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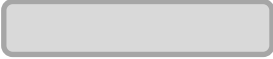
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# INVESTIGATING IRAQI ARABIC SPEAKERS' USE OF NANO-PRAGMATICS WITH REFERENCE TO SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

استقصاء استخدام متحدثي العربية العراقية للتداولية الدقيقة في منصات التواصل الاجتماعي

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## Abstract

This current study investigates how Iraqi Arabic speakers use nanopragmatic markers which are defined as the use of micro-cues like emojis, vocal prosody in voice notes, and the use of creative typography for pragmatic ends, aiming to explore the social media platforms represented by WhatsApp and Twitter. The study employs qualitative discourse analysis complemented by quantitative statistical tests. Using the software Praat for vocal patterns and MAXQDA for emoji coding, a corpus of 2,000 text samples and 300 voice messages are analyzed, taking into account the sociolinguistic variables such as age and gender. The study concludes that such digital markers are not randomly used; they represent sophisticated adaptations and manifestation of the classic pragmatic principles such as Relevance and Politeness, when it comes to the Iraqi cultural context. This current study not only introduces the unique digital use of the Iraqi dialect, but also provides crucial insights for educators, linguists, and AI developers, thereby assisting those who seek the high rate of connecting people from various socio-cultural backgrounds in the age of digitalism.

**Keywords**: Nanopramatics, Pragmatic Markers, Social Platforms, Iraqi Arabic, Computer-mediated Discourse

المستخلص:

تتحقق هذه الدراسة الحالية في الطريقة التي يستخدم بها متحدثو العربية العراقية علامات التداولية الصغرى (النانو)، والتي تُعرّف باستخدام إشارات دقيقة مثل الرموز التعبيرية (الإيموجي)، والنبرة الصوتية في الرسائل الصوتية، واستخدام الركوز الطباعية الإبداعية لأغراض تداولية، بهدف استكشاف منصات التواصل الاجتماعي المتمثلة في واتساب وتويتر. تستخدم الدراسة تحليل الخطاب النوعي مع الاختبارات الإحصائية الكمية. حيث تم تحليل مجموعة من ٢٠٠٠ عينة نصية و ٣٠٠ رسالة صوتية باستخدام برنامج برات Praat لتحليل الأنماط الصوتية وبرنامج MAXQDA لترميز الرموز التعبيرية، مع الأخذ في الاعتبار

المتغيرات الاجتماعية اللغوية مثل العمر والجنس. تخلص الدراسة إلى أن هذه العلامات الرقمية لا تُستخدم عشوائيًا؛ بل تمثل تكيفات وتجليات متطورة لمبادئ البراغماتية الكلاسيكية مثل نظرية العلاقة ومبدأ الأدب، في السياق الثقافي العراقي. إن هذه الدراسة ليس للاستخدام الرقمي الفريد للهجة العراقية فحسب، بل انها توفر أيضًا رؤى جوهرية للمعلمين واللغويين ومطوري الذكاء الاصطناعي، وهو أمر يساعد أولئك الذين يسعون إلى تحقيق معدل عالٍ لربط الأشخاص من خلفيات اجتماعية ثقافية مختلفة في ظل العصر الرقمي.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** التداولية النانوية، العلامات التداولية، المنصات الاجتماعية، اللهجة العراقية، الخطاب المكتوب في وسائل التواصل.

## 1. Introduction

New linguistic and pragmatic phenomena have been emerged due to the rapid evolution of digital era of communication, a matter that reshapes how meaning is transferred and interpreted in online interactions. As far as Iraqi Arabic is concerned, unique nanopragmatic markers have emerged in the context of social media messaging platforms Jucker& Locher (2022). Nanopragmatic markers are defined by Verschueren (2021) as small but significant elements that serve pragmatic ends such as emojis, voice

note prosody and typographical modifications to certain writing styles, leading to influence interpretation of a given utterance at the levels of tone and social dynamics. Unlike traditional pragmatics which investigates the spoken and written discourse (Grice, 1975; Sperber & Wilson, 1986, 1991, 2012, 2015), digital pragmatics deals with the micro-level cues that alter communicative intention of the speaker (Verschueren, 2021). This current study is to investigate how Iraqi Arabic speakers employ

nanopragmatic markers as emojis, vocal variations in voice notes, and typographical modifications as to express such phenomena as sarcasm, politeness, urgency, and other emotional nuances at the pragmatic level (Giora, 2021).

