Interpretation and Use of Implicature by Yarmouk University Students : A Socio-Pragmatic Study

Reema Taher Labaniyeh*

Abstract

This present paper is a socio-pragmatic study of implicature in Jordan. It examines the interpretation and use of Jordanian popular proverbs by Yarmouk University students. It seeks to set any correlation between the variables of the study, namely, gender, age, region, and education as well as the interpretation and use of proverbs. The research instrument of the study is a questionnaire framed by the researcher. A questionnaire is used to elicit information about the students' use and interpretation of implicature through proverbs. The first part seeks personal information like age, sex, region (of living), and level of education. The second part is divided into two sections: section (A) is proverbs (see Appendix). The researcher has concluded the following : (1) Female respondents tend to interpret the given proverbs more than males do. (2) Young respondents (22 years old or less) succeeded in interpreting the generation tends to use proverbs and rhetorical devices more than its predecessor). (3) There is no significant difference between the subjects (B.A. students and M.A. ones). Perhaps, it is due to the closeness in age between them.

Keywords: Implicature, Indirectness, Proverbs, Language Use .

Introduction:

Implicature plays an important role in our personal interactions. We usually understand in a conversation what others are saying even when people do not express their intentions directly. After being introduced in linguistics by Grice (1975), this phenomenon was studied from different aspects.

Goffman's theory of face in human interaction explains why we say things indirectly. Then, Brown and Levinson (1987) used this theory to explain politeness expressions (Tsuda 1993: 64). Their theory involves two aspects, namely negative and positive face. When we interact with others in society, it is necessary to avoid threatening one another's face. In order to avoid these face-threatening acts, we try to employ politeness strategies in our interactions. They also point out that the determinants of the kinds of politeness strategies used are the following three sociological factors: the relative power of the hearer over the speaker, the social distance between the speaker and the hearer, and the ranking of the imposition in doing the facethreatening act (Tsuda 1993: 66). Thus, it is clear that politeness necessarily involves indirectness.

Lakoff' sets another theory of politeness which

* Irbid University College Al-Balqa University Irbid - Jordan.

consists of the following three principles :

- 1. Don't impose (Distance)
- 2. Give options (Deference)
- 3. Be friendly (Camaraderie). (Tannen 1984:17)

Based on the former principles, Tannen (1984) develops her theory of conversational style. She explains that the choice of one principle results in a particular style, which is indicated in parentheses. Each principle can be interpreted as follows :

1. States that we keep distance from others by not imposing. In order to do so, she points out that we tend to use formal expressions or use technical vocabulary to exclude personal emotions.

2. To say things hesitantly, by not stating one's will clearly or by using euphemisms. She also points out that women often behave in this way to show consideration to others, or to leave the decision to others.

3. Refers to the equality between the speaker and the hearer, and it enhances closeness between them. Here, the speaker and the hearer understand each other completely and there is no need to talk.

Therefore, implicature can be employed within these situations.

However, Grice's work on implicature is considered as one of the linguistics classics. His study was the first serious attempt to clarify the

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intuitive difference between what is expressed literally in a sentence, and what is merely suggested by an utterance of the same string of words. He calls what is said in a sentence and what is implicated in an utterance of the same sentence "the TOTAL SIGNIFICATION of an UTTERANCE." According to Lyons (1995: 272), Grice distinguishes two different kinds of implicature: conventional and conversational. "The difference between them is that the former depends on something other than what is truthconditional in the conventional use, or meaning of particular forms and expressions, whereas the latter derives from a set of more general principles which regulate the proper conduct of conversation". Furthermore, Grice explains how we can interpret correctly what others are implying by universal conventions in human which are called cooperative interaction principles. These principles explain how hearers are able to interpret speakers' intentions. He calls them conversational maxims and they are as follows:

QUALITY: Try to make your contribution one that is true.

1. Do not say what you believe to be false.

2. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

QUANTITY:

1. Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange).

2. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

RELATION: Be relevant.

MANNER: Be perspicuous.

- 1. Avoid obscurity of expression.
 - 2. Avoid ambiguity.
 - 3. Be brief.

