

Vague Language and Its Social Role

Mubarak Alkhatnai

Department of English Language and Translation, College of Languages and Translation, King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Abstract—Vague language in other words denotes phrases and words that are neither exact nor precise. People often use these phrases in cases where they are not sure about something, to save time during a conversation, and to speak informally but in a manner that is friendly. The use of language shapes peoples' understanding of their social world (Adjoa, 2007). The use of vague language varies per culture and it is paramount for the speaker to attempt to learn language in the new culture he or she is in as that would help them know how native speakers of that language use vague expressions. Additionally, it would be prudent for a user of vague language to appreciate the new culture in which they live as that would help them understand the vague expression etiquette of that particular culture. Additionally, it is becoming evident that reporters and scholars have started adopting the use of vague language in order to drive their messages home, and this approach has been received positively.

Index Terms—vague, phrases, social role, vague quantifiers, gender, culture

I. INTRODUCTION: DEFINITION OF VAGUE LANGUAGE

Vague language exists in almost every culture and it denotes vague items, for example, conversational *implicature*, clause final ellipsis, vague clauses, general extenders, general verbs, and general nouns, as well as vague modifiers such as, epistemic vague stance markers and vague quantifiers (Biber, 1995). Vague language in other words denotes phrases and words that are neither exact nor precise (Biber, 1995). People often use these phrases in cases where they are not sure about something, to save time during a conversation, and to speak informally but in a manner that is friendly. This paper explores vague language and its social role and how people can learn vague language in different contexts and cultures.

Scholars have realized the importance and prevalence of vague language in spoken discourse and learning and teaching materials need to explicitly include in vague language. Secondly, they gave highlighted the role of discourse intonation in aiding both speakers and hearers in situation-specific contexts of vague language use and hence the need to place greater emphasis on discourse intonation on learning and teaching materials. The learning and teaching of discourse is yet to find its way in mainstream English language and teaching materials, but where it has been utilized, examples drawn from real instance of language use can serve as models for learners to discuss and replicate.

II. SOCIAL ROLE OF VAGUE LANGUAGE

In the normal face-to-face conversations, especially in the intercultural communication, it is essential to maintain good relations with between the speaker and the hearer. According to O'Keeffe, McCarthy, and Carter (2007), relational language serves a creator of good relationship between the speaker and his or her audience (hearer). According to them, vague language is an example of relational language and can be found in daily conversations as speakers tend to avoid the notion of sounding over definite, which might sound as over-educated and threatening. In that case, vague language can act as a socially cohesive function as per Cutting (2007). In addition, O'Keeffe et al. (2007) further note that another central function of vague language is to make assertion fuzzy or hedge them by allowing speakers down tone what they are communicating. In this way, it is seen as an expression softener so that the speaker does not appear as being too direct or unduly assertive or authoritative. The use of vague language by the speaker, as Cater and McCarthy (2006) portend, is a conscious decision and for that matter, it is not a sloppy expression or a product of careless thinking.

Numerous studies have been conducted to elucidate the role and use of vague language in different social contexts (Carter, Hughes & McCarthy, 2011). Such studies helped identify various vague expressions, as well as explain how they are employed in different settings. For example, Koester (2007) studied conversations across different office environments and their study showed that the use of vague language is a common phenomenon in different work environments in work-related interactions across different cultures. Similarly, Adolphs, Atkins, and Harvey (2007) assessed the Nottingham Health Communication Corpus (NHCC) and they noted that there is a significant use of vagueness in health communication contexts and it plays a crucial role in the negotiation of advice and therefore, affirming the choice that the patient makes.

In a different study, Parvaresh and Dabghi (2013) studied the use of vague language across different languages. In their comparative study, these researchers reported on the degree to which transfer is taken from Persian to English as a Foreign Language (EFL) discourse. In the same spirit, Lin (2012; 2013) investigated the similarities and differences in

vague expressions that are employed in authentic discourse and EFL text books. In authentic discourse, Lin (2012) found that vague expressions are used as a persuasive tool but it is not present in EFL learning materials. From their his study, Lin (2012) noted that the sue of vague expression in EFL would be of great benefit as it would enrich the description of the target language, but also increases the novice's awareness of the patterns of use in an authentic communication text.

