The Pragmatic Functions of *Ḥalāl* and *Ḥarām* in Spoken Jordanian Arabic

Bushra S. Majali
Al-Balqa Applied University, Jordan

Amal A. Thenibat
Al-Balqa Applied University, Jordan

Abstract—**The current study investigates the pragmatic functions of the terms ḥalāl and ḥarām in Spoken Jordanian Arabic. The researchers compiled a number of contexts which include the words ḥalāl and ḥarām in different pragmatic functions. The scenarios were first judged by a panel of jury. Then the last version of the scenarios was given to 50 native speakers of Jordanian Arabic. The results show that ḥalāl conveys several different pragmatic functions for example, expressing something religiously permissible, as a synonym of Cattle, possessions and money among others. On the other hand, ḥarām is also used to convey several pragmatic functions such as something religiously forbidden, religious terms as the secret months, and oath and so on.**

Index Terms—**Discourse Marker, ḥalāl, ḥarām, Jordanian Arabic, pragmatic function**

I. INTRODUCTION

The current article investigates the polysemy and the pragmatic functions of the words *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām*. Carston (2021) defined polysemy as the phenomenon of a word having different meanings. He also stated that polysemy is usually created by triggering new words from monosemous as a start (Carston, 2021). Pragmatics is defined in the Cambridge dictionary as "the study of how language is affected by the situation in which it is used, of how language is used to get things or perform actions, and of how words can express things that are different from what they appear to mean". The analyses of these words can be interesting because they provide a detailed explanation of the different functions and uses of a single word or term. It also reduces pragmatic failures since it clarifies the intended interpretation of them. According to Deda (2013) learning and teaching pragmatics help natives and non-natives to elevate their competence of pragmatics. It also helps them to avoid miscommunications because of cultural differences. All linguistic expressions convey different pragmatic function in different contexts (Hamdan & Abu Rumman, 2020).

The interlocutor's understanding of the pragmatic functions of a particular word can be achieved through: First, the use of presupposition. Second, the use of backchannels as *huh*, *ah…* etc. Third, showing that the person is the place of understanding for example, to answer the question, to correspond with the question. Finally, exemplification, i.e., the repetition and paraphrasing is a good clue of a good understanding (Clark, 1996).

The Jordanian dialect has many phrases and discourse markers with different pragmatic functions such as *ʕādī* 'normal, acceptable', and *ṭayyib* 'good, ok' among others. Some other discourse markers are inspired by Islamic terms such as inʃāllāh 'with God's will', wallāh 'I swear' because Islam is a prominent factor in the Jordanian culture and has a salient impact on the culture. The reason behind choosing *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām* is that they have multiple functions in different domains and they are commonly and frequently used. According to Oxford dictionary *ḥalāl* means "Religiously acceptable according to Muslim law". This term is not only used by Muslims, other Arabs of other religions use it as well. On the other hand, *ḥarām* in Oxford dictionary is referred to as "…from Arabic *ḥarām* 'forbidden'".

These two words are not exclusively related to religious legislation, they are exceedingly rich in pragmatic diversities in different fields. According to Al Jallad (2008) *ḥalāl* is utilized by Muslims and Arabs to point any lawful and permissible matter. On the contrary, *ḥarām* is any prohibited and punishable matter by the Islamic rules. The verb *ḥalāl* in Arabic means legal, licit, legitimate, and unforbidden and it also means to solve or resolve (Al Jallad, 2008). Whereas, the word *ḥarām* in Arabic means forbidden, taboo, outlaw, the holy places (i.e. Macca, Madina, and Jerusalem), wife, and holy. "Forbidden pattern of behavior, speech, dress, conduct, and manner under Islamic law" (Al Jallad, 2008, p. 80). Thus, the words *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām* have contrary connotations i.e., allowed and disallowed respectively and they are used in different contexts to give related pragmatic functions.

Ḥalāl and *ḥarām* are considered discourse markers based on the definition of Schiffrin (1978, p. 31) i.e., "sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk". She clarified that discourse markers can be presented in different word classes as conjunctions (e.g. so), adverbs (e.g. then), lexicalized phrases (e.g. you know) and interjections (e.g. uh, oh) (Cited in Maschler & Schiffrin, 2015). The notion of analyzing discourse markers was first presented by Harris (1952) as a method of analysis of both written and spoken language by studying the relationship

between the social and cultural meaning with the language, also between linguistic forms and the function of the communication in pragmatic as well as in a discourse (Cited in Hamdan & Abu Rumman, 2020).

