Procedural Encoding Strategies of the Discourse Marker بَس (bas) in Syriac Interactional Discourse: A Relevance Theoretical Study

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Keywords:	Abstract
- Syriac discourse - Relevance Theory -Cognitive effects -Procedural encoding functions **Article Info** **Article history:** **Received: 1-7-2021**	This study is an attempt to investigate the procedural encoding strategies of the discourse markerبَس (bas)(but), selected from one of the Syriac plays performed in the dialect of the Qaraqoush community. This discourse marker in this study, having interrelated procedural functions according to the context used, is assumed to be a discourse procedure that guides the hearer to the intended conceptualization of the discourse. The procedural functions of the selected discourse marker limit or constrain the context relevance of both speaker and hearer's assumptions. The constraining is taken place by deriving one of the kinds of contextual or (cognitive effects); contextual implication, strengthening, and contradiction, or by reorienting the hearer to a path in the given context that leads to these effects. In this respect, the study aims to prove that procedural encoding is necessary for the conceptual encoding of the utterance context to achieve the intended meaning of the speaker. The data examples selected from the Syriac play are

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	analyzed within the domain of Relevance Theory. The selected data are transliterated, translated, and analyzed concerning the procedural functions of the involved discourse marker. Due to the outcome of data analysis, some findings are raised. The most striking finding presented here is that the procedural role of the discourse marker بَس (bas)(but) in Syriac discourse is very significant; in that, it guides or directs the speaker to interpret the intended meaning. In the light of the findings, the study presents some suggestions to researchers who are interested in such a field of research.

إستراتيجيات الترميز الاجرائي لاداة الخطاب بس(لكن) في الخطاب السرياني التفاعلي: دراسة مرتكزة على نظرية الترابطية

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الخلاصــــة: هذه الدراســـة محاولـــة لاســتقصـــاء اســتراتيجيات الترميز الإجرائي لأداة الخطاب "بس" (لكن) ، المختارة من إحدى المســرحيات الســــريانية التي تم أداؤها بلهجة مجتمع قره قوش. يُفترض أن تكون علامة الخطاب في هذه الدراسة ، التي لها وظائف إجرائية مترابطة وفقًا للسياق المستخدم ، أداة خطاب يوجه المســتمع إلى التصــور المقصـود للخطاب. تعمل الوظائف الإجرائية لعلامة الخطاب المختارة على تقييد ملاءمة ســياق افتراضــات كل من المتحدث والمستمع. يتم التقييد عن طريق اشــــتقاق أحد أنواع الســـياق أو (التأثيرات المعرفية) والتي هي التضــمين الســياقي ، التعزيز ، والتناقض ، أو عن طريق إعادة توجيه المســتمع إلى طريق او مســار في ســياق معين يؤدي إلى هذه التأثيرات الدراكية السياقية . في هذا الصدد ، تهدف الدراسة إلى إثبات أن الترميز الإجرائي ضــروري للترميز المفاهيمي او الدلالي لســياق الكلام لتحقيق المعنى المقصــود للمتحدث. في هذه الدراســة يتم تحليل أمثلة البيانات المختارة من المســرحية الســـريانية ضـــمن مجال نظرية الترابطية ، ويتم

ترجمة البيانات المختارة وتحليلها طبقا يتعلق بالوظائف الإجرائية لعلامة الخطاب المعني. بســـبب نتيجة تحليل البيانات ، تم طرح عدد من النتائج. النتيجة الأكثر لفتًا للنظر المعروضـــة هنا هي أن الدور الإجرائي لمؤشر الخطاب بَس (باس) (لكن) في الخطاب السرياني مهم جدًا ؛ في ذلك ، فإنه يوجه أو يوجه المتحدث لتفسير المعنى المقصود. في ضـوء النتائج ، تقدم الدراسـة عددًا من الاقتراحات للباحثين المهتمين بمثل هذا المجال البحثي .	التوفر على النت