4. Be orderly.(Grice 1975: 26-7)

This paper is a socio-pragmatic study of implicature in Jordan. proverbs has been chosen as a form of indirect language and a tool to achieve implicature as Cuddon (1998: 706) points that a proverb is a short pitchy saying which embodies a general truth. It is common to most nations and languages; it is a form of expression of great antiquity. The researcher, thus, will study the use and interpretation of Jordanian popular proverbs by Yarmouk

University students. It seeks to set any correlation between the variables of the study, namely, gender, age, region, and education as well as the interpretation and use of proverbs by answering the following questions

- 1. Does gender affect the interpretation and use of proverbs.
- 2. Does age affect the interpretation and use of proverbs.
- 3. Does region affect the interpretation and use of proverbs.
- 4. Does education affect the interpretation and use of proverbs.

Methods:

a two-point scale To perform this work, questionnaire is designed by the researcher for the current study. The questionnaire is used to elicit information about the students' use and interpretation of implicature through proverbs (see appendix of the proverbs with their translation to English). It is divided into two parts. The first part seeks personal information like age, sex, region (of living), and level of education. The second part is divided into two sections: section (A) is concerned with the participants' interpretation of proverbs (by giving them a proverb and asking them to provide the appropriate context). Section (B) is concerned with the subjects' use of proverbs (by giving them a given context and asking them to supply the pertinent proverb for that context). As far as measurement is concerned, the researcher will give (0) for the false answer and (1) for the right one; then she will proceed in analyzing the data by means of the SPSS 16.0 package..

The population of the present study is all university students, male and female- enrolled in the B.A. and M.A. programs of English language and literature at Yarmouk University. The sample of the study consists of fifty participants who are randomly selected from the population. The researcher has selected these participants from B.A. and M.A. students to make the variable of age significant. The ranges of their age, gender, region and level of education that shown in Table (1) below:

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	The key & its significance
2=female	Gender : 1=male
2=more than 22 years old	Age: 1=22 years old or less
2=village dweller	Region : 1=city resident
2=M.A. student	Education : 1=B.A. student
en it is significant and positive.	- If the Mean equals 1.00 or more, the
b, then it is significant.	- If the significance of T equals $\alpha = 5\%$

Table 1: Keys used in measurement & analysis.

Significance of the Study :

The study seems to be significant for the following reasons :

1. It clarifies the use and interpretation of proverbs by the Jordanian speakers.

2. It gives some insights into the language use in Jordan.

- 3. It can be considered as a modest contribution to the field of semantics and pragmatics in general and to the studies on implicature and indirectness in particular.
 - Analysis:
 - Analysis of the Corpus:
 - Descriptive Analysis :

Gender

Table 2: Gender descriptive analysis.

Cumulative	Valid	Percent	Frequency		
Percent	Percent				
42	42	42	21	1	Valid
100	58	58	29	2	
	100	100	50	Total	

Key: 1 = male, 2 = female

Comment: The participants' percentage consists of 42% males and 58% females. Age :

Table 3: Age descriptive analysis.

Cumulative Percent	Valid Percent	Percent	Frequency		
22	22	22	11	1	Valid
100	78	78	39	2	
	100	100	50	Total	

Key: $1 = \langle 22 \text{ years old}, 2 = \rangle 22 \text{ years old}$

Comment: The participants' percentage consists of 22% < 22 years old and 78% > 22 years old. Region:

Table 4: Region descriptive analysis.

Cumulative Percent	Valid Percent	Percent	Frequency		
68	68	68	34	1	Valid
100	32	32	16	2	
	100	100	50	Total	

Key: 1= city resident, 2= village resident

Comment: The participants' percentage consists of 68% living in cities and 32% living in villages.

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Education:

Table 5: Education descriptive analysis.

Cumulative	Valid	Percent	Frequency		
Percent	Percent				
26	26	26	13	1	Valid
100	74	74	37	2	
	100	100	50	Total	

Key: 1 = B.A. student, 2 = M.A. student

Comment: The participants' percentage consists of 26% B.A. students and 74% M.A. students.

• Analysis of the First Section of the Questionnaire: Interpretation of Proverbs One-Sample Statistics:

Student Deviation	Mean	N	
0.33	1.00	45.00	Q1
0.33	0.88	50.00	Q2
0.44	0.74	39.00	Q3
0.34	0.87	46.00	Q4
0.42	0.79	28.00	Q5

Table 6: Analysis of the 1st section of the questionnaire.