It is worth mentioning that *ħalāl* and *ħarām* are vividly used in Jordanian proverbs, wisdom, folk, and songs and in everyday formal and informal conversations. For example, in the proverb, اجمع راسين بالحلال (*gather two people in love in a ħalāl relationship)*, this proverb is used when someone attempts to join two people in the sacred matrimony. Therefore, bil-*ħalāl* is used to enunciate the meaning of *marriage*. The second proverb is أبغض الحلال عند الله الطلاق (*Divorce is the worst ħalāl to Allah*), this proverb indicates that getting divorced is allowed in Islam but, according to this proverb, it is not preferable. Another example is العشرة ما بتهون إلا على ابن الحرام (*good relationship is not reserved or respected by bad people*) which is usually used to describe the misbehavior of a close person. The related word in this proverb is *Ibn ħarām* (the son of *ħarām*) that is used to refer to a person of bad virtues or behavior (in slang it can be translated into *son of a bitch*). The word my *ħalāl* is commonly used in Arabic folk songs. For instance, the phrase yā *ħalāli* (O my *ħalāl*) appeared in one of the most popular folk songs by the Jordanian singer Omar al-Abdallat. The lyrics goes as ياحلالي ويا مالي يا ربعي ردّوا عليا (*O my wife, O my money, O my people, answer me*). Here, in this wedding song the word *ħalāl-ī* is employed to mean *my wife*.

Al-Kawaldeh (2018) highlighted that Jordanian discourse markers have multiple meaningful senses and are used in the daily conversations. Such markers are well understood in their different contexts by Jordanian people and by some other Arabs. This is because of the mutual understanding of the Arab culture as well as the literal meaning of the two words in Standard Arabic.

This study addresses the use of the words *ħalāl* and *ħarām* in the Jordanian community which is part of the Arab and Islamic world. The vast majority of the ethnic groups in Jordan is Arabs and the official language of the country is Standard Arabic. However, the spoken language by its people is the Jordanian Arabic dialect (Jordanian Spoken Arabic). The dominant religion is Islam; more than 92% of the population are Muslims. The words *ħalāl* and *ħarām* originated in Standard Arabic, and their basic usage and literal meanings are related to religion especially Islam. Thus, the study addresses the pragmatic functions of the terms *ħalāl* and *ħarām* as used by Jordanians in their daily lives.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Many studies have been conducted on the pragmatic functions of different terms and discourse markers. As mentioned earlier, religious discourse markers received a massive interest by scholars. For instance, in his paper on the pragmatics of *inʃāllāh* 'God's will' in Jordanian Arabic, Farghal (1995) revealed that this term cannot be understood in isolation and it must be presented in a context. He found that this term can function as a directive, or expressive, i.e. expressing the mid-state of thinking or apology.

In another study, Migdadi et al. (2010) discussed the Arabic religious formula *māʃāllāh* 'God bless'. They stated that it is used to imply different meanings such as divine will, vocation, a compliment, to express happiness, modesty, sarcasm, and can be used as a conversational backchannel.

Al-Harahsheh and Kanakri (2013) studied the pragmatic function and the translatability of the term *ṭayyib* 'good, ok' and its cognate *ṭabb*. The theoretical framework for their study was discourse analysis, conversation analysis, and relevance theory. The results of the study indicated that in Jordanian spoken Arabic the term *ṭayyib* and its cognate *ṭabb* are functional with ten pragmatic functions.

In other Arabic dialects, Al-Rousan (2015) examined the use of the discourse marker *maʕ nafsak* in Saudi spoken Arabic. The study found 12 different pragmatic functions for this term: *refusal,* lack of interest/indifference, annoyance, reprimanding, doubt, unwillingness, and distancing oneself from others, challenging, scolding, disappointment, choice, and preserving personal privacy.

Alazzawie (2015) investigated the discourse marker *ʕādī* 'normal, natural, ok' in spoken Iraqi Arabic. He found that this discourse marker roughly means *no worries, okay, how dare you? Yeah I hear you, or I've gone through the same thing myself.* On the other hand, Harb et al. (2022) examined the function of the discourse marker *ʕād* in spoken Jordanian Arabic as well as a syntactic account of it. The data were collected by interviewing 60 participants to make a corpus. The article showed that *ʕād* starts the speaker oriented *Ground Phrase*. It also revealed that discourse markers in general can be presented in a sentence without the need of another level of grammatical presentation.