1.1   Introduction

This study is an attempt to investigate the procedural encoding strategies of the discourse markerبَس (bas)(but) used in Syriac interactional discourse: specifically, the dialect of Qaraqoush, which is one variation of Syriac dialects. The data is a selected play performed at the theatre of Qaraqoush in 2018. Different approaches are used by different scholars to analyze discourse markers, one of them is Relevance Theory by Sperber and Wilson (١٩٨٦) . Relevance theory explains how the speaker and hearer comprehend each other, and how the hearer infers the intended meaning of the speaker. The speaker uses discourse markers to constrain the relevance of the utterance context and make the hearer derive the contextual effects (cognitive effects), that help him/her in the interpretation of utterances.

These necessary cognitive effects are of three kinds: creating a contextual implication when new information is given to the hearer, or strengthening an existing assumption when a piece of evidence is given to strengthen a previous assumption, and finally, denying or weakening an old assumption (i.e. contradiction). As a result, discourse markers work as inferential paths for the hearer to achieve the intended meaning of the speaker.

In the light of relevance theory, the present study aims to prove that the use of discourse marker بَس(bas)(but) in Syriac utterances with their interrelated procedural function makes the interpretation of utterances easy, because its constrain the relevance of the utterance context, and makes an effective communication between speaker and hearer through achieving the earlier mentioned cognitive effects.

1.2 The Problem of the Study

In this study, the major problem is how to deal with discourse marker بَس(bas)(but) from a cognitive relevance perspective in Syriac discourse. Further, discourse marker بَس(bas)(but) in Syriac as a procedural expression with reference to its various procedural functions can be an insightful challenge for the study. The minor problem is that nobody has investigated the procedural role of such discourse marker in Syriac discourse: thus the study is an attempt to fill this gap.

1.3 The Hypothesis of the Study

The study hypothesizes that the discourse marker (bas)(but) بَس is a marker that has procedural functions that help to guide or instruct the interlocutors to derive different cognitive effects. It is also hypothesized that relevance theory is a more reasonable model or approach that can account for such a marker and prove that it is procedural in nature.

1.4 The Aims of the Study

The study is an attempt to investigate the following aims

1. To investigate the procedural role of discourse marker بَس (bas)(but) in the interpretation of utterances.

2.To explain the multifunctionality of discourse marker بَس (bas)(but) in Syriac discourse with respect to their procedural functions

3. To present a proof of the reliability of the relevance theory

1.5 Methodology

A qualitative method is used in this study to describe the nature of the discourse marker in Syriac. So, this research is a qualitative one, since it answers the question of why and how a discourse marker is used procedurally by native speakers of Syriac.

1.6 Scope of the study

In this study, the discourse marker بَس(bas)(but) taken from a selected modern play performed in Syriac language, especially the dialect of Qaraqoush, is analyzed, with special reference to the procedural functions of it. Thus the study is limited to one play, and dialect of Qaraqoush only.

1.7 Value of the Study

This study will be significant because it gives attention to discourse marker بَس(bas)(but) in Syriac language that hasn't been investigated before.

Also, the study would be valuable for the literature on discourse markers and for the literature of relevance theory that will be used in the analysis of other markers., the study is hoped to arouse interest in other researchers to study Discourse markers and their procedural meanings in their languages.

1.8 Definitions of Discourse Markers

First, Discourse analysis is a significant area in the field of linguistics, that has been received great attention, since the previous century. It is defined according to Stubbs (1983, p.1) as an attempt to study the organization of language above the sentence, or above the clause. In other words, it is the study of units that are larger than a sentence such as conversation exchanges and written texts. In addition, discourse analysis is also concerned with language in use in social contexts, especially with the interaction and communication or dialogue between speakers (ibid).

