A Pragmatic Study of Diminutives in Ahmad Shawqi's Plays

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	The present research delves into a pragmatic analysis of diminutives within Shawqi's plays, aiming to explore the multifaceted linguistic and cultural dimensions they bring to his dramatic discourse. Diminutives, linguistic constructions that denote smallness, affection, or endearment, have long been a significant element in the Arabic language and culture, serving various communicative functions. This research aims at investigating how diminutives are strategically employed by Shawqi to convey different meanings, evoke emotional responses, and shape character interactions. The present research uses extracts taken from selected plays as data. These plays are Antra, Majnoon Layla, Qhambeez, Ameerat Al-Andalus, and Ali Bey Al-Kabir. Drawing upon the framework of pragmatics, this research analyzes diminutives in selected plays by Ahmad Shawqi. The analysis involves a qualitative approach where diminutives in Ahmad Shawqi's plays are identified through character speeches, marked on pages, documented, and categorized by the researcher using content analysis following a systematic data collection process. It examines their contextual usage, communicative effects, and cultural connotations. Through a comprehensive examination of diminutives, their forms, and their roles in dialogue, characterization, and plot development, this research seeks to derive patterns and themes that illuminate Shawqi's unique stylistic choices and the socio-cultural factor in which his works were crafted. By approaching Ahmad Shawqi's plays from a pragmatic perspective, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the intricate interplay between language, culture, and dramatic artistry. The textual analysis reveals that Diminutives in Shawqi's plays serve as strategic tools, especially in romantic situations, enhancing emotional expression and character connections. They can convey both positive and negative emotions. Diminutives enrich literary works, reflecting cultural context and societal norms. They depict social hierarchies and relationships, adding depth to character portrayals. In essence, diminutives in Shawqi's plays are context-dependent, contributing to a deeper understanding of characters and emotions. Ultimately, this study enriches our appreciation of Shawqi's enduring contributions to Arabic literature and his mastery of linguistic devices in shaping the theatrical experience.

1. Introduction

Holmes (2004) states that language serves as the cornerstone of our daily interactions, facilitating communication, expression of emotions, and the sharing of information within the complex web of human relationships. In this intricate interplay of linguistic expression and cultural diversity, diminutives emerge as a captivating linguistic phenomenon. These diminutives, achieved through the addition of suffixes or alterations to words, infuse language with sentiments of affection, endearment, and occasional playfulness. Beyond their apparent linguistic function, diminutives possess profound pragmatic implications that resonate deeply within the realm of literature.

Mendoza (2005) the diminutive is a linguistic feature of universal interest. It primarily conveys the concept of "smallness". However, it possesses a versatile capacity for conveying various pragmatic meanings that extend beyond the mere notion of small size. Diminutive initially conveys a meaning associated with physical smallness but also brings forth considerations related to social relations and interactions, where the speaker's intentions and attitudes take precedence as the most significant conveyed meanings. Jurafsky (1996) states that a diminutive in social interaction arises from its ability to encode seemingly contradictory functions, such as signifying a positive emotional attitude or conveying pejorative meanings, simultaneously intensifying and attenuating expressions. It can

also express both contempt and glorification. This polysemous structure contributes to the diminutive's intriguing and multiple role as a pragmatic device in social interaction. Consequently, the diminutive serves as a prime example of a linguistic device imbued with socially motivated meanings, reflecting how social considerations influence language use (Mendoza, 2005, p.171).

Theoretical discussions concerning diminutives have primarily centered on identifying the core feature that drives their use as pragmatic devices. Dressler and Merlini Barbaresi (1994) assert that the pragmatic function of diminutives takes pragmatics over semantics. They suggest that pragmatics holds a superior position to semantics in the realm of diminutives. According to this perspective, diminutives, in addition to the semantic quality of "small", encompass a more fundamental shared pragmatic attribute, characterized as "non-serious". This fictive feature is posited as the primary driver behind the majority of pragmatic applications of diminutives. Dressler and Merlini Barbaresi argue that while the "small" feature operates on the semantic level to diminish propositional content, it falls short on the pragmatic level, particularly when diminutives are employed as persuasive devices in requests.

Conversely, Jurafsky (1996) holds an opposing viewpoint regarding diminutives. He suggests that diminutives across languages are rooted in words that are semantically or pragmatically linked to children. This is because the core feature of "child", which occupies a central position in diminutives, is historically prior and serves as a metaphorical and inferential motivator for other senses of diminutives. This perspective is also shared by Wierzbicka (1984), who similarly contends that "child" is the vital feature responsible for the pragmatic functions of diminutives. Jurafsky (1996) outlines various semantic senses of diminutives, including small, child, female gender, small-type, imitation, intensity/exactness, approximation, and individuation/partitive. From a pragmatic standpoint, he identifies several uses of diminutives, such as affection, contempt, playfulness, contexts involving children or pets, and metalinguistic hedges.

This paper aims to explore the pragmatic usage of diminutives in Ahmad Shawqi's plays. The central argument posits that diminutives in these plays serve pragmatic purposes as both markers of positive and negative attitudes, as well as acts that potentially threaten the positive face of the hearer. By delving into the pragmatic significance and roles of diminutives, this study seeks to provide insights into the communicative tools used in these literary works. Furthermore, this research endeavors to address a gap in the existing body of Arabic pragmatics studies and contribute to a broader understanding of the pragmatic functions of diminutives in language and communication as a whole.