Comment :

- \succ Most of the participants could interpret the proverbs correctly (items 1 to 5).
- item 1 (ينظف العتبة ويترك الرقبة) was عدم العتبة ويترك الرقبة was successfully interpreted by all respondents with a Mean 1.00.

Item 3 (كبير العمة وسيع الذمة) Was the least interpreted item with a Mean 0.74.
One-Sample Test:

Table 7:One sample test Test value = 0

	95%	Mean	sig. (2-	Df	t	
	Confidence	Difference	tailed)			
	Interval of the					
	Difference					
Upper	Lower					
0.97	0.79	0.88	00.0	49.00	18.96	Q2
0.89	0.60	0.74	00.0	38.00	10.50	Q3
0.97	0.77	0.87	00.0	45.00	17.32	Q4
0.95	0.62	0.79	00.0	27.00	9.95	Q5

Comment :

From the above table, it seems that all the items have high value of T-Test which means that the answers are logically and rationally answered. In

other words, the respondents focused on their answers and tried to answer them appropriately.

Detailed Description

Group Statistics :

 Table 8: Group description.

Student	Mean	N	Gender	
Deviation				
00.0	1.00	17.00	1	Q1
00.0	1.00	28.00	2	
0.46	0.71	21.00	1	Q2
00.0	1.00	29.00	2	
0.37	0.84	19.00	1	Q3
0.49	0.65	20.00	2	
0.47	0.70	20.00	1	Q4
00.0	1.00	26.00	2	
0.50	0.33	9.00	1	Q5
00.0	1.00	19.00	2	

Key : 1 = male, 2 = female

Comment : Most of the subjects (male and female) answered the items properly except for item 5 ((یرجنه منر زبلا منفعه), where females interpreted it correctly (Mean 1.00) and Table 0.4

males failed to some extent (Mean 0.33). Moreover, item 1 (نظف العتبة ويترك الرقبة) was perfectly interpreted by both males and females (Mean for both 1.00).

Student	Mean	N	Age	
Deviation			_	
00.0	1.00	11.00	1	Q1
00.0	1.00	34.00	2	
00.0	1.00	11.00	1	Q2
0.37	0.85	39.00	2	
00.0	1.00	6.00	1	Q3
0.47	0.70	33.00	2	
00.0	1.00	11.00	1	Q4
0.38	0.83	35.00	2	
00.0	1.00	5.00	1	Q5
0.45	0.74	23.00	2	

 Table 9: Age description.

Key: $1 = \langle 22 \text{ years old}, 2 = \rangle 22 \text{ years old}$ Comment: Both groups (less than 22 years old) and more than 22 years old) answered almost with the same rate except for item 5 (منعة منح مند منعة المعامين المعامين (اربعة مضرة بلا منعة first group (<22 years old) succeeded in their

interpretation (Mean 1.00), some of the second group (> 22 years old) failed to some extent (Mean 0.74). This difference may be due to the divergence in their numbers.

Student Deviation	Mean	N	Region	
00.0	1.00	30.00	1	Q1
00.0	1.00	15.00	2	
0.39	0.82	34.00	1	Q2
00.0	1.00	16.00	2	
0.44	0.75	28.00	1	Q3
0.47	0.73	11.00	2	
0.37	0.84	32.00	1	Q4
0.27	0.93	14.00	2	
0.41	0.79	24.00	1	Q5
0.50	0.75	4.00	2	

Table 10: Region

Key : 1= city resident, 2= village resident Comment :

All the subjects (city residents and village dwellers) answered the items almost with the ينظف ويترك الرقبة) same level. For instance, item 1 (العتبة) was answered by all the subjects (city

residents and village dwellers). But there is a جاجه حفرت على) little difference concerning item 1 (راسمها عفرت more in their interpretation (Mean 1.00).

Table 11: Education.

