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## The Closing Conversation Strategies in Arabic Iraqi Society

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### Abstract

This research paper examines specific strategies in conversation closings in Arabic Iraqi society. It concentrates on three primary strategies which are positive comments, excuses, and imperatives. They have specific functions to end the conversation and making a flexible interaction between the participants. The first strategy is the positive comment provide social ties by reflecting speakers' joy and satisfaction during conversations. The second strategy is excuse which involves providing justifications for ending a definite conversation. Hence, mitigating potential abruptness and maintaining politeness. Further, the imperative strategy utilizes direct commands or phrases to signal the conclusion of the conversation. Through qualitative analysis, this research highlights the cultural nuances and social functions of these strategies, demonstrating their significance in maintaining relationships and facilitating smooth interactions within the community. Therefore, the findings contribute to a deeper understanding of conversational dynamics in Arabic Iraqi speaking society.

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### Introduction

The beginning and the ending of the conversations are essential aspects of social contexts, especially for the Arabic Iraqi society. Making a conversations not only for individuals to provide their ideas but also plays a main role in maintaining social harmony. In everyday conversations, people normally use opening expresstions such as "Hi," "Good Afternoon," or "Good morning" to signal their readiness to converse thus, it is highly important to pay attention to close the conversations. Schegloff and Sacks assert that (in Coppock, 2005) <sup>[3]</sup>, the processes of greeting and leave-taking are often perceived as routine, yet they serve significant functions in social interactions. Laver aptly points out that these verbal behaviours represent special strategies for negotiating social relationships between participants.

Schegloff and Sacks (1973) <sup>[6]</sup> further assert that conversations do not merely end; they require a structured closing routine. Participants must articulate a conclusion, ensuring that their conversation does not terminate abruptly. However, this study aims to examine the specific strategies employed by individuals in closing conversations, highlighting the cultural nuances that dictate these actions.

### To achieve this aim, the current paper will address the following questions

- What strategies are commonly used in conversation closings for Arabic Iraqi society?
- How do these strategies reflect social norms and interpersonal relationships?
- In what ways do these closing strategies facilitate smooth transitions in dialogue?

### To examine these questions, the following hypotheses are adoptes

- The use of positive comments plays a crucial role in reinforcing social interactions for conversation closings.
  - Excuses are frequently used to justify the end of a conversation, mitigating any perceived abruptness.
  - C. Imperative strategies are utilized to provide clear signals that a conversation is closing.
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**To achieve the objectives of this research paper and test these hypotheses, the following methods will be adopted**

- a. Conducting a comprehensive literature review to establish a theoretical framework regarding conversation closings in Arabic-speaking contexts.
- b. Performing qualitative analyses of conversational data to identify and categorize the strategies used in closing dialogues.
- c. Engaging in contextual analysis to elucidate the cultural significance of these strategies in maintaining interpersonal relationships.

Ultimately, this study aims to provide valuable insights into the dynamics of conversation closings, illustrating their importance in fostering effective communication and social cohesion within Arabic Iraqi society.

## 2. Positive Face-Saving Strategies

Politeness, in a broad sense, pertains to the expression of respect within interactions. Effective conversations are predicated on good behavior and positive engagement. Brown and Levinson (1987) characterize politeness as an expression of concern for individuals' "face." The concept of face refers to the public self-image that one presents or aims to project to others. In social interactions, individuals generally collaborate to uphold each other's face, thereby partially fulfilling each other's face needs.

Face encompasses two dimensions: negative and positive. Negative face pertains to an individual's desire for independence, freedom of action, and a lack of interference from others. In contrast, positive face relates to the wish to be liked and accepted by peers Yule (1996, pp. 61-62). Behaviors that minimize imposition on others are indicative of negative politeness, while behaviors that convey warmth and sociability towards the interlocutor are classified as positive politeness Holmes (1995, p. 5).

Positive face-saving strategies, often referred to as positive politeness strategies, indicate that the speaker acknowledges the addressee's need for respect. Yule (1996, p. 62) defines these strategies as features that aim to preserve face and foster a positive self-image, promoting solidarity between the speaker and the listener, who share common goals.