Also, Al-Ghoweri (2016) studied the pragmatic functions of *adʒallakum allāh* (may God elevate you) in Jordanian spoken Arabic. The paper revealed that people use this term when they talk about animals, impure places and reprehensible situations. It is also used as a politesse strategy to reduce the sensitivity of taboo words. The researcher further found that what can be seen as taboo in the Jordanian culture might not be taboo in other cultures.

Al-Khalidy (2017) investigated the pragmatic functions of the term *ṭāliʕ* 'appears, turns out' in Jordanian spoken Arabic as used in TV comedy series. The results of the paper revealed that *ṭāliʕ* can pragmatically mean: going, going out, hearable, appear, looks like, share, ascending and from now on. These senses can be understood by Jordanian and some other Arab speakers as well.

Al-Kawaldeh (2018) explored the pragmatic uses of the word *wallāhi* 'I swear' in Jordanian Arabic. The data were collected by a corpus of 8 hours of spoken discourse including phone calls and face to face interactions. 26 males and females of different jobs and levels of education participated in the study. It was concluded that this discourse marker has various functions; it introduces apology, acceptance, complaint, a request softener, elaboration among others.

Hamdan and Abu Ruman (2020) explored the diverse pragmatic functions of *yāhummalāli* in Jordanian Arabic. A list of scenarios was prepared by including *yāhummalāli* in semi-authentic contexts. Then, 55 participants checked the acceptability of the scenarios. The results clarified that the data presented 19 different pragmatic functions of the term such as regret, disapproval, jealousy, fear, condemnation, expressing anger, shock, sarcasm etc.

In a recent study, Al-Khawaldeh et al. (2023) investigated the pragmatic functions of evil-eye in colloquial Jordanian Arabic. The data were collected through discourse completion tasks and interviews. The findings show that the discourse marker *evil eyes* in Jordanian Arabic is formed by different strategies as exclamation, simile, metaphor, negation, and questions.

III. METHODOLOGY

The data were collected through observation and recording since the researchers are native speakers of Jordanian Arabic. This method is useful because it provides authentic data about what people really do (Wixon et al., 2002).

The researchers composed different scenarios and contexts that included the words *ħalāl* and *ħarām*. They were written in Jordanian Arabic with a clear context to explain the pragmatic function of each situation. These scenarios were judged by a jury of three university professors for validation. Then, the familiarity of the scenarios was tested by 50 Jordanian participants who were all native speakers of Jordanian Arabic. They were 25 males and 25 females, aged (30-50) and of different levels of education. Thereupon, they were asked to give their opinion of the acceptability of each function by rating it against a 5-point Likert scale (i.e. strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree). Only the scenarios that were rated *strongly agree* and *agree* by the participants were considered as acceptable while the ones that have *disagree* or *strongly disagree* were excluded from the study. Furthermore, only the scenarios that were acceptable by 50% or more of the participants have been included in the study.

Accordingly, this study seeks to answer the following questions:
1.   What are the pragmatic functions of the discourse marker *ħalāl* in different contexts?
2.   What are the pragmatic functions of the discourse marker *ħarām* in different contexts?

IV. DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

Tables 1 & 2 present the percentages of the acceptability of the pragmatic functions of *ħalāl* and *ħarām* and their frequency. Only percentages above 50% are considered acceptable and thus included in the discussion below.

TABLE 1
PRAGMATIC FUNCTIONS OF *ĦALĀL* AND ACCEPTABILITY PERCENTAGES

No.	Function	Acceptability	
	ħalāl	No.	%
1.	Religiously permissible	50	100%
2.	Cattle	49	98%
3.	property, possessions and money	40	80%
4.	Son/daughter of *ħalāl*	49	98%
	- Legitimate child	50	100%
		46	92%
	- Positive value to describe a good person	48	96%
	- a villain		
5.	Praising others	37	74%
6.	Granting others	33	66%
7.	Marriage eligible bachelor/ bachelorette	45	90%

The data in Table 1 demonstrate that the highest frequency is associated with two functions of the word *ħalāl*: religiously permissible/ allowed and son of ħalāl. On the other hand, the lowest frequency, 66%, is associated with the sense of (granting others). The other functions also have high acceptability ranging, i.e. between 74% and 98% which implies that these usages are very common in the Jordanian community.