Student			Education	
Deviation	Mean	N		
00.0	1.00	8.00	1	Q1
00.0	1.00	37.00	2	
0.44	0.77	13.00	1	Q2
0.28	0.92	37.00	2	
00.0	1.00	10.00	1	Q3
0.48	0.66	29.00	2	
0.45	0.75	12.00	1	Q4
0.29	0.91	34.00	2	
0.55	0.50	6.00	1	Q5
0.35	0.86	22.00	2	

Key : 1 = B.A. student, 2 = M.A. student

Comment : There is a noticeable difference between the subjects (B.A. students and M.A. etc.) منابعة مضرة بلا) درمنافعة على اربعة مضرة بلا). Some B.A. students seem to do not understand the item (Mean 0.5).

• Analysis of the Second Section of the Questionnaire: Use of Proverbs One-Sample Statistic:

Table 12: Analysis of the 2nd section of the questionnaire

Student Deviation	Mean	Ν	
0.22	0.95	42.00	Q6
0.31	0.89	47.00	Q7
00.0	1.00	26.00	Q8
0.50	0.67	9.00	60
0.44	0.76	33.00	Q10

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Comment :

- > Most of the contexts are recognized by the subjects and a pertinent proverb is used (items 6 to 10).
- النشخص البغير) 8 (المنخص البغير) was successfully replaced by a proverb (or a cultural saying only for item 8 and 9) by all respondents with a Mean 1.00.
- اttem (context 9) (الشخص السخيف) was the least found item with a Mean 0.74. In other words, the subjects could not use a relevant proverb for that item.
 One-Sample Test :

Test Value = 0						
	95 %	Mean	Sig. (2-	df	Т	
	Confidence	Difference	tailed)			
	Interval of					
	the					
	Difference					
Upper	Lower					
1.02	0.89	0.95	00.0	41.00	28.64	Q6
0.99	0.80	0.89	00.0	46.00	19.66	Q7
1.05	0.28	0.67	00.0	8.00	4.00	Q9
0.91	0.60	0.76	00.0	32.00	10.00	Q10

Table 13: One sample test.

Comment :

From the above table ,it seems that all the items have high value of T-Test which means that the

answers are logically and rationally answered.

Detailed Description

Group Statistics :

Mean	N	Gender	
0.95	19.00	1	Q6
0.90	18.00	1	Q7
1.00	29.00	2	_
		$\frac{1}{2}$	Q8
00.0	3.00	1	6Ô
1.00	6.00	2	-
		$\frac{1}{2}$	Q10
	$ \begin{array}{c} 0.95 \\ 0.96 \\ 0.72 \\ 1.00 \\ 1.00 \\ 1.00 \\ 0.00 \\ \end{array} $	$\begin{array}{c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c $	$\begin{array}{c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c $

Table 14: Group description.

of the subjects (**male** and **female**) answered the items properly except for context 9 (الشخيف) where females used a relevant proverb (Mean 1.00) and males failed

(Mean 0.00). However, this failure is because of their minority i.e. only 3 males could use a proverb for that context and the others did not answer. <u>Consequently, the researcher considers</u> the unanswered items as missing data.

Student	Mean	N	Age	
Deviation			_	
0.30	0.91	11.00	1	Q6
0.18	0.97	31.00	2	_
00.0	1.00	11.00	1	Q7
0.35	0.86	36.00	2	
00.0	1.00	8.00	1	Q8
00.0	1.00	18.00	2	
		00.0	1	Q9
0.50	0.67	9.00	2	
0.47	0.73	11.00	1	Q10
0.43	0.77	22.00	2	

Table 15: Age description.

Comment : Both groups (less than 22 years old and more than 22 years old) answered almost at the same rate. Table 16: Region description.

Student	Mean	N	Region	
Deviation				
0.19	0.96	28.00	1	Q6
0.27	0.93	14.00	2	
00.0	1.00	31.00	1	Q7
0.48	0.69	16.00	2	
00.0	1.00	20.00	1	Q8
00.0	1.00	6.00	2	
00.0	1.00	5.00	1	Q9
0.50	0.25	4.00	2	
0.46	0.73	22.00	1	Q10
0.40	0.82	11.00	2	

Comment : All the subjects (city residents and village dwellers) responded the items almost at the same level. For instance, items 6 and 8 (see appendix) were answered by all the subjects (city residents and village dwellers). But there is a difference concerning context 9 (الشخص السخية)

where village dwellers almost failed to use a relevant proverb (Mean 0.25). Again, perhaps their minor number (as the researcher has already stated) may be due to some missing data concerning item 9 and relatively item 8)

