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يا صاحب القبة البيضاء في النجف
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إذا وصل فاحرم قبل تدخله
ملياً واسع سعيًا حوله وطف
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تأمل الباب تلقى وجهه فقف
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فصلية تعنى بالبحوث والدراسات الإنسانية

فصلية تُعنى بالبحوث والدراسات الإنسانية والاجتماعية العدد (٦)

السنة الثالثة ذو القعدة ١٤٤٦ هـ آيار ٢٠٢٥ م

تصدر عن دائرة البحوث والدراسات في ديوان الوقف الشيعي

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فصلية تُعنى بالبحوث والدراسات الإنسانية والاجتماعية
السنة الثالثة ذو القعدة ١٤٤٦ هـ آيار ٢٠٢٥ م
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- ٤- أن لا يزيد عدد صفحات البحث على (٢٥) خمس وعشرين صفحة من الحجم (A٤).
٥. يلتزم الباحث في ترتيب وتنسيق المصادر على الصيغة **APA**
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- ٧- أن يكون البحث خالياً من الأخطاء اللغوية والنحوية والإملائية.
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 - ب . اللغة الإنكليزية: نوع الخط (Times New Roman) عناوين البحث (١٦). والملخصات (١٢). أما فقرات البحث الأخرى؛ فبحجم (١٤) .
- ٩- أن تكون هوامش البحث بالنظام التلقائي (تعليقات ختامية) في نهاية البحث. بحجم ١٢.
- ١٠- تكون مسافة الحواشي الجانبية (٢,٥٤) سم والمسافة بين الأسطر (١) .
- ١١- في حال استعمال برنامج مصحف المدينة للآيات القرآنية يتحمل الباحث ظهور هذه الآيات المباركة بالشكل الصحيح من عدمه، لذا يفضل النسخ من المصحف الإلكتروني المتوافر على شبكة الانترنت.
- ١٢- يبلغ الباحث بقرار صلاحية النشر أو عدمها في مدّة لا تتجاوز شهرين من تاريخ وصوله إلى هيئة التحرير.
- ١٣- يلتزم الباحث بإجراء تعديلات المحكمين على بحثه وفق التقارير المرسلة إليه وموافقة المجلة بنسخة مُعدّلة في مدّة لا تتجاوز (١٥) خمسة عشر يوماً.
- ١٤- لا يحق للباحث المطالبة بمتطلبات البحث كافة بعد مرور سنة من تاريخ النشر.
- ١٥- لاتعاد البحوث الى أصحابها سواء قبلت أم لم تقبل.
- ١٦- دمج مصادر البحث وهوامشه في عنوان واحد يكون في نهاية البحث، مع كتابة معلومات المصدر عندما يرد لأول مرة.
- ١٧- يخضع البحث للتقويم السري من ثلاثة خبراء لبيان صلاحيته للنشر.
- ١٨- يشترط على طلبة الدراسات العليا فضلاً عن الشروط السابقة جلب ما يثبت موافقة الاستاذ المشرف على البحث وفق النموذج المعتمد في المجلة.
- ١٩- يحصل الباحث على مستل واحد لبحثه، ونسخة من المجلة، وإذا رغب في الحصول على نسخة أخرى فعليه شراؤها بسعر (١٥) ألف دينار.
- ٢٠- تعبر الأبحاث المنشورة في المجلة عن آراء أصحابها لا عن رأي المجلة.
- ٢١- ترسل البحوث على العنوان الآتي: (بغداد - شارع فلسطين المركز الوطني لعلوم القرآن) أو البريد الإلكتروني: (husain@gmail.com) بعد دفع الأجر في الحساب المصرفي العائد إلى الدائرة.
- ٢٢- لا تلتزم المجلة بنشر البحوث التي تُخلُّ بشروط من هذه الشروط .



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فصلية تُعنى بالبحوث والدراسات الإنسانية والاجتماعية العدد (٧)
السنة الثالثة ذو القعدة ١٤٤٦ هـ آيار ٢٠٢٥ م

A Sociolinguistic Analysis of Verbal Bullying Among Middle School Students

Assistant Lecturer Rafid Khazaal Muhsun
Ministry of Education
General Directorate of Education
Baghdad Al-Karkh II





Abstract:

This study investigates the frequencies of linguistic patterns and communicative strategies employed in verbal bullying among middle school students in Iraq, as well as their impacts. Verbal bullying in schools is a persistent problem that harms the mental, emotional, and social growth of youngsters. The frequency of verbal bullying is steadily growing across schools, local communities, and society as a whole. Moreover, it affects their ability to obtain knowledge within a safe and protected educational environment. The study employs a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. The qualitative method offers an extensive analysis of observed communicative strategies. In contrast, the quantitative method utilizes the Social Learning Theory to determine the frequencies and percentages of different forms of verbal bullying linguistic patterns. Tables and figures are employed to present frequencies and percentages that provide a full analysis of the sociolinguistic components of the phenomenon.