Similarly, Lin (2013) portends that vague language has been included in major English grammar books as an essential interpersonal and grammatical feature of spoken language, and for that matter, Bieber et al. (1999) highlight that vague language in such context conveys imprecision that hedges and that in generic reference the noun denotes a whole class, rather than to an individual. In their interpretation, Cater and McCarthy (2006) argue that vague expressions are words or expression that deliberately refer to people or things, in a non-specific, imprecise way. For example, around six, anything, stuff, and like among others. Channel (1994), on the other hand, indicates that vague language can be seen as a language that can be contrasted with another word to give the same proposition that is purposeful and unabashedly vague. This authors' analysis of vague language indicates that the meanings of vague expressions are themselves vague and in that case, speakers share knowledge to understand them. This definition that inclines towards assumed or sheared knowledge is also supported by O'Keeffe et al. (2007). These authors point to the notion that vague language is a market of inter-subjectivity. In that case, the interlocutors are not expected to convey precise and concrete information simply because they are accustomed to relying on a common ground of knowledge, as well as belief shared with others. Any social group sharing interest and knowledge, according to Channel (1994) and Carter (1998), employs non-specificity in talking about their shared interests.

On the contrary, even though discourse communities use language to cement in-group membership and show solidarity, critical discourse analysis has revealed this phenomenon can also act as social divider (Koester, 2010; 2013). In fact, Wodak (1996) holds that there can be the emergence of confusion if there are gaps between distinct and insufficiently coincident cognitive worlds because, as he notes, these are separate insiders from outsiders, members of institutions from clients of those of institutions, and elites from the normal citizens uninitiated in the arcana of bureaucratic language and life. This notwithstanding, vague language, as Wodak (1996) further notes, vague language is pervasive in everyday talk serving interpersonal and pragmatic functions in discourse. Carter (1998) perceives it as a social leveler. In other words, it puts the speakers on an immediately causal and equal footing with their interlocutors. From these findings, it is evident that the use of vague language is a common phenomenon in any given society or cultural setting.

III. VAGUE LANGUAGE AND GENDER

In the same spirit, Adjoa (2007) opines that in the past two decades, there has been a re-awakening in the manner in which gender influences different aspects of language. The author denotes that various studies have been done to evaluate the differences in language use on the basis of gender. One such study showed that women lead in language shift. Another study found out that women produce linguistic forms closer to standard language, and they tend to use forms of higher prestige than men. Additionally, it was found out that men's and women's languages plat a crucial role in the formation of their identities, and again, is used to maintain the relations of power. When the concept of vague language is thrown into the debate, there is a clear indication that it has gender-specific connotations (Adjoa, 2007).

Many feminists have managed to show that through research that language, which is understood as discourse, acts as a powerful tool of patriarchal culture (Adjoa, 2007). It has been shown that language helps nor only enact, but also transmit every type of inequality, and this includes that between sexes. The use of language shapes peoples' understanding of their social world (Adjoa, 2007). Perhaps, most importantly in relation to the topic under study, vague language shapes how people interact between and within genders and cultures, and social identities.

IV. LEARNING VAGUE LANGUAGE IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS/CULTURES

While bringing into focus how vague language can be learned in different cultures and contexts, Chinese Sabet and Zhang (2013) note that questions such as how often is often, how many is many, have been the concern of the study of vague language. As an integral part of the language, vague language influences how people interact and in their study, noted that Chinese Sabet and Zhang (2013) Chinese are the most frequent users of vague language. The usability of a vague expression in multiple positions is found to contribute to its functionality, which results in the large frequency of vague expressions. The most intriguing finding by Chinese, Sabet and Zhang (2013) is that the elastic feature of vague language allows speakers to stretch it to satisfy their communicative needs. The most versatile vague categories are *subjectivizers* as they tend to meet the diverse communication needs of different groups. Elasticity allows vague words to stretch and provide the speaker with opportunities to make strategic use of these expressions to enrich communication (Anderson, 2000). For example, vague language can mitigate, show politeness or solidarity, or maintain face and this is how its use can help foreigners settle down in new cultural environments.