Student			Education	
Deviation	Mean	N		
0.29	0.92	12.00	1	Q6
0.18	0.97	30.00	2	
00.0	1.00	10.00	1	Q7
0.35	0.86	37.00	2	
00.0	1.00	7.00	1	Q8
00.0	1.00	19.00	2	
		00.0	1	Q9
0.50	0.67	9.00	2	
0.53	0.57	7.00	1	Q10
0.40	0.81	26.00	2	

Comment : Both **B.A.** students and **M.A.** students replied to the items and used relevant proverbs almost with the same frequency.

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second group has the following Means (for the same items with the first group): (0.97), (0.86), (1.00), (0.67, and (0.77). Thus, there is no clear difference between them.

- All the subjects (city residents and village dwellers) responded to the items almost at the same level. For instance, item 6 and 8 (see appendix) were answered by all the subjects (city residents and village dwellers). But, context 9 city residents got a Mean of (1.00) whereas village dwellers got (0.25)!!! Again, perhaps this is because of their insignificant number if compared with the number of the city residents.

Both B.A. students and M.A. students replied to the items and used relevant proverbs almost at the same rate of recurrence. B.A. students have the following Means respectively for items 6 to 10 : (0.92), (1.00), (1.00), (/), and (0.57). On the other hand, M.A. students have the following : (0.97), (0.86), (1.00), (0.67), and (0.81).

Conclusions:

The researcher has come up with the following conclusions :

1. Concerning interpretation :

- Female respondents tend to interpret the given proverbs better than male ones do.

- Young respondents (22 years old or less) succeeded in interpreting the proverbs more than the elders. Perhaps, this suggests an important sociological and cultural change (i.e. the new generation tends to use proverbs and rhetorical devices more than the old one).

- There is no significant difference between city residents and village dwellers in interpreting proverbs. They almost responded similarly.

- There is no evident difference between the subjects (B.A. students and M.A. ones). Perhaps, it is due to the closeness in age between them.

2. <u>Concerning the use</u>:

- Most of the subjects (male and female) answered the items properly and provided a relevant proverb for each context except for item 9 (where we have missing data because most of the respondents did not answer that item).

- Both groups (less than 22 years old and more than 22 years old) answered almost at the same rate.

- All the subjects (city residents and village dwellers) responded to the items almost at the same level.

- Both B.A. students and M.A. students replied to the items and used relevant proverbs almost at the same rate of recurrence.

Results and Discussion: The First Section of the Questionnaire :

- Most of the subjects (male and female) answered the items properly except for item 5 answered the items properly except for item 5 (بعده مضر مبلا منفعه) where females interpreted it correctly (Mean 1.00) and males failed to some extent (Mean 0.33). The Means (of male subjects) for Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4, and Q5 (0.33). Whereas the Means of females for the same questions are respectively (1.00), (1.00), (0.65), (1.00), and (1.00). So, female respondents tend to interpret the given proverbs more than male do.

- Both groups (less than 22 years old and more than 22 years old) answered almost with the same rate except for item 5, where all the members of the first group (< 22 years old) succeeded in their interpretation (Mean 1.00), some of the second group (> 22 years old) failed to some extent (Mean 0.74). The Means of the first group are respectively (1.00), (1.00), (1.00), (1.00), and (1.00). On the other hand, the Means of the second group are respectively (1.00), (0.85), (0.70), (0.83), and (0.74). But as we have mentioned before, there is an inequality between the numbers of the two groups. Thus, Young respondents (22 years old or less) succeeded in interpreting the proverbs more than the elders.

- All the subjects (city residents and village dwellers) answered the items almost with the same level. The city residents have the following Means : (1.00), (0.82), (0.75), (0.84), and (0.79). Whereas the village dwellers have (1.00), (1.00), (1.00), (0.73), (0.93), and (0.75). So there is no significant difference between them.

- There is a noticeable difference between the subjects (B.A. students and M.A. ones).

The Second Section of the Questionnaire :

- In general, most of the contexts are recognized by the subjects and a pertinent proverb is used (items 6 to 10).