The use of diminutives in Arabic and English literature has been recognized as a fascinating linguistic phenomenon. However, there is a lack of comprehensive research on the pragmatic aspects of diminutives in this context. This study seeks to address this gap by investigating the functions and contributions of diminutives in Arabic and English literature, aiming to understand how these linguistic elements shape communication and reflect cultural expressions. The research will investigate the contextual variations of diminutive usage, analyze their impact on social norms, and trace their evolution across different literary genres. By doing so, this study aims to provide valuable insights into the significance of diminutives in literature and their role in enriching the expressive heritage of language and culture.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses have been posed:

1. Diminutives in Ahmad Shawqi's plays serve as pragmatic devices, enriching literary expression with a wide range of emotions and cultural nuances.

2. Their use enhances communication within the plays, conveying subtle meanings and fostering a stronger connection with the audience.

3. The pragmatic application of diminutives in Ahmad Shawqi's plays varies across different social, historical, and cultural contexts, reflecting the dynamic interplay between language and societal norms within the context of his dramatic works.

4. Diminutives in Ahmad Shawqi's plays play a crucial role in reflecting and reinforcing social hierarchies and relationships, offering insights into the cultural dynamics of the era.

Through our comprehensive exploration of diminutives in Ahmad Shawqi's plays, these hypotheses provide valuable insights into the pragmatic functions and cultural significance of diminutives, contributing to a deeper understanding of their role in enhancing the dramatic expression in Shawqi's theatrical works.

This study aims to conduct a comprehensive investigation into the pragmatic aspects of diminutives in Arabic literature. The study aims to evaluate the various functions and contributions of diminutives within the context of

Arabic literary works. By analyzing the usage of diminutives in different social, historical, and cultural contexts, the research intends to understand how these linguistic elements shape communication and convey emotions such as affection, endearment, and playfulness. Furthermore, the thesis aims to trace the evaluation of diminutive usage across various literary genres to uncover potential shifts in meaning and pragmatic functions over time. Through this research, we aim to provide valuable insights into the significance of diminutives in Arabic literature and their role in reflecting cultural expressions, contributing to the fields of pragmatics, linguistics, and Arabic literature studies.

Literature Review

Diminutive

The term "diminutive" has a historical linguistic lineage that traces back to the late Middle English period. Its etymological roots lie in the Old French term "diminutif, -ive," which emerged from the late Latin term "diminutivus". This Latin term, in turn, derives from the base "deminut-," conveying the notion of "diminished" or "made smaller" (Oxford English dictionary, 2006, p. 403). In its broadest sense, a diminutive is understood to be a linguistic construction, often in the form of a suffixed noun, used to express the concept of smallness. Additionally, diminutives are frequently associated with conveying a positive or endearing attitude. Scholars and linguists have approached diminutives from different angles, leading to diverse conceptions of what constitutes a diminutive. Some definitions tend to emphasize the morphological aspects, viewing diminutives as affixes added to base words to denote smallness. Others highlight the pragmatic dimension, considering diminutives as forms that express the speaker's emotional attitude, ranging from endearment to contempt or irony. The definitions from various sources enable a comprehensive examination and a more comprehensive perspective on the complex issue of defining diminutives.

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2005), a diminutive is a linguistic term referring to either a word or an affix used at the end of a word to convey the idea of smallness in relation to the object or entity it describes. The dictionary acknowledges its nature as a grammatical formation that undergoes specific morphological modification to achieve the intended effect of diminutiveness. This modification may involve the addition of suffixes or alterations to the structure of the word, enabling it to assume a diminutive form.

Crystal defines the diminutive as "a term used in morphology to refer to an affix with the general meaning of 'little', used literally or metaphorically (as a term of endearment)" (crystal, 2003, p.139). Crystal provides a precise definition of the term "diminutive". According to him, a diminutive is a concept related to morphology, which deals with the structure of words. In this context, a diminutive is an affix, a small unit added to a word, that carries a general meaning of "little". This meaning can be applied both in a literal sense, denoting actual small size, and metaphorically, implying a sense of endearment or affection. Crystal's definition highlights the versatility of diminutives, as they can serve both practical and emotional purposes in language.

Ibnu Durayd states that "Diminution linguistically refers to reduction, and technically, it is a modification that occurs in the structure of a word intended to be minimized. This applies to words that can be subject to diminution" (Ibnu Durayd, 1927, p. 243). In Arabic, the term "تصغير" (Tasghir) refers to the linguistic concept of "reduction" or "diminution." In technical terms, it is a morphological transformation that occurs in the structure of a word, primarily aimed at creating a smaller version or a "diminutive" form of the original word. This process of diminution applies to words that are capable of such alterations, allowing for the formation of smaller or more affectionate versions of the base word.

According to Brown and Levinson (1988, p.107-109), diminutives serve as linguistic tools that contribute to in-group identity and promote solidarity among individuals. They are used as terms of address to convey feelings of endearment and affection towards the addressee. Moreover, diminutives serve as a means of politeness in communication, especially in directive speech acts where individuals make requests, commands, or suggestions. By using diminutives, speakers can soften the impact of their requests, making them less imposing and more amicable. This approach fosters a positive and respectful communication style, enhancing social harmony and cooperation. Brown and Levinson's definition holds particular importance as it places diminutives within the framework of pragmatics. By doing so, they highlight the pragmatic aspects of diminutives, emphasizing their role in social interactions and communication dynamics. This inclusion in the pragmatics framework sheds light on how diminutives go beyond their literal meanings and carry deeper implications in expressing emotions, forming group identity, and maintaining polite communication. Understanding diminutives through the lens of pragmatics enriches our comprehension of how language is intricately tied to social relations and cultural norms.