Discourse markers are a branch of discourse analysis. They are defined differently by different scholars. For instance, Schiffrin (1987, p.31) defined discourse markers as " sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk". Concerning this definition, two important aspects of discourse markers are introduced; the first aspect refers that

discourse markers are items that work at the level of discourse and they are dependent on the sequence of discourse. Schiffrin claims that this sequential dependence can be seen where discourse markers join two units that don't belong to the same syntactic category.

According to Fraser (1999, p.31), Discourse markers are defined as "a class of lexical expressions drawn primarily from the syntactic classes of conjunctions, adverbs, and prepositional phrases which signal a relationship between the interpretations of the segment they produce".

According to Richards and Schmidt (2002, p.162) in Faghih and Mousaee (2015), Discourse markers are defined as expressions that typically connect two segments without contributing to the meaning of these segments. These expressions include adverbials as *still*, conjunctions as *but*, and prepositional phrases as *in fact*.

According to Siepmann (2005, p.138), discourse markers are defined from a coherence approach, he stated that " Discourse markers are natural strings of varying length and morpho-syntactic structure whose primary function is to signal a coherence – relations obtaining between a particular unit of discourse and other surrounding units of the common situation and thereby to facilitate the listeners' or readers' processing task "

This study defines discourse markers as expressions that are empty of propositional content. These expressions belong to different categories and their function is to guide the hearer to a path to interpret the intended meaning of the speaker.

1.9 Approaches to Discourse Markers.

Different approaches are used to study discourse markers such as the coherence approach, grammatic-pragmatic approach and relevance theory. The coherence approach explains how discourse markers help both speakers and hearers to construct relations in discourse. One of the prominent studies using this approach is that of Shiffrin (1987). Shiffrin studies eleven discourse markers which ***are, well, Oh, and, but, or, so, because, now, then, I mean, y'know***. She analyses the use of these expressions in conversation by proposing a model of coherence in talk. Shiffrin (1987) distinguishes five planes of talk, namely: exchange structure (turn-taking), action structure (speech acts), ideational structure (semantic units: propositions or ideas), participation framework (social relations between speaker and hearer (e.g., teacher-student), also influenced by the relations of speaker and hearer to talk and ideas, presented in the talk), information state (cognitive capacities of speaker and hearer – organization and management of knowledge and meta-knowledge).

Shiffrin (1987, p.20) suggests that discourse markers select and then display structural different planes of talk, rather than creating such relations. This conclusion is seen as an indication that there may be a broader difference between markers that function primarily on ideational planes and all other markers. Finally, Schiffrin(1987) proposed other

expressions that might be analyzed as discourse markers in some of their uses as *(see, look, listen, there, here, why, gosh, say, boy, anyhow, anyway, whatever).*

The second approach is the grammatic-pragmatic approach. Fraser (1988, 1990, 1996, and 1999) studies the discourse markers from the perspective of this approach. He aims to classify the general characteristics of discourse markers and shows how they constitute a class in every language linguistic system and the function that they convey is to show the communicative intention of the speaker. Fraser (1988) studies discourse markers within a framework of sentence meaning. He (ibid, p.27) defines discourse markers as: " lexical expressions which are syntactically independent of the basic sentence, and which have a general core meaning which signals the relationship of the current utterance to the prior discourse "(1988:27).

The third approach is relevance theory. Relevance theory is developed by Sperber and Wilson (1987) and republished (1995). Relevance theory focuses on the cognitive processes involved in utterance interpretations and the role of discourse markers in limiting this interpretation. Discourse markers' function according to this approach is to constraint utterance interpretations. Many scholars have studied discourse markers adopting this theory such as; Jucker (1993), Matusi(2002), and Hussein (2009).

Jucker (1993) adopted the relevance theory approach to discuss and analyze the discourse marker "well". He (ibid) found distinct uses for the discourse marker"well", and all are related to one core meaning. According to him, "well" can be used as a face-threat mitigator, marker of insufficiency, frame marking device, and a delay device. He found that relevance theory is a reasonable approach to account for functions and uses of discourse markers in all different discourse interactions (ibid).

