

Jordanian Wedding Invitation as a Genre: An Analysis of Rhetorical Structure and Linguistic Features

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ABSTRACT

The present study is an attempt to conduct a genre analysis of Jordanian wedding invitations. Drawing on the model of genre analysis proposed by Bhatia (1993), a sample of 200 Jordanian wedding invitation cards has been collected and examined to provide an overview of the main linguistic devices used in the texts and analyze to what extent such devices have a social purpose. The corpus analysis revealed that Wedding invitation cards go beyond announcing the wedding of two people to mirroring and deconstructing the social practices, values and beliefs of the Jordanian society that shape the construction of this genre. I hope that the results of this study will be of help in further raising cultural awareness.

1. INTRODUCTION

A wedding invitation is a letter asking the recipient to attend a wedding ceremony. It is typically written in formal, third-person language and sent out one to two weeks before the finalized wedding date. Like any other invitation, it is the privilege and duty of the host to issue invitations. The communicative purpose of a wedding invitation is to inform people that a wedding party is going to be held in a specific time and place and to call upon them to participate in this occasion by their presence. In Jordanian culture, as in all cultures, the written wedding invitation card is characterized by certain generic textual and linguistic features that distinguish from other types of written genres; it is a traditional text in which socio-cultural, as well as religious conventions play a huge role. Wedding invitation cards belong to a group of genres referred to by Miller (1984) as “homely discourse”, which includes, as Al-Ali (2006, p. 692) argues, announcement texts of everyday life such as birth, weddings, graduations, obituary announcements and the like. A wedding invitation card is a recognizable ‘homely’ discourse that is widely known to people all over the world. That is to say, its content is easily predicable in terms of the mention of the name of a bride and a groom, and the time and place of the wedding ceremony, etc.

In spite of their obvious prevalence and uniqueness, wedding invitation cards have long been understudied homely genres in comparison with other types of genres. This research attempts to unravel some of the mysteries surrounding this popular

widespread communicative event from which individuals can learn the practices and rules of specific social groups in a society. Ventola (1987, p. 6) argues that “learning foreign languages is learning how to behave linguistically in cultures other than one’s own”; thus, this study will be useful for those people who are concerned with becoming familiar with and taking part in the social life of members from Jordanian culture. Moreover, this study serves as a useful resource about Jordanian society in terms of language use in a particular rhetorical context, as well as socio-cultural and religious background. In other words, this study is a window that provides a view into various aspects of Jordanian culture and a guide to the way through which Jordanian people construct and organize their wedding invitation cards and obituary announcements. The present paper seems to be an interesting enterprise, because while there is substantial body of research on the rhetorical structure of wedding invitations (Clynes and Henry, 2005; Al-Ali, 2006; Momani and Al-Refaei, 2010; Sharif and Yarmohammadi, 2013; Sawalmeh, 2014; Sawalmeh, 2015), it is difficult to think of a study in the existing literature devoted to the way that linguistic choices of a varying nature are related to the sociocultural and religious dimensions in wedding invitations. With this in mind, the present study is organized as follows. After providing an overview of the previous research that has explored rhetorical generic moves rhetorical functions and linguistic features in the organization of this genre, I shall discuss the practicalities of how the data collection was conducted, and the model taken to

data analysis. The fourth section will be dedicated to exploring the linguistic realizations of the rhetorical moves that characterize this genre, together with illustrative examples from the corpus. The conclusions obtained from the analysis will bring this study to an end.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The present study draws on Bhatia (1993) genre analysis. The concept of genre has been discussed by several researchers from different fields such as literature, rhetoric, writing, linguistics, and anthropology. One of the most influential definitions of genre has been given by Bhatia (1993). He has proposed a comprehensive definition of genre:

It is a recognizable communicative event characterized by a set of communicative purpose(s) identified and mutually understood by the members of the professional or academic community in which it regularly occurs. Most often it is highly structured and conventionalized with constraints on allowable contributions in terms of their intent, positioning, form and functional value. These constraints, however, are often exploited by the expert members of the discourse community to achieve private intentions within the framework of socially recognized purpose(s) (P.49).