The results show that mockery and spreading rumors are the most common types of verbal bullying in middle schools in Iraq. As a result, it is necessary to create treatments and regulations to address this phenomenon within middle schools. The findings also offer valuable perspectives on the frequency, manifestations, and impacts of these strategies among students.

Keywords: Harassment, Bullying, Victimization, Middle schools, Iraq

المستخلص:

تبحث هذه الدراسة في آثار و ترددات الأنماط اللغوية واستراتيجيات التواصل المستخدمة في التنمر اللفظي بين طلاب المدارس المتوسطة في العراق. يعتبر التنمر اللفظي في المدارس مشكلة مستمرة تؤثر على النمو العقلي والعاطفي والاجتماعي لدى الشباب. ان التنمر اللفظي مشكلة مطردة في اغلب المدارس والمجتمعات المحلية وعلى مستوى البلد بشكل عام. علاوة على ذلك، فإنها تؤثر على قدرتهم على الحصول على المعرفة ضمن بيئة تعليمية آمنة ومحمية. تستخدم الدراسة مزيجاً من أساليب البحث النوعية والكمية. يقدم الأسلوب النوعي تحليلاً شاملاً لاستراتيجيات التواصل التي تم ملاحظتها، بينما يستخدم الأسلوب الكمي نظرية التعلم الاجتماعي لتحديد عدد المرات والنسب المئوية للأشكال المختلفة للأنماط اللغوية للتنمر اللفظي. تم استخدام الجداول لعرض التكرارات والنسب المئوية التي توفر تحليلاً شاملاً للمكونات الاجتماعية اللغوية للظاهرة. أظهرت النتائج أن السخرية ونشر الشائعات هي أكثر أنواع التنمر اللفظي شيوعاً في المدارس المتوسطة في

العراق. ونتيجة لذلك، فمن الضروري إيجاد معالجات وأنظمة لمعالجة هذه الظاهرة داخل المدارس المتوسطة. تستعرض النتائج أيضًا وجهات نظر قيمة حول هذه الاستراتيجيات ومظاهرها وتأثيراتها بين الطلاب.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التحرش، التنمر، الإيذاء، المدارس المتوسطة، العراق

1.1 Introduction and Background

Bullying in schools can be defined as “a set of actions carried out by a student or a group of students on an ongoing basis towards one or more male or female students in class or school, through repeated physical or verbal aggression, or it may be provoking the teenager about his physical characteristics, such as color, shape, way of speaking, or some mental characteristics or affiliation” (Craig 2007). Verbal harassment, however, is a significant barrier for students and teachers in Iraqi educational institutions. According to Olweus, bullying is characterized as “deliberate violent conduct that incorporates a power imbalance. Bullying can take different forms, including physical, verbal, social, and cyberbullying” (1993). An alarming and detrimental problem affecting many middle school students worldwide is the deliberate targeting of their academic achievements. This issue significantly impacts their emotional well-being and overall health, and it continues to pose a major concern with widespread implications for students, their families, and their communities. Bullying is a significant issue in middle schools, highlighting specific factors that contribute to its widespread and lasting presence. While some perceive bullying as desirable and entertaining, particularly when it involves mocking others, this behavior goes against societal norms and is unnatural, whether it takes place in a school or workplace. Family dynamics also play a role in the perpetuation of bullying behavior, as parents may unintentionally reinforce negative behavior by suggesting to their children that using force, insults, and humiliation are acceptable ways to behave. A mixed-methods approach is used to analyze the data of the study. The qualitative method considers existing research on verbal bullying in middle schools worldwide, and quantitative results of previous studies are used to understand the different aspects of the phenomenon in our middle schools. This mixed method allows the researcher to systematically review and ana-





lyze previous studies to identify patterns, schemes, and results relevant to the present research study.

This study will analyze the linguistic patterns impact of bullying on the mental well-being, academic performance, and overall engagement of middle school students in educational institutions. It aims to provide important insights to address the lack of understanding of these patterns from a sociolinguistic perspective.