Matusi (2002) studied the discourse marker "dakara" as a Japanese discourse marker, and she analyzed both the semantic and pragmatic status of it. She (ibid) claimed that the fundamental function of dakara is to mark the utterance that follows it as an interpretive representation of another utterance. So, the connective dakara has a procedural function or meaning, because it provides the listener with the instructions to identify the representation of the previous utterance.

Hussein (2009) proposes a study of pragmatics and semantics of discourse markers in Arabic and English using relevance theory. He (ibid) studied discourse markers in two varieties of Arabic; Standard Arabic and Syrian Arabic. Hussein regards discourse markers as items that encode procedural functions by constraining the interpretation of the discourse they occur. . He (ibid) focused on 10 discourse markers, five from Standard and five from Syrian Arabic. Comparing these discourse markers to their English equivalents, he (2009) concludes that discourse markers are used to encode general procedures which encode various meanings.

This study adopts this model to discuss the procedural functions of the discourse marker بَس(bas)(but) in Syriac discourse.

1.10 Relevance Theory

Individuals are presented with different utterances that connect with their thoughts and senses, and they can distinguish those which are beneficial and relevant to them from those which are not. Relevance theory is developed by Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson (1986) in their first edition Relevance: Communication & cognition. This theory is a pragmatic cognitive theory that depends on the principle of relevance. It explains how individuals comprehend each other and how they make the effective communication. According to relevance theory utterances raises expectations that are necessary for participants to interpret the intended meaning (Sperber and Wilson, 19٨٦, p.32)

More specifically, relevance theory plays an important role in the speaker's capacity to construct an utterance that metal represents his / her thoughts (representations), as, in the hearer's ability to form assumptions derived from the speaker's utterance, during inferential interpretation. In this way, it is a theory of mind (thinking about and forming assumptions). Further, mind-reading ability to form metarepresentations is central to the human ability to communicate (Sperber & Wilson, 2002).

Relevance theory has two important principles; the cognitive principle and the communicative principle. These two principles are defined as :

1.10.1 Cognitive Principle

The cognitive principle of relevance theory is defined as " Human cognition tends to be geared to the maximization of relevance'' (Sperber &Wilson 1995, p.260). The cognitive principle of relevance represents that human's cognitive resource tends to process an input that is the most relevant in available inputs. According to the cognitive principle, the new information may interact with the context of existing assumptions to achieve relevance in three ways: Either to create contextual implications, or to strengthen an expressed assumption, or to contradict an existing assumption. The more cognitive effect achieved, the more relevant an input it is.

1.10.2 Communicative Principle

This principle means that every act of ostensive communication communicates a presumption of its optimal relevance (Sperber & Wilson, 1995, p.158). The communicative principle of relevance represents that the ostensive stimulus has optimal relevance with no exceptions. When this principle is satisfied (normally; any time, anybody, addresses, etc.), addressees undertake an interpretive process or interpretive task which aims at selecting the most appropriate interpretation among the range of interpretations that the utterance has in the immediate context.

An input is optimally relevant to an audience or participants when two conditions are fulfilled. If:

(a) it is relevant enough to be worth the hearer's processing effort; and

(b) it is the most relevant one compatible with a communicator's abilities and preferences (Wilson&Sperber, 2002a, P. 256).

1.11 Discussion and Analysis

In this section, the discourse marker بَس (bas)(but)   is going to be analyzed and discussed, with reference to its conceptual and procedural encoding using a model of relevance theory. The data is a play performed in the Syriac language (dialect od Qaraqous). Examples from the data are transliterated, translated, discussed, and analyzed with reference to the different procedural functions that this discourse marker serves in the contexts involved.

بَس(bas)(but)

This discourse marker occurs frequently in Syriac discourse. It occurs mostly in the initial position, and even in the medial position to function differently according to the context that is involved. It doesn't occur in a final position. The functions that this discourse marker encodes are disagreement, topic shift, disapproval, turn-taking, emphasis, grabbing attention. These are discussed in the following sections

Extract 1:(Ap.١, No.19-20)

آ.نطِيرِي خَابِي كُولِيؤن دِدمَطِيَن أخَا ومَحكيَن مِنح .

