

Salutations in Jordanian Arabic: A Sociolinguistic perspective

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Abstract

Salutation is an important social custom. Jordanians who are governed by social customs use various salutations in their daily life. The present study aims to find out the various salutations used by people of Jordan. The paper will include a review of some studies about salutation followed by a discussion of the ways in which such salutations are structured in Jordanian Arabic. The social factors that stand beyond using salutations are also included.

Introduction

As an everyday tradition salutation is spread in all part of Jordan. A bulk of salutations is utilized by Jordanians of different social classes and educational backgrounds to salute themselves in different places like home, work places, private gatherings, public gatherings and in public places like bus stations and mosques. The present paper will investigate salutations adopted by people of Jordan in their everyday life.

Review of Related Literature

Salutation is a greeting; so many studies had dealt with greeting in different cultures. Ferguson (1967) considered greetings as "a politeness formula". He pointed out that greetings are important for their presence or absence in a certain context rather than the specific meaning their constituent parts convey.

Ibrahim (1983) used "minor sentences" for salutations, felicitations and invocations. According to him salutations were used for politeness and respect.

Lungstrum (1987) studied two paradigms for hailing in Kekchi (Mayan) in PuebloViejo, Belize. He discussed the nature and the use of greeting in that particular Indian culture. His findings showed that greetings were adopted by that society indicate special social reference to the position of the speaker and addressee, the period of the meeting and the degree of friendliness.

Chen Song-Cen (1991) pointed out that greetings had are important in the polite language. He clarified that when a person uses a greeting the aim is to show his/her attitude toward the addressee or that he /she aims to start a conversation with addressee.

El-Hassan (1991) studied the Arabic speech patterns by Jordanian shopkeepers, shop assistants and customers. His data were collected from many Jordanian shops. One of his paper's sections is greeting on leave.

Al-Abdul Halim (1994) studied greetings in Jordanian Arabic. His data were collected from many public places such as hospitals and universities. He revealed many forms for each greeting and that some greetings were used more than others. His affirmed that the relation between the speakers and the addressees affects the choosing of the right greeting.

Types of Salutation Patterns

1. Islamic Salutation.

The most Islamic salutation is al-salam a'laikum w-arahmatu Allah w-abarakatuh, may the peace, mercy and blessing of Allah "God" be upon you. This salutation has shortened forms such as (al-salam a'laikum w-arahmatu Allah, may the peace and mercy of Allah be upon you), al-salamu a'laikum, peace be upon you, salam, peace.

The addresses responding might be wa a'laikum al-salam warahmatu allah wabarakauh, and may the peace, mercy and blessing of God be upon you, wa a'laikum al-salam warahmatu allah , and the peace and mercy of Allah be upon you, wa a'laikum al-salam, and may the peace be upon you) and wa a'laikum, and also be upon you, wa-alaikum al-salam wa- alrahma , may the peace and mercy be upon you, wa-alaikum al-salam alhlan, may the peace and mercy be upon you welcome.

2. Peasant Salutations.

Certain salutations are used by Jordanian peasants while working in fields in the countryside. While plowing or harvesting, Jordanian peasants were saluted with expressions as a'l afiah, may you have good health, sah badanuh, may your body is healthy, sah badanak, may your body is healthy, sah badanhum, may your "for a group of farmers or workers ' bodies are healthy, Al-allah ya'teek ilafeh may God give you good health, Al-allah ya'teeku ilafeh may Allah give you all good health..

Other salutations are quwwah, power, qawwak, may you have power, ya'teek ila'fyah, may God give you a good health. The addresses would say Allah ea'afeek, may Allah give you the power, also, webadanuh and your body or igweet, may you also have a strong body. Such salutations are used for those who have hard job that need powerful body.

3. Morning, Afternoon and Evening Salutations

When family members, friends, colleagues meet each other in the morning at homes, bus stations , universities , colleges and work places they salute each other saying: sabah ilkhear , good morning. When they meet in the afternoon or in the evening they salute each other with: masa'a ilkhear, good evening. Salutations such as Sabah ilnoor, the morning of light, masa'a ilnoor, the evening of light are also used.

Roses are also used for salutations like sabah ilward , the morning of roses , sabah ilyasmeen , the morning of jasmine, masaa' ilward , the evening of roses , masaa' ilful , the evening of Arabian jasmine , masaa' ilward wilyasmeen , the evening of roses and Arabian jasmine , masaa' lqrunful, the evening of carnation and masaa' ilful wilyasmeen , the evening of Arabian jasmine and jasmine.

Other salutations are sabhu, may you have a good morning, sabhu bilkhear , may you have a good morning, sabbihum, good morning for all of you ,sabbahak allah bilkhear, may Allah make your morning full of welfare. Other similar expressions include sabhak , I wish you a good morning , ysa'id hal sabah , may your morning is a happy one , massihum bilkhear , good evening for all of you , massak allah bilkhear , may Allah make your evening full of welfare , massak bilkhear , may " Allah' make your evening a good one , masseeku bilkhear , I wish a good evening for all of you. Other salutations are esabhak bianwar ilnabi , may the lights of the prophet lighten your morning, emassek bianwar ilnabi, may the lights of the prophet lighten your evening .The word prophet refers to prophet Mohammad.