Not only is vague language convenient for successful communication, but it can also facilitate management of an interaction. There is an interconnection between the linguistic realizations of vague items and the particular functions they serve. This is not a one-on-one correspondence but a continuum of particular functions in relation to linguistic

realization of vague items. It is also revealed that the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of people can influence their use of vague language. This, for example, can occur as *taarof*, formal courtesy, in Persian and indirectness in Chinese (Sabet & Zhang, 2013). Learners of new languages can be taught to take advantage of the elasticity of vague language in the process of communication. For instance, by instruction in the ways vague language can be used to compensate for inadequacies in their communicative competence.

Additionally, Kinginger (2013) gives the example where Spaniards are frequent users of general extenders (GEs). GEs are routinized chunks of language frequently utilized by from shared pragmatic functions interactions among users with different levels of shared sociocultural experience. In Spanish, GEs normally result from the combination of a conjunction and a noun, adverb or pronoun. For that matter, GEs in Spanish can either be adjunctive or disjunctive. In the adjunctive form, the GEs are affirmative or negative. On the other hand, negative GEs cancel any other further possible possibilities. Learning the use of these GEs can help a non-Spanish speaker settle down easily in a Spanish community by using the elasticity of vague expressions to cover for their incompetency in the Spanish language.

V. VARIATIONS IN THE MEANINGS OF VAGUE EXPRESSIONS ACROSS DIFFERENT CULTURES

Moreover, Trosborg (2010) portends that the way in which we talk and silence is used can reflect cultural values in communication and thus carry pragmatic meaning. Members of a speech community share community-specific norms on the appropriate use of silence, just as they do on speech acts on other features, and the intended meaning of silence and norms relating to the length of pauses in interaction varies across cultures. The use of silence, can therefore, be misinterpreted by native speakers, much as the inappropriate use of any other feature. Research suggest that Anglo cultures value talk over silence compared to many other cultures, and so in English a longer than normal silence can be interpreted as rejection, resistance or criticism, and is often as a preface to bad news or unwelcome turn of some kind (Winter & Norrby, 2000). Thus if Japanese, for instance, transfer into English a tendency to pause before turns, this may be misinterpreted by native English speakers as a preface for dispreferred response, that is to something that interlocutors might find disagreeable. In Aboriginal cultures in the USA and Australia, longer pauses may be tolerated between turns, and silence is not seen negatively as a sign of communication breakdown in interaction as it is their respective English-speaking mainstream cultures (Reppen, 2010).

For that matter, learners must be aware of pragmalinguistic variations cross cultures and understand that what is feasible or expected in another language, it is more even crucial that they understand why such choices are made, that is, that they understand the sociopragmatic issues underlying the linguistic, paralinguistic and strategy choices that are routinely made by speakers of a language in another culture (Stenstrom, Anderson & Hasund, 2002). While studying the application of these aspects with respect to vague language, it is clear that little has been done. On the same front, in order to learn vague language in different contexts and cultures these aspects must be taken into consideration.

Furthermore, Leap and Boellstorff (2004) hold that vagueness tends to have a double presence in syntax and this feature is linked to the undesirability, as well as a function of various grammatical categories that tends to overlap between them. Recursion is a crucial aspect of both language and productivity. It plays an important role in the generation of infinite sentences that emanate from a defined set of symbols and that makes language even more interesting. In that case, discrete infinitude gives the boundary that differentiates human from animal language. Similarly, also vagueness holds in syntax because of grammatical categories that offer borderline cases. In that case, Leap and Boellstorff (2004) suggest that it is essential for those using vague language to appreciate the different factors that affect it first if they have to use it effectively. Culture, as he notes, plays a crucial role. The use of vague language varies per culture and it is paramount for the speaker to attempt to learn language in the new culture he or she is in as that would help them know how native speakers of that language use vague expressions (Tagliamonte & Denis, 2010).

Additionally, it would be prudent for a user of vague language to appreciate the new culture in which they live as that would help them understand the vague expression etiquette of that particular culture (Rayson, 2008). Cutting (2015) holds that vague language is a key characteristic of global English, and it has been found to vary on the account of the variety of English, as well as the first background of the speaker. As much English is the most popular language in the world, it has been found to have slight variations when compared to the native English speaking societies for example, American English, Canadian English, British English, Australian English, New Zealand English, Western Africa English, South African English, East African English, Spanish English, French English, and Italian English among others. The use of vague expressions is common among these English speaking societies and there is no doubt that vagueness is an English dominated feature (Tono, 2011).