A :{nTiri khayi kulihi didmaTyan akha wmHakyan miniH}.

{ (Lit): I have waited all my life to reach here, and speak with him }

ب. بَس آلۤوَا لَكِمحَاكِا موَلَخَا . لَمحُكِيلٍا مغِيرِي أنَا .

B: {bas alaaha lakimHakih mwalakhaa' lamHukilih mghirii aana}.

{(Lit) But God doesn't speak to anyone, he spoke only with me}.

In this interactional context, **A** (Mother) meets with **B**(Mousa) in a place that she thought she will meet God to beg him to stop the war in their city. **A** tells B that she has waited a lot to reach such a place and meet God to beg him to stop the war. **B** initiates his turn by the procedural encoding marker بَس, "**bas" (but)** to disagree with A's assumption. Thus, **B** indicates his attitude to A's assumption by using this as a signal of disagreement. **B** says that God speaks to non, and then he adds more information by saying that God spoke only to him. **B** is trying to make manifest his attempt to be optimally relevant by contradicting the assumption that is stated manifestly by A. The token "بَس " in **B**'s answer has guided **A** to follow an inferential path to the interpretation of the conceptual information of B's utterance. This is achieved by contradicting B's assumption to the

assumption of **A** to eliminate it. In such a way, the intended meaning of B is accessed by **A**.

Extract ٢: (Ap.1.No.150-152)

آ. كزَدِة آلِي ,. لِية.ِرا مِندِي خَاةَرا . بَرقُايَاةَرا كِنَا مُحِد.ِرا دَقطَالِا دِايَلِينَن ,وگَاةِرة دَوَا دِدزَدِة آلِي؟ .

A.{kzadit 'iily , lithih mindi khatha, barqo' yatha kina moHidhree daqTaala d'yalinan ,wkathit daha didzadt 'iili?}

{(Lit) Afraid for me? There is nothing new. just the explosions are prepared to kill our sons, and now you come to be afraid for me}.

ب. بَس كأَابِر كأَابِر آيَلِيخُّو دِنَا بشِلطَنُّوةَرا .

B .{ <u>bas</u> kSayir kSayir 'iyalikhu dina bshilTanutha}.

{ (Lit) But, maybe, maybe your sons are in heaven }.

The procedural tokenبَس , **"bas" (but)** in this context encodes a function of shifting a topic. **B** (Mousa) tries to shift a topic to mitigate the suffering of **A** (Mother). **A** is just speaking how the explosions every day are prepared to kill their sons in the city. **A** is very sad for the young sons that are dying in her city. Using the marker "بَس " by **B** to shift the topic constrains the relevance of the context after a manifested assumption stated by **A**. **A** is telling **B** about her and other mothers' suffering during losing their sons in the war. **B** wants to solidarize with **A's** situation, that is why he says to her that maybe her sons are in heaven. The contextual effect that is resulted from the given context is the contextual implication because **B** tries to modify the cognitive environment of **A**. This provides A a way to get access to the propositional content of **B**, hence to the intended meaning of **B** that **B** wants to lessen the suffering of the mother. **B** changes the topic from speaking about the war to speaking about heaven to relieve the pain of the mother.

Extract ٣: (Ap.1,No. 30-32)

آ. آِي ودِخ لَكيَاد.ِانَخ . . . وأؤُّو أَلَوَا كِمشَادِيرِي دِمحَاكِن منَخ .

A:{ ee wdikh lakyaTh'nakh wahuu 'alaaha kimshadirii dimHakin

minakh }.

{(Lit) Yeah, how come that I don't know you if God has sent me to

speak with you}.