4. English Salutations

Due to the contact with the western culture via mass media, travelling, studying in western countries and teaching of English in Jordan from the kindergarten till university some English salutations like hello, hi, good morning and welcome are used in Jordan. Some Jordanians would say hallo for hello with a stress on 'l' in an intimate voice.

5. Marhaba and Ahlan Salutations.

Various salutations are derived from these two words. marhaba, or marhaban salutation, marhaba(n) biiku, salutation for all .Other salutations are marhabtean , two salutations , meet marhaba, one hundred salutations, a'shar maraheb, ten salutations, marhabtean wunos , two salutations and half .

People of Jordan also use the salutation maraheb salutations which show countless number of salutation. Other salutations are hala wemaraheb , hala wreheb, salutation and welcome , hala waghla, salutation and most welcome, ahlan or ahlean, welcome , ahlan wa sahlan , welcome and welcome, ahlean wesahlean , two greetings and welcomes , halalta ahlan wawatea'ta sahlan , your are most welcome , hala, welcome , hala wemaraheb, many greetings, ya hala, Oh, welcome yahala, welcome , yahala wallah, welcome , I swear by God.

6. Body Language Salutations.

Salutations are also made with left or right hands, fingers, eyebrows and head. A Jordanian would use a body salutation to salute another Jordanian from a far distance. A driver or a passenger salutes a walking person or someone stands near the street waiting for the bus or taxi by waving his hand, nodding his head backward, or raising his hand little over the steering wheel .

The right hand or forefinger is used for salutations while driving. Eyebrows and head are also used for salutation. People raise their eyebrows up or move their head with a little movement backward.

7. Keaf ; how Salutation.

Salutations such as keaf ilhal, how are you, keafak, how do you do, ishlunak, how do you do, keafku, how you all are are also used in Jordanian Arabic. The word (keaf) is pronounced in other forms. Rural people would say cheaf ilhal, cheafku, for males and cheafech, chafchen for females. Urban people would say keafak, keefak for males, and keafik, keefik for females.

8. Izzayak salutation.

The Egyptian salutation (izzayyak, how are you) is also used in Jordan in a narrow range as an intimate salutation between close friends.

9. Hayyak Salutation.

hyyak allah, may Allah salute you , allah yehayeek , may Allah salute you, hayyak allah webayyak , may Allah salute you a lot , hayyak webayyak , may "Allah" salute you a lot and a lot .

10. Salutation with numbers.

The number one hundred is commonly used for salutation in Jordanian Arabic. It is associated with the words (marhaba , wardeh). Salutations like meet marhaba , meet wardeh, one hundred welcome , roses respectively.

11. Other salutations.

Salutations as tehya weddoom, may you live and last for a long time, tahyyati waashwaqi, my salutations and yearnings, tahyyati, my salutations for you.

Expressions as kefak ilyaom, how are you today, keaf asbaht, how is your morning, keaf akhbarak, how is your news, shu akhbarak, what is your news and shu u'luumak , what is your news are also used. The words my warm salutations and misses are also used for salutation in Jordanian Arabic as Taheati wa ashwagi; my warm salutations and misses.

The structure of Salutations.

Salutations are structured in Jordanian Arabic as the following.

1. Two noun salutation. sabah likhear, good morning.
2. Verb - noun salutation. ysa'id sabahak, May your morning is a happy one.
3. One noun salutation. marhaba; welcome, or salam; peace
4. Preposition - noun salutation. a'la ila'afya, have a good health.
5. The Arabic vocative particle (ya, Oh) - noun salutation. ya marhaba, ya ahlan , Oh. Welcome.
6. Number - noun salutation. Meet marhaba, one hundred salutations.

What affect choosing salutations?

1. Local Environment.
Some salutations are related to Jordanian urban and rural areas.
2. Islam.
Islam is the official and main religion in Jordan.
3. Education.
Educated people use salutations as Sabah ilkhear, good morning, masaa' ilkhear, good evening.
4. Relation with the West
Media and direct contact with the western civilization cause the use of some western salutations in Jordan.

The type, depth and intimacy of relation between members of the society affect the choosing of the salutations in Jordanian Arabic. To salute a close friend it is accepted to use the English greeting expression (hello) or the Arabic one (marhabtean , two welcomes), but it is not accepted to salute people with high positions such as professors , ministers , princes or the king with such greetings.

Salutations such as (ahlan wasahlan , most welcome) ,(assalamu a'laikum ,peace be upon you) , (sabah ilkhear , good morning) are more used than others to salute such people .

Conclusion

Salutations have a prominent role in smoothing relations in the society. In Jordan, they are very important and such importance is embodied in the many expressions and forms that are used for greeting. These greetings are of different types and they are formed in various ways. It is hoped that this simple paper will shed light on this sociolinguistic phenomenon and it is hoped that it will open the door for other similar studies.

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