VI. VAGUE LANGUAGE IN ARABIC

There have been minimal studies that have studied the use of vague expressions in the Arabic language. Very little language has been done on vagueness in Arabic language, but a snippet preview of this feature can be realized when look at one example, the Moroccan Arabic language (MAL). The MLA is marked with both elements *ma* and *-fi*. According to the contexts, these elements can be split in a discontinuous form or merged into a continuous form (Reen, 2012). For example, in direct assertions, the discontinuous form surrounds a verbal predicate or a quasi-verbal predicate, while the continuous form precedes a nonverbal predicate. In MAL, *ma* element is required in all contexts,

while the second element *-fi* can or must fall in various contexts. By looking at the negation cycle in the Arabic language, we can gain insights in the use of vague expression in Arabic. Negation is a common feature of research in the grammaticalization framework. Further, this term was pioneered in the early 1990s to explain the evolution of sentential negation, and it has been shown that negation evolves by cycles (Reen, 2012).

The renewal process of negation in Arabic and French are rather close (Reen, 2012). French sentential negation stems from the preverbal Latin negation *non: Egeo, si non est* ("If I miss something, I pass"). The Latin non-phonetically reduced and unstressed, evolved in old French into *ne* and joined nouns meaning the smallest possible quantity in a given of experience, such as *pas* 'sep', *mier* 'crumb', *goutee* 'drop', and *point* 'stitch'. These nouns are selected according to semantic class of the verb and according to the denoted event *-pas* 'step' in the context of negated verbs motion, *goutte* drop', which negated the verbs for 'to drink' and so on, emptied gradually of lexical meaning, and fixed a grammatical one by contamination with *ne*. The possibilities reduced one by one in favor of *point* in formal register and *pas* in the informal register. Currently, colloquial register, *pas* can be used alone, without the preverbal *ne*, in a third stage of the negative cycle. The MAL negator *ma* derives from classical Arabic (CA), which marks sentential negation with a single unit: *la*, *lam*, *lan*, and *ma* and the negative copula *laysa*. As for the element *-fi*, it derives from likely CA *fay an* a thing, that is the undefined noun *fay* marked with accusative. The use of vague expression in the Arabic language is poorly understood unless *if* compared with other languages as the depicted above and mostly it occurs in the form of sentential negations (Reen, 2012).

VII. USE OF VAGUE LANGUAGE IN OFFICIAL CONTEXT

Having said that, with diverse developments in science and technology, Pan (2012) portends that people are always on the lookout for the latest information around them in this sphere. The best where in which we do attain this goal is by looking at news items because they are often put in the simplest forms for us to understand. In that case, the language that is used in the news is expected to be not only formal, but also concise, if they have to convey the news as expected. However, it has been shown that some languages lack a clear meaning but still make the audience understand the news better. Pan (2012) gives the examples of words such nearly, many, at least, properly, more, and about among others. In that case, Channel (1994) holds that vague expressions are not only persuasive, but also casual. According to him, vague language has dominated our lives because it is used almost on a daily basis and that there is no language that lacks vague expressions. Additionally, it is becoming evident that reporters and scholars have started adopting the use of vague language in order to drive their messages home, and this approach has been received positively.

However, in other areas, the use of vagueness is not welcomed completely as it is seen to be contradicting with the set principles. Pan (2012) gives the example of Grice's cooperative principle. For example, some argue that it violates the Maxim quality. Experts agree that everything seems to be in a changing condition, and this may contribute to not only inaccurate and incomplete, but also inadequate information. In that case, reporters lack the right words to precisely describe the events and for that matter, they resort to using vague language. As a consequence, experts warn that reporters are likely to violate the maxim quality in a bid to rid themselves of the responsibility of provide accurate information. For instance, because of insufficient information, misunderstanding, or something they do not believe in, some may say something. An analysis of the Grice's cooperative principle, there is a clear indication of how vague language is used in newspapers, for one thing, its use in this area often violates the relevance of maxim (the quantity and quality) due to various special occasions. As a result of the use of vague expressions in the news, readers are left with so many things to ponder about.