TABLE 2
PRAGMATIC FUNCTIONS OF *ḤARĀM* AND ACCEPTABILITY PERCENTAGES

No.	Function	Acceptability	
	ḥarām	No.	%
1.	Religiously forbidden	50	100%
2.	Religious terms - holy places - holy months	48	96%
3.	To show sympathy	46	92%
4.	To express dissatisfaction about waste	47	94%
5.	Sarcasm	30	60%
6.	To express reprimand and anger	43	86%
7.	Son/daughter of *ḥarām* - illegitimate child - a villain	50	100%
8.	Showing disapproval	38	76%
9.	Making oath	48	96%
10.	Women/ relatives	39	78%
11.	The privacy of the house		

The results in Table 2 show that two functions got the highest percentages of acceptability i.e., religiously forbidden and son of ḥarām which scored 100% each. However, the least frequent function is the one that implies sarcasm. The other functions also indicate a very high frequency.

Thus, the tables above show that *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām* demonstrate the highest frequencies when associated with religious function. This might be justified by the fact that these words are originally religion-related since, as mentioned above, their literal meaning is to describe something that is religiously allowed / disallowed. Then, the two words shifted to other social and pragmatic contexts. The other functions in both cases indicate high levels of acceptability which reflect their wide spread and common usage by Jordanian people.

A. Pragmatic Functions of Ḥalāl

The pragmatic functions of the words *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām* in colloquial Jordanian Arabic are various and multifunctional. In this section, the functions of *ḥalāl* are presented in potential contexts in which they may occur. These contexts are presented first, followed by a dialogue and a short discussion. In the dialogues, *ḥalāl* is highlighted and italicized.

(a). Religiously Permissible

Here, *ḥalāl* is used to imply that the action or the situation is allowed and licit from a religious perspective.

In this context, Ali is asking a yes/no question about the Islamic judgment of eating seafood in Islam. The Islamic judgment allows it.

علي: شو الحكم الشرعي لأكل المأكولات البحرية؟
Ali: What is the Islamic judgment of eating seafood?

بشرى: حلال
Bushra: It is *ḥalāl*.

In this sense, the word in italics *ḥalāl* has a meaning of (it is allowed in religion). According to Hanzaee and Ramezani (2011), *ḥalāl* in Arabic means permissible. To non-Muslims and non-Arabs, *ḥalāl* is also related to permissible food in the Islamic legislation (Al Jallad, 2008). Hanzaee and Ramezani (2011) and Al Jallad (2008) clarify that it is used to describe food, beverages, cosmetics, and personal care products among other consumer products. In addition, *ḥalāl* is used to regulate different types of food and beverages whether they are allowed or not. Sometimes *ḥalāl* is printed on some food products to indicate permissible ingredients, hence a permissible product. Moreover, *ḥalāl* is not only connected with food, it is used to express any allowed action from a religious perspective. People ask about the religious rules and laws about different life aspects such as getting the religious judgment on using birth control, financial transactions and other life issues.

Another point related to *ḥalāl* food is not the species of the animal but the way it was slaughtered which must be according to Islamic rites i.e. *thabḥ ḥalāl* (permissible slaughtering). This phrase is usually printed on the meat products as Muslims do not eat pork. For instance, in the following context Ali wants to buy beef from the supermarket but he wonders whether it is slaughtered according to the Islamic rites or not.

علي: اللحم البقري هذا شكله زاكي بس خايف ما يكون ذبح *بالحلال*.
Ali: This beef seems delicious but I'm afraid that it's not *ḥalāl* slaughtering.

محمد: اه *حلال* هيو مكتوب عليه.
Mohammad: Yeah. It's *ḥalāl*. It's printed here.

(b). Cattle

The word *ħalāl* is widely used in the Bedouin and rural societies in Jordan to refer to sheep, goats, and other type of cattle.

In the following dialogue Ali is asking Mohammad about the number of his sheep and goats.

علي: قديش عندك راس حلال؟
Ali: How many heads of *ħalāl* do you have?

محمد: 500 راس.
Mohammad: 500 *ones*.

In this pragmatic function *ħalāl* is related to sheep and goats and sometimes cows. On the other hand, *ħalāl* is not used to describe other type of animals in the Jordanian culture. The reason behind calling the cattle *ħalāl* is that in the Bedouin culture all of cattle products are permissible in Islam. This function is not utilized in all Arabic cultures, it is more used among Bedouins and farmers in Levantine.

(c). Property, Possessions and Money

Ħalāl can be used to refer to one's property, possessions and money. In the following dialogue, Ali is blaming Ahmad for wasting money and Mohammad tells him that it is his own money and properties and he is free to do whatever he likes.

علي: ليش هيك أحمد ببعزق بالمصاري والأراضي، إذا ضل هيك رح يفلس.
Ali: Why is Ahmad wasting his money and lands, he's going to be broke.

