutionary act serves as factual statements, descriptions, assertions, and conclusions. The expression '*It was a perfect fruitful meeting*', for instance, has the function of a description, and the phrase '*Water boils at 100 degrees Celsius*' acts as a factual statement. Thus, the typical utterances of this type of illocutionary act have a declarative structure.

7. Supervisors' Modes of Interaction

To communicate effectively, the interlocutors are expected to adhere to one or more modes of interaction. As with any communication,

the supervisors in postgraduate studies need to employ a specific mode or modes of interaction throughout the supervisory process to guide the research students in completing the thesis. Simultaneously, the research student needs to engage adequately in any mode of interaction employed by the supervisor during the meeting. Supervisors' participation in supervisory meetings typically entails stating, explaining, instructing, clarifying, and expressing, among other things. To express any illocutionary acts listed above, the supervisor employs a particular mode of interaction that may differ from that used by other supervisors. The variation in modes of interaction among different supervisors or concerning the same supervisor throughout the various stages of the supervisory process could be attributed to the implicit perceptions that individual supervisors have of the supervisory process. Moreover, the level of postgraduate studies, whether diploma, Master or doctoral studies, also may influence the supervisory mode of interaction. To identify the supervisory mode of interaction, Heron's (1976) six categories of intervention model is adopted. These categories involve two major groups: authoritative and facilitative interventions.

Authoritative interventions include three sub-categories, the first is prescriptive interventions, in which the supervisor tries to control, guide the supervisee's actions, and provide advice and suggestions. For example, in a postgraduate supervision environment, the supervisor attempts to direct the behaviour of the research student to use a specific method of analysis. The second is the informative mode, where the supervisor intends to provide knowledge. It is authoritative in the sense that the supervisor serves as the source of information. For instance, the supervisor shares his or her beliefs or perspectives with the research student to explain the rationale behind employing a specific model of

analysis to assist the research student in comprehending the model. The third sub-category is confronting, in which the supervisor draws the supervisee's attention to some limiting attitude or behaviour that he or she is unaware of by challenging them with comments without personal attack. It should be a fruitful and productive interaction rather than an aggressive one. For example, the supervisor confronts the research student: *'Have you noticed how frequently I have explained this technique?'* (Cassedy, 2010, p. 109).

Facilitative interventions also involve three sub-categories. The first is cathartic, in which the supervisor assists the supervisee in relieving stress. For instance, the supervisor tells the research student, *'Do not be worried. Many other students believe they do not have enough time to complete their thesis. This is perfectly normal'*. The second mode is catalytic, in which the supervisor assists the supervisee in comprehending, analysing, and resolving problems independently. For instance, the supervisor might ask the research student, *'How would you fix this issue?'* The final sub-category is supportive, in which the supervisor aims to build trust and demonstrate the supervisee's worth. For instance, the supervisor could tell the research student, *'well done, I'm so pleased of you.'* (Yaghchi, Ghafoori, & Nabifar, 2016, p. 182).

8. Data Analysis

This section presents an in-depth analysis of supervisors' employment of assertive speech acts in their utterances during three stages of supervision. The first step is to analyse supervisors' utterances extracted from the transcribed materials based on the presence of direct and indirect ASs. The second step entails determining whether the identified ASs can lead to identifying the supervisory mode of interaction throughout the

three supervisory stages and recognising the dominant mode of interaction across the study sample.

8.1 Direct Assertives

The frequency of direct ASs throughout each supervisory stage and department is illustrated in Table (1). In addition, this table shows the total frequency of ASs across the three stages and departments in general. Furthermore, this table in its last row presents the overall frequency of ASs in the study sample regardless of stages and departments. However, Table (1) lists the frequency of ASs during the three stages in each department to explain how the total frequencies are obtained. Finally, this table depicts the number of supervisors' utterances that involve direct ASs across the three departments.