Coppock (2005) [3] categorizes positive face-saving strategies into three main components: positive comments, excuses, and imperatives to conclude the conversation. Among these, positive comments are the most frequently utilized strategy for closing conversations, effectively countering any implication that the other participant may be boring or bothersome at the conversation's end Coppock (2005, p. 3) [3].

### 2.1. The Positive Comment Strategy

The Positive Comment strategy, exemplified by phrases such as "It was nice talking to you," is recognized as the most commonly employed method for concluding conversations. By expressing that the conversation was enjoyable, the speaker alleviates any concerns about discomfort associated with ending the dialogue. Consequently, this approach serves as a means to preserve the positive face of the conversational partner Coppock (2005, p. 3) [3].

Employing the Positive Comment strategy signifies that the interaction was both pleasant and fulfilling, yet the speaker is not inclined to prolong the conversation. For instance, the

phrase "It was nice talking to you" indicates that the speaker appreciated the exchange, but prolonged discourse could lead to feelings of annoyance or disturbance for making participants use this strategy politely to end the interactions.

### 2.2. The Excuse Strategy

The Excuse Strategy aims to alleviate the implication that an individual prefer to close the conversation by express an alternative justification or explanation for their potentially face-threatening behaviour as in:

- **I better get back to work**

The phrase shows the underlying concerns linked to the intention of closing the conversations and it effectively clarifies the speaker's intentions and minimizes the likelihood of misunderstanding.

Another related strategy is referred to as the imperative to end, which refers that the conversation must come to a close as in:

- **It looks like our time is up**

This phrase is directly communicating the necessity of concluding the conversation Coppock (2005, p. 3) [3]. Hence these strategies play a crucial role in managing social contexts, providing a polite transition towards the end of a specific conversation.

### 2.3. Imperative To-end Strategy

The imperative to-end strategy has a function of leading the the interactions between the speakers must come to close. While the use of imperative phrases may seem direct, the speaker simultaneously aims to preserve the positive face of the listener. This strategy is generally more explicit than the Excuse Strategy, because it clearly indicates the essential of closing the conversations as in:

- **It looks like our time is up**

In this phrase, the speaker shares the listener when he uttering the word *our*, which implies a sense of shared experience and cooperation between the speaker and the hearer. That means the participants participates the conversation as partners.

Therefore, the imperative to-End strategy can be classified as a positive face-saving strategy since it fosters a sense of camaraderie between the participants. By framing the closing of the conversation in terms of mutual cooperation. Hence, this strategy helps to maintain the social dynamics that are important for effective communication Coppock (2005 p. 3) [3].

## 3 Research Methodology

This paper examines the closing strategies conversational utterances related to closing in selected video shows from Iraqi Arabic society. It focuses on analysing interactions that occur in the context of the Iraqi society. The researcher investigates three strategies based on Coppock's theory of conversation closure. There are specific strategies employ as a methodology. The first method is transcription to transcript the conversations featured in the selected video shows. The second one is identification of closing utterances. The third one is data Analysis.

Then, the research paper analyses the highlighted utterances in relation to the established strategies for closing conversations. Therefore, the research paper aims to uncover

the deployment of closing strategies in regular interactions, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of conversational reactions within the cultural contexts of Iraqi Arabic society.

### 3.1. Data and Analysis

This section outlines the data analysis in relation to the formulated research problems, specifically applying Coppock's theory of conversation closure strategies. The data for this study will be presented numerically, with an example illustrating the first utterance from the initial conversation.

#### Conversation 1

**Setting:** At secretary office

**Participants:** Shams and secretary

**Situation:** Shams wants to meet the poor children even to help them and produce some gifts for them. She is wondering if the children get and ready for meeting her? She is very excited to meet them.

**Secretary:** أهلا ست شمس

**Welcome Miss Shams.**

Shams: شونك؟

**What's up?**

Secretary: أهلا وسهلا، استريحي

**You are welcome, sit down please.**

Shams: ربي بخليك، طمني الأطفال جاهزين؟

**Thank you, are the children ready?**

Secretary: أن شاء الله جاهزين وياتنظارك

**Yes, they are ready and waiting you**

Shams: تمام، يله خلي نشوف

**OK, let's go and see**

#### Analysis

The research paper analyses the closing conversation between two characters Shams and the Secretary by applying the three strategies which are outlined in Coppock's theory of conversation closure. The first strategy is positive Comment, the second one is excuse, and the third one is imperative to-end.