## 1.1. The Problem

Digital communication dominates the growing stream of linguistic as well as pragmatic communication which adopts nanopragmatic markers in such social media platforms as WhatsApp and Twitter (Danesi, 2016; Herring & Dainas, 2017). Iraqi Arabic merits due attention on how speakers utilize nanopragmatic strategies in the aforementioned platforms of WhatsApp and Twitter. Following the studies that explores the use of emoji usage at the level of global contexts (Danesi, 2016; Herring & Dainas, 2017), the local and /or cultural context having specific pragmatic functions have not been addressed yet. The following questions can be viewed as an attempt to address the problem in question along with the role of prosodic features used in voice notes and those used in typographical modifications such as repeated letters, exaggerated different types of punctuation) and so on:

1. What are the nanopragmatic strategies in using the emojis along with their pragmatic functions as used by Iraqi Arabic speakers?

2. What are the prosodic features which are intentionally employed in voice notes to convey nanpragmatic markers through sarcasm, urgency, or playfulness?

3. How do typographical modifications function as nanopragmatic markers in written digital discourse as used by Iraqi Arabic speakers?

Addressing the abovementioned question can be of highly significant mechanisms for theoretical linguistics and applied linguistics in that it adds to the natural processing of language and enriches the intercultural communication programs such as learning, teaching and training.

## 1.2. The Aims

This current study aims to the following:

1. Show the role of nanopragmatic markers in modifying message tone, for instancesoftening criticism, intensifying emotion).

2. Identify and categorize nanopragmatic markers in Iraqi digital communication.

3. Examine whether the sociolinguistic factors influencing the use of nanopragmatic markers such as age, gender, context.

## 1.3. The Procedures

In the stream of the questions and aims of the current study as mentioned above, the study adopts a mixed-methods approach which is as follows:

## A.    Qualitative Approach

The data collection is conducted through the publicly available Iraqi Twitter posts where no permits are needed to select the data, and anonymized WhatsApp group messages taken with all the ethical requirements and approvals. These data are coded for the pragmatic functions following the framework of Tagg and Seargeant (2014) regarding digital discourse analysis.

The study uses the Likert scales in order to measure how the utterances are pragmatically perceived as friendliness, sarcasm, urgency, etc. The study adopts methodologies taken from Sampietro (2019) as a model for the test on pragmatics of emoji.

To analyze the audio samples of the data al the levels of pitch, vowel modification, and pauses using, the study follows Praat software which is fit to analysis. Drawing on Ling and Baron (2021), the study investigates the pragmatic function/interpretations through the use of such stretched voice messages.

## B. Statistical Analysis

The second approach is the quantitative analysis where the study applies a chi-square test to determine the significances relations between the markers and the pragmatic functions they are employed for. It also shows the typographical nuances and creative patterns that are produced by Iraqi Arabic speakers, following Zappavigna (2018) scale on internet linguistics.

### 1.4.    Hypotheses

The study adopts the following hypotheses:

1.    Iraqi Arabic speakers utilize certain emojis to signal special pragmatic functions such as the Iraqi flag emoji (☐☐) is used for the national pride, ☐to mitigate the face-threatening acts, or ☐to provoke sympathy. All these emojis are used along with the utterances.

2.    The correlation of high pitch in voice notes is to represent sarcasm and criticism while the monotone voice note represents seriousness of the speaker.

3.    In the typography use, speakers excessively employ the punctuation marks such as (!!!!!) to intensify the emotional load on the addressee.

### 1.5.    Limitations

The study is limited to the Twitter and WhatsApp digital spaces only. The findings only generalize these two platforms where the interpretations of the tests, away from the statistics, are qualitatively conducted. In other words, the tests are analyzed in terms of statistics, however, the interpretation of the occurrences and significances are characterized by subjectivity which is based on the statistics. Ethical concerns are taken into account

through obtaining the consent and approvals from where the data are collected.

