Faculty of Education
Department of English

Pragmatic Trends in Arabic and English LinguisticThought: A Contrastive Study

A Thesis Submitted in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Ph.D. in Linguistics

By

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Supervised by

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Reading Conventions for The Symbols Used in The Transcription of Arabic Forms

Consonants:

[b] voiced bilabial plosive, as in /*bayt*(un)/ ‘house’

[d] voiced denti-alveolar plosive, non-emphatic as in /*dars(un)*/ ‘lesson’

[f] voiceless labio-dental fricative, as in /*fa’s(un)*/ ‘axe’

[h] glottal fricative, as in /*hirr(un*/ ‘cat’

[h*] voiceless pharyngeal fricative, as in /*h*ilm(un)*/ ‘dream’

[k] voiceless velar plosive, as in /*kabi:r(un)*/ ‘old’

[l] voiced denti-alveolar lateral, as in /*la:m*/ ‘he blamed’

[m] voiced bilabial nasal, as in /*mayyit*/ ‘dead’

[n] voiced denti-alveolar nasal, as in /*na:’im*/ ‘sleeping’

[q] voiceless uvular plosive, as in /*qur’a:n*/ ‘koran’

[r] voiced alveolar flab, as in /*rā’s(un*/ ‘head’

[s] voiceless denti-alveolar sulcal fricative, non-emphatic, as in /*su:*q(un)/ ‘market place’

[s*] voiceless palato-alveolar fricative, as in /s**ā:rim/* ‘firm’

[sh] voiceless palato-aveolar fricative, as in /*sha:ri‘(un)*/ ‘street’

[t] voiceless denti-aveolar plosive, non-emphatic, as in /*ta:h*(a)/ ‘he lost his way’

[w] labio-velar semi-vowel, as in /*walad*(un)/ ‘boy’

[kh] voiceless uvular fricative, as in /*khārāj(a)*/ ‘he went out’

[y] voiced palatal semi-vowel, as in /*yawm(un)*/ ‘day’

[z] voiced denti-alveolar sulcal fricative, non-emphatic, as in /*za:r*/ ‘he visited’

[’] glotal plosive, as in / ’*ana:*/ ‘I’

[‘] voiced pharyngeal fricative, as in /*‘a:lim*/ ‘scholar’

[gh] voiced uvular fricative, as in /*ghāli*/ ‘expensive’

Emphatic Consonants:

d*, S*, T*, Z* are ‘emphatic’ consonants corresponding to ‘non-emphatic’ d, s, t, z respectively, as in /*D*ārāb*/ ‘he hit’; /*S*ālla:h*/ ‘prayer’; /*T*ābu:r*/ ‘queue’; /*Z*a:lika*/ ‘that’

Vowels:

[i] half-closed to close front spread vowel (short and long), close when long or final, as in /‘ilm/ ‘science’; /‘ali:m/ ‘scholar, scientist’

[u] half-closed back to central rounded vowel (short and long), close rounded when long or final, as in /*khuz**/ ‘take’; /zahabu:/ ‘they went’

[a] front open vowel, short and long, as in /*ba:‘(a)*/ ‘he sold’

[*ā*] back open vowel, short and long, as in /*Khā:lid*/ ‘immortal’

* Long vowels are indicated by (:)

** Geminated consonants are indicated by doubling the consonant letter. They are pronounced longer and more tensely articulated than their single counterparts.

- Adapted from Ali Ezzat’s (1973), *Aspects of Language Study*.

Abstract

This thesis shows that the investigations of the Arab scholars in the linguistic arena have been a source of inspiration for the Western linguists and scholars of the philosophy of language. Many are those who have thought that the studies that have been carried out in the field of pragmatics are exclusive to the Western school of linguistics. However, this thesis is intended to refute this pretense, as it exhibits with concrete evidence that the Arab scholars' linguistic treatments are precedent to their Western equivalents.