Strang states that "Diminutives are usually forms that have begun by meaning a small one of its kind but have undergone a development whereby they come to express not merely an assessment of size, but also, or even exclusively, the speaker's response to small things, a response ranging from affection through condescension to

contempt; we might say that a diminutive is mature when it carries only this response-meaning" (Strang, 1968, p. 138). Strang proposes a link between smallness and attitude in language. This association, according to Strang, emerges during early language acquisition when children begin using diminutive expressions. These small words are frequently used in interactions with parents, fostering a strong emotional bond. She provides examples of how diminutives can carry either positive or negative meanings, which may seem paradoxical at first. However, the meaning of these words is context-dependent and influenced by various factors, such as the base word's usual meaning, the speaker's intention, and the specific social situation. Strang's definition highlights the importance of pragmatics in understanding diminutives. The meaning of these expressions is context-dependent and varies according to the communicative intent and social situation.

Dressler and Merlini Barbaresi (1994) propose a specific meaning feature for diminutives, which they call "non-serious". According to their analysis, when diminutives carry this feature, they serve as a linguistic strategy to diminish the seriousness or commitment of the speech act being performed. In other words, using diminutives with the "non-serious" feature allows the speaker to convey a sense of informality or a lack of strong commitment towards the addressee. By employing diminutives in this way, speakers subtly signal that the communication is not meant to be taken too seriously, creating a more relaxed and casual tone in the interaction. The significance of Dressler and Merlini Barbaresi's notion of diminutives lies in revealing the pragmatic function of diminutives as a means to communicate non-seriousness and lower commitment in speech acts. By employing diminutives with the "non-serious" feature, speakers can subtly convey informality and a lack of strong obligation towards the addressee, contributing to the overall dynamics of interpersonal communication.

The various definitions and notions of diminutives reveal their complexity and significance in language. Diminutives not only convey the idea of smallness but also carry emotional connotations, ranging from affection to contempt. Moreover, they serve as pragmatic terms to build social solidarity and politeness, as well as expressing non-seriousness in communication. This versatility makes diminutives an essential aspect of human language, enriching interpersonal interactions and communication dynamics.

In conclusion, a diminutive is a linguistic concept primarily related to morphology, which involves the structure of words. It typically takes the form of an affix, a small unit added to a word, carrying a general meaning of "little". This meaning can be applied both in a literal sense, indicating actual small size, and metaphorically, implying a sense of endearment or affection. Diminutives are versatile linguistic tools that can serve practical and emotional purposes in language, including expressing feelings of affection, softening communication, and promoting politeness. They are essential components within the field of pragmatics, as they play a crucial role in social interactions, contribute to in-group identity, and help maintain respectful communication. Additionally, diminutives can convey a range of attitudes, from affection to condescension or even contempt, depending on the context and the speaker's intention. Some diminutives carry a specific "non-serious" feature, which serves as a linguistic strategy to convey informality and reduce the level of commitment in speech acts, creating a more relaxed and casual tone in communication. In summary, diminutives are linguistic devices that go beyond their literal meanings, embodying a rich interplay between language, emotions, social dynamics, and cultural norms.

Methodology and Procedures

Data-Source of the Study

Data are information that are gathered and collected by the researchers for analysis. There are two types of data: quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data are numerical data that can be measured and quantified. On the other hand, qualitative data are descriptive that can be analyzed and characterized. Denscombe (2003) states that qualitative data are words and images that are taken from the topic being analyzed. That is, qualitative data are descriptive and non-numerical ones. They are gathered to gain a deep-in insight about a topic.

The present research uses extracts taken from selected plays as data. These plays are Antara, Majnoon Layla, Qhambeez, Ameerat Al-Andalus, and Ali Bey Al-Kabir. The data are in form of verses used by the characters in the plays. Denscombe (2003) states that qualitative data are the product of a process of interpretation. Plays can be good sources of qualitative data as they involve descriptive detailed contexts. They can hold a great deal of interpretation. Diminutives are mostly informal expressions and they probably can be found in informal speech. Thus, plays are selected as the language used in plays is more like the informal spoken language. These plays are decided on to be studied and to examine the uses of diminutives in different contexts. Diminutives are the essence of the data of the present study. First, they are searched for, identified, and then analyzed according to the model adopted.

Method of Data Collection

The data collection method in this study is qualitative and relies on the analysis of diminutives in Ahmad Shawqi's plays. Diminutives are identified through the characters' speeches within the plays, constituting the data for analysis. The documentary method, specifically content analysis, is employed to gather this data. This technique is commonly used in qualitative research to assess physical sources like books and documents (Barrett & Twycross, 2018, p.63).

The data collection process involved the following steps:

1. The researchers read the plays multiple times to identify diminutives used by the characters.
2. Each page containing diminutives was marked.
3. Extracts with diminutives were documented for later analysis.
4. The researchers determined the speakers and addressees of these extracts.
5. Speech situations were identified to aid in the analysis.
6. Data coding was used to collect data from the marked pages.
7. The diminutives were categorized by the researcher for each selected drama, creating a data-sheet to organize the raw data.

The Model of the Study

After reviewing the previous studies on diminutive analysis, Dressler and Merlini Barbaresi's model is adopted to analyze the data collection in the present study. Dressler and Merlini Barbaresi compose a general feature for the meaning of the diminutive, i.e. non-serious. They state that the non-serious feature is used to lower one's responsibility towards the speech being performed (Dressler & Merlini Barbaresi, 1994, p. 144). In other words, the diminutive is used to downgrade the seriousness of the speech act.