## 1.6.    Significance of the Study

This study is of use to the areas of theoretical linguistics, applied linguistics and natural language processing. It adds to the studies of the newly introduced approach to pragmatics which is nanopragmatics. This approach deals with the micro-level digital cues in understudied dialects. The study aids those who are interested in intercultural communication such as educator, syllabus designers, diplomats and translators in uncovering the norms and parameters of the Iraqi digital discourse. The current study sheds light on the improving the studies on the natural processing of language in terms of the Arabic language and dialects.

## 2. Digital Nanopragmatics in Iraqi Arabic

## 2. 1. Nanopragmatics

Nanopragmatics is a relatively, emerging subfield of pragmatics that marriages the micro levels of pragmatics, linguistic structures, paralinguistic cues in digital communication that deals with emojis, typographical modifications, and prosodic features in voice messages. While traditional pragmatics studies pragmatic tools such as speech acts, implicature, and politeness strategies (Grice, 1975; Brown & Levinson, 1987),

nanopragmatics, as an emerging subfield related to digital era, deals with how meaning is shaped/interpreted via small linguistic elements when attached to the contextual cues relevant to computer-mediated communication (Verschueren, 2021).

What characterizes the social media discourse is that of brevity in writing/speech, the high recurrences of multimodalities, and the highly rapid turn-taking. Such features dominate the digital interaction on the social media platforms, following Sampietro (2019). As far as the Iraqi Arabic is concerned, digital discourse is characterized with certain pragmatic adaptations such as intercultural norms, inter-dialectal features, globalized digital contexts, and global semiotic cues and utterances. There are many aspects that are found in this subfield, under the title of digital communication; however, only three relevant key theoretical frameworks are to be presented in the current study. These are as follows:

a.    The use of emojis – added to the contextual cues – is relevant to this study in terms of the way of modifying the speech acts used by Iraqi speakers.

b.    There are the adaptions of the prosodic features such as pitch, prolonging and intonation of the speech as found in the voice notes.

c. The use of certain typographical nuances creatively written such as the repetitions, use punctuations and various styles of fonts.

These characteristics are all found in the Iraqi Arabic under the use of the daily language in a variety of contexts, among which social media platforms are involved. Following Kadhim (2023), Iraqi Arabic is full of the use of pragmatically utilized slang expressions where speakers highly rely on such utterances.

## 2. Concepts in Digital Pragmatics
## 2.1. Cognition and Digital Communication

The common concept in cognition and the digital communication is demonstrated by the pragmatic tool of relevance as introduced by Sperber & Wilson's (1986). Relevance Theory deals with the modes of communication under cognitive principles: *"maximal contextual effect with minimal processing effort"*. In other words, a communicative act, among which pragmatic acts are produced, is achieved only when the contextual cues are presented with the utterance in a way that the utterance requires minimal cognitive efforts to process and make the relevance about the intended meaning of the speaker. Attaching such a principle to digital communication, the three dimensions selected in the current study can be explained as follows:

The use of emojis – in a semiotic way- can be related to a variety of pragmatically oriented products as irony, humor (Giora, 2019, 2021), or mitigation and the like, depending on the semiotic shape and representation of the given emojis both at the global and local level, taking into account the acculturation of some of the emojis (Sampietro, 2019).

However, Iraqi Arabic introduces culture-specific relevance that are not globally views as the flag emoji (□□) which may signal national identity rather than mere geographical reference. Another example can be the use of emojis of the Kaaba, the Sacred House, (□) to combine both pragmatic as well as religious functions.

Relevance can be attained through the use of various pitch contour which is found in the voice notes, using it for pragmatic functions such as criticizing, being sarcastic, mocking and the like (Verschueren, 2021).

As far as the typographical nuances are concerned, the use of repeated letters, morphemes or words "צ|||", the use of punctuation marks "!!!" and combination of certain letters such as the creative acronyms as "lol" standing for lot of laugh mostly serve a pragmatic ends in an economical manner such as pinpointing to emphasis and urgency

or showing emotional attitudes (Zappavigna, 2018).