Accordingly, Bhatia (1993) conceives of genre analysis as a means to account for not only the way text is conventionally structured but also for the way it is interpreted, used and exploited in specific contexts to achieve certain goals. In the field of linguistics, genre analysis is used to describe the structure and stylistic features of texts (Coffin, 2001). What is of great significance in genre analysis is the proper identification of the communicative purposes of a text as well as the use of language within institutionalized settings controlled by communicative conventions created by a group of individuals in a defined discourse community (Bonyadi, 2012, p. 87). So, in this study, the analysis of wedding invitation cards will focus on the main linguistic choices associated to the generic moves, and the socio-cultural explanations for the choices of structure and linguistic features.

In the past few years, two studies investigating the discourse of wedding invitation cards have been carried out in Jordan (Al-Ali, 2006, Momani & Al-Refaei, 2010). In a study which explored written wedding invitations, Al-Ali (2006) used a genre and critical discourse analysis to examine religious

affiliations and masculine power in the texts. He found that religious affiliations and masculine power played a crucial role in shaping the overall component moves, and coloured the naming practices and lexical choices in the genre. His analysis of a large dataset of 200 Arabic written wedding invitation cards, for instance, revealed that this genre opened with verses from the Holy Qur'an in the form of formulaic and ritualistic quotations which promote marriage in Islam. Masculinity and patriarchal kinship culture then ran through the ritualized invitation text. For example, the "Heading" move began with stating the names of the couple's tribes, and such social forces kept on dominating the representations of the wedding inviters, the guests, the couple and even the time and the place of the wedding ceremony.

In another study carried out in Jordan, Momani and Al-Refaei (2010), using model of analysis proposed by Holmes (1997) and a modified version of the model outlined by Clynes and Henry, investigated the generic structure of Jordanian wedding invitation cards in order to find out what components Jordanian inviters employ to articulate the communicative purpose of these invitations. They also investigated the effect of socio-cultural aspects on the generic structure of wedding invitation cards through surveying many Jordanian people's opinions using a questionnaire and interviews. The sample of the study consisted of 55 invitation cards from a collection of 150 cards covering the periods from 1979 until 2006. They found that the wedding invitation card genre in Jordan was built around obligatory and optional moves which communicate a lot of information about socio-cultural values and norms in Jordanian society that affect the structure of such genre. Obligatory and optional moves were: (1) "Opening"; (2) "Identifying the celebrating families"; (3) "Stating the names of people issuing the invitations"; (4) "Inviting the guest"; (5) "Identifying the bride and groom"; (6) "Ceremonial arrangements"; (7) "Closing"; and (8) "Notification". Even though Al-Ali and Momani and Al-Refaei's studies have on the whole yielded excellent and interesting results, they do not have a number of shortcomings. Firstly, they concentrated only on the common generic text structures or components of the Jordanian wedding-invitation genre. And secondly, they did not provide in-depth analysis of the linguistic patterns which characterize the moves of wedding invitation genre. The present study takes a wider perspective to genre analysis, focusing on the sociolinguistic discourse variability and dynamics in light of the underlying academic, social and institutional motives and forces. Moreover, Al-Ali's and Momani and Al-Refaei's studies were conducted

in 2006 and 2010 respectively, and it will be very interesting to see if the language of wedding invitation card has changed in the eight years that separate these studies, as examining this genre over a longer period of time might reveal new structural and linguistic differences, and show how such genre can evolve and develop over time under the impact of social and religious forces that affect the linguistic and textual choices of the genre.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Corpus

Prior to collecting the sample, the researcher checked different types of written wedding invitations. From this preliminary linguistic check, it was observed that there were no significant differences in the generic structures of these invitations. Thus, a sample of 500 Jordanian written wedding invitation cards, covering the period from 2000 to 2018, were selected randomly for the present study from several sources. Some of the wedding invitation cards were collected by visiting some local card stores based in the area where the researcher lives, while other wedding invitation were accumulated from within the circle of the researcher's family, colleagues, friends, neighbours and relatives who were asked to provide the researcher with as many wedding invitation cards as possible.