Dressler and Merlini Barbaresi's model (1994) falls into three criteria. The first part focuses on speech situations, namely child-centered speech situations, pet-centered speech situations, and lover-centered speech situations. This criterion is meant to identify the situation that covers the speech act being performed. It is worth noting that two other situations are added by the researcher, namely: the hatred-speech situation and the common benefit situation as the need arises for such situations to give a comprehensive analysis of the data collected. The second criterion focuses on the speech acts. This criterion identifies types of the speech acts according to Searle's classification of speech acts. The third criterion concentrates on the role of the regulative factors. These regulative factors are of different types and meanings, i.e. playfulness, emotion, sympathy, empathy, informality, familiarity, intimacy, understatement, irony, and sarcasm (Dressler & Merlini Barbaresi, 1994, p. 173).

Results and Discussion

Data Analysis

The extracts to be analyzed will be analyzed according to speech situations determined. Extracts 1-6 are categorized as lover-centered, extracts 7-9 as hatred-centered, and finally extracts 10-12 involve common benefit speech situations:

Extracts 1-6 involve lover centered speech situation

(1) [Antarah is responding to Abla who is in danger and calling for help]

 Antarah: labbayk 'ubayla al-laythu ati

Antarah: لبيكِ **عُبيْلَ** الليثُ آتي

According to the model adopted in the present study, the extract above will be analyzed according to three criteria. The first criterion is speech situation. The extract is between two adult people who have feelings and passion for each other. They are engaged in interactional discourse through which they are expressing their deep love. Thus, the situation is lover-centered speech situation.

The second criterion is speech-act based. Antarah is committing himself to do some future action. He decides to save his lover Abla. Thus, the speech act is commissive. The use of dim "ʿubaylah" indicates the upgradation of the emotional inner state of the speaker through the display of feelings and supplement, i.e. the use of dim "ʿubaylah" reveals how much deeply Antarah is in love with Abla. It also points out that the speaker's commitment towards the illocutionary act is highly upgraded. Antarah's commitment to save Abla is highly upgraded since he is in love with Abla and he is willing to do anything for her. On the other hand, the propositional content is downgraded through modifying the base word "Abla" to "ʿubaylah". In other words, the use of dim "ʿubaylah" coveys the denotative meaning of smallness and cuteness.

The third criterion is regulative factor. Several factors are introduced in this extract. The first and most obvious factor is emotion. The use of dim "ʿubaylah" adds a sense of endearment, attachment, and fondness to the interaction of the participants. It indicates affection, warmth, and playfulness towards the addressee, Abla. This helps in establishing rapport and expressing positive emotions towards the addressee, Abla. The other factors are sympathy and empathy. The use of dim "ʿubaylah" in this extract reflects the speaker's sympathy and empathy towards the referent. In other words, Antarah is empathizing Abla for the bad situation she is going through and revealing his positive attitude towards her by diminutizing her name. The last set of factors introduced here are intimacy, familiarity and informality. Intimacy is particularly obvious since the speaker is revealing his inner and personal feelings through the use of dim "ʿubaylah". The use of dim "ʿubaylah" creates a sense of closeness and familiarity, i.e. it suggests a close relationship between Antarah and Abla. In addition, the dim "ʿubaylah" adds informal and casual tone. Antarah, through using the dim "ʿubaylah", attempts to create a friendly and relaxed atmosphere. The three criteria altogether support the use of diminutives. In other words, they increase the probability of diminutive's occurrence in the speech situation. They also contribute to interpreting the exact meaning of the dim in the given extract**.**

(2) [Antarah is asking Abla to get close to him and forget about his uncle]

Antarah: ʿubaylah Juri wa truki 'ammana yajur, fa-inni 'ala 'ahdi al-hawa la muqim

Antarah: عُبيْلَة جوري واتْرُكي عمَّنا يَجرْ   فإني على عهدِ الهوى لمُقيم

The extract above will be interpreted according to three criteria. The first criterion is speech situation. The interaction is between Antaraا and Abla who are lovers. Thus, the situation is lover-centered speech situation.

The second criterion is speech act. The speech act is directive. The speaker attempts at making the addressee do something for him. That is, Antarah asks Abla not to care about his uncle as long as their love is resistant. The propositional content is downgraded through word base modification. That is, the use of dim "ʿubaylah" conveys a denotive meaning of smallness and cuteness. The inner state is highly upgraded through emotional display and supplement, i.e. the dim "ʿubaylah" reveals the deep love of Antara towards Abla. It is worth noting that directive acts hold some sort of imposition on the addressee. The use of the diminutive "ʿubaylah" reduces this imposition and makes the request less demanding. It results in making the act politer and less threatening.

The third criterion is regulative factor. First and foremost, emotion plays a significant role in this context. The inclusion of the diminutive term "ʿubaylah" conveys a strong sense of endearment, attachment, and fondness. It signifies a deep affection and warmth towards the addressee, Abla. This effectively creates a connection and expresses positive emotion towards Abla. Second, playfulness is another factor introduced here. The interaction is intentionally joyful and jocular. The speaker attempts at establishing a joyful atmosphere by using the dim "ʿubaylah". Intimacy, familiarity, and informality are shown in the participants' interaction. The use of dim "ʿubaylah" indicates how much the participants are intimate and familiar to each other. It suggests a close relationship between Antarah and Abla. The dim "ʿubaylah" adds informal and casual tone to the speech situation. All these three criteria favor the use of diminutive. That is, they facilitate and support the use of diminutive in the given extract.

(3) [Zuhayr, Abla's brother, directs his words towards her and proceeds to make a statement regarding her]

Zuhayr: ana laa araa 'ubaylatu khayran min abeeha wa la akhee-haa ikhtiyaaran

Zuhayr: أنا لا أرى عُبيْلَةُ خيراً   مِنْ أبيها ولا أخِيها اختياراً

According to the model adopted in the present study, the extract above will be analyzed according to three criteria. The first criterion is speech situation. The extract above is between siblings. Commonly, the relationship between siblings is emotionally charged. It encompasses both positive and negative aspects, and occasionally a mix of conflicting feelings. Thus, the situation is lover-centered speech situation.