VIII. VAGUE LANGUAGE AND DISCOURSE

In this paper, the additional role of intonation in adding situation-specific meaning to vague language has been examined. It has been shown that the speaker's choice of intonation can serve to disambiguate the use of vague language or add additional layers of meanings on vague items based on speaker's perceptions of the context including the perceived shared knowledge between participants. While discourse intonation choices are situation specific, and are neither predetermined nor guaranteed, it has been shown that patterns of discourse intonation, can be described, and thus to some extent predicted in the context of vague language use.

Researchers have realized the importance and prevalence of vague language in spoken discourse and learning and teaching materials need to explicitly include in vague language. Secondly, they gave highlighted the role of discourse intonation in aiding both speakers and hearers in situation-specific contexts of vague language use and hence the need to place greater emphasis on discourse intonation on learning and teaching materials. The learning and teaching of discourse is yet to find its way in mainstream English language and teaching materials, but where it has been utilized, examples drawn from real instance of language use can serve as models for learners to discuss and replicate.

IX. SUMMARY

In summary, this paper has outlined the following:

- Vague language exists in almost every culture and it denotes vague items, for example, conversational implicature, clause final ellipsis, vague clauses, general extenders, general verbs, and general nouns, as well as vague modifiers such as, epistemic vague stance markers and vague quantifiers.

- Vague language denotes phrases and words that are neither exact nor precise.
- People often use these phrases in cases where they are not sure about something, to save time during a conversation, and to speak informally but in a manner that is friendly.
- Vague language is pervasive in everyday talk serving interpersonal and pragmatic functions in discourse.
- It as a social leveler. In other words, it puts the speakers on an immediately causal and equal footing with their interlocutors.

- The use of vague language is a common phenomenon in any given society or cultural setting.

Vague expressions have different social roles:

- It is essential to maintain good relations with between the speaker and the hearer.
- Relational language serves a creator of good relationship between the speaker and his or her audience (hearer). Vague language is an example of relational language and can be found in daily conversations as speakers tend to avoid the notion of sounding over definite, which might sound as over-educated and threatening.

- Vague language can act as a socially cohesive function as per Cutting et al. (2007).
- It makes assertion fuzzy or hedge them by allowing speakers down tone what they are communicating.
- It is seen as an expression softener so that the speaker does not appear as being too direct or unduly assertive or authoritative.

- The use of vague language by the speaker, is a conscious decision and for that matter, it is not a sloppy expression or a product of careless thinking.

Vagueness occurs in almost every society and there are different ways in which a newbie in a new culture can learn vague language in their new localities. Firstly, it is paramount for the new individual to learn the language of the new location. Secondly, it is essential to learn the culture of the new location because different cultures have different approaches to events and by learning how people in those cultures behave, a person gain a few insights on how to use vagueness in such a location. That would prove to be very helpful because some vague expressions are seen as a lack of respect or rudeness or impoliteness.

Lastly, very little has been done on vagueness in Arabic language, but a snippet preview of this feature. The use of vague expression in the Arabic language is poorly understood unless if compared with other languages as the depicted above and mostly it occurs in the form of sentential negations. Additionally, it is becoming evident that reporters and scholars have started adopting the use of vague language in order to drive their messages home, and this approach has been received positively. However, in other areas, the use of vagueness is not welcomed completely as it is seen to be contradicting with the set principles. Learners of new languages can be taught to take advantage of the elasticity of vague language in the process of communication. For instance, by instruction in the ways vague language can be used to compensate for inadequacies in their communicative competence.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author expresses his genuine appreciation to the Deanship of Scientific Research at King Saud University, and the Research Center at the College of Languages & Translation for their candid support.

REFERENCES

- [1] Adjoa, A. (2007). Gender Aspects Of Vague Language Use: Formal And Informal Contexts. Retrieved (01/12/2016) from <http://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/527/dissertation.pdf?sequence=1>.
- [2] Adolphs, S., Atkins, S., & Harvey, K. (2007). Caught between professional requirements and interpersonal needs: vague language in health care contexts. In J. Cutting (Ed.), *Vague language explored* (pp. 62-78). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- [3] Anderson, G. (2000). Pragmatic markers and sociolinguistic variation. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- [4] Andersson, L., & Trudgill, P. (1990). *Bad Language*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- [5] Biber, D. (1995). Dimensions of register variation: a cross. linguistic comparison. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [6] Biber, D., Johansson, S., Leech, G., Conrad, S., & Finegan, E. (1999). *Longman grammar of spoken and written English*. Harlow, England: Longman.
- [7] Carter, R. (1998). Orders of reality: CANCODE, communication and culture. *ELT Journal*, 52, 43-56.
- [8] Carter, R., & McCarthy, M. (2006). *Cambridge grammar of English: A comprehensive guide*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [9] Carter, R., Hughes, R., & McCarthy, M. (2011). Telling tales: grammar, the spoken language and materials development. In B. Tomlinson (Ed.), *Materials development in language teaching* (2nded.) (pp.78-100). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [10] Channell, J. (1994). *Vague language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [11] Cutting, J. (2015). *Dingsbums und so: beliefs about German vague language*. Edinburg: The University of Edinburg Press.
- [12] Cutting, J. (2007). *Vague Language Explored*. Berlin: Springer.