As a Jordanian, I am very active in attending many wedding ceremonies in the Jordanian society; therefore, through personal observation and taking part in several Jordanian wedding events, I have been able to observe how the weddings are carried out by Jordanian people who have different customs and habits. Moreover, as a member of the Jordanian discourse community which constructs and produces the wedding invitation texts, I already have the experience and background knowledge of the Jordanian community and the communicative conventions related to it. This in turn provided me with the necessary information needed about the effect of religious and socio-cultural practices and norms on the wedding invitations.

3.2 Procedures

The theoretical assumptions on which the present paper relies are mainly derived from Bhatia's (1993) genre analysis approach. This socially and linguistically-oriented approach goes beyond the language analysis of texts and relates the linguistic patterns and elements found in wedding invitation cards to the social conventions of the wedding rituals. In other word, the strength of this approach lies in the fact that it goes far beyond the examination of patterns of text organization and lexico-grammatical description of language use in a given genre text (thin

description) by incorporating the social context and the communicative purposes of the genre under study (thick description).

As far as the analysis of micro-linguistic features of the genre under study, it was divided up into meaningful units, essentially on the basis of linguistic clues, and then it was analysed for the purpose of investigating the salient lexico-grammatical choices and strategies which characterize each identified rhetorical move; that is, to look into their linguistic features from syntactic and rhetorical.

Arabic language is very rich in rhetorical and stylistic devices which are utilized to perform specific rhetoric functions in their context through invoking meaning that goes beyond the lexical meaning of words (El-dali, 2012; Abdullah et al., 2016). It is not surprising, therefore, to find out that the genre of Arabic wedding invitation cards constitutes a fertile ground for the proliferation of such linguistic and literary devices (Fernandez, 2006; Bressler, 2009). The microlinguistic features examined in this study are considered the most common ones used in the genres of wedding invitation cards. The choice of these linguistic features was not at random. Rather, certain moves of the genres, apart from their rhetorical functions, are characterised by specific distinct stylistic features associated with them. For example, some rhetorical features (e.g., alliteration, rhyme, simile, metaphor, consonance, and assonance) in wedding invitation cards are very specific to the "Opening" move which is characterised by denoting different types of poetry. These rhetorical devices make the writing impressive, vivid and interesting. Therefore, the bride and groom use them to make their wedding cards impressive and arouse the potential readers' interest of reading the wedding invitation card and thus encouraging them to attend the wedding ceremony, which is the main communicative purpose of the genre.

In addition, specific nouns and adjectives with positive connotations are among the most common syntactic features realized in the genres of wedding invitation cards. For example, in wedding invitation texts, nouns and adjectives of semantic field of love have been employed by the couples in the "Opening" and "Deferential ending" move to express the romantic feelings and emotions; and promote love, peace and harmony between them. These nouns and adjectives which were found to be specific to certain moves include happiness, wishes, perfume, flower, moon, prince, diamond, happy, prosperous, generous, to mention but few.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Before examining the linguistic features of the genre under study, it is of significance to initially present the generic structure (moves) of the wedding invitation genre. The elements in a typical wedding invitation card appear in the following order: Opening, Identifying the celebrating families, Identifying the inviters of the wedding, Requesting the presence of the guests, Identifying the bride and groom, Stating wedding ceremony arrangements, Deferential ending, and Notifications. This section traces and explores the micro-linguistic features of this genre with the intention of seeing how Jordanian brides and grooms organize their wedding invitation cards. It focuses on salient syntactic and rhetorical properties.

4.1 Syntactic Features

This section presents the prevalent syntactic features in the wedding invitation text such as sentence length, sentence complexity, verb tenses, nouns, adjectives, prepositions, ellipsis, etc.

Sentence Length

Sentence length, in this study, is going to be determined by calculating the number of words for each move in the wedding invitation card corpus by hand, i.e., to find out how many words constitute each discursual move in the wedding invitation card genre. The analysis of the data indicated that there is variation in sentence length across wedding invitation cards. More specifically, wedding invitation cards have many short sentences in comparison to long sentences.