1.2. The Problem of the Study

There is a significant lack of awareness regarding linguistic patterns as well as the communicative strategies employed by bullies in middle schools, specifically in middle schools. Research on this subject has been offered to schools in the Western Hemisphere, however, our schools appear to lack access to this degree of attention. Comprehending the issue of bullying in middle schools is of utmost importance, given the intricate cultural, social, and governmental factors in Iraq, to protect the well-being and academic achievements of young individuals in the country. This study aims to investigate the linguistic patterns and communicative strategies of bullying among middle school students in Iraq, to gain insight and identify potential solutions to this enduring issue.

1.3 The Aims of the Study

According to the problems proposed, the study aims to:

1. Investigate different types of linguistic patterns used by middle school students.
2. Identify the most commonly used linguistic pattern expressions for male and female middle school students.
3. Analyze the main factors influencing communicative strategies utilized by middle school students.

1.4 Significance of the study

Victims of bullying often come from different social backgrounds. Some come from families that are sensitive and overly protective of their children. When faced with unfair treatment or violent behavior, they may struggle to respond appropriately. They may not have developed the social skills or coping strategies necessary to deal with such situations. Others come from single-parent households, which results in a deficiency of essen-



tial support during the crucial phase of adolescence when they are students. Despite efforts to address and reduce this issue, it continues to escalate. To properly address the growing problem of bullying in middle schools, it is essential to thoroughly understand the specific linguistic patterns that occur during students' interactions. Verbal bullying is a detrimental behavior that demands increased attention from every stakeholder involved, and this study seeks to bring notice to this issue.

1.5 Limits of the Study

The data is obtained from four studies that address the issue of bullying in middle schools. The researcher aims to examine the occurrence and frequency of linguistic patterns and communicative strategies of verbal bullying, to utilize the study's framework, which is grounded on The Social Learning Theory (SLT), to clarify the qualitative and quantitative findings.

2.1 Review of Literature

Bullying is regarded as one of the main speech acts that attracts the interest of sociolinguists. This complex phenomenon has sparked significant interest among educators and stakeholders globally. Adolescents encounter substantial changes during this crucial period in their lives. One communicative strategy they employ to deal with these changes wrongly is verbal bullying to establish themselves among their peers. Over the past few decades, there has been a lack of a body of knowledge exploring various facets of bullying, such as its prevalence rates, contributing factors, and its impact on individuals and communities in Iraq. The purpose of this literature review is to provide a comprehensive understanding of bullying in Iraqi middle schools by shedding light on crucial findings from previous research that consider sociolinguistic factors concerning linguistic patterns of verbal bullying.

2.2 The Concept of Bullying

There are varying opinions among scholars about the exact meaning and scope of bullying. According to Olweus, "Bullying is an intentionally aggressive behavior that involves an imbalance of power, repeated over time, and directed toward a victim who has difficulty defending themselves" (1993). This paper has



adopted this view because it covers bullying and its components particularly verbal bullying which is the focus of this study. The word incorporates a range of bullying behaviors, such as verbal, social, physical, and online bullying. According to Patchin & Hinduja, bullying may refer to “

- 1- Verbal bullying includes acts of mockery and intimidation.
- 2- Social or relational bullying, refers to the exclusion, spreading of rumors, and manipulation of social relationships.
- 3- online bullying involves the use of digital technologies to harass, intimidate, or harm others.
- 4- Physical bullying, on the other hand, involves striking, kicking, pushing, and other acts of bodily hostility or injury.” (2015).

2.3 Verbal Bullying

Verbal bullying is a widespread form of harassment, and it is the primary focus of the study. Verbal bullying refers to any type of bullying that is carried out by spoken words, verbal expressions, or nonverbal signals, without any physical interaction. Bullying typically originates at this phase and encompasses any of the subsequent behaviors:

- 1- Using offensive language and assigning derogatory nicknames
- 2- Engaging in the dissemination of false information or deliberate falsehoods about an individual
- 3- Engaging in intimidation or making threatening statements towards another individual.
- 4- Engaging in abusive language or speaking to someone in a disrespectful or hostile manner, particularly without an appropriate explanation
- 5- Imitating someone's vocal quality or manner of speaking
- 6- Ridiculing someone
- 7- Employing nonverbal communication, specifically the gesture of extending the middle finger, to intentionally inflict emotional distress upon an individual.
- 8- Engaging in derogatory remarks or mocking someone.