Table 1: The Frequency of Direct Assertives

Dep.	Stages of supervision	No. of UT	Direct Assertives
English	Beginning	173	44(44%)
	Middle	199	40(39%)
	Final	191	17(16%)
History	Beginning	148	49(37%)
	Middle	133	36(26%)
	Final	131	50(37%)
Arabic	Beginning	95	20(17%)
	Middle	236	66(56%)
	Final	139	31(27%)
Total	Beginning	416	113(32%)
	Middle	568	142(40%)
	Final	461	98(28%)
	All stages	1445	353(24%)

The last row in Table (1) indicates that the direct ASs are used in the supervisors' utterances with a frequency of 353. The assertive speech acts commit the speaker to the truthfulness of the expressed proposition and impose no obligation on the addressee. The supervisors use these speech acts to give information, clarify something or show their agreement or disagreement to the research students; thus, ASs fulfil both control and evaluative functions. Several words in the supervisors' utterances demonstrate the supervisors' use of ASs, including asserting, stating, explaining, informing and clarifying. The following are examples of direct ASs performed by supervisors in this study:

١. نعم هذا ما يعنيه النموذج التجميعي مصادر مختلفة نظريات مختلفة تجتمع مع بعضها، من تضعهم سويا وتصهرهم سويا تحصل على المنهج التجميعي.

Trasl. *Yes, this is what is meant by the eclectic model: diverse sources and theories collide; when you combine and fused them, you will get the eclectic model.*

٢. اطروحتك راح تصير ١٧٠ صفحة وهذا كثير جدا، قلت لك سابقا فوق ١٥٠ غير مقبول.

Trasl. *Your thesis will be 170 pages in length, which is quite a lot; I told you earlier that more than 150 is unacceptable.*

٣. مادام ما اكو دراسة سابقة عن عنوانك هذا معناه دراستك سوف تكون جديدة، وكل المادة راح تكون ما مدروسة سابقاً.

Trasl. *As long as no previous studies are conducted on your title, your thesis will be invented, and the rest of your subject will be so.*

Example number (1) involves an assertive speech act that carries the illocutionary force of asserting. The supervisor agrees with the research student's definition of the eclectic model, stating that it is formed

by fusing diverse theories or models from multiple disciplines. Examples (2) and (3) illustrate the use of ASs with the illocutionary force of stating.

The second step in analysing the data in Table (1) sheds light on the reasons behind the variation in frequencies and percentages of supervisors' use of ASs across the three stages of the supervisory process. The data reveal that the supervisors' use of ASs slightly varies across the three stages. This speech act occurs 113 times (32%) at the beginning, 142 times (40%) at the middle stage, and 98 (28%) at the final stage.

The relatively high frequency of the initial use of ASs is attributed to the informative nature of these speech acts. At this stage, the majority of research students have insufficient research knowledge. The supervisors seek to provide them with various details about the research process and subject. Having sufficient knowledge about the research method and subject area increases the research students' confidence in writing their thesis. Supervisors employ the ASs illocutionary forces of informing, stating, explaining, and asserting to accomplish these goals. The following are examples of supervisory utterances at this stage.

٤ . الخطة التي قدمتها تعتبر مسودة ومجرد بداية.

Tranl. *The plan you submitted is considered a draft and merely a start.*

٥ . احنا بالتاريخ عدنا مشكلة، من نعطي عنوان عدنا تصور لكن ما نقدر نحدد مساحة العنوان وابعاده بنسبة ٩٠٪. لذلك احيانا لما نشغل قد نتفاجأ أن المساحة قليلة والعنوان ما يصلح.

Tranl. *In history, we are back with a problem. When a title is suggested, we have an idea about the subject, but cannot define the limits of the subject by 90%. Thus, while working, we may be astonished that the title is inappropriate.*

٦ . الخطة التي توضع الان اكيد مستقبلا تصير عليها تغييرات حسب النتائج التي نخرج بها من العمل.

Tranl. *The prepared plan will be probably modified in the future based on the work results.*

There are ASs with the illocutionary forces of informing and clarifying in the above examples. For instance, in (4), the supervisor tells the research student that the plan s/he presented is considered a draft and represents the first step toward writing the thesis.