- Most of the subjects (male and female) answered the items properly except for context 9 answered the items properly except for context 9 (الشخص السخون)) where females used a relevant proverb (or a cultural saying is accepted for this context) (Mean 1.00) and males failed (Mean 0.00). However, this failure is because of their minority, i.e., only 3 males could use a proverb for that context and the others did not answer. <u>Consequently</u>, the researcher considers the unanswered items as missing data.

- Both groups (less than 22 years old and more than 22 years old) answered almost with the same level. For instance, the first group has the following Means respectively: (0.91), (1.00), (1.00), (1.00), and (0.73). On the other hand, the

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استبيان	
تحديه طيبه وبعد :-	
في صدد القيام بدراسة ميدانية حول استخدام وفهم طلبة جامعة البرموك للأمثال الشعبية الأردنية ، يسعدنا أن نطل	ب منکم
تعبئة الاستبيان المرفق علما أن الإجابات ستعالج بسرية ولن تستخدم إلا لأغراض البحث.	
وتقبلوا فائق الاحترام والنقدير	
<u>الجزء الأول:</u>	
العمر : الجنس : مكان الإقامة : – ألمدينة	
المستوى العلمي : – القرية	
الجزء الثاني:-	
اً. اكتب السياق المناسب لهذه الأمثال:	
[. ينظف العتبة ويترك الرقبة:	
ares about silly matters but ignores the important ones"	1. " C
2. جاجة حفرت على راسمها عفرت:.	
soins trouble to bimsolf, by bim solf	 О Байа
nging trouble to himself by him self	
3. كبير العمة وسيع الذمة.	
is a big shot	3. He
4. انقق القط والفار على خراب الديار	
two enemies agree on spoiling the world	4.The
5. بيضة على أربعة مضرة بلا منفعة	•••••
o ایند می ربد مسره بر مد	5. Too
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Reema Taher Labaniyeh	Interpretation and Use of Implicature by Yarmouk
ب. <u>اکتب مثلا مناسبا لکل سیاق:</u>	
6. من لا یری عیوبه ویری عیوب غیرہ	
	6. Overlook his faults and look on others
 ۲. الشخص الذي يظهر بمجرد الحديث عنه 	
	7. Talk of the devil, and he is sure to appear.
8. الشخص البخيل	
9. الشخص السخيف	
	9. Like a wild goose chase
10. الشخص الذي يستبق الأحداث ويتسرع في حكمه	
	10. To put the card before the horse

استخدام وتفسير المعنى التظمينى: دراسة اجتماعية – تداولية

ريما طاهر لبنية

الملخص

يستهدف هذا البحث دراسة تضمين الأمثال الأردنية الشعبية كما يفهمها و يستعملها طلاب جامعة البرموك، و مدى علاقة هـ ذا الفهـم والاستعمال بعدد من المتغيرات مثل الجنس و العمر و المنطقة و المستوى التعليمي . و قد استعملت الباحثة استبيانا أداة للبحث. و قسم الاستبيانعلى جزأين ؛ الجزء الأول يستهدف جمع معلومات شخصية عن المشاركين فـي البحـث مثـل الجـنس والعمـر والمنطقـة والمستوى التعليمي، أما الجزء الثاني فقد قسم على جزأين آخرين : الجزء الأول يهتم بعدى فهم الطلبة للأمثال الشعبية في حين اهـ الجزء الثاني بمدى استعمالهم لهذه الأمثال. و قد دلت النتائج على (1) إن استجابة الطلبة الإناث افهم الأمثال كانت أكبر من اسـنجابة الطلبة الذكور، (2) نجح المشاركون الأصغر سنا في فهم الأمثال أكثر من الكبار. (3) لا يوجد هناك اختلاف ذو قيمة بين سكان المدن وسكان القرى في فهم الأمثال فجاءت استجاباتهم منشابهة و ربما يعزى ذلك إلى التغير الاجتماعي و الثقافي إذ ينحو الجيل الجديد إلـ المتعمال الأمثال و الصيغ البلاغية أكثر من المتقدمين (4) لا يوجد هناك أي اختلاف ذي قيمة بين المشاركين من حملة البكالوريوس و حملة الماجستير وقد يعزى هذا إلى التقارب في العمر.