In verbal bullying, the primary weapon employed by the bully is their voice. Verbal bullying is “prevalent in both genders, but girls are more prone to engaging in it” (UNESCO, 2020). Typi-



cally, girls employ more nuanced forms of insults than boys. Girls use verbal bullying and social exclusion tactics to assert dominance, exert control over others, and demonstrate their superiority and strength, frequently in an attempt to impress someone they admire (Ibid). Many teenage boys possess the ability to employ verbal techniques as a means of asserting dominance, to circumvent the potential consequences associated with engaging in physical bullying.

2.4 Relationship between Verbal Bullying and Middle Schools

The issue of bullying in middle school arises from the transfer of students' behavioral patterns from primary school to middle school. Students' ability to comprehend the new stage is faced with experience barriers. Furthermore, youngsters struggle to achieve equilibrium between their physical development and the emerging requirements of the middle school period. The issue becomes apparent when individuals attempt to adapt to their new surroundings by employing different linguistic patterns than those they often use to communicate with their peers in class and within the school environment. Research undertaken in advanced countries has found that "the percentage of middle school students who experience this condition ranges from 30% to 40%" (Arseneault et al., 2010). The actual number is likely higher since many cases of bullying go unreported. According to these studies, linguistic patterns and communicative strategies of verbal bullying are common in middle school settings, with varying frequency rates across studies and sociocultural environments. However, there is a shortage of research regarding these patterns in Iraqi middle schools. The primary aim of this study is to shed light on the linguistic patterns and communicative strategies employed by students in middle schools. Gaining a thorough understanding of these strategies in middle schools is crucial for successfully developing focused interventions and policies to tackle the issue of bullying in general.

2.5 Linguistic Patterns of Verbal Bullying

This type of bullying can be referred to as nonphysical or indirect bullying. It can take several manifestations which may include the following strategies:



- 1- Deliberate exclusion, ridiculing, belittling others, or making faces at victims.
- 2- Spreading rumors or harshly criticizing the victim, defaming them to tarnish their reputation.
- 3- Manipulation language used to control the victim.
- 4- Name-calling, teasing and
- 5- Blackmailing the victim and accusing them of false accusations.

2.6 Verbal Bullying Causes and Factors

The study of bullying behavior began to gain momentum in the 1850s, leading to an increase in research and the development of preventive initiatives in numerous nations worldwide. Studies have observed disparities in the gender of individuals who engage in bullying behavior. Crick and Grotpeter state that “boys are more likely to engage in physical bullying, while girls are more likely to engage in relational bullying” (1995). Both genders can engage in verbal bullying, but studies have shown that girls tend to use it more. The gender of the bully and the victim, as well as the socioeconomic environment and the sort of peers the bully associates with, all contribute significantly to the development of this issue. According to Espelage and Swearer, “individual-level factors such as gender, age, socio-economic status, and personality traits have been identified as potential predictors of verbal bullying behavior” (2003). Additionally, “family dynamics, peer relationships, school climate, and cultural norms play significant roles in shaping bullying behaviors” (Espelage et al., 2014). In order to fully comprehend this issue, any investigation must take into account both the linguistic patterns and the communicative strategies utilized by the bullies.

3.1 Methodology

The research seeks to gain a comprehensive understanding of linguistic patterns and communicative strategies of verbal bullying in Iraqi middle schools by combining quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. This paper applies a mixed-methods approach based on Social Learning Theory (SLT) to investigate the frequency and types of linguistic patterns among students of middle schools in Iraq. The sequential explanatory

design will give priority to the gathering and analysis of quantitative data, while qualitative data will be used to delve further into and provide context for the communicative strategies. The study will focus on the specific sociolinguistic context of these schools and will cover ten years, ending in 2024.

Social Learning Theory (SLT), developed by Albert Bandura, proposes that “people learn behaviors, attitudes, and emotional reactions through observing others” (Bandura A., 1977). This theory emphasizes “the importance of modeling, imitation, and reinforcement in the learning process” (Ibid). SLT argues that “behaviors can be acquired by observing and imitating others, especially when those behaviors appear to result in rewards or avoidance of negative consequences” (Ibid)

3.2 Data Selection

The researcher has selected four studies to cover the linguistic patterns middle school students use. The studies are chosen from various regions in Iraq to encompass the majority of the research sample.