The middle stage has a higher frequency of ASs than the beginning stage. At this stage, the majority of information provided by supervisors is used to inform the research students about the practical part of the research or to assert the research students' opinions, as shown in the following examples:

٧. في الفصل الثالث نتكلم فقط عن المنهجية.

Tranl. *In chapter three, we only talk about the methodology.*

٨. نعم، طلاب الصباحي والمسائي ضمن العينة حتى تكون نتائجك أكثر موثوقية.

Tranl. *Yes, both morning and evening students are included in the sample to ensure the reliability of your results.*

The final stage of the supervisory process reveals a minor change in the frequency of supervisors' utterances containing ASs. Compared to the beginning and middle stages, supervisors use fewer speech acts. The reduction in using ASs at this stage is attributed to the research student's increased knowledge of his subject. Additionally, research students are closer to achieving writing independence at this stage. Besides, the decrease in the percentage of ASs is related to the supervisors' mode of interaction adopted by the supervisors; they may prefer to appear more facilitative at this stage.

Most of the information supervisors provide at this stage is used to inform the research students about the findings and conclusions of the thesis. The following are some examples of ASs at this stage:

٩ . المقوم اللغوي والعلمي يقرأ لكن لن يضع ملاحظات في كل مكان لكن قراءة عامة.

Tranl. *The linguistic and scientific evaluator will read your work but not insert notes on every page.*

١٠ . عندك الفصل الخامس مرتبط بالأول وما تزرعه في الفصل الأول تحصده في الخامس.

Tranl. *Chapter five is related to chapter one. What you write in chapter one is what you fulfil in chapter five.*

In (9) and (10), the supervisors use ASs with illocutionary forces of informing and clarifying.

8.2 Indirect Assertives

The frequency of indirect ASs is depicted in Table (2) for each stage and department. Additionally, this table details the overall frequency of ASs throughout the three stages and departments in general. Besides, this table reveals in its last row the total frequency for indirect ASs in the study sample regardless of stages and departments. Nevertheless, this table lists the frequency of ASs during the three stages in each department for organisational purposes and to demonstrate how the total frequencies are obtained. Finally, this table illustrates the number of supervisors' utterances that include indirect ASs in the three departments in its third column.

Table 2: The Frequency of Indirectness of Illocutionary Acts

Dep.	Stages of supervision	No. of UT	Indirect Speech Acts
English	Beginning	50	41(42%)

	Middle	45	37(38%)
	Final	27	20(20%)
History	Beginning	29	28(20%)
	Middle	76	61(44%)
	Final	50	48(36%)
Arabic	Beginning	28	25(25%)
	Middle	79	54(52%)
	Final	32	24(23%)
Total	Beginning	107	94(27%)
	Middle	200	152(46%)
	Final	109	92(27%)
	All Stages	416	338(81%)

The last row in Table (2) indicates that the indirect ASs are used in the supervisors' utterances with a frequency of 338. Using indirect assertives indicate that supervisors have other unstated meanings that they want to convey indirectly. In addition, it reflects the supervisors' desire to mitigate the effect of their institutional position by using indirect ASs to ensure that research students feel comfortable during the supervisory meetings.

The indirect ASs are used in the present study with the implied illocutionary forces of stating, clarifying, informing, explaining and asserting. Examples of indirect ASs used by supervisors in the current study involve the following:

١١ . بالنسخة الورقية أقدر اكتب لك هنا خطأ وهذا البديل او مثلا ضع مصدر هنا او الموضوع يحتاج الى اسهاب أكثر.

Trnsl. *In the paper version, I can write that there is a mistake in a particular section, or specific material has to be replaced with another, or for example, insert a source here, or the topic needs more details in a given section.*

In (11), the supervisor indirectly informs the research student that he did not provide feedback.

١٢ . النقطة الأخرى بالنسبة لتقسيم المباحث الرئيسية والمباحث الفرعية أنا مقتنع بتقسيمات الفصل الثاني فقط.