A close examination of the data showed that the “Identifying the celebrating families move,” “Identifying the inviters of the wedding” move, “Identifying the bride and groom” move, “Deferential ending” move and “Notifications” move are characterized by short sentences, while the other moves; namely, the “Opening” move, “Requesting the presence of the guests” move and “Stating wedding ceremony arrangements” move are characterized by long sentences.

In the light of what was mentioned above, it can be argued that Jordanian brides and grooms, as members of a discourse community, seem to show a clear preference for short sentences when constructing their wedding invitation card text, perhaps due to the fact that they want to reduce the cost of such wedding invitations for economic reasons. Put in a different way, they are trying to save space and money because words cost a lot of money when writing the wedding invitation in Jordan.

The objective of the corpus analysis is to figure out the preferred verb tense used in each move of the wedding invitation cards. In general, the analysis of the data suggested some variation as far as the tense choice and frequency of occurrence among the moves were concerned.

The data showed that the present tense and the past tense were the preferred tenses in Move 1 (Opening) and Move 7 (Deferential Ending), and that the present tense was used more frequently in these two moves. One thing worthy of note is that the present tense was the only tense restricted to Move 4 (Requesting the presence of the guests) and Move 8 (Notifications). It is interesting to note, however, that the other moves, viz., Move 2 (Identifying the celebrating families), Move 3 (Identifying the inviters of the wedding) and Move 6 (Stating wedding ceremony arrangements) do not contain any present, past or future tenses at all.

The results of the study revealed that the present simple tense has proved to be the mostly used tense in the wedding invitation card genre. The main reason for the predominance of the present simple tense in the moves results from the fact that it expresses the future. That is, the bride and groom, who are responsible for issuing the wedding invitation card, try to tell readers of the invitation that the wedding ceremony is going to happen in the near future, hence using the simple present tense to express the future most frequently. Consider the following illustrative examples:

tabda? ʔalsahra masa? yawm ʔalxami:s
(The evening party **starts** on Thursday evening)

yatafarafa:n bidaçwatikum liħudu:r ħaflat zafa:f
(X and Y **request** the honour of your presence to attend the wedding ceremony)

Nouns

A careful analysis of the data of the present study yielded the result that nouns in these wedding invitation cards are abundant and plentiful. A close look at the “Opening” move shows that it includes nouns such as “happiness” (سرور *suru:r*); “love” (الحب *ʔħub*); “wishes” (امنيات *ʔumnia:t*); “longing” (شوق *fawaq*); “fondness” (الود *ʔalwud*) “tranquillity”; and “mercy” (الرحمة *ʔlrħmah*). The Jordanian couple want their marriage to be filled with love, happiness, serenity, and contentment; they want it to be a source of joy and fulfilment their whole life long; therefore, they use these nouns in their wedding invitation cards to express their romantic feelings and emotions for the happy occasion of marriage.

The groom tends to express his great love, appreciation, and romance for his soon to be wife through describing her as being similar to someone or something else. For example, he compares his wife using one of the following nouns: “princess” (أميرة *ʔami:rah*); “flower” (زهرة *Zahra*); “moon” (قمر *qamar*); “sun” (شمس *fams*); “sea” (بحر *bahr*); “gold” (ذهب *ḍahab*); “diamonds” (الماس *ʔalama:s*); “knight” (فارس *fa:risah*); “treasure” (كنز *kinz*).

The “Identifying the celebrating families” move is mainly characterised by the extensive use of proper nouns such as “Al-Omari العمري”; “Al-Sawalmeh السوالمه”; “Al-Khateeb الخطيب”. These proper nouns represent the names of the couple’s families. They use the family name to reflect their solidarity, pride and belongingness to their tribes.