محمد: حلاله وهو حر فيه
Mohammad: They're his own *ħalāl* and he can do whatever he wants.

In this context, *ħalāl* is used to represent all of someone's possessions, money and rich belongings. The reason behind this usage is that these properties were gained in a legitimate/ *ħalāl* manner.

(d). Son/Daughter of Ħalāl

One of the most used functions of *ħalāl* is the literal meaning of son/daughter of *ħalāl* ابن حلال for males and bint *ħalāl* بنت حلال for females. These two terms are used literally and pragmatically and they have different functions as explained in the following.

(e). A Legitimate Child

The literal meaning of *ʔibn ħalāl* and *bint ħalāl* is a legitimate child. In the following context Ali is asking whether the orphan boy is a legitimate or a bastard child.

علي: اتبنوا الولد من الميتم.
Ali: They adopted him from an orphanage.

بشرى: طيب يعني هو ابن حلال والا لا؟
Bushra: Is he a son of *ħalāl* (legitimate child)?

علي: اه ابن حلال، كنا نعرف أبوه وأمه، كانوا متزوجين شرعي بس ماتوا بحادث .
Ali: Yes, he is a *ħalāl* child. We know his parents. They were married legally but they passed away in a car accident.

A *ħalāl* child is the result of a legal marriage. Thus, it is used literally in this context to ask about the adopted child.

(f). Positive Value to Describe a Good Person

Since the word *ħalāl* is associated with something legal, licit legitimate permissible and allowed, it has a positive connotation. Therefore, it is used by Jordanians to positively describe a good person. In the dialogue below Ali and Ahmad are discussing the virtues of another person who is distinguished by his good manners. Ali is asking Ahmad about his opinion of Sami.

علي: شو رأيك في سامي؟
Ali: What you think of Sami?

أحمد: اه والله، علي ابن حلال.
Ahmad: oh yeas, Ali is a son of *ħalāl* (he is a very decent person).

In this context, *ħalāl* is used to describe the personality and/ or the behavior of a person. It is used positively to express good virtues, manners, and good behavior of a person. It can also be used to show appreciation for behavior of others. For example, in the following dialogue Ahmad brings Ali a cup of coffee without being asked to do so. Ali wants to thank Ahmad and praises him, so he used the phrase *ibn ħalāl*.

أحمد: تفضل هاي أحلى فنجان قهوة.
Ahmad: here you are. This is the tastiest cup of coffee.

علي: والله إنك ابن حلال، إجا بوقته.
Ali: Wow. You're a son of *ħalāl*. It came in the right time.

(g). A Villain

Ironically, the phrase ibn *ħalāl* is used to mean "a villain" based on the contexts. In the following conversation, Ali is ironically describing the bad virtues of Khaled by using the word *ħalāl*.

أحمد: ما بصدق شو عمل فيك خالد. كثير فظيع الي عمله فيك
Ahmad: I can't believe what Khaled did to you. It was very awful.

علي: اه طلع *ابن حلال*
Ali: Yeah, he is *a son of ħalāl* (villain).

Ali here is using *ħalāl* to express the bad behavior of a person. He describes his disappointment of that person. Sarcastically, it is used to highlight how bad a person can be or as a reaction to a bad behavior of someone. Although the word *ħalāl* has positive connotations, as mentioned before, it is used here to mean the opposite.

(h). Praising Others

The expression *ħalāl ʕaleik* can be interpreted into different ways depending on the context. It is used to tell someone that he deserves good things. It may also mean "bravo" to appreciate someone's achievement.

In the following context the first speaker gets promoted. The other person congratulates him and tells him that he deserves it.

علي: كثير مبسوطة، ترقيت اليوم بالشغل
Ali: I feel very happy, I got promoted today.

أحمد: مبروك بتستاهل كل خير، *حلال عليك* والله.
Ahmad: Congratulations! You absolutely deserve it. *ħalāl ʕaleik.*

Here the term has a positive meaning of praising someone's behavior or appreciating his/her achievement. It is used to encourage others too.

(i). Granting Others

ħalāl ʕaleīk is used when giving something to others. In the following context, Amal is having a second thought of taking an expensive present from Bushra. Bushra somehow insists that Amal accept it.

آمال: مستحيل أقبل هديتك. كثير غالية
Amal: I can't accept your present. It's too expensive.

بشرى: طبعا رح تقبلها، *حلال زلال عليك*.
Bushra: Of course you will. *ħalāl zala:l ʕaleīk* (You absolutely can!! It's all yours).