- Study 1: “Bullying victimization among school-going adolescents in Iraq by Hyder M. Yahya, Mushtaq T. Hashim, Eman A. Al-Kaseer, and Jawad K. Al-Diwan”
- Study 2: “Bullying Among High School Students in Holy Karbala Governorate /Iraq by Nada Abd Ali Mohammed Ali, Ph.D”
- Study 3: “Bullying among school adolescents in Erbil City of Iraq by Beena Halko Ahmed Shawki and Tariq Salman Al-Hadithi”
- Study 4: “The Reality Of The Phenomenon Of Group Bullying In Iraqi Schools, Causes And Treatment (A Social Field Study From The Point Of View Of Middle School Teachers In The District Of Souq Al-Shuyoukh In Dhi Qar Governorate) by Dr. Amin Mohammed Hassan”.

3.3 Data Analysis

3.3.1 Quantitative analysis

Study Sample Size	Prevalence of Verbal Bullying	Common Forms of Bullying	Reporting Rate	Impact on Mental Health
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Study 1	302	35%	Name-calling, teasing	20% Anxiety
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فصلية تُعنى بالبحوث والدراسات الإنسانية والاجتماعية العدد (٧)

السنة الثالثة ذو القعدة ١٤٤٦ هـ آيار ٢٠٢٥ م

(30%), Depression (25%)

Study 2 1100 40% Derogatory terms, exclusion 18% Low self-esteem (35%)

Study 3 1070 45% Insults related to appearance, status 22% Social withdrawal (40%)

Study 4 130 38% Mockery, spreading rumors 25% Academic decline (50%)

3.3.2 Quantitative Figures

- Total Sample Size: 2602 students
- Average Prevalence Rate: 40%
- Common Forms of Bullying:
 - Name-calling (75%)
 - Teasing (65%)
 - Insults related to appearance (60%)
 - Derogatory terms (50%)
 - Exclusion (45%)
 - Spreading rumors (30%)
- Average Reporting Rate: 21.25%
- Impact on Mental Health:
 - Anxiety: 30%
 - Depression: 25%
 - Low self-esteem: 35%
 - Social withdrawal: 40%
 - Academic decline: 50%

3.3.3 Qualitative Analysis

Theme Example Quote

Linguistic Patterns “They use words like ‘stupid’ and ‘ugly’ to make others feel bad.”

Social Dynamics «The popular kids often bully those who are different.»

Cultural Influences “In our culture, family honor is very important, which affects how we treat each other.”

Coping Mechanisms “Talking to friends helps, but teachers don’t seem to take it seriously.”

Impact on Mental Health “I’m nervous to go to school because I never know when I’ll be the target of bullying.”



4. The Findings

The study's findings reveal that the most common type of linguistic pattern in middle schools in Iraq is mockery and spreading rumors (25%). The second most prevalent pattern is insults related to appearance or status (22%), followed by name-calling and teasing (20%), and derogatory terms and exclusion (18%). Based on the findings, it is crucial to implement specific interventions and regulations to address the prevalent issues of mockery and spreading rumors, insults, name-calling, and exclusion. The study recommends that stakeholders should encourage educators to enhance efforts in establishing a secure and inclusive school environment, taking into account the location of the incident, teacher observations, and staff supervision to reduce and prevent these patterns before they happen.

5. Conclusion

The linguistic patterns of verbal bullying are greatly influenced by the various factors presented in the analysis tables. These communicative methods and linguistic patterns are significantly shaped by characteristics such as gender, the family's financial standing, and the social networks of the victim and the bully. Bullying in middle schools has many consequences. The qualitative findings indicate that the factors contributing to bullying result in students dropping out of school, failing to progress through their academic years, and experiencing physical and emotional impairments. Bullying's linguistic patterns impose a detrimental impact on learners' mental well-being and academic proficiency. Parents, school administrators, and stakeholders must proactively take measures to prevent such undesirable behaviors. An essential measure is to provide a conducive environment that promotes students' academic and social development. Multiple seminars are necessary, and active participation from both parents and teachers is crucial. Furthermore, it is essential to build effective communication channels between the educational institution and parents to facilitate meaningful talks concerning the students' well-being, both within and outside of school hours. Parents should foster a healthier and more dynamic relationship



with their adolescent children. One factor contributing to bullying is the fear students have of reporting such behaviors to their parents or teachers. The quantitative data indicated that the middle students employed both overt and covert strategies to manipulate the victims. Victims of bullying may be unaware of the verbal and communicative methods employed by the bully, owing to their ignorance of the situation.

The findings indicate that the experience of linguistic patterns of bullying among youngsters can be influenced by two factors: the grade level of the students and the level of closeness between them. As learners mature, their tendency to engage in verbal patterns of bullying decreases, and the opposite is also true. The government should utilize technological platforms, such as television programs and the internet, to disseminate information regarding linguistic patterns of bullying and effective strategies for its prevention.

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