ب. أَلَوَّا ؟ وِدِمحَاكِة مِني ؟ بَس أَنَا لَطِلِبلِي دِمحَكيَن مِنبِيَا .أَنَا كبَأَن دِمحَكيَن مَالَوَّا أَلَوَّا وبَس وِدِدشَامِا طِلبُّونَا دكُّولِيِوِا
آمَةَا وِدِدشَامِا طِلبُّونَا دكُّولِيِوِا آمَةَا .

B:{'alaaha ?? wdimHakit mini?? <u>bas</u> aana la Tlibli dimHakyan minbiya , aana kba'an dimHakyan m'alaaha 'alaha w bass , w didsham' Tilbuunih dkulihi 'immaTha w didsham ' Tilbuunih dkulihi 'immaTha....}.

{(Lit) God? and speak me? But I did not ask to speak to a Prophet. I want to speak God only, to hear the requests of all the mothers, to hear the requests of all the mothers}.

The context of this extract contains the procedural markerبَس "**bas**" **(but)** that is used in the middle of the utterance to express **B** (Mother) ' s attitude as disapproval to what has been stated by **A** (Mousa). **A** is relevant to **B**, and is making a manifest assumption that God has sent him to speak with **B**. **B**, in her response to **A**, is astonished first, and then directly becomes angry and refuses the assumption of **A** with a tone of showing emphasis and disapproving in her assumption. The procedural strategy of the discourse marker " بَس " encodes the disapproval function. This strategy activates the contradiction between **A** and **B**'s assumptions. This constrained the interpretation of **B**'s utterance for **A**. As a consequence, **B** provides an inferential path for **A** to interpret the intended meaning of S **B**, that **B** rejects speaking with **A**, all he needs is God only.

Extract ٤ : (Ap.1,No.33-35)

آ : شمُّوا شمُّوا يَا آمَا ,كَان أَوَّة آتلَخ شبُّونَا دبِيشَة دِيوَنِيةَا لَقلَخ حَق دشُّوقَة خِنِا   آمَةَاﺓ دِةبِيشِا دِيوَنيَةﺓ

A. {shmoo' shmoo' ya 'imma, kaan aahat'itlakh shbuuna ditbishat diwaniitha latlakh Haq dshuqat khinih 'immatha diwanyatha}.

{(Lit) Listen ٬ listen, mother, if you have the right to be crazy, you have no right to let the other mothers be crazy}.

ب .بَس أَنَا آمَيَن أَنَا آمَيَن ةِيِلِي لاخَا طِانِةَا حِزقُّوةَا ومَرَرُّوةَا , أَنَا آمَيَن آمَا , آي ,آمَا دِمسُكِرِوِا آيَالَح مِنَح لَسوِآن
مرِخَح (ةَبدَا بالغِنَاا) طوُّوأُو عَزِيزِي طوُّوأُو

B. {bas aana 'immayan aana 'immayan ٬ Thilii lakha T'innta Hizqutha wmararuutha ٬ aana 'immayan 'imma ٬ ee٬ 'imma dimsukirhe 'yalaH minaH lasu'in mrixaH (kbadya bizmara) Tu'oo <a zizi Tu'oo ......)}.

{(Lit) but I am the mother, I am the mother, I came here carrying all the bitterness, yeah, the mother who has lost her sons, (starts singing) sleep dears, sleep....}.

This utterance context contains the discourse marker "بَس **bas** " (but) initially. **A** (Mousa) makes a clear and manifest assumption to **B** to warn her not to behave like a mad

woman. **B (Mother)** takes her turn and holds the floor by using the procedural token بَس**,** "**bas** " to initiate her turn. **B** wants to emphasize that the suffering of losing her sons made her behave this way. However, no contextual effect is achieved but there is a reorientation as a clue that may lead **A** to **B**'s further utterance interpretation. **B** starts singing sadly for her lost sons, and this guides **A** to the interpretation that **B** wants to speak more and more about the terrorism that they are living. **B**'s holding the floor directly guides **A** to the interpretation of her intended meaning.