Trnsl. *As for the division of the main and sub-sections, I am convinced only with the divisions of chapter two.*

In (12), the supervisor uses indirect ASs to imply that the division of the sections in other chapters other than two is not appropriate. The supervisors' words 'I am convinced only with the divisions of chapter two.' float on the surface while the indirect implication comes beneath it, mitigating the authority and power inherited in supervisors due to their institutional position.

The next step in analysing the data in Table (2) involves determining the reasons behind the variation in the frequencies of the supervisors' use of indirect ASs across the three stages of the supervisory process. Indirect ASs occur 94 (27%) at the beginning, 152 times (46%) in the middle, and 92 times (27%) in the final stage. According to Table (2), there is no relatively significant difference in the frequency of the supervisors' use of indirect ASs in the beginning and final stages. The slight variation in frequencies between the two stages is attributed to the supervisors' general desire to ensure that the communication between the supervisory participants runs smoothly. However, the middle stage of supervision exhibits an increase in indirect ASs compared to the beginning and final stages. In this stage, the supervisors need to provide more feedback on the theoretical background and discuss the methodology related to chapter three with the research student. As a result, supervisors state a significant portion of their ASs indirectly to

limit the influence of their authority and power while offering feedback. Additionally, the supervisors want to instil critical thinking in the research students. The following are representative examples of indirect ASs, presented chronologically according to the supervisory process's three stages.

١٣ . عندك شغلة مهمة دائما أنبهك عليها وهي أن اللغة العربية بيها طرق وبيها وطرائق.

Trnsl. *There is a critical issue that I always remind you of: the Arabic language has procedures and methods.*

١٤ . الشخص الذي يقوم بطباعة رسالتك بعض الأحيان لا يفهم خطك.

Trnsl. *The person who types your thesis sometimes does not understand your handwriting.*

١٥ . مادتي هي الأولى في جدول الامتحانات الأسبوع المقبل، ولديّ امتحان حضوري بالإضافة إلى تصحيح ٢٧٥ ورقة امتحان.

Trnsl. *My subject is the first on the examination schedule next week, and I have an in-presence exam in addition to marking 275 examination papers.*

In (13), the supervisor indirectly informs the research student through AS that he has repeated the same mistake. In this utterance, there is a combination between an AS and expressive speech acts. The supervisor blames the research student for repeating the mistake—the supervisor uses assertive indirectly to mitigate the effect of blaming. Additionally, he instructs the research student indirectly to distinguish between procedures and methods. In (14), the supervisor alerts the research student indirectly through AS that his work contains some

typographical mistakes. In (15), the supervisor employs AS to inform the research student indirectly that he cannot see him next week.

It can be argued that several factors are behind the variation in the supervisors' use of direct and indirect ASs across the three stages of the supervisory process. The first factor is how complex or easy the topic is. This factor significantly affects the supervisors' use of direct or indirect ASs. The more complicated the topic, the more direct the supervisors need to be in their instruction. Using indirect ASs with research students could result in a misunderstanding between the supervisory participants. The second factor that affects the supervisors' decisions in using direct or indirect ASs relates to the research students' diligence. Research students who are clever and diligent can understand the supervisors explicit and implicit remarks. In contrast, research students who have poor levels of intelligence and diligence have to be instructed directly. The third factor that affects supervisors' decision to be direct or not is the stage of the supervisory process. Finally, the nature of the relationship between the supervisor and the research student, whether he knows him before or not, also affects the supervisors' use of direct or indirect speech acts.

9. Assertives and Heron's (1976) Mode of Interaction

The present part of the analysis sheds light on the supervisory mode of interaction adopted by the supervisors throughout each stage of supervision within Searle's ASs, regardless of being direct or indirect. The supervisory mode identification is achieved through the correlation between Searle's ASs and Heron's model subcategories. The link between the two will be expressed in terms of formulas suggested by the researcher. The framework formula is to be read as follows:

If Speech act > (involves) intervention (then), the mode is authoritative/facilitative.