The “Identifying the inviters of the wedding” move and the “Identifying the bride and groom” move were characterised by the use of many common nouns such as “doctor” (الدكتور *ʔalduktu:r*); “teacher” (الاستاذ *ʔalʔusta:ḍ*); “engineer” (المهندس *ʔalmuhandis*); “lawyer” (المحامي *ʔalmuḥa:mi*); “judge” (القاضي *ʔalqadii*); “pilot” (الطيار *ʔaltaya:r*); and “pharmacist” (الصيدلاني *ʔalsaidala:ni*). These common nouns, which represent professional and academic titles, are used by the inviters and the couple to demonstrate that they occupy high social positions and are of high social statuses in the Jordanian society.

Adjectives

The results of the analysis showed that the adjectives are employed in four moves only, viz., the “Opening” move, the “Stating wedding ceremony arrangements” move, the “Deferential ending” move and the “Notifications” move.

A detailed analysis of the “Opening” move, the “Deferential ending” move and the “Notifications” move in the present corpus revealed that the issuers of the wedding invitation card tend to indicate the significance of Jordanian wedding by using some verses of the Holy Qur’an, extracts of Prophet Mohammed's prayers or invocations, or a few lines of Arabic poetry to bestow blessings on the bride and groom for the wedding journey. Therefore, when constructing their wedding invitation card, the bride and groom use one of the following key lexemes (adjectives) that reflect the religious importance of wedding: “good” (صالح *Ṣa:liḥ*); “complete” (مكتمل *muktamil*); “happy” (سعيد *saʕi:d*); “generous” (كريم *kari:m*); “prosperous” (عامر *ʕa:mir*).

Ellipsis

Ellipsis is one of the prominent linguistic phenomena found in the Arabic language, in both written and spoken forms. Ellipsis can be defined as the omission of unnecessary words or phrases from a sentence. A careful examination of the wedding invitation card genre revealed that there are four types of ellipsis. These types include verbal ellipsis, nominal ellipsis, prepositional phrase ellipsis and vocative particle ellipsis.

[يا] اللهم بارك لهما وبارك عليهما واجمع بينهما في خير

[O] *ʔallahuma ba:rik lahumma waba:rik ʕalyihima: waḍmaʕ bainihima: fi xayr*

[O] May Allah grant blessings to them and bind them with harmony and goodness

[نتمنى] لأطفالكم نومت هنيئا

[*natamana*] *nawman hani: ʔan laʔḥfa:likum*

We [wish] pleasant sleeping for your children)

الرجاء عدم اطلاق العيارات النارية [في الحفل] نهائيا

ʔradza: ʔ ʕadam ʔḥla:q ʔalʕyara:t ʔana:riyah [fi: ʔalhafḥ] niha: ʔiyan

Please kindly no shooting [at the ceremony] at all

[موعد] حفلة الوداع مساء يوم الخميس

[*mawʕid*] *ḥafḥit ʔlwadaʕ masa: yawm ʔalxami:s*

[The date] of the farewell party starts on Thursday evening at 5 o'clock)

It can be stated that ellipsis is one of the most frequent phenomena in wedding invitation card genre since it tends to shorten this kind of discourse for reasons of economy or style. Therefore, it has been noticed that some moves in the wedding invitation card text are condensed and contracted by using few words relevant to the central ideas of wedding rituals, and thus bringing out the message the bride and groom want to convey and making the text appealing to readers.

Jordanian wedding invitation cards apparently have a characteristic style which is different from the styles that prevail in normal sentences. It has been found that the nominal ellipsis, prepositional phrase ellipsis and vocative particle ellipsis are a very common style of wedding invitation discourse. More specifically, the corpus revealed that the verb phrase ellipsis is very rare if compared to the ellipsis of the nominal ellipsis, prepositional phrase ellipsis and vocative particle ellipsis in wedding invitation cards. According to the corpus, it is very common for the bride and groom to contract the text of the wedding invitation card when facing constraints in page spaces and word limits due to the high costs of producing such invitations. Finally, it is true that the wedding invitation card genre has too much condensation and

contraction of words as an economic way to save words and spaces, but it is attention-grabbing and arousing for the readers.