The second criterion is speech act. The speaker, Zuhayr, is expressing an opinion and a belief. He believes that Abla is not better than her father or her brother in her choice. Therefore, the act belongs to representative speech act. The use of the dim "ʿubaylah" indicates the upgradation of the emotional inner state. It is used as a mitigation device to reduce the negative evaluation. That is, the speaker adopts the dim "ʿubaylah" in his speech to minimize the conflict or to avoid any trouble with his sister. The use of diminutive adds a jocular atmosphere to the speech which helps the speaker to avoid conflictual sequel with the addressee. Zuhayr fears Abla getting angry with him as he states that she is no better than him or her father. Thus, he uses the dim "ʿubaylah" as a strategy to avoid any quarrel with her and as mitigation strategy to reduce the impact of the statement on Abla.

The third criterion is regulative factor. First and foremost, emotion plays a great role in this context. The diminutive term "ʿubaylah" conveys the meaning of endearment, attachment, and fondness. It implies a deep affection and warmth towards the addressee, Abla. This effectively creates a connection and expresses positive emotion towards Abla. Playfulness is another factor introduced here. The interaction is intentionally joyful and jocular. The speaker attempts at establishing a joyful atmosphere by using the dim "ʿubaylah" to avoid any conflict with the addressee. Intimacy, familiarity, and informality are revealed in the participants' interaction. The use of dim "ʿubaylah" indicates how much the participants are intimate and familiar to each other. It suggests a close relationship between Zuhayr and Abla. The dim "ʿubaylah" adds informal and casual tone to the speech situation. These criteria altogether favor the use of diminutive. That is, they facilitate and support the use of diminutive.

(4) [Tasu, the pharaoh's guard and Natitas's lover, is lamenting Natitas for leaving him and marring someone else]

Tasu: ayunsa fi suwayʿatin wa yutawa dhalika al-ḥubb

Tasu: أَيُنسَى في سُوَيْعاتٍ   ويُطوى ذلكَ الحُبُّ

The interaction under consideration comprises of two individuals deeply affectionate towards each other, sharing a strong emotional connection. Consequently, the context of communication is classified as a lover-centered speech situation. In terms of the speech act employed, it falls under the category of expressive language as Tasu openly reveals his sentiments to his beloved, expressing sorrow and lamentation over her decision to leave him. The propositional content is downgraded through modifying the base word "sa'a" to "suway'at= the plural form of suway'a". This downgradation results in conveying the meaning of smallness and cuteness. The inner state is highly upgraded through the emotional display. That is, the use of the dim (suway'at) reflects Tasu's profound affection and fondness for Natitas. As for regulative factors, emotion is the significant one. The use of dim of "suway'at" indicates a heightened emotional connection and affection between Tasu and Natitas. It creates an intimate and personal language shared exclusively between them, fostering a sense of closeness and special bond. Tasu establishes a private and unique communication style, reinforcing the sense of intimacy in their relationship. Additionally, the use of the dim "suway'at" carries positive connotations of warmth and care. It reinforces the emotional bond and deepens the attachment Tasu and Natitas have for one another. It leads to increase feelings of comfort, trust, and security in the relationship. Finally, this use of the dim "suway'at" adds an element of playfulness and flirtation to communication between them. It adds lightheartedness and joy into their interactions, making it more enjoyable and exciting.

(5) [Al-'Abadiyah, Buthayna's grandmother, lovingly urges Buthaynah to share her feelings about the person she loves]

Al-'Abadiyah :Buthayna bunayyati ana al-jaddatu walidtuki marratayn. istarihi ilayya bisurki

Al-'Abadiyah: بُثينة بُنَيَّتي أنا الجدةُ ولدتُكِ مرتين إستَريحي إليّ بسركِ

The conversation takes place among individuals who have a strong familial bond. The relationship between the members of the family is typically linked to affection and concern. Thus, the situation is a lover-centered speech situation. This makes the entire interaction in all extracts associated with tenderness and fondness. It adds an emotional and affectional tone to the participants' engagement. The extract belongs to the speech act of expressing affection and care. In this statement, Buthayna's grandmother addresses her with warmth and tenderness, emphasizing her role as a grandmother and expressing her love for Buthayna. The propositional content is downgraded in all examples through modifying the base word "binti" to "bunayyati", conveying the denotative meaning of smallness and cuteness. On the other hand, the inner state is highly upgraded through emotional display and supplement. That is, the use of the dim form "bunayyati" reflects the profound love and tenderness that the speaker feels towards Buthaynah. Regarding regulative factors, emotion stands out as the most significant one. The use of dim "bunayyati" conveys a sense of affection and endearment. It serves to express the speaker's emotional connection to Buthaynah, and it evokes feelings of warmth and care. The dim "bunayyati" is also adopted to create a more familiar and intimate tone in conversation. It helps to establish a sense of closeness and reinforces a strong bond with Buthaynah. Additionally, the use of the dim "bunayyati" contributes significantly to building rapport and establishing trust with Buthaynah. By employing this dim, the speaker creates a more approachable and friendly attitude, adding a sense of closeness and understanding. This, in turn, encourages Buthaynah to feel comfortable and confident in the interaction, leading to stronger bond and open communication.