## 2.2. Politeness and Digital Contexts

Another concept that is regarded as a key element in nanopragmatic is that of politeness theory with both eminent versions of Brown & Levinson's (1987) and Leech's politeness principles (2014). Brown & Levinson's (1987) introduce pragmatic strategies using linguistic structures and speech acts to save, mitigate, hedge, or attenuate one's face. This is done through the face saving/threatening acts. Moreover, Leech (1983 and 2014) asserts the principles of politeness depending on the weight maximizing the polite utterances and minizine the impolite ones. Both versions of politeness are utilized to achieve the best way to communicate effectively and respectfully.

When it comes to the digital discourse and communication, politeness strategies employed in nanopragmatics can be found in the three dimensions as follows:

Following Sampietro (2019), the use of special emojis – as represented by the semiotic load they have- to mitigate or to save the face threatening act; to be as much polite as possible. Speakers may use such an emoji: □to the face threatening act in the utterance: "You're a coward ". The pragmatic function of

the emojis to reduce the face threatening act.

In regards to the voice notes, the intonation – globally or locally oriented- is also used for pragmatic ends along with special modes of intonational contour, the purpose of which is to explicate the pragmatic function, i.e., to soften or minimize the impoliteness in the communicative act (Zappavigna, 2018).

The use of ellipsis/capital letters and the like in terms of the typographical adjustments to the written discourse demonstrates pragmatic strategies to mitigate, hastate, put emphasis or intensify the communicative act through such a nano-pragmatic markers (Tagg & Seargeant, 2014).

The Iraqi Arabic context is highly characterized by the use of deference within which politeness is used, and in digital communication the nanopragmattic tools are utilized. The Iraqi society characterized by the tribal and familial hierarchies adopts such nonpragmatic markers to indicate the way how to show deference to elders or to exaggerate in voice notes to avoid direct clashes among speakers (Kadhim, 2024).

## 2.3. Impact of Multimodal and Paralinguistic Cues

Meaning is shaped not only through the individual meanings of words, phrases or sentences; it highly relies on several other elements such as the co-text, context, the availability of

images, signs and so on. Kress & van Leeuwen (2001) introduce Multimodality theory to address meaning and come out with better interpretations to the pragmatically oriented utterances. Among the tenets of the model herein is that interpretation is constructed through the multiple semiotic modes of the meaning, represented by the signs and symbols that accompany the text. In regards to digital communication, these signs and symbols are also annotated, and extends to the field of pragmatics as markers Sampietro, 2019).

Concerning the three dimensions in the current study, the main pragmatic functions of such non markers can be as follows:

The utilization of emojis in general is to reinforce the attitudes as a paralinguistic cue to add to the context of situation to be interpreted in the appropriate way, for instance the use of nano emoji "❤□" is for affection (Sampietro, 2019).

On the other hand, the use of voice notes and typographical nuances is viewed as substitutes for speech that is loaded with certain attitudes, for instance the extraordinary rise or fall of the pitch in voice messages or the prolonging of a sound in the typographical writing. These lead to influence the interpretation of a given utterance as attained by Ling & Baron (2021).

As far As Iraqi Arabic is concerned, a new norm of writing and messaging is emerged in the social media platforms depending on the Iraqi use of discourse (Kadhim, 2024). It is written in romanized Arabic or Arabic plus the emojis to create nano markers, or using the voice messages with typographical prosody to represent the dialect spoken.

## 3. Nanopragmatic Markers

Generally speaking, pragmatic markers are defined as linguistics structures such as *well, you know, like* that serve pragmatic functions, express attitudes, or manage the way of interaction between the speaker and the hearer (Fraser, 1999; Schiffrin, 1987). Context, in pragmatic markers, is highly significant in that it serves to organize the discourse in an intended way for instance "therefore, so, thus, frankly …" (Brinton, 1996).