4.2 Rhetorical features

Alliteration

Alliteration can be defined as the repetition of the initial consonant sound or letter in two or more words in close succession, as in this illustrative example taken from Leech (1966, p. 187): “**B**uilt **B**etter **b**y **B**urco for you”. Analysis of the data revealed that this rhetorical device occurs in four moves; namely, the “Opening” move, “Stating wedding ceremony arrangements” move and the “Deferential ending” move. However, the alliteration does not occur in the other moves of the wedding invitation cards. Consider the following examples:

اللهم بارك لهما وبارك عليهما واجمع بينهما في خير
allahuma ba:rik lahumma wa ba:rik çalyihima:
wadçmaç bainihima: fi xayr
 (May Allah grant blessings to them and bind them with harmony and goodness)

Rhyme

Rhyme refers to the repetition of the similar or identical sound or sounds of two or more words, especially at the ends of lines of poetry. The most common rhyme pattern used by poets is called “end rhyme”. This pattern simply means that the end words of lines of poetry rhyme together. It is clear that effective rhymes can be an important device in wedding invitation card genre. Analysis of the data revealed that rhyme was used in the “Opening” move only, most often in poetry produced by the bride and groom. Examples of this rhyme can be found in the following examples from the “Opening” move:

بشر أحبائي وأهل مودتي وكل قريب يريد مسرتي
baçir çahiba: ?i wa?ahl mawadati wakul qari:b
yuri:d masarati
 (Convey good news to my loved people, and every relative who wants my happiness)

Simile

A simile is one of the most popular techniques used in Arabic poetry. It can be defined as a figure of speech in which a comparison between two unlike elements is made, often marked by use of the words “like”, “so”, “as”, “as if”, “than”, or a verb such as “resembles”. A close examination of the data showed that this figure of speech was used in the “Opening” move only, especially in poetry. Consider the following example:

ها أنا يا أمرتي أنتيتك من آخر الاوطان وأخطفك على حصان
 كالفارسان

ha: çana ya çami:rati çatatuiki min ?a:xir çalçawta:n
 wa?xtfik çala hiça:n kalfursa:n

Here I am, O princess I came from the farthest home lands and I want take you on a horse like a knight
 In the above example taken from the “Opening” move, the bride and groom use simile which is usually introduced by the word “like”. This example is a case of a comparison between a thing and another. For instance, the groom compares himself to a knight riding on a horse to take his princess or sweetheart home.

Metaphor

A metaphor has been defined as “a word or phrase used in an imaginative way to describe sb/sth else, in order to show that the two things have the same qualities and to make the description more powerful” (Longman dictionary of contemporary English). Unlike simile, metaphor does not use the words “like”, “so”, “as”, “as if”, “than”, or a verb such as “resembles” to indicate the comparison.

Obviously, appropriate application of metaphor, in wedding invitation card genre, plays an important role, which can render wedding invitation cards picturesque, fabulous and attractive. This figure of speech usually creates a comparison between the bride and another thing or between the groom and another thing. On thorough examination, the corpus analysis disclosed that this figure of speech was utilized in the “Opening” move only, most often in poetry. Consider the following example:

حقق لي الاماني ونلت كنزاً قد حوى كل الدرر
haçaq li: çalçama:ni wanilt kinzan qad çawa kul
eldurar

My wishes have been come true and I obtained a **treasure** that has encompassed all pearls.

In this example, the bride is compared directly to a treasure without the use of the words “like”, “so”, “as”, etc. More specifically, the groom compares his wife with a precious treasure which contains many pearls in it. The metaphor, in the above example, not only has an interesting value but also stimulates the curiosity of the readers (wedding invitees) to continue reading the whole wedding card.

Euphemism

Euphemisms are words or expressions which can be used to avoid those expressions which are deemed to be taboo in a polite, indirect, tactful, mild and implicit way. In other words, they are used to soften or conceal unpleasant, hateful or embarrassing words and expressions. Euphemisms act as a veil, and they substitute these words and expressions with more delicate, pleasant, inoffensive and less shocking ones.