(6) [Antara is addressing Abla and trying to assure her that she is the only one who he is in love with, by reminding her of their good old days]

Antara: washuwyahatki hawli 'ansun yaghtarfna al-maa'a min rahi al-suhum

Antara: وشُويهاتُكِ حولي أنسٌ   يَغترِفْنَ الماءَ من راحي السُّحُمُ

The conversation is between Antara and Abla who are lovers and cousins. Clearly, the situation is lover-centered speech situation. Abla is in doubt and thinks that Antara is betraying her with other ladies. Antara assures her that she is the only one that he loves. In addition, he reminds her of their childhood when they used to meet and the cattle around them. The act is representative since Antara is describing an old situation. The dim "shuwayhat" indicates the upgradation of the emotional inner state. The propositional content is downgraded through modifying the base word "shat" to "shuwayhat". The use of the dim "shuwayhat" serves as a mitigating device, aiming to diminish negative evaluations. In other words, the speaker employs the diminutive "shuwayhat" in his speech to minimize conflict and avoid any potential issues with his lover. The use of the diminutive creates a relaxed atmosphere. The dim "shuwayhat" helps the speaker to avoid any potential disagreements with the listener. Antara is concerned about not provoking Abla's anger. The third criterion is the regulative factor. Emotion plays a significant role. The diminutive term "shuwayhat" conveys sentiments of endearment, attachment, and fondness. It implies a deep affection and warmth towards Abla, effectively establishing a connection and expressing positive emotions towards her. Playfulness is another factor introduced here. The interaction is intentionally joyful and light-hearted. The speaker's intention is to create a pleasant atmosphere by employing the term "shuwayhat", thereby minimizing any potential conflicts with the listener. The participants' interaction reveals intimacy, familiarity, and informality. The use of the diminutive "shuwayhat" signifies a close relationship between Antara and Abla. It adds an informal and casual tone to the speech situation.

Extracts 7-9 involve hatred-speech situation

(7) [During the gathering, a guest speaks to Malik and attempts to insult Antarah through his words]

A guest: ʿablatu la tuhadda ila ibni 'ammatin yar'a ash-shuwayhati wa yasqi al-ab'araha

A guest: عبلةُ لا تُهدى الى ابنِ أَمَةٍ   يرعى **الشُّوَيْهاتِ** ويسقى الأبعرة

Based on the adopted model, the exchange occurs between participants who view themselves as superior to Antarah. The speaker refers to Antarah as a shepherd who takes care of small sheep, implying a negative and disrespectful tone. Thus, the situation is a hatred-speech situation. This particular situation indicates that negative emotions and orientation will characterize the entire interaction.

The speech act is assertive which belongs to representative. It indicates the speaker's opinions and beliefs about something. The dim "shuwayhat" implies the speaker's negative feelings towards Antarah. The propositional content is downgraded through modifying the base word "shat" to "shuwayhat=plural of shuwayha". That is, the dim "shuwayhat" is used to increase the offensive attitude towards Antarah. The inner state is upgraded through the menacing attitude towards the referent, i.e. the use of the dim "shuwayhat" implies how much the participants are arrogant. It suggests that they view themselves as intellectually and socially superior to Antarah. The dim "shuwayhat" reflects how much the participants hate Antarah.

In terms of regulative factors, negative emotional attitude, sarcasm, and understatement are revealed. The speaker sarcastically uses "shuwayhat" to express his negative attitude towards Antarah. It is used to insult and belittle Antarah. It sends a clear message that the participants do not hold Antarah in high regard and they intentionally choose to offend him. This interaction is associated with non-seriousness to indicate the non- important of the referent. That is, the diminutive is employed as an offensive strategy here. The use of the dim "shuwayhat" creates an atmosphere of exclusion and marginalization. Overall, this behavior highlights a lack of empathy, respect, and consideration for Antarah's face image. Thus, it results in making the situation impolite and more threatening.

(8) [the demon Umayyad is addressing Qays and belittling his poetic skills]

Umayyad: la yufham al-sha'iru lakin yufham al-shuway'ir

Umayyad: لا يُفحَم الشاعرُ لكن   يُفحم **الشُّوَيْعِرُ**

The demon Umayyad is addressing Qays and referring to him as little poet. In doing so, the demon insults and underestimate the addressee Qays. The interaction is between participants who obviously have negative feelings towards each other. Thus, the situation is hatred-speech situation. The speech act is representative as the extract represents the speaker's opinion and belief about Qays. That is, the demon believes that Qays is not a good poet, but a little one to underestimate him and his poetic skills. The propositional content is highly downgraded through modifying the word base "sha'ir" to "shuway'ir" to increase the offensive attitude. The inner state is upgraded through the menacing attitude towards the referent. The regulative factors presented here are negative emotional attitude, sarcasm, and understatement. The speaker uses "al-shuway'ir" to express his negative attitude towards Qays.

This interaction is associated with non-seriousness to indicate the non- important of the referent. Referring to someone as a "shuway'ir" implies a negative evaluation of his poetic skills or abilities. The negative connotation attached to "shuway'ir" suggests that Qays is perceived as inexperienced, unskilled, or lacking talent in his poetic ability. The dim "shuway'ir" is used to belittle or criticize Qays, often with the intention of demeaning his work or dismissing his artistic efforts. The speaker likely aims to convey his negative judgment of Qays's poetic abilities or work. He intends to assert his own perceived superiority or to discredit Qays's achievements in poetry. That is, the use of the dim "shuway'ir" serves as a means for the speaker to assert his own authority or superiority in matters of poetry or literature. Umayyad positions himself as more knowledgeable or accomplished, implicitly suggesting that he stands above the poet in skill and expertise. Additionally, the dim "shuway'ir" is considered a face-threatening act. This dim challenges Qays's positive face, which represents this desire to be appreciated, respected, and esteemed by others. The use of this dim negatively risks damaging Qays's self-esteem and reputation, potentially leading to feelings of hurt or humiliation. Overall, the use of "shuway'ir" is perceived as impolite and disrespectful, as it directly challenges the addressee's skills and status.