Pragmatic markers vary according to the language varieties and contexts; they can serve different meanings in different registers, dialects, and languages, along with various channels of communication such as spoken utterance or written texts, not to mention the semiotic aspects (Andersen & Fretheim, 2000). Aijmer (2013) remarks that pragmatic markers are characterized with the optionality in terms of their presence, the distinctive intonational contours and the context sensitivity

wherever they are present. When it comes to the nonpragmatic markers, part of pragmatic markers, all the aforementioned features are, by nature, applicable. The following are the three nano pragmatic types of markers:

### 3.1. Emoji as Nano-Pragmatic Makers

As mentioned above, research on nano-pragmatic use of emojis serve as tone modifiers; Danesi (2016) concludes that emojis are used pragmatically in digital communication as paralinguistic backchannels to replace the multiple facial expressions. Another account conducted by Sampietro (2019) in this regard, mentions that such nano pragmatic markers, including the typographical voice notes, considerably function as either face saving acts "□" or face threatening acts "□". However, both accounts lack the dialectical variations and nuances as found in languages as the Arabic language dialects. In the same stream with certain cultural modifications, the Iraqi discourse adopts such nano markers to reflect similar pragmatic functions in addition to adapting certain markers according to the Iraqi context such as tribal or sectarian nuances in the chatbots,

### 3.2. Prosodic Modifications in Voice Messaging

As nano markers serving pragmatic ends, Ling & Baron (2021) introduce a model of how prosodic modifications can yield different functions. Interestingly, three prosodic functions are introduced in voice notes:

a. The use of shifts in the normal code of pitch for pragmatic ends such as being sarcastic, as in the Iraqi Arabic utterance: ماااا شاء الللله.

b. Prolonging vowels is employed pragmatically for various functions depending on context of situation as in the Iraqi Arabic utterance: يمعووووووووود. This is utilized as urgent call to do something.

c. The use of dot "...." To show pauses in an intentional way hinting or implicating something totally different from the semantic interpretation as in the Iraqi Arabic: ("انت... تعرف أحمد؟).

Furthermore, Iraqi Arabic has got additional patterns representing the Iraqi specific utterance which are used for certain pragmatic functions such as "يالله" to signal fatigue, starting or ending a chat.

### 3.3. Typographical Pragmatics

Typographical pragmatic deals with the way of using language in such a manner that conveys the speaker's intentions, performative acts or soften the face threatening acts through the textual modifications, as Zappavigna (2018) categorizes such modifications into three categories as:

a.     The use of typographical tools for emphasis, such as the use of bold fonts, italics and others to show that the words in question are emphasized.

b.     The use of certain punctuation marks as "!!!!!" for certain reasons, chief among them is the provocation of one's attention.

c.     Repetition of a given letter such as "mmmmm" or in Arabic "مممممم" demonstrating certain attitudes which are more relatively designed for certain cultural aspects such as hesitations.

In Iraqi Arabic, all the above-mentioned categorization can be applicable with slight and /or heavy modification, depending on the way how a group of speakers may use their ow variety. The use of the prolonged "and" "ووووو" as an instance can serve the pragmatic function of adding dramatic effects indicating that there are kore and more like the situation in question. Another example from the religious typography such as the Arabic phrase "ماشاء الله" is used to show the affection that is accompanied with religious touch.

### 3.4.  Sociolinguistic Variables

In the current study, sociolinguistic and cultural aspects are to be taken into account, such as the dialect variation, the gender and dynamics of age, and the platform norms (Lakoff, 1975; Labov, 2001). Following Bassiouney (2020), Habib (2020) and Al-Sharoufi (2021), Iraqi contains distinctive dialects and diglossic aspects that in one way or another affects the investigation of nano-pragmatics. The age and gender altogether have a direct impact on the way how speakers elect the emojis and whether they use more or less emojis or voice notes as well as the aim of using both. Furthermore, the social media platforms are characterized with distinctive features that recognize one platform from another. Twitter, for instance is featured with the satirical hashtags, while WhatsApp is well-known of the voice messaging and notes.

In the current study, minute details are to be discarded such as the small details that do not add or subtract issues from the study and only keep those details that can be of significance to the generalization of the findings of the study in question.

### 4. Previous Studies

The previous studies in digital pragmatics, specifically, nanopragmatic markers introduce global generalization regarding the pragmatic functions of nano markers. Herring & Dainas (2017) investigate the use of emojis from the pragma-linguistic as well as semiotic perspective and conclude their pragmatic functions as mentioned in the above sections. On the same stream, Zappavigna (2018) explores the use and functions of

typographical play with the letters and words at a global level where certain characteristics and strategies of using language are presented along with the linguistic and discourse functions. In 2021, Ling & Baron conducted a study on voice messages and concluded the role of voice messaging in shaping digital communication through intermingling spoken and written features on the platforms.