9.1 Supervisory Mode of Interaction in Assertives

To arrive at the supervisory mode of interaction in ASs, the supervisors' utterances related to this speech act are examined to determine whether they are linked to Heron's model subcategories. The correlation between the two is investigated in terms of the suggested formula above. The formulas expressing the authoritative mode subcategories are to be elicited depending on the analysis of the supervisors' utterances related to ASs in the study sample. The following account presents examples of the supervisors' utterances that reflect the authoritative mode subcategories:

❖ Informative

١٦. النموذج التجميعي عبارة عن مصادر مختلفة ونظريات مختلفة تجتمع مع بعضها، من تضعهم سويا وتصهرهم سويا تحصل على المنهج التجميعي.

Trnsl. *The eclectic model is a combination of diverse sources and theories. When they are combined and fused, the eclectic model results.*

❖ Confronting

١٧. اطروحتك راح تصير ١٧٠ صفحة وهذا كثير جدا، قلت لك سابقا فوق ١٥٠ غير مقبول.

Trasl. *Your thesis will be 170 pages in length, which is quite a lot; I told you earlier that more than 150 is unacceptable.*

In (16), the supervisor uses the informative intervention by employing AS speech act with the illocutionary force of stating to inform the research student that the eclectic model is a collection of different sources and theories. When these are fused, one gets the eclectic model. The supervisor's utterance demonstrates the authoritative mode of interaction since the supervisor serves as the source of information. The formula used to predict this mode is *If ASs > Informative → Authoritative*.

In (17), one can deduce that the supervisor adopts the confronting intervention by using AS speech act with the illocutionary force of stating to draw the research student's attention that the thesis has exceeded the acceptable page numbers. Using confronting intervention, the supervisor reminds the research student that he has earlier told him that the thesis should not exceed 150 pages. The supervisor uses the confronting intervention to show his dissatisfaction with the research student for disregarding his previous advice. However, the supervisor does not do so aggressively; instead, he expresses his point of view positively and productively. The formula used to predict this intervention is *If ASs > Confronting → Authoritative*. The data shows no occurrence of prescriptive subcategory since this subcategory is mostly related with directives.

The analysis of the supervisors' utterances reveals that the formulas related to the authoritative mode in ASs involve the following formulas:

A. If ASs > Informative → Authoritative

B. If ASs > Confronting → Authoritative

The formulas related to the subcategories in facilitative mode are to be elicited depending on the analysis of the supervisors' utterances related to ASs in the study sample. The following account presents examples of the supervisors' utterances in ASs that correspond to the facilitative mode subcategories.

❖ Cathartic

١٨ . أتصور المشكلة بالتحليل صغيرة ويمكن حلها ان شاء الله.

Trnsl. *I think the problem in analysis is trivial and can be easily solved hopefully.*

❖ Catalytic

١٩ . افضل اذا ربطت بعملك نظريتين متناقضتين فعملك سيكون جدا رائع.

Trnsl. *It would be better if you connect two contradictory theories in your work.*

❖ Supportive

٢٠ . انا اعرف راح يطلع عندك شغل جدا رائع.

Trnsl. *I know that your work will be outstanding.*

In (18), the cathartic intervention is constituted by AS speech act. The supervisor employs the AS speech act with the illocutionary force of stating to reassure the research student that the problem would be solved. The supervisor uses cathartic intervention to aid the research student in releasing stress and dealing with emotions that inhibit his/her ability to think creatively. Once the research student is conscious of his/her concerns and anxiety about the work, s/he will overcome these obstacles and complete the thesis. The formula used to predict this intervention is *If ASs > Cathartic → Facilitative*.

In (19), the supervisor adopts the catalytic intervention through applying AS speech act with the illocutionary force of stating to inspire the research student's self-discovery. In this example, the supervisor motivates the research student by assuring her that if she connects two contradictory theories in her thesis, the work will be remarkable. The supervisor aims to motivate the research student to acquire the necessary knowledge and information for completing the thesis. The formula used to anticipate this intervention is *If ASs > Catalytic → Facilitative*.

In (20), the supervisor employs the supportive intervention by adopting AS speech act with the illocutionary force of asserting to boost the research student's confidence by concentrating on his

accomplishments. The supervisor wants to ensure that the research student has done well in his thesis. The formula used to expect this intervention is *If ASs > Supportive → Facilitative*.

The analysis related to the facilitative mode of interaction in ASs shows that the formulas relating to this mode in ASs include the following:

- A. If ASs > Cathartic → Facilitative
- B. If ASs > Catalytic → Facilitative
- C. If ASs > Supportive → Facilitative

Based on the deduced formulas, Table (3) reveals the frequency of both the authoritative and the facilitative modes of interaction across the stages of the supervisory process in ASs. What is significant for the present study are the overalls of the authoritative and facilitative modes of interaction, regardless of the variation that may exist within their subcategories across the three stages, since it is irrelevant to the current research.

According to Table (3), the authoritative mode in ASs has been used 175 times (32%) at the beginning stage, 251 times (43%) at the middle stage and 158 times (27%) at the final stage. On the other hand, the facilitative mode occurred 38 times (35%) at the beginning stage, 19 times (18%) at the middle stage and 50 times (47%) at the final stage.

Now we turn to discuss in general the variation among the three stages in using the mode of interaction in ASs. Taken together, the authoritative mode of interaction has been used 175 times (29%) at the beginning stage, 275 times (46%) at the middle stage and 149 times (25%) at the final stage.

Table 3: Supervisory Modes of Interaction in Assertives

Dept.	Mode of Interaction Stages	Authoritative			Facilitative		
		Prescriptive	Informative	Confronting	Cathartic	Catalytic	Supportive
		No.(%)	No.(%)	No.(%)	No.(%)	No.(%)	No.(%)
English	Beginning	(0%)	47 (87%)	7 (13%)	2 (12%)	8 (50%)	6 (38%)
	Middle	(0%)	80 (92%)	7 (8%)	2 (40%)	2 (40%)	1 (20%)
	Final	(0%)	36 (84%)	7 (16%)	2 (17%)	4 (33%)	6 (50%)
History	Beginning	(0%)	70 (92%)	6 (8%)	8 (89%)	1 (11%)	0 (0%)
	Middle	(0%)	83 (94%)	5 (6%)	3 (37%)	2 (26%)	3 (37%)
	Final	(0%)	75 (99%)	1 (1%)	8 (40%)	6 (30%)	6 (30%)
Arabic	Beginning	(0%)	36 (80%)	9 (20%)	2 (28%)	5 (72%)	0 (0%)
	Middle	(0%)	85 (85%)	15 (15%)	2 (33%)	2 (33%)	2 (33%)
	Final	(0%)	38 (97%)	1 (3%)	7 (78%)	1 (11%)	1 (11%)
Total	Beginning	(0%)	153 (87%)	22 (13%)	12 (38%)	14 (44%)	6 (18%)
	Middle	(0%)	248 (91%)	27 (9%)	7 (36%)	6 (32%)	6 (32%)
	Final	(0%)	140 (94%)	9 (6%)	17 (40%)	11 (27%)	13 (33%)
Total	Beginning		175 (29%)		32 (35%)		
	Middle		275 (46%)		19 (21%)		
	Final		149 (25%)		41 (44%)		
Total Across all Stages			599 (87%)			92 (13%)	
			691				

The analysis reveals that the supervisors at the middle stage tend to be more authoritative than at the other stages. This could be attributed to

the sense that this stage is essential since it represents the culmination of the research student's efforts in writing the thesis. It involves selecting the proper methodology and research methods as well as data analysis and discussion. Therefore, the research student requires as much as possible intervention from the supervisor at this stage. Keeping in mind that the research students are M.A. students, one can presume that they lack the adequate knowledge needed to complete this part. Moreover, many updates may occur in the study sample throughout the practical part, a matter that requires quick interference from the supervisor. Therefore, the supervisors need to be more directive to cope with such situations.

As for the beginning stage, the relatively high frequency of the authoritative mode could be attributed to the supervisors' expectations that the majority of their students cannot achieve significant progress when considering the nature of this stage. In other words, many research students spend a considerable amount of time at the beginning stage discussing with their supervisors the title, the problem, the resources ..., etc. Because most of them lack sufficient research knowledge and do not have enough information about their subjects, the supervisor will tend to spoon-feed research students with various details regarding their subjects. To perform their role as guiders or directors, the supervisors use a relatively high frequency of the authoritative mode expressed in their use of prescriptive, informative and confronting interventions.

The final stage of the supervisory process reveals a change in the frequency of supervisors' use of the authoritative mode. Compared to the beginning and middle stages, the supervisors are relatively less authoritative in their relationship with the research students. The decrease in the supervisors' use of their authority at this stage is attributed to the research student's increased knowledge of his subject. Additionally,

research students are closer to achieving writing independence at this stage. Besides, the reduction in the percentage of the authoritative mode is related to development in the relationship between the two participants as each becomes more acquainted with the other. Moreover, the researcher notices that one of the students of the study sample is relatively frail and entirely reliant on the supervisor, which raised the frequency of using the authoritative mode during the final stage; however, this factor cannot be generalised to the rest of the study sample.

As for, the facilitative mode in ASs the overall frequency of facilitative mode in Table (3) shows that this mode has been repeated 32 times (٣٥%) at the beginning stage, 19 times (21%) at the middle stage and 41 times (44%) at the final stage. The data analysis shows that supervisors are more facilitative at the beginning stage than the middle stage, as supervisors seek to motivate research students at this stage to inquire into seemingly crucial subjects, encouraging them to seek information necessary for their thesis.

At the middle stage, the supervisors are slightly less facilitative than the preceding stage due to its importance; as noted in the preceding paragraph, this stage reflects the practical portion of the work. The supervisor does not discard the facilitative mode at this stage, but he prefers to be more authoritative through using prescriptive, informative and confronting interventions to avoid any misunderstanding that can jeopardise the thesis's completion. However, being more facilitative does not imply that this mode leads to misunderstanding. On the contrary, in a facilitative mode, the research student is encouraged to make his or her own judgments about what to undertake, a matter that the supervisor does not prefer because the nature of this stage requires more control and interference from the supervisor.

At the final stage, Table (3) shows an increase in the supervisors' use of the facilitative mode; this can be attributed to the supervisor's desire to see their students stepping forward towards being independent researchers. At this stage, the work should be completed properly and within the specified deadline for submitting the thesis. Thus, research students need more encouragement and support from their supervisors to accomplish their work. However, it is a common sense that an increase in supervisors' use of the facilitative mode implies a decrease in supervisors' use of the authoritative mode, for the reasons stated previously.

In order to arrive at the dominant mode of supervision, the last column in Table (3), presents the total frequency and percentage of implementing both modes. It shows that the authoritative mode is employed 599 times (87%) in the study sample, whereas the facilitative mode is used 92 times (13%) in the study sample.

10. Conclusions

The study comes up with the following conclusions:

1. Supervisors manipulate direct ASs more than indirect ASs to avoid any misunderstandings that could obstruct or delay the fulfilment of the thesis.
2. Both direct and indirect ASs are more frequently used in the middle stage other than the other two stages. They fulfil both control and evaluative functions. Using indirect ASs instead of direct ASs indicates that the supervisors prefer to imply their ASs indirectly because they have other unstated meanings that they want to convey indirectly. In addition, it reflects the supervisors' desire to mitigate the effect of their institutional position by using indirect ASs to ensure that research students feel comfortable during supervisory meetings.

3. Assertives are good tools for identifying the supervisory mode of interaction.
4. The eclectically developed model has been found to be adequately workable for identifying the supervisory mode of interaction based on the investigated speech act.
5. The dominant mode of interaction across all the stages is authoritative. It is authoritative in the sense that the supervisor serves as the source of information.

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