(9) [pharaoh addresses his niece Natitas and tells her not to make him angry. They argue a lot and have a lot of issues as Pharaoh has killed her father]

Pharaoh: la tadfi natita bi wala tuhyyiji ghadbi

Pharaoh: لا تَدفعي **نَتيتَ** بي   ولا تُهيّجي غَضبي

The given extract involves a conversation between two individuals who have experienced significant struggles and difficulties. The speaker, referred to as the pharaoh, is communicating with his niece named Natitas. It is important to note that Natitas holds strong negative emotions towards her uncle due to his involvement in her father's death. Therefore, the context of their interaction can be described as a hatred-speech situation. The propositional content is downgraded through modifying the base word "Natitas" to "Natita". The use of dim "Natita" downgrades the intensity of the speech. The dim "Natita" is used as strategy for lowering the seriousness of the situation. That is, the speaker uses the dim to avoid and reduce the conflict with his niece, Natitas. The speech act is directive, as the speaker is explicitly instructing the addressee not to become angry. Within this directive act, there is a subtle element of threatening the addressee's self-image or social standing. However, the dim "Natita" is employed to mitigate the potential offense or impoliteness of the statement. This use of the dim form softens the imposition on the addressee and diminishes the level of threat conveyed. Consequently, this linguistic strategy contributes to the overall reduction of impoliteness in the discourse. However, the Pharaoh's use of the diminutive name "Natita" suggests that he may hold favorable sentiments towards his niece. Diminutive names are commonly associated with expressions of warmth and endearment. Considering their familial relationship, it is natural for ups and downs to occur, as is typical in relationships among relatives. Nevertheless, it is essential to acknowledge that this sentiment of reconciliation is solely observed from the Pharaoh's perspective. Throughout the play, Natitas continues to hold negative evaluation towards her uncle, and she never reaches a point of forgiveness.

Extracts 10-12 involve common benefit speech situation

(10) [Malik, who is Abla's father, warmly invites the guests to stay and join in a meal together]

Malik: makankum ya dhiyūfa ʿabs hunayhatan taṭʿamūa al-majiʿa

Malik: مكانكمْ يا ضيوفَ عبْسٍ   **هُنَيْهةً** تَطْعَمُوا المجيعا

The extract is among participants who have the same goal, i.e. the same negative attitude towards Antarah. It is a common benefit speech situation. Malik and his guests are in a common approach towards Antarah. They try to get rid of Antarah, in order to make Abla marry someone else.

The speaker, Malik, requests his guests to stay and have a meal. Thus, it is directive speech act. The propositional content is downgraded through modifying the base word "huna" to "hunayha" which means short period of time. The inner state is upgraded through the emotional display and supplement. The use of the dim "hunayha" downgrades the force of the request. Requests may threaten the face image of the addressee. Thus, the use of the diminutive softens the force of illocutionary act of the request. In other words, the dim "hunayha" reduces the imposition on the addressee and makes the situation politer.

In terms of regulative factors, the most obvious one is temporal approximate. This factor is used to approximate the time. It refers to nearness of time. The speaker uses the dim "hunayha" as a strategy to make the guests stay and have the meal. In other words, the speaker uses the dim "hunayha" as a means to assure the guests that they are going to wait for short period of time and it will not cost them much time. It results in making the request less demanding and politer**.**

(11) [Malik is addressing his son Zuhayr in his speech and talking about Dhirgham. Dhirgham is someone who loves Abla and proposes to her]

Malik: waqultu kulaybun nastateelu basahrihi, idha huwa kalbun

Malik: إذا هوَ كلبٌ   وقلتُ **كُليْبٌ** نستطيل بصهرِهِ

The extract above is among participants who share the same feelings towards Antara. That is, they hate Antara and want to get rid of him. Thus, the situation is common benefit speech situation. Malik is referring to Dhirgham in his speech. Malik thinks that Dhirgham was brave and strong "kulayb", but it turns out that he is just a dog (to convey the meaning of coward). Thus, the speech act is representative. It represents Malik's opinion about Dhirgham. The emotional inner state is upgraded. It is noteworthy that the propositional content is syntactically downgraded through word base modification, yet the meaning is intentionally upgraded to express different thing than the base word. In other words, the dim "kulayb" is minimized through applying grammatical rules to the base word "kalb". However, the meaning is maximized and changed to covey totally different and contrastive thing. The most prominent element introduced by the use of the dim "kulayb" is the concept of greatening. This element presents a clear contradiction to the diminutive's typical use, as it ascribes greatness or significance to the referent. Malik utilizes the term "kulayb" sarcastically in his speech to amplify the menacing attitude towards Dhirgham. The speaker's intention is to insult Dhirgham and belittle his value. This choice of comparison sends a clear message that the individuals involved hold Dhirgham in low regard and deliberately seek to offend him. The application of the dim form "kulayb" serves as an offensive strategy within this context, highlighting a lack of empathy, respect, and consideration for Dhirgham's social image. Consequently, this behavior renders the situation impolite and poses a threat to Dhirgham's dignity.