In the current study, however, the unique nanopragmatic features are investigated along with the cultural specifics in the use of emojis and voice note systems, i.e. how these nano markers are pragmatically interpreted in the Iraqi context. This research advances nanopragmatics as a framework for Arabic digital discourse by integrating Relevance Theory, Politeness Theory, and Multimodality.

## 5. Research Design

As mentioned earlier in the procedures that the current study relies on a mixed method that is combed of two approaches: qualitative and quantitative. In the qualitative approach, the study investigates the prosodic analysis and the data collection and interpretation. In the quantitative approach, on the other hand, the statistics, perception and the annotations of the the corpus analyzed are taken into account. Such mixed approaches can be of a

high benefit to the study in terms of validating the finding and verifying the hypotheses that are based on different data sources, following Creswell & Plano Clark (2017).

### 5.1. Data Collection

Data are collected from three publically oriented areas: Twitter (X), WhatsApp in the Iraqi run pages and platforms. All the data are anonymized for the ethical issues, though approval ae taken, to ensure the accurate generalizations. All usernames, names, pictures and the like are removed, and all the participants from whom voice messages are taken are volunteers. As for the criteria of which data to include and which to exclude, the study adopts the definitions of the emojis, repeated letters, exaggerated voice notes. Certain cultural, geographical and tags peculiar to the Iraqi context are considered.

As for the sampling strategy, the stratification is based on the three social dimensions: age, gender and dialect. Age groups are represented by 18–25, 26–40, 40 and so on, while the gender is 60 percent of males and 40 percent of female due to the the cultural and geographical nature of the Iraqi society in terms of using social media platforms. Regarding the dialect, the current study deals with the common terms in the Iraqi dialects in general, i.e., the structures that are used and understood by all the Iraqi Arabic

speakers, covering the three main dialectal regions of Baghdadi, Basrawi, and Moslawi dialects.

In regards to the corpus size, the written tweets, Facebook comments, and WhatsApp messages are represented by a number of 2000 samples. As for the voice messages and notes, the audio clips that are selected, with 3-10 second, are 300 ones. This number gives as accurate findings as possible and yields reasonable statistics when it comes to the quantitative analysis of the data.

## 5.2. The Model

Following Sampietro (2019) on emoji semantic roles and Zappavigna (2018) typographical emphasis, the parameters set for the analysis are shown under the following scheme:

a.   The pragmatic function such as mitigation, sarcasm, emphasis, request and so on.

b.   Recurrence emojis and the function for example the use of emoji "□" with the insult to indicate face saving act, or "□" with requests to indicate the emotional status.

c.   Position of emoji; whether at the beginning, in the middle or at the end.

For these parameters, the study utilizes MAXQDA and NLTK, Emoticon softwares to deal with the frequency analysis and coding schemes.

Regarding the prosodic analysis of the voice messaging, parameters are different; a specialized software is adopts: Praat Software, where it measures pitch variations and functions, vowel prolonging and functions, and pausing.

## 5.3. Data Analysis

As mentioned earlier, data are collected from the two social media platforms are 2000 tweets and WhatsApp messages. Statistically, the analysis, following the model above, is conducted in both statistics, meaning in tables, and interpretations of the statistics.

**Table (1): Functions and Distribution of Nanopragmatic Markers**

| Marker | Freq. | Main Function | Most recurred examples | Perception Trends | Observations |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | 62% | Being ironic, Mitigating, mockery, minimizing insults | "غبي" ("Stupid") | Mean: 4.2 (friendly) **p < 0.01** (gender differences) | **Using politeness strategy (85%),** **70% women** (playfulness), **55% men** (for being sarcastic) **Older users** (40+) rated as mocking (Mean=3.1), vs. 18–25 (Mean=4.6) |
|  | – | Being Sympathetic, showing emotional appeal, request | "كافي" ("Please stop") | Mean: 4.5 (very friendly) **p < 0.05** (age difference) | **(80%)** interpreted **genuine** by **Women,** **(45%) men as manipulative** |
| – |  | minimizing the Disapproval, softening boredom, or passive-aggression | "تمام" ("Fine") | Mean: 2.1 (hostile) **No significance** | **younger users, signaling sarcasm or ironic detachment** |
| Repeated/exaggerated letters | 28% | Emphasis ("وووووو"), hesitation ("مممم") | "بس لااااا!" ("But nooo!") | – | **intensify emotional tone** or indicate **processing time** |
| Abundant punctuation (e.g., "!!!") | 10% | Showing Excitement, maximizing urgency, extending irony | "راح اجيبها!!!!" ("I'll get it!!!!") | – | **Common in younger users**, indicating being **ironic disapproval** or **emotional** |