#### a. Positive Comment Strategy

Although not explicitly stated in the provided dialogue, the positive atmosphere is established through polite exchanges. The Secretary's welcoming remarks *أهلا وسهلا، استريحي* or *You are welcome, sit down please* create a friendly tone that sets the stage for a pleasant interaction. This positive engagement is crucial in maintaining rapport, thus contributing to a smoother transition towards the end of the conversation.

#### b. Excuse (Reason) Strategy

In this context, Shams provides an implicit reason for concluding the conversation by expressing a desire to check on the children *ربي بخليك، طمني الأطفال جاهزين؟* or *"Thank you, are the children ready?"* She gives a clear justification for ending the conversation. This strategy alleviates any potential discomfort associated with the abrupt ending of the conversation. It frames the closure in terms of a legitimate

concern.

#### c. Imperative To-End Strategy

The most explicit strategy employed is the Imperative To-End, as evidenced by Shams's utterance, **Let's go and see تمام، يله خلي نشوف**. This phrase serves as a direct signal that the conversation is coming to a close. It implies urgency and a shared goal, further reinforcing the cooperative relationship between Shams and the Secretary. Shams maintains a respectful tone while effectively indicating the need to transition to the next activity in order to use inclusive language.

The application of these three strategies positive comment, excuse, and imperative to-end demonstrates how Shams navigates the conversational dynamics with the Secretary.

Therefore, Each strategy plays a role in facilitating a polite and effective closure to the conversation. It is worth mentioning that both participants feel respected and engaged in the interaction. Hence, This analysis highlights the importance of strategic communication in everyday conversations in order to maintain social harmony and collaboration.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-cd6NZ-ff7Y>

#### Conversation 2

**Setting:** At the head office of Mr. Ameer

**Participants:** Shams and the head office of Mr. Ameer

**Situation:**

Shams is a journalist. She wants to make a meeting with Mr. Ameer for certain questions. She insists to meet Mr. Ameer because she has something important to talk about. But the head does not let her to meet Mr. Ameer because he is busy and he has lots of meetings.

Shams: أنا الصحفية شمس، جاية هنا حتى أسوي لقاء مع الاستا أمير.

**I'm a journalist. I want to make a meeting Mr. Ameer.**

The head office: بصراحة، حاليا الاستاد ميسوي أي لقاء صحفي بسبب انشغالاته

**Honestly, Mr. Ameer is currently unable to conduct any interviews due to his busy schedule**

Shams: زين ليش متتصل وتكوله لعله ما عتده اي عذر

**So you can call and told him, if he has or not**

The head office: أنا مدير مكتبه واعرف عنه كولشي

**I am the head of his office and I know what he is doing**

Shams: ياريت تتصل بيه لان مراح اتحرك منا الا اقبله

**Please call him because I'm not going till meeting him**

The head office: الظاهر انتي مصره تفضلي استريحي اشوفه وارجلع

**Ok, you seem insisted so please have a seat while I check on him and come back to you**

#### Analysis

In analyzing the interaction between Shams and the head office of Mr. Ameer, several key strategies emerge that facilitate the dynamics of conversation closure.

#### a. Positive Comment Strategy

The head office initiates a polite and respectful tone by acknowledging Shams's request. His response, *بصراحة، حاليا، Honesty, Mr. Ameer*

is currently unable to conduct any interviews due to his busy schedule, sets a cooperative atmosphere. This positive framing helps maintain rapport and prepares both parties for the subsequent dialogue.

#### b. Excuse (Reason) Strategy

The head office employs this strategy when he states, أنا مدير I am the head of his office and I know what he is doing. This statement serves as a justification for why he cannot facilitate an immediate meeting. By providing a clear reason for his inability to comply with Shams's request, he alleviates any potential discomfort associated with denying her request. **Imperative To-End Strategy:**

The implicit use of the Imperative To-End strategy is evident when the head office says, اشوفه وارجع Please have a seat while I check on him and come back to you. This phrase signals a transition, indicating that the conversation is moving towards a conclusion. Although it is framed as an invitation, it effectively communicates the necessity to shift focus from the current conversation to the next steps.