This dissertation casts the light on the basic pragmatic aspects founds in the theories and linguistic inquiries of the Western schools, and hence sheds a highlighting shadow over their Arabic equivalents. This is the general encompassing frame of the thesis, yet the main focus of comparison is on the speech act model, as proposed by Austin and Searle, wherein the *constatives/performatives* dichotomy is compared with the *'insha:'/khābar* one in Arabic linguistic tradition. Likewise, the *theme/rheme* dichotomy is compared with the *musnad 'ilayhi/musnad* dichotomy. Many examples have been provided to back and bolster this issue, especially in the sixth chapter which is designated to provide the reader with a hopefully sufficient amount of analysis applied to a selected poetic and prose corpus, with a focus on the poetry of *'Ibn(i) l-Mu'tazz* and that of *William Blake*.

Thus, the notions of "*context*," "*co-text*," "*illocutionary force*," "*performatives*," "*constatives*" "*truth value*," "*directions of fits*," "*saying is doing*," "*metonymy*," "*implicature*," "*use*," etc., are respectively compared with their equivalents in Arabic tradition, e,g., "*maqā:m*," "*siya:q*," "*quwwah*," "*'insha:'*," "*khābar*," "*as-s*idq wa l-kaz*ib*," "*al-h*us*u:l(u) l-khāriji:*," "*al-h*us*u:l(u) z-z*ihni:*," "*'i:ja:d(u) l-fi'l(i) bi l-qawl*," "*maja:z*," "*'istilza:m tad*mi:ni:*," etc. Even the distinction between *sentence-type* and *sentence-token* is proven to correspond to the "*al-jumal la: fi mah*all(i) n-nut*q*" and "*al-jumal fi mah*all(i) n-nut*q*;" and that of "*intention*" to that of "*al-qās*d*" in Arabic tradition.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Theoretical Preliminaries

This thesis represents an attempt at elucidating the fact that it is the Arab scholars who have laid down the origins of linguistic sciences, especially pragmatics. This study, in the first place, is of a pragmatic orientation, and its importance stems from being the first to prove, with definite evidences, the precedence of Arab linguists in dealing with the linguistic theory from a pragmatic viewpoint. In this regard, it will bridge the gap that has been kept unfilled, for years, due to the lack of books that tackle this aspect. Moreover, what motivated me to pursue this hard subject is the scarcity of modern researches that explore traditional Arabic linguistic theorization from a pragmatic viewpoint. Since this study is contrastive in nature, then a comparison will be drawn between the pragmatic features of Arabic linguistic theory and their English counterparts. Contrastive analysis, according to Carl (1980) is viewed as an interlinguistic, bidirectional phenomenon which is concerned with both the form and function of language. Yet, I am interested not only in matters of forms and functions, but also and in the first place in the pragmatic abstractions and philosophical and theoretical suppositions according to which those forms and functions have come to fore. The similarities between Arabic and English in the pragmatic philosophy of language are so evident that I am stirred to pursue

them in this work. Thus, I will adopt a theoretical contrastive analysis, not a pedagogical one. Contrastive analysis is dealt with in the works of Weinreich (1953), Haugen (1956), and specially Lado (1957) in his *Linguistics Across Cultures* (Carl 1980:11). But, their models tend to be more pedagogic than theoretic. I recur here that that I am interested only in the theoretical linguistic component of contrastive analysis, not the pedagogical one.

This study pinpoints that language is a pragmatically-structured constitution, for language is no more than a medium of symbols or signs to be employed in actual communications surrounded by a sphere of context(s). Therefore, it is incumbent upon any approach to language, for its success, to take notice of its innate pragmatic aspects. Here, the contrastive study, between Arabic and English, of such topics as synonymy (’at-tara:duf), polysemy (’ishtra:k ma‘nawi), collocation (which has to do with “’al-musnad” and “’al-musnad ’illaih”), metaphor and synecdoche (’al-isti‘ara and ’al-maja:z), etc., will be of paramount importance, for these linguistic processes bear witness to the pragmatic essence of language, as will be shown. From this point emanates the universality of the pragmatic approach to language, that is to say, all living languages are either consciously or unconsciously pragmatically structured. I would like to stress, here, that this work is intended to probe, in the first place, into the philosophies on the basis of which the linguistic theorization in Arabic and English is built. Evidences will be given that these philosophies are inherently pragmatic.