| Marker | Freq. | Main Function | Most recurred examples | Perception Trends | Observations |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | exaggeration |
| (Flag Emoji) | – | Showing national pride (30%), or political sarcasm (70%) | – | – | Dual function: **positive identity assertion** vs. **critical political commentary** |
| Religious typography | – | Showing sincere promise and reinforcement | "إن شاء الله ❤" | – | **pragmatic commitment** especially in religious contexts |
| **Prosodic features of Voice Note** | – | sarcasm vs. sincerity through pitch and prolonging | " ما شاء الله" (sarcastic) " الحمد لله" (genuine) | – | Sarcastic: **Wider pitch (180–350 Hz)**, **prolonged vowels (2.5x)** Genuine: **Narrower pitch (120–250 Hz)**, **lower, creaky voice** |

## 5.4. Interpretation of Data Analysis

**Table 1** above includes all the statistical results of the data selected and analyzed. It shows that the nanopragmatic markers that are demonstrated through the combination of emojis and voice notes of typography are variant in the pragmatic functions when used by the Iraqi Arabic speakers.

Three symbols of emojis that accompanied the linguistic utterances add to the interpretations of the pragmatic markers as follows: The laughing emoji shows that it is the most frequent nano marker that serves the pragmatic functions of face-saving acts through minimizing the insult as in "غبي □", showing mockery or being ironic "تمام □". As for gender differences, the highest percentage of using the nano pragmatic markers for playfulness is by females 70%, while males use them for mostly sarcasm in a percentage of 55%. Age variable is

significant here as well, where ages from 18 through 25 show that such nano pragmatic markers are used to show friendliness, unlike the ages from 25040 plus where they use such nanopragmatic markers for being sarcastic. As for those utterance and nano-pragmatic markers represented by the emojis, typographical exaggerated letters and notes showing face threatening acts are used in a significantly high percentage as a politeness strategy, "كافي □", i.e. as face-saving acts 85%.

In regards to the voice message notes and typographical nuances and exaggerations, the statistics show that repeated letters and punctuations are highly utilized by Iraqi Arabic speakers for such pragmatic functions as focusing on emotional load "لاااااااا", hesitation "ممممممم", being ironic, excited or exaggerated disapproval "!!!!".

There are certain nanopragmatic markers that deals with the cultural/religious or societal aspects such as the IQ flag and إن شاء الله ❤". These markers show a significant percentage when using them to represent national pride 30% or political criticism 70% regard the marker IQ flag, and the religious load is utilized to show sincerity and commitment of a given speech act.

Voice notes accompanied by prolonging the vowels, lower tone, creaky voice or very shortened vowels also show that they have the pragmatic functions ranging between sarcasm and/or Genuity. Higher pitch with prolonged vowels in a given utterance "ما شاء الله " shows, depending on the context, being sarcastic or ironic. On the other hand, lower pitch, short vowels show that the utterance and the communicative act is genuine.

## 6. Findings and Discussions

Now that the pragmatic functions of nano digital communicative markers represented by the semiotic and textual symbols have shown significant importance in utilizing them as nano pragmatic markers, the traditional pragmatic tools are verified as being employed to serve the digital pragmatics in terms of the contextualization, the relevance principles and politeness strategies.

Following Sperber & Wilson (1986, 1991, 2012, 2015), on relevance principle and Giora (2019, 2021) on comprehending the figurative utterance pragmatically, the current study verifies that Iraqi Arabic speakers employ on a significant level the emojis, with peculiar cultural as well as social considerations, to indicate Iraqi contextualized interpretations such as showing pride, being ironic, criticizing, mitigating and softening bald situations, based on Brown & Levinson (1987) and Leech (2014).