Extract ٥:(Ap.1, No.91-94)

آ. بَدَم دِبِشِيتُہا كسَوْدِريہُا غدَالِح . . . لَنَشيَة أَوُا كِمخَالِقخُا

A. {badam dbishitu ksahThitughdaliH , lanashyat ahu kimkhalqkhu}.

{(Lit) You must keep worshiping him, don't forget he is the creator }.

ب. لَكَنَشيَن لَا لَا . بَسِ لَخِيلِا بَرنَاشَا بَادِي أراَا دِخ دِخِيلَن بكَبَد وقَوَر . آِيمُّورِي يَا مُّوشِا نبِيَا . مَا وِدلَن دِكِمزَادِيلَن بَادَا أُوقَنَا . . . آِيمُّورِي خَا مِندِي مَا مِندِي ةَاوِا (ةُوأَشَر آِلَا آَلخَارِج) خزِي ... خزِي . .خزِي وفَارِج لِبخَايَا وِاَرَاخَا دأَانِي آِمَاةَرَا.

B . {laknashyan la la . <u>bas</u> lakhele barnasha baThi ar'aa dikh dikhelan bkabad wqahir. iimuri ya mushi nbiya . ma withlan dkmzadilan batha auqana ... iimuri kha mindi , ma mindi tawih. khzi.. khzi..khzi   wfarij   libkhaya wiSrakha d'ani 'immTha}.

{(Lit): I won't forget, no, no, but, nobody has lived on this land with oppression and suffering like us. Tell me what is our sin to live in such suffering. look, look, look at the screaming and crying of mothers(pointing with her hands)}.

This interactional context has more than one discourse marker, but the one that concerns us here is the procedure بَس " **bas** " (but). The procedural function that this token encodes in this context is the emphasis function. **B** (Mother) constrained the relevant context of **A**'s assumption and limited the utterance interpretation for **A** by using this discourse marker. First, **B** is emphasizing **A**'s assumption to strengthen boh assumptions, and then she uses this discourse marker to focus on the most important part of their topic which is the crying and screaming of the mothers of her city. **B** is informing **A** about their suffering, but no contextual effect is achieved in this context since **A** knows their sufferings. However, the **B** reorients **A** to the intended meaning by her extended assumption and repetition of the marker خزِي, **khzi (look)**) three times. **B** uses this marker خزِي to draw **A**'s attention and to look to the mothers who are crying outside for their sons, to strengthen her assumption. In this way, **B** indicates a strategy to **A** to the inferential process of the propositional content and hence to the intended encoded meaning of **B's** utterance; which is **B's** desire to find a solution from God to their circumstances.

1.12 Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the procedural encoding functions of discourse marker بَــس " **bas** " (but) in Syriac language (the dialect of Qaraqoush)   within the general theorization based principally on relevance theory. The study has come up with the following conclusions :

1   .The discourse markerبَس " **bas** " (but) is multifunction in the Syriac language, it serves many functions according to the context in which it occurs. It can be used to function as a disagreement marker, shift topic marker, disapproval, turn-taking and emphasis marker. These functions are procedural that help the participant to lead to the interpretation of the utterance.

2   .Relevance theory proved that the procedural expressions in Syriac guide the hearer to the interpretation of the intended meaning of the speaker by achieving one of the three cognitive effects; contextual implications, strengthening and contradiction, or reorient the hearer to a path to reach these effects to conceptualize the meaning. The discourse marker as بَس " **bas** "optimizes the relevance and reduces the effort needed for interpreting an utterance by maximizing the cognitive effects needed for interpretation.

The study has the following suggestions for future research

1. There are many other Discourse markers in Syriac languages, have not been studied and investigated, need to be discussed and analyzed in the same model.

2. A comparative study can be attempted among Discourse markers in Semitic languages such as Syriac language and Arabic language as Mousali dialect.

In Short, several open issues remain, what is done is just an attempt to research this Semitic language.

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