In the previous dialogue, Bushra is employing *ħalāl ʕaleik* to indicate that this gift is given with love and pleasantly presented. In addition, it is used to assure the receiver that s/he can take it as if s/he has bought it by their own money.

(j). Marriage

The word *ħalāl* is extensively used in marriage relationships to describe the marriage itself or the wife and the husband. In the following dialogue, Ali is proposing to Bushra. Here, the use of the phrase *bil-ħalāl* is employed as an indication of marriage.

علي: أنا بدي اياكِ بالحلال
Ali: I want you *bil-ħalāl*

بشرى: موافقة
Bushra: yes, I agree.

In Arabic cultures the word *ħalāl* can be used appropriately instead of the word married/marriage. *Ħalāl* is used to indicate the legitimate relationship between a woman and a man. It could be used by men and women; spouses may address each other by "حلالي" *ħalālī* (my legitimate wife/husband). In this case, *ħalāl* is a term of address in the Jordanian culture to show endearment and affection as explained by Al- Majali and Al-Haq (2021).

It can also be related to the general concept of marriage. For instance, a marriage relationship between two people may be described as ماخذها بالحلال which literally means (he took her in *ħalāl*) i.e., (he married her) or عايشين بالحلال (literally: They live in *ħalāl*) which means *they are married*.

(k). Eligible Bachelor/ Bachelorette

Ibn (son) *ħalāl* and bint (daughter) *ħalāl* اين حلال، بنت حلال can also be used to refer to eligible bachelor and eligible bachelorette in Arabic culture in general. In the dialogue below, a man is asking his friend if he got married with a suitable match.

علي: شو أخبارك ؟ إن شاء الله لقيت *بنت الحلال*؟
Ali: so, tell me. Did you get married? Did you find bint *ħalāl* (a suitable girl)?

أحمد: لا والله، لسة بدوّر على *بنت حلال* تناسبني
Ahmad: unfortunately, I am still looking for bint *ħalāl* that may be my match.

In the previous context, *ħalāl* is employed to characterize a woman to be as suitable, good match and with good manners.

B. Pragmatic Functions of Harām

Ħarām is the opposite of *ħalāl*. It implies the meanings of illegitimate, disallowed, forbidden or not acceptable. In addition, it has some implications related to religiously holy places and times. Below we present the main functions of *ħarām* accompanied with potential contexts.

(a). Religiously Forbidden

In the Arabic culture *ħarām* is usually used to any forbidden act in any religion. Therefore, the pragmatic function of *ħarām* means "religiously forbidden". For instance, in the following dialogue the first speaker is asking about the Islamic ruling of eating pork. The answer of this question is expected to be either *ħalāl* or *ħarām*. The second speaker replies that it is *ħarām* (forbidden).

بشرى: هل أكل الخنزير في الإسلام *حرام*؟
Is pork *ħarām* in Islam?

آمال: طبعاً *حرام*.
Amal: of course it is *ħarām*.

(b). Religious Terms

1. Holy Places

Here, *ħarām* is part of compound nouns الحرمين الشريفين / البيت الحرام(literally, the holy house/ the two holy places) which refer to the holiest mosque in Mecca and The Prophet's mosque in Madina. Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem is also called al-bajt al-ħarām (Al Jallad, 2008). The reason behind calling these holy Mosques *ħarām* is that initiating war and killing people is prohibited in these areas. Not only people but also killing animals, cutting trees or hurting any creature is prohibited as well. If Muslims kill any animal in those Mosques during their hajj (pilgrimage), Muslims' expiation of sins is paying fines (Kamil & Darojat, 2019).

In the following dialogue the first speaker is thanking God for the opportunity of going to perform pilgrimage by mentioning the expression البيت الحرام (the *ħarām* house). This expression is appropriately understood by the second speaker as the holiest mosque in Mecca where people go when they perform their pilgrimage.

بشرى: الحمدلله رح أزور البيت الحرام
Thank God I'm off to visit the *ħarām* house.

آمال: ما شاء الله، تروحي وترجعي بالسلامة
Amal: Masha'Allah, have a safe trip.

Performing hajj (pilgrimage) or Omar (small pilgrimage) to Mecca is usually accompanied by visiting Madina, and both of them are called الحرمين al ħamerīn (the two holy places).

2. The Holy Months

The Hijri calendar (Arabic calendar) is used in some Islamic countries especially for religious events, and it's different from the Gregorian calendar. It is a lunar calendar