This thesis subscribes to the notion that not only are meanings given to words via pragmatic procedures, but also the grammar of language has been proved to be *syntagmatically* structured and organized on a pragmatic

basis. This is what Halliday affirms, in his functional theory of language, when he links the linear sequencing of syntax with the concept of "process" which is basically pragmatic in nature. This very notion of *process* is mentioned by *as-Sakka:ki* and *at-Taftaza:ni* in their ***Miftah(i) l-'ulu:m*** and ***Mukhtas*ār(i) l-Ma'ani***, respectively. They have also provided, as will be shown, insightful references to what is called now "truth conditional theory."

The word/meaning dichotomy has been, for a long time, a debatable issue in Arabic linguistic literature. This dispute is also existent in English. Some scholars have been biased towards the sign, some towards the meaning, and others have assumed an in-between stance in which they stress the importance of both. This concept will be explored in some detail. On this ground, the strategies of hermeneutics and their applications will be discussed according to four

aspects:

1) The effects of co-text
2) The effects of text on the interpretation of sentential meaning.
3) The effects of inter-texts on the interpretation of textual meaning.
4) The effects of context on interpretation of the three categories of meanings.

The above mentioned notions will be the point of departure of this thesis which will prove the precedence of the Arab linguists who have pioneered in the arena of linguistic research, and the purely pragmatic nature

of the evolution of language. Consequently, the interpretive strategies should be also pragmatic-oriented in order to be reliable and authoritative.

1.2 Aim of the Study

This study aims at investigating and proving the Arabic origins of *pragmatics* in the linguistic thought of Arab scholars, and comparing them to theoretical background of the non-Arab theorists who have benefited, in one way or another, from the Arabic linguistic heritage. This study will show the importance and necessity of pragmatic-oriented hermeneutic techniques. This pragmatic technique might be resembled to a huge melting pot in which are gathered and processed the four types of effects mentioned in the introduction.

1.3 Procedure

Pertinent excerpts will be selected, processed and compared to figure out the aspects of similarity and equivalence in the philosophies of Arabic and English linguistic theorization. This work will be sectioned into two parts: the one for treating theoretical considerations in English and Arabic, the other for practical application and contrastive analysis.

1.4 Data Source

On the Arabic side, the sources of data are found in the traditional works of such Arab scholars as al-Ja:h*idh, at-Taftaza:ni, al-Hamaz*ani, al-‘Alawi,

and others. On the English side, it is existent in the works of speech-act theorists, e.g., Peirce, Wittgenstein, Austin, Searle, and others. In addition, the theoretical considerations tackled in the previous sources are applied to a selected prose and poetic corpus excerpted from Qur'anic text, and the poetry of Ibn l-Mu'tazz and William Blake, besides other sources.

1.5 Data Analysis

An eclectic approach, which has to do with Rodway's (1983) notion of "pluralism," will be employed in order to cope with the multifaceted viewpoints and orientations. This approach is contrastively descriptive, critical, and analytic.

1.6 Framework

This dissertation is pigeonholed into two parts; the first of which is dedicated to probing into the depths of the pragmatic theory of meaning, especially the speech-act account (with focus on Austin's and Searle's Models), and to tracing the same thread in Arabic linguistic tradition. The second part is designated to contrastive analysis and application. In this thesis, I will focus attention on the basic elements and features of comparison between Arabic and English theoretical thought, as is illustrated in the first and second parts. The pivotal idea of this thesis is that there are many aspects of convergence and divergence between Arabic and English, as regards the pragmatic treatment of language. As will be proven, the Arab rhetoricians' linguistic investigations are built on purely pragmatic bases.