A number of writers have provided some definitions for euphemism. Rabab'ah and Al-Qarni (2012, p. 730), for instance, define euphemism as "a polite or indirect way of saying a tabooed term". For Abrantes (2005, p. 86), euphemism is "a word or a phrase used in a specific linguistic and extra-linguistic context to soften or conceal something unpleasant". Similarly, Hudson (2000, p. 261) describes euphemism as "the extension of ordinary words and phrases to express unpleasant and embarrassing ideas".

A close examination of the data obtained from the wedding invitation cards revealed that the use of the phenomenon of euphemism occurs in one move only, viz., the "Notifications" move. The euphemistic expressions below bear witness to this phenomenon:

نومًا هنيئاً لأطفالكم

nawman hani:ʔan laʔtfa:likum
(Pleasant sleeping for your children)

جنة الاطفال بيوتهم

dʒanna:t ʔatfa:l biyu:tuhum
(Children's paradise is their house)

On the other hand, the results of the present study showed that a number of wedding invitation cards included direct appeals to the invitees requesting them not to bring their children to the wedding celebration for organizational considerations by using one of the following direct and hateful expressions:

يمنع اصطحاب الاطفال منعاً باتاً

yommaç ʔʕtiha:b ʔalatfa:l mançan ba:tan
(Children are not permitted to attend the wedding party)

However, this study revealed that most of the couples were unwilling to use the above expression directly in the invitation cards because this direct expression is unpleasant and offensive. Therefore, they resort deliberately to replacing this agonizing, undesirable and embarrassing expression by indirect and polite expressions. In this study, the bride and groom sometimes resort to euphemize the expression "Children are not permitted to attend the wedding party" through writing one of the following pleasant expressions:

نومًا هنيئاً لأطفالكم

nawman hani:ʔan laʔtfa:likum
(Pleasant sleeping for your children)

جنة الاطفال بيوتهم

dʒanna:t ʔatfa:l biyu:tuhum
(Children's paradise is their house)

Consonance

Consonance is the repetition of a consonant sound two or more times in short succession. Typically this repetition occurs at the end of the words, but may also be found in the middle or at the beginning of the

words. Here are some examples in which the consonant sound is repeated two or more times in the words:

- 1- Slither and slather
- 2- Litter and batter
- 3- Sent and went

A close examination of the genre of wedding invitation cards revealed that this rhetorical device was found in three moves, viz., the "Opening" move, "Deferential ending" move and "Notifications" move. Consider the following illustrative example from the data:

يمنع اصطحاب الاطفال منعاً باتاً بأمر من إدارة الصلاة

yommaç ʔʕtiha:b ʔalatfa:l mançan ba:tan biʔamr min ʔda:rat ʔiʕa:lah

(The wedding hall does not permit accompanying children at all)

Assonance

Assonance can be defined as a repetition of the similar or identical vowel sounds in two words or more than two words, often in poetry to create rhythm. The results of the study revealed that assonance as a rhetorical device occurred in three moves of the genre of wedding invitation cards, namely, the "Opening" move, the "Stating wedding ceremony arrangements" move and the "Notifications" move. Consider the following illustrative examples from the data:

هيا طيور الخير زغردي فوق الجباه المؤمنات و غردي
أفراحنا طابت و فاح غبيرها فجنورها تزوي بسنة احمد

haya ʔoyu:r ʔxayr zağridi fawq ʔdʒibah ʔmoʔmina:ti wağrriidi

ʔfrahuna ʔabat wafa:h çabi:ruha faɖuðu:ruha turwa bisunnati ʔħmadi

(Come on birds of good utter trilling cries of joy, and warble upon the forehead of women believers)

(Our wedding has a pleasant fragrance, with roots watered from the Sunna of Ahmad).

Parallelism

Parallelism is a common phenomenon used in Arabic language and is connected to rhymed prose as it gives the construction or structure a clear musical effect. Simply, parallelism is a device in which two sentences (phrases or clauses) have the same structure. Cook (1989, p. 15) defines parallelism as "a device which suggests a connection, simply because the form of one sentence or clause repeats the form of another".