(12) [Ibnu Dhareeh, a friend of Qays, is addressing Layla and trying to calm her down as she gets angry of him]

Ibnu Dhareeh: bal Ruwaydan wa-isma'ee ya layla

Ibnu Dhareeh: واسمعي يا ليلَ   بلْ رُويْداً

The speaker, Ibnu Dhareeh, addresses Layla. He asks her to stay and listen to him. This extract is between participants who share the same positive feelings towards Qays. Thus, it is a common benefit situation. The speech act is directive as the speaker attempts to make the addressee stay. The propositional content is downgraded by modifying the base word. The inner state is upgraded through the emotional display and supplement. The speaker reveals good feelings and empathy towards the addressee, Layla. The use of dim "ruwaydan" reduces the imposition on the addressee to fulfill the request. Thus, this reduction of imposition results in making the speech less threatening face image. In terms of regulative factors, the temporal proximity is the most obvious one. It refers to the nearness of time. Through using the dim "ruwaydan", the speaker intentionally attempts to make the interaction joyful and jocular to avoid sequel conflict with the addressee. The speaker aims to create a positive and relaxed atmosphere, and he achieves this by using the dim "ruwaydan". This use of the diminutive form is a deliberate attempt to avoid any potential conflict or tension. Furthermore, the use of the diminutive form "ruwaydan" indicates a level of intimacy, informality and familiarity between the speaker, Ibnu Dhareeh, and the addressee, Layla. It suggests that they share a close relationship, perhaps as friends or family members. The inclusion of the diminutive form adds an informal and casual tone to the speech situation, reinforcing the friendly and relaxed nature of their interaction.

The study's findings strongly support the hypotheses regarding the use of diminutives in Ahmad Shawqi's plays within the context of Arabic literature. Diminutives indeed serve as pragmatic devices, enriching literary expression with a wide range of emotions and cultural nuances, while simultaneously enhancing communication and fostering a deeper connection with the audience, in line with the first and second hypotheses. The study further confirms the third hypothesis by revealing the variability in the pragmatic application of diminutives across different social, historical, and cultural contexts, reflecting the dynamic interplay between language and societal norms in Shawqi's dramatic works. Moreover, the research affirms the fourth hypothesis by highlighting the vital role of diminutives in reflecting and reinforcing social hierarchies and relationships within Arabic society, offering valuable insights into the cultural dynamics of the era.

The findings of the study on diminutives in Ahmad Shawqi's plays align with the research conducted by Muhammad Badarneh on "The Pragmatic Functions of Diminutives in Spoken Jordanian Arabic". Both studies recognize the diverse and multifaceted uses of diminutives in different linguistic and cultural contexts. However, there are notable differences in the scope and focus of the two studies.

While the study on Ahmad Shawqi's plays primarily examines diminutives in the context of Arabic literature, Badarneh's research centers on conversational settings of spoken Jordanian Arabic. Shawqi's plays represent a literary context where diminutives are used as literary devices, conveying emotions and cultural nuances. On the

other hand, Badarneh's study investigates how diminutives function in everyday spoken language, with a particular emphasis on their role in establishing and maintaining social relationships among speakers.

Moreover, both studies draw upon existing linguistic frameworks to analyze diminutive usage. The study on Shawqi's plays explores the pragmatic functions of diminutives, resonating with the broader field of linguistics, while Badarneh's research relies on Brown and Levinson's politeness model to uncover the interactional aspects of diminutives in spoken Jordanian Arabic.

In terms of findings, both studies reveal that diminutives serve a wide range of pragmatic functions beyond their prototypical usage. In Shawqi's plays, diminutives are shown to convey emotions and cultural nuances, while in spoken Jordanian Arabic, they are used to express politeness, establish intimacy, or convey a playful tone. Both studies highlight the cultural relevance of diminutive usage, demonstrating how it reflects and reinforces specific cultural values within their respective contexts.

However, there are also notable differences and considerations. The study on Shawqi's plays primarily focuses on literary analysis and may not fully capture the nuances of spoken language use. Conversely, Badarneh's research is based on natural conversations, providing insights into real-life language use but potentially lacking the controlled rigor of experimental studies.

Additionally, while both studies emphasize the cultural significance of diminutives, they do so within the specific cultural contexts they investigate (i.e., Arabic literature and Jordanian society). Generalizing their findings to broader linguistic and cultural contexts would require further comparative analysis with other Arabic dialects or languages, as both studies acknowledge.

In summary, both studies contribute valuable insights into the multifunctional nature of diminutives in different linguistic and cultural settings. They highlight the importance of considering linguistic and cultural factors when studying diminutives and their pragmatic functions. However, each study has its own scope and focus, making them complementary in understanding the versatile nature of diminutives in language and culture

Conclusion

In conclusion, this pragmatic study of diminutives in Ahmad Shawqi's plays has shed light on the versatile and context-dependent nature of these linguistic devices within the dramatic narrative. Diminutives serve as powerful tools that can intensify or mitigate emotional expressions, depending on the speech situation. They play a vital role in shaping the dynamics of interpersonal interactions, emotions, and social hierarchies depicted in Shawqi's plays. Within lover-centered contexts, diminutives like "ʿubaylah" serve to create an atmosphere of affection and endearment, emphasizing positive emotions and contributing to the establishment of intimate connections between characters. Conversely, in scenarios characterized by hatred and animosity, diminutives like "shuway'ir" are employed as tools of insult and belittlement, heightening the negative attitudes and tensions among the characters. Furthermore, diminutives in common benefit speech situations, exemplified by terms like "hunayha" and "ruwaydan", facilitate the expression of requests or suggestions in a less imposing manner, fostering a cooperative and polite atmosphere among participants. This study underscores the rich and multifaceted role of diminutives in shaping the dynamics of Ahmad Shawqi's dramatic narratives. It highlights the importance of considering the context and speech situation when analyzing the pragmatic functions of these linguistic elements, showcasing their significance in enriching the portrayal of emotions, relationships, and societal norms within the plays

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