Overall, the analysis of this conversation reveals the strategic use of positive comment, excuse, and an implicit Imperative to-end strategies. Therefore, each strategy plays a vital role in facilitating a respectful and effective closure to the dialogue. This interaction highlights the importance of strategic communication in professional settings. that both participants feel valued and understood while navigating the complexities of conversation interactions.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZBjqXO3TDs0>

### Conversation 3

**Setting:** at the vegetables sell

**Participants:** Shams and the vegetable seller

**Situation:**

Shams wants to buy some vegetables. She asked the seller to collect tomato, union and apples.

**Shams:** سلام عليكم عمو

Peace be upon you dear

**The vegetable seller:** هلو عمو شلونج

Hello, how are you

**Shams:** لو سمحت اريد كيلو طماطه وكيلو بصل وتفاح.

I need one kilo of tomatoes, one kilo of onions, and apples, please!

**The vegetable seller:** صار توامرین أمر, بعد مرایده شی؟

Ok dear, do you need something else?

**Shams:** لا, شکرا.

No, thanks

**The vegetable seller:** الله ویاج

Ok, good bye

#### Analysis

The research paper identify several conversational strategies that facilitate the dynamics of their exchange in order to analyze the interaction between Shams and the vegetable seller.

#### a. Positive Comment Strategy

The vegetable seller begins the conversation with a friendly tone. He greets Shams with Hello, how are you?

This positive engagement sets a warm atmosphere for the interaction. He uses the welcoming greeting to establish rapport and encourages a cooperative dialogue because it is crucial in a customer-service context.

#### b. Excuse Strategy

When Shams places her order, she specifies, اريد كيلو طماطه I need one kilo of tomatoes, one kilo of onions, and apples, please! The seller responds with صار صار توامرین أمر, بعد مرایده شی? Ok dear, do you need something else? His use of the phrase suggests he is accommodating her needs to provide a clear reason for his inquiry about additional items. Therefore, this strategy enhances the customer's experience by demonstrating attentiveness and willingness to assist.

#### c. Imperative To-End Strategy

In the conclusion of the interaction, Shams says, لا, شکرا, No, thanks, to which the seller responds, الله ویاج, Ok, good bye.

The seller's farewell serves as an implicit signal that the conversation is coming to an end. It is a polite closure indicates that both parties are satisfied with the transaction and are ready to conclude the interaction on a positive note.

Hence, the analysis of this interaction reveals the effective use of positive comment, excuse, and imperative to-end strategies. Therefore, each of these strategies contributes to a polite and effective exchange. That means both Shams and the vegetable seller feel respected and valued throughout their interaction. Furthermore, this highlights the importance of strategic communication in everyday transactions for fostering positive customer relations.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qVlcBh4WFSk>

### 4. Conclusion

This research paper examined the complexities of conversational dynamics within Iraqi Arabic society. It specifically focusing on the strategies that facilitate effective communication and the closing conversation. The analysis revealed the importance of employing strategies such as positive comment, excuse, and imperative to-end. They are crucial for enhancing the quality of conversation and ensuring a seamless conclusion to interactions. These strategies not only promote respectful and engaging exchanges but also ensure that all participants feel acknowledged, valued, and understood during the closing conversation. Therefore, the findings underscore the critical role of strategic communication techniques in various contexts as in the nature of these interactions can significantly influence overall satisfaction and the development of relationships. Then individuals within Iraqi Arabic society can foster an environment of open dialogue and mutual respect in order to enhance their interpersonal skills and leading to more productive outcomes. However, this paper highlights the necessity for individuals to cultivate effective communication skills to be thoughtful and intentional conversation. Further, in closing conversations is essential for achieving positive outcomes in both personal and professional realms. Moreover, mastering the art of navigating closing conversations can ultimately lead to stronger connections and a more harmonious exchange of ideas within the community.

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