Jordanian wedding invitation writers tend to use parallelism in the structure of the wedding invitation for creating musical effects and encouraging the

reader to continue reading the whole wedding card. Mehawesh (2013, p. 260) argues that parallelism “draws the ear; listeners are naturally attracted to its pleased sound. Thus, parallelism not only emphasizes an idea but also adds rhythm to a work and making it pleasing to hear or read”. A careful look at the data revealed that this device is widely noticed in the “Opening” move, especially in the Qur’anic quotations, prophetic prayers or invocations and poetic verses. Examples of parallelism in Arabic are exemplified by the following phrases taken from the wedding invitation cards:

بارك لهما وبارك عليهما واجمع بينهما في خير

ba:rik lahumma waba:rik ſalyihima: waḡmaſ bainihima: fi xayr

(May Allah **grant** blessings to them, **grant** blessings on them and **bind** them with harmony and goodness)

بالطيب والورد نلاقىكم وبالحب والخير نشكر تهانيمكم

bilṭi:b walwarad nulaqi:kum walbilhub walkayer nafkur taha:ni:kum

We welcome you with perfume and roses and **we thank you with love and goodness** for the Congratulations you offered

In example (1), it is clear that parallelism is created by repetition of the same structure. The sentences “grant blessings to them” (بارك لهما *ba:rik lahumma*), “grant blessings on them” (بارك لهما *ba:rik ſalyihima:*), and “bind them” (اجمع بينهما *waḡmaſ bainihima:*) are placed with similar forms, hence having the same structure. In example (2), the structure or the form of the two sentences, i.e., “*We welcome you with perfume and roses*” and “*we thank you with love and goodness for the congratulations you offered*” is repeated. More specifically, the sentences bear the same grammatical structure and the words have the same order in succession.

5. CONCLUSION

Wedding invitation cards are not limited to merely announcing the wedding of two people; rather, they mirror Jordanian people’s ideas and judgments, depending on many factors such as economic standing, religious beliefs, cultural practices, customs, etc. They are characterized as ceremonial genre texts generally constrained by socio-religiously motivated practices and conventions.

More specifically, in the light of the present research, the analysis of the wedding invitations has revealed interplay between social and linguistic choices which can be summarized in five main points. First, wedding invitations primarily achieved a social purpose. In fact, the explicit reference to academic and professional titles, which are written in bold-face with different sizes of font, reinforces socio-cultural

values and reflects that the bride and groom belong to high socio-economic statuses in the Jordanian society. Second, religion played a prominent role in wedding invitations. The linguistic lexical choices reflected in different communicative moves of the corpus display many features of the influences exercised by religious beliefs of the bride and groom in the texts. Examples of the religious lexical choices and phrases used by the producer of the wedding invitations are “Al-haj”, “Paradise”, “mosque”, “Allah”, “Most Gracious” and “Most Merciful”, “church”, “God”, “Christ”, and “Heaven”. Finally, the producers of wedding invitation cards; namely, the bride and groom employ a set of rhetorical devices (alliteration, rhyme, parallelism, metaphor and simile, euphemism) which have made the wedding invitation card genre look very eye-catching and persuasive for readers. They aimed at not only informing the readers, i.e., the invitees of the topic of wedding invitation card genre but also expressing their ideology achieved through using these rhetorical devices.

I hope to have demonstrated how this genre text is structured and interpreted to serve the communicative purposes agreed upon by members of Jordanian community who constantly take part in this genre and very aware of their social conventions. It is also hoped that this study has offered a rich account of the generic linguistic features of the genre text in relation to religious and socio-cultural values and practices of Jordanian society.

This study aimed to make a significant contribution to the study of genre of Jordanian wedding invitation cards with the objective to analyse the linguistic features and communicative purposes practiced in these this genre to determine specific conventionalized purposes which are associated with different socio-cultural, as well as ideological backgrounds that Jordanian people practice in constructing and interpreting this genre. What is more, this study drew on the importance of contextualized genre analysis and explained that style, culture and religion, as well as norms determine the overall structure and linguistic features of this genre. Thus, it is also hoped that this study will serve as a window through which non-Jordanians can improve their knowledge of the nature of these genres and can learn the rules and practices of specific social groups in Jordanian society.

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