In line with the Ling & Baron (2021), and what this study

hypothesized regarding the combination of the voice messages and notes used intentionally by the Iraqi Arabic speakers, the findings and results of the analysis show that this hypothesis is verified. Pitch spikes and vowel prolonging or shortening in the voice messages, along with the contextual factors, used by Iraqi speakers represent either serious or non-serious use of language, a function that marks pragmatic ends in the digital communication.

To reflect the phonological variations of pitch, tone or intonation in writing, Iraqi Arabic speakers use a rather different way of representing such typographical marks, this verifies the hypothesis regarding the excessive use of punctuations and Iraqi Arabic peculiar typographical schemes to give emotional and intensifying focus on the addresses.

As far as sociolinguistic variables are concerned, the study finds that the female Iraqi Arabic users tend to use the nano pragmatic markers for the pragmatic functions that show solidarity and emotions, unlike the male users who mostly use them as non-serious attitudes such as being ironic or sarcastic, going with Labove's (2001) argument regarding the linguistic variations. Moreover, older users are found to prefer the use of voice notes to add clarity and highlighting the messages, while younger ones tend to use more

emojis and typographical nuances, going hand in hand with adopting the argument of Habib (2020) on age variations.

# 7.      Conclusions, Future Studies and Recommendations
## 7.1.      Conclusions

The current study has come up with the following concusions:

**1.**      Emojis are used by Iraqi Arabic speakers as nano pragmatic markers for the purposes of face saving markers accompanied with such astrateggies of irony, sarcasm, and politeness,

**2.**      Nano pragmatic markers, the use of emojis, is affected by the social parameters such as age, gender; male users use such markers for being sarcastic while females for solidarity. Older users employ the markers in question for being sarcastic while younger one for being friendly.

**3.**      Exaggerated use of typography and voice note features such as pitch, vowel prolongation are used to signal hesitation, irony, or sincerity, aligning with digital pragmatics principles.

**4.**      Symbols that are peculiar to a given culture like the Iraqi flag (national pride/political criticism) while religious cultural symbols are utilized for religious sincerity which are pragmatically loaded, demonstrating how digital

communication yields sociocultural values.

**5.** Relevance Theory (Sperber & Wilson) and politeness strategies (Brown & Levinson, 1987) and other traditional pragmatic tools remain valid when it comes to digital contexts, with Iraqi speakers adapting them through nanopragmatic markers.

**7.2. Recommendations for Further Studies**

1. Based on the conclusions above, the following recommendation can further advance the subfield of nano pragmatics:

2. Comparative studies of nanopragmatics between dialects of the Arabic language or between Arabic and other languages such as English, taking different types of discourse such as political, religious and the like.

3. A study can be conducted on corpus pragmatics of the use of nanopragmatic markers such as emojis, voice notes, and typography to add to the digital learning of pragmatics in multiple contexts such as Iraqi or other dialects.

4. To shed light on digital pragmatics, focus studies can be conducted on the variable and constants of the field according to the different age variations, represented by longitudinal case studies.

5. A cognitive pragmatic investigation can be set for the Iraqi

or any other language users to test how language users process the pragmatic functions of emojis or voice and typographical notes.

**6.** A comparison between the different social media platforms can be conducted in terms of norms, principles and other tools that shape the pragmatic strategies.

**7.3. Recommendations and Implications**

1. When teaching pragmatic in the Arabic contexts, it is implicated to develop courses on the newly integration of "Arabizi" and digital communication to focus on the new methods of linguistic descriptions and analysis in the various local contexts.

2. it is highly recommended to have partnership with platforms like WhatsApp and Twitter (X) to analyze anonymized Iraqi Arabic data, a matter that uses ethical AI training for dialect recognition and linguistic generalizations.

3. As an objective to secure funds for minorities inlnguistics, it is recommended to seek grants for example grants from the competent authorities to preserve or document Iraqi Arabic's digital innovations.

4. It is highly recommended to create corpus data base on the Iraqi dialect pragmatics to be used by educators and policymakers to inform language planning.

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