- [13] Kinginger, P. (2013). *Social and Cultural Aspects of Language Learning in Study Abroad*. New York: John Benjamins Publishing.
- [14] Koester, A. (2007). "About twelve thousand or so": Vagueness in north American and UK offices. In J. Cutting (Ed.), *vague language explored* (pp. 40-61). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- [15] Koester, A. (2010). Building small specialized corpora. In M. McCarthy & A. O'Keeffe (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of corpus linguistics* (pp. 66-79). London: Routledge.
- [16] Leap, W., and Boellstorff, T. (2004). *Speaking in Queer Tongues: Globalization and Gay Language*. Chicago: University of Illinois.
- [17] Lin, L. (2013). Vague Language and Interpersonal Communication: An Analysis of Adolescent Intercultural Conversation. *International Journal of Society, Language and Culture*, 1(2), pp. 68-80.
- [18] Lin, Y. L. (2012). Mind the Gap! Textbook Conversation vs. Authentic Intercultural Interaction. In Y. Leung, K. Cheung, W. Dai, C. Hsiao, & J. Katchen (Eds.), *Selected Papers from the 21st International Symposium on English Teaching* (pp. 42-54). Taipei: Crane Publishing.
- [19] O'Keeffe, A., McCarthy, M., & Carter, R. (2007). *From corpus to classroom: Language use and language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- [20] Pan, W. (2012). An Analysis of Vagueness in English News from Grice's Cooperative Principles. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 2(12), pp. 2530-2534.
- [21] Parvaresh, V., & Dabghi, A. (2013). Language and the socio-cultural worlds of those who use it: A case of vague expressions. *Iranian Journal of Society, Culture & Language*, 1(1), 73-88.
- [22] Reem, B. (2012). *Arabic Language and Linguistics*. Georgetown: Georgetown University Press.
- [23] Rayson, P. (2008). From key words to key semantic domains. *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics*, 13(4), 519-549.
- [24] Reppen, R. (2010). *Using corpora in the language classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [25] Sabet, P. and Zhang, G. (2016). *Communicating through Vague Language: A Comparative Study of L1 and L2 Speakers*. Berlin: Springer.
- [26] Stenström, A., Anderson, G., & Hasund, I. (2002). *Trends in teenage talk: Corpus compilation, analysis, and findings*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- [27] Tagliamonte, S. & Denis, D. (2010). The 'stuff' of change: general extenders in Toronto, Canada. *Journal of English Linguistics*, 38, 335-368.
- [28] Tono, Y. (2011). TaLC in action: Recent innovations in corpus-based English 80 Vague Language and Interpersonal Communication: An Analysis of Adolescent /Intercultural Conversation language teaching in Japan. In A. Frankenberg-Garcia, L. Flowerdew, & G. Aston (Eds.), *New trends in corpora and language learning* (pp. 3-25). London and New York: Continuum.
- [29] Trosborg, A. (2010). *Pragmatics across Languages and Cultures*. New York: Walter de Gruyter.
- [30] Winter, J., & Norrby, C. (2000). Set marking tags "and stuff". In J. Henderson (Ed.), *Proceedings of the 1999 Conference of the Australian Linguistic Society* (pp. 1-8).
- [31] Wodak, R. (1996). *Disorders of discourse*. London: Longman.

Mubarak Alkhatnai is an assistant professor of applied linguistics and TESOL. He was taught in the USA, UK and Canada. His research interests span between applied linguistics, TESOL, and Translation. He is currently the Vice Dean of the College of Languages and Translation for Development and Quality.