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## Pragmatic Markers in English and Arabic Novels: The Love in the Wrong Time and THE Nine Lessons

Assist Lect. Ashwaq sukkar khayoon

#### College of Education/Ibn Rushd for Humanities sciences

#### University of Baghdad

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#### Summary:

Pragmatic Markers are single or multi-word expressions that characterize language use whether on the textual or the interpersonal level, and constitute a purely open functional class, which is difficult to delimit. The concept of Pragmatic Markers (hence PMs) has come to the limelight in the recent few decades to become the subject of inquiry for many linguists in general as well as discourse analysts and pragmatists in specific. The current paper is contrastive in nature. It investigates PMs in two completely well- known novels (the English *The Nine Lessons* and the ArabicLove in the Wrong Time. Based on Fraser's (2005) model of PMs, the two novels are analyzed quantitatively and qualitativelyin terms PMs focusing on their functions in these two novels. The paper infers that the use of PMs in both languages is confined to contextual pragmatic factors. This explains why they are sometimes referred to as contextualization cues.

#### 1. Introduction

As lexical expressions, PMs exist in every language. They are usually free morphemes, normally sentence initials, loosely attached to syntactic structure, classified on functional pragmatic basis, and they do not change the propositional content of an utterance (Fraser 2005 Cited in Fischer 2006:189). The data which are presented for analysis are in the form of narrative text, in specific, two novels from English and Arabic. The former is *The Nine Lessons* by Kevin Allan Milne and the latter is Love in the Wrong Time by Ismail Al Naqeeb.



A narrative text is a fine ground on which such research can be built upon. This is due to the fact that the function of PMs can be identified on the textual and the interpersonal level and both levels constitute a narrative text. One point to be considered is that both novels would better be of the same genre, having relatively similar length and contemporary. All the previously mentioned points have been taken into consideration so that a parallel corpus can lead to strict contrastive conclusions. In this sense, Fraser's (2005) and Aijmer's (2013)models of PMs is adopted as they are purely functional-pragmatic by which the researcher can identify the frequency of the pragmatic PMs used in the two novels focusing on the function behind the use of these markers.

2. Pragmatic Markers in English

Since *pragmatics* is a young subject, consequently, PMs are a new realm of inquiry. However, many attempts have been made to give a complete theoretical and practically based account of this phenomenon. PMs have received varying degrees of focus and interest for example: *Well* has been the most extensively studied PM in the literature (Aijmer 2013:4).

#### 2.1 Terminology

There is no general agreement over the terminology of these lexical expressions that are often called Discourse Markers. However, the terminology used in this research is *Pragmatic Markers*, following the Model adopted. According to Jucker and Yael (1998:2) some other terminologies are also used to refer to this group:

- Discourse Particles Fischer 2006
- Pragmatic MarkersFraser 1996, Aijmer 2002
- ConnectivesBlakemore 1987
- Discourse MarkersSchiffrin 1987
- Pragmatic ExpressionsErman 1987
- Contextualization Cues Gumpers 1997



#### 2.2 Defining PMs

Any attempt to define PMs requires a better insight to what actually these elements are? How can they be described formally and functionally? Is there a clear cut for them as independent elements of a group? The latest attempt to define PMs is by Tannen et al., (2015:189) who describes them as one set of linguistic items that "function in cognitive, expressive, social, and textual" fields, for instance: *oh, well, y'know*, and *but*. Biber et al. (1999:140) explain that "discourse markers" are mainly distinctive of verbal discourse. They refer to "words and expressions which are loosely attached to the clause and facilitate the ongoing interaction".

Finally, Bublitz et al., (2011:635) assert that:

"pragmatic markers are words or phrases that do not add so much to the propositional content of utterances as they metalingually flag how discourse *relates* to other discourse. Pragmatic markers thus play a crucial role in facilitating processes of pragmatic inference. Because they are lexically relatively fixed and thus relatively easily retrievable from a corpus."

In conclusion, each definition varies on the light of the approach adopted as well as the perspective of the writer i.e syntactic, pragmatic, and semantic

2.3 Characteristics of PMs

Based on Brinton (1996) and Jucker and Ziv (1998), Archer et al. (2012:77) present a list of features of prototypical pragmatic markers:

*i. Phonological and lexical features:* PMs areshort elements that can be reduced phonologically i.e cos (because), they are also prosodically integrated into larger tone groups.

*ii. Syntactic features:* PMs often occur sentence initially, and they are sometimes loosely attached to syntactic structure. Moreover they are syntactically optional in that in omitting them the content will not change.

*iii. Semantic features:* PMs have little or no propositional content.



*iv. Functional features:* PMs are Poly functional. They operate on several linguistic levels simultaneously.

*v. Sociolinguistic and stylistic features:* PMs are common in spoken rather than written discourse and they also mark informality. They are used with high frequency. They are stylistically stigmatized and are associated with non-fluency. They are typically features of women's speech.

Pragmatic markers have both formal as well as functional features as maintained by Aijmer (2013:16-17) who proposes that PMs have formal properties which are part of the description of their usage. Those features are syntactic for instance *position, prosodic, lexical.* Or they might be stylistic for instance *text type.* 

As far as functional features are concerned (Ostman 1995: 99) highlights three functional features of PMs:

- Discourse marking or discourse organizing.
- Interaction signaling.
- Attitude/involvement signaling.

3. Pragmatic Markers in Arabic

Since the current research is contrastive in nature, dealing with English and Arabic, it is important to give a clear idea about the Arabic language and the status of PMs in it. The theoretical background provides a better understanding of Arabic as well as Pragmatic Markers in the related literature.

The study of PMs is almost marginal in Arabic linguistics since few linguists have centered their attention on this subject in their research. This is assured by the fact that traditional grammar which does not exceed the sentence level overwhelms the research in Arabic linguistics, whereas the study of PMs requires shifting the attention to the discourse level.

Al Huqbani (2013:2162/2163) states that in Al-Batal's (1985-1990) view, Discourse Markers haven't received enough amount of focus and research concerning their



function on the sentence or the discourse level. Much focus has been paid to their syntactic properties and their effect on the inflections of the nouns or verbs that follow and this is due to the grammarian's interest in الاعراب (parsing). The cohesive and text building function of discourse markers was neglected by Arab grammarians and instead they were studied under an independent subject called by Arab grammarians study (Rhetoric) in terms of *Ulearly (disconjunction* and *conjunction*). The grammarians study of these elements was centered on و (and). Only a limited group of Arab linguists have tried to approach discourse markers from semantic and pragmatic perspective, for instance: Al-Batal, 1985, 1990, 1994; Al-Khalil, 2005; Ghobrial, 1994; Hussein, 2008a 2008b.

According to Izzat (1996:53) PMs are those lexical items that cannot be explained by traditional grammar or semantics which analyze single sentences. Consider the following examples: *Well, Please, Ok, Sure, Thanks, I mean, You know.* They were classified *as* adverbs, prepositions or conjunctions. He (ibid) adds that one of the first studies of PMs dated back to 1987 by Deborah Schiffrin and her book *Discourse Markers*.

*Connectives* and *conjunctions* are two terms used by Ryding (2005:407) to refer to PMs in Arabic, and this is because she studies Arabic from syntactic perspective and the book where these two terms are used is titled "*A reference grammar of modern standard Arabic*" (MSA). She (ibid) states that connectives are "words or phrases that connect one part of discourse with another". They are a remarkable and widespread characteristic of "MSA syntax". In particular "Arabic sentences and clauses within a text are connected and interconnected by means of words or phrases (such as *j* and') that coordinate, subordinate, and otherwise link them semantically and syntactically".



Ryding (ibid:408-409) adds that these expressions in Arabic form a heterogeneous class which belongs to various grammatical categories like adverbs, conjunctions, particles, idiomatic or set phrases that serve as connectives. On the sentence level, traditional grammarians classify PMs as *Huruf* on basis of the grammatical influence on the next clause or phrase. For example, the connective  $\zeta$  (so that) should be "followed by a verb in the subjunctive mood". She calls this effect (operational effect) Amal عمل in Arabic, according to this criterion, connectives are divided into two classes. The first are called *simple linking connectives* which do not require a following grammatical change and have linking function only. The other class is called aloue of operative particles)which modify the inflectional status of the following clause or phrase i.e. requiring verb in the jussive mood or accusative case on nouns. Ryding presents numerable examples of connectives in Arabic with examples from real language use and she started from the most widely used like  $\vartheta$  (and) which has initial and connective use as in:

مس مساعد وزير الدفاع"And the minister-assistant of defence left Cairo" yesterday."

and ending in some less widely used connectives like the topic of shift ف/ اما (as for)as in :

" As for the translated part, it is very diverse." اما القسم المترجم فمتنوع جدا

Al Batal (1985:2) also calls these elements *connectives*. In fact, his career in research of MSA, especially the narrative text is crucial in the field of PMs in Arabic. He conceptualizes the term connective as: "any element in the text which—regardless of whether or not it belongs to the form class of conjunctions—indicates a linking or transitional relationship between phrases, clauses, sentences and paragraphs" therefore; and unlike traditional grammarians, Al Batal focuses in his study and analysis of connectives, on their cohesive and text building function. In

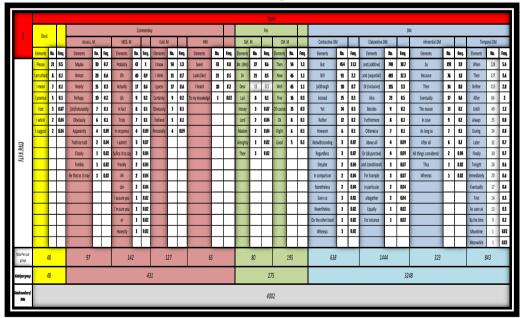


other words, he considers them from modern discourse perspective as basically cohesive devices.

4. Quantitative Analysis

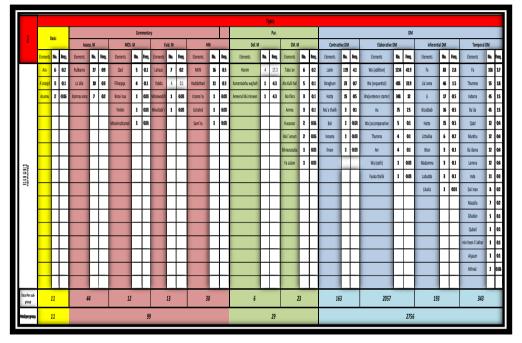
The study examines PMs in two novels alternatively from English and Arabic as a source of data presented for analysis. The first step is the quantitative analysis which will be achieved by sorting out PMs in the whole novels getting their numbers of occurrence and percentage of frequency so as to reach contrastive statistical results as will be shown in the relevant figures starting with the English novel and ending with the Arabic one:

Table 1 PMs in the English novel



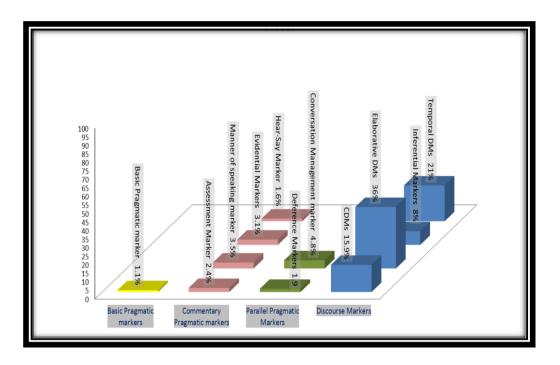


### Table2 PMs in the Arabic novel





#### Figure 1Frequencies of PMs in the English novel



#### 5. Qualitative Analysis

In this section, two extracts from each novel are selected for qualitative analysis in the form of commentary over PMs as far as their functions, poly-functionality, frequency and all the relevant concepts are concerned.

#### 5.1 English Novel: The Nine Lessons

#### (Extract 1) P.4

"After nearly seven years of wedlock, with no visible signs that my opinion on being a father had changed, Erin stopped simply hoping, and escalated the matter to a higher authority. She did this through regular, audible prayer, as loudly and



fervently as she could, peeking occasionally during her pleadings with the Almighty to make sure I was listening.

"Dear God," she would say, "please soften the heart of my stubborn husband. I want to have children so bad, and I'm growing tired of waiting for him. But, if his heart cannot be softened, well... then I give thee thanks for the imperfections of birth control."

In response, I also started praying aloud, notwithstanding the fact that I hadn't uttered so much as a single *"amen"* since I was a small boy. *"Dear Lord, I'm sure you're as tired of my wife's prayers as I am, so please help her to give it a rest already!"* 

#### Commentary

It should be noted that the narration throughout the novel is carried out by the hero Augusta. The context including the spatio-temporal is clarified and the escalation to a higher authority implies that Erine resolves to God in order to aid her to moderate her stubborn husband`s heart. It is clear from the occurrences of deference markers like *Dear Lord* and *Dear God* that both characters are addressing God in reference to the main conflict of the novel which is (having children). They both address God, but in fact their speeches are meant for each other so as to introduce the reader for the main conflict in the novel.

If God does not grant her wish to have children (using *But* with contrastive function), and with *Well* as indicator of reluctant agreement as stated by Aijmer (2012:20) *Erine* infers (using *then* as inferential marker) that in any way she will be thankful. Given the context and shared knowledge, Augusta is not a man of faith, as he uses the contrastive DM *Notwithstanding* to show that he will pray in response to Erine although he has never uttered the word *Amen* since his childhood. He utters the Evidential PM *I'msure* to signal evidently and as he witnessed that his wife's prayers are so frequent that, as he assumes, they made God tired. It can be noticed

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that PMs are sorted out on the basis of their function and meaning as they connect sentences and manage conversation. From socio-cultural perspective, PMs like *Dear, Lord* and *Please* signal the power and distance relation in discourse, that is a Deference Marker like *Dear* or *Lord* is usually used in addressing God or a person in authority. Syntactically, PMs in this extract, (except for the temporal marker *since*) clearly behave as inserts being loosely attached to the syntactic structure, and as Schiffrin (1987:31) indicates that such elements are independent of sentential structure to the extent that omitting them leaves the sentence intact. Given the statistics above, DMs have the highest frequency, indicating the interactive information structure, by connecting sentences logically.

#### (Extract 2) P.10

"I was almost too flabbergasted to put together a coherent sentence. "But... I... I mean... what? Well...?" As shocked as I was at that moment, I should have just stopped talking altogether and walked away until I could sort out my thoughts. But I didn't stop talking and I didn't walk away. I just opened up my mouth and let it run its course. "Well you... er... we... I mean, you know how I feel about this, right? So what are our options? Do you think we can find someone to adopt it? I hear it's a seller's market for that sort of thing."

#### Commentary

Given the context that Erine told Augusta about her Pregnancy, he in turn tries to collect himself and utter something in response. This is reflected through the use of the sequence *"But... I... I mean... what? Well...?"* that reflects his being mentally unprepared, hesitant and cognitively disorganized. In this respect, Vivien (2002) cited in Fischer (2006:151) states that expressions in the language including PMs have procedural and context based guidance to inference and interpretation rather than conceptual one, eventually contributing to "relevance by reducing the cognitive processing effort needed" for interpretation. In the above example, PMs are



manipulated by the author to show what goes on in the character's mind through using pragmatic markers in the course of plot development. *Well* is used here to show reluctance irritation and it can also signal embarrassment, caution, doubt or fear (Carlson 1984: 43).*But* is used sentence initially only when non-linguistic context is provided as Fraser (2005:97) cited in Fisher (2006) indicates that when DMs occur in initial position, it requires non-linguistic context for the message to be successful and suitable, For instance:

a.Setting: "Jim, on seeing his bike being taken by a stranger."

Jim: "But that's my bike!"

b. Setting: "Tom, on seeing his roommate walk in smiling."

Tom: "So, you aced the exam."

Hence, in Augusta nonsense utterance *But* signals that Erine's pregnancy contradicts his will. *Well* is used in the second occurrence to give a space for correcting and to be more organized as Celle and Huart (2007:111) point out: "*well* and *you know* have the ability of giving pragmatic indications of how their host utterance interacts with its context of occurrence." To make the final conclusion to Erine more forceful, Augusta says *I mean* which is a complex basic PM signaling illocutionary force of the following utterance. *So* is used as inferential DM and highlights that Augusta has one option and he says it to Erine, that is to offer the baby for adoption. Using *I hearthat*, which is a hear-say marker, he tries to convince Erine that they may give up the baby for adoption in the proper market which he heard about.

الحب في زمن الخطأ:5.2 Arabic Novel

(Extract 1) P.9

"كان مختار عبدالله يختلف مع صديقه احمد حول كلمه تقال في الحب. فصديقه احمد دائما ما كان يردد ان علاقتي في الحب مثل العلاقة التي تربط بين الشاطئ ,وموج البحر. يتولد الفراق في لحظة اللقاء!. ولكن مختار عبدالله يرى في الحب كلاما قريب الشبه من ذلك ولكنه يختلف. فهو يرى ان العلاقة في الحب مثل علاقة المسافربوسيلة السفر .. يتولد الفراق عند اللقاء ولكن سيظل اللقاء



قائما لبعض الوقت. قد يطول لو كان السفر على ظهر باخرة. وقد يقصر لو كان في الطائرة. وقد يكون بين هذا وذاك في وسائل السفر الاخرى, ولكن في كل الاحوال لابد من الفراق. ولابد من العودة للحب!

ولكن مختار عبدالله اتفق اخيرا مع صاحبه احمد في علاقة الحب بامواج البحر والشاطئ يحدث الفراق في وقت اللقاء."

#### **Commentary:**

In this extract the whole idea of conflicting and forbidden love is introduced to the reader. The narration is occasionally carried out by the hero of the novel مختار as well as by the unknown narrator who introduces the first lines in the novel. Throughout the novel, Throughout the novel, his friend Ahmed the story of his love to a married women and how he suffered to have a single chance to practice his passion to her. It is obvious from the figure above that just like in English discourse pragmatic markers are functionally basic elements of Arabic discourse.

The PM Li is used twice in the extract with the same inferential function assuming that there will be more than one function of this PM throughout the novel. Ryding (2005:410) indicates that Li is one of the significant connecting devices in Arabic that signal several functions one of which is the resultative function where Li is referred to as (Li al sababiyya). As far as position is concerned, Ryding adds that Li may start a sentence or join two sentences together. The interest in the polyfunctionality of Li was highlighted by Miri (2009:3) who states that thisDM may fulfill different functions due to the procedural meaning it exhibits, for example sequentiality, immediacy, non-intervention and causality. Syntactically speaking, it can also be noticed that there is no fixed position to PMs within sentences or stretches of discourse.

(Extract 2) P.14/15

" وكثر الحديث .. وازداد انقباض الصدرمع هذا الحديث السمج والممل جدا. وازدادت رغبتي في الصمت.



القاهره.. وسالني البعض ان كنت معهم في الحديث. فاجبت باقتضاب شديد: نعم! وسال من جديد: ولماذا لا تشارك في الحديث؟ قلت انا من اهل الصمت عند الحديث المفيد. وقلت هذه العبارة مجاملا. ولكن صديقي قال: يا سلام من اهل الصمت..وانت صاحب ((مكلمه))!.. وضحك الحاضرون لهذه الكلمة. وواصل صديقي الحديث مشيرا الي..انه لا يعطي فرصه لاحد في الكلام. ولكنه في هذه الليلة يقول انه من اهل الصمت!.. طبعا هو يخدعكم! وفي الحقيقة انني لم استرح لكلمه الخديعة التي انفر منها. ولكنني قلت صحيح انني من المتحدثين. ولكنني صاحب اتجاه في علم الكلام .. واضفت علم الكلام ((الهايف)) لا علم

The context of the given extract is indicated by who directly shows the reader that he is unwilling to be a participant in the on-going conversation. The group, including مختار are waiting at the airport for some friend to arrive from abroad. His silence reflects the social unfamiliarity with most of the present people except for his friend, despite the fact that all of them know that he (مختار) is a radio broadcaster who is not accustomed to silence.

What is often remarkable in this extract is the multiple function and positions occupied by the DM  $_{\odot}$  which is the most frequent and important DM in Arabic which has received an extensive research and focus both in Arabic and in English. Three functions are identified for  $_{\odot}$  :  $_{\odot}$  as sentence starter which is according to Ryding



(2005:409) reflects "a good style in Arabic but it is not usually translated into English"which does not usually allow *and* initially. For example:

وفي الحقيقه انني لم استرح لكلمه الخديعة

The second usual function is the additive one which signals the sense of addition:

صمتي <u>و</u>شرودي

وازدادت رغبتي في الصمت

The third function is the sequential one which signals the sequence of events:

The high frequency of j is indicated by Al kufaishi (2008:236) who argues that heavy coordination is a remarkable feature of Arabic and this can be noticed in the language of the Holy Quran as well as in the language of literature.

Another function of *Li*can be remarked, that is the temporal function when it is used to signal the sequence of events occupying the same function of *Thumma* as shown below:

فاجبت باقتضاب شديد

#### 6. Concluding Remarks

Based on the quantitative and qualitative analysis of both novels some remarkable similarities and contrasts can be noticed, and, at the same time proved to clarify the idea. Throughout the study, the following conclusions have been reached:

- The use of PMs in both languages is confined to contextual pragmatic factors. This explains why they are sometimes referred to as contextualization cues.
- 2. In both languages, PMs exist as an open class of single and multi-word expressions. However, it is not very easy to specify the limits of this class as it is possible to add or delete certain expressions. So it is very hard to have a clear cut group of PMs.



- 3. In both languages, pragmatic markers exist as a heterogeneous group whose elements belong to various grammatical classes for example *But* in English is a coordinate conjunction whereas *When* is a clause marker of time. In Arabic الكن one of العطف one of العطف one of العطف.
- 4. In both languages, and to a high degree, PMs tend to occur sentence initially. However, there are certain exceptions for example *and* in English cannot occur at initial position whereas some PMs occurfreely initially, medially or lastly like */ mean*. In addition to that, they are loosely attached to the syntactic structure. As far as the latter point is concerned, omitting a PM leaves the grammaticality of a sentence acceptable. For instance:

Well, I really don`t like Math.

I really don`t like Math.

Both sentences are acceptable with or without *well* .Thesame can be noticed in Arabic:

لم اذهب للمدرسة <u>بل</u> ذهبت الى البيت. لم اذهب للمدرسة, ذهبت الى البيت.

- 5. In both languages, PMs highly contribute to the management of discourse i.e. the coherence and cohesion of discourse. They are assisting devices that enable language users to hierarchically (horizontally and vertically) connect sentences and paragraphs in a contextually based way.
- 6. In both languages, some PMs do not affect the propositional content, in other words, they are non-truth conditional:

In fact, Lucy is going to quit. Lucy is going to quit.

> اعتقد ان الجو حار الجو حار

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In other cases the interpretation of an utterance is dependent on the presence of a PM:

### l love you but l cannot marry you. l love you, l cannot marry you.

7. Sometimes, a PM in one language may have certain function whose equivalent does not exist in the other language For instance, the sentence starter jin Arabic which is rarely used in English specially for emphasis, for example:

ووصل الرئيس المصري ليل البارحة

### And you what are you doing in my room?

- 8. In both novels, PMs were used by writers to give real life effects to the ongoing events as well as to make the reader involved in events. For instance, they reflect the character's reasoning as well as social dimensions whether on the textual or the interpersonal level.
- 9. Through the statistical analysis, it appeared that the English *and* constituted (31.1%) of frequency and, the Arabic g constituted (68.1%). Both are the dominant and the highly frequent top rank PMs. However, the fact that the Arabic g has a higher frequency than the English *and* is attributed to the fact that Arabic allows for high-frequency coordination for cultural and language-specific purpose.

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الكلمات المفتاحية: العلامات التداولية, رواية. علامات براغماتية

الملخص:

تشكل العلامات التداولية والتي هي تعابير مفردة الكلمة أو متعددة الكلمات والتي تميز استخدام اللغة سواء على المستوى النصي أو مستوى الاتصال الذاتي (الشخصي) صنفا أَدائِيًا محضا منفتحا. وكذلك فأن تلك التعابير تكون صعبة التحديد. لقد جاء مصطلح العلامات التداولية ليصبح موضوع البحث والاستقصاء في العقود الأخيرة للعديد من لعلماء اللغة بشكل عام ولعلماء تحليل الخطاب والتداولية بشكل خاص .

أن التداولية هي طبيعة هذه الدراسة والتي تقوم باستقصاء العلامات التداولية في روايتين ذواتي شهرة و هما رواية الدروس التسعة في اللغة الإنكليزية و رواية "الحب في زمن الخطأ "في اللغة العربية. لقد تم اعتماد نموذج فريزر (2005) Fraser's للعلامات التداولية في تحليل الروايتين نَوْعاً وكَمّاً.ومن هنا تستنج الدراسة الحالية بأن استخدام العلامات التداولية في كلا اللغتين هو محدد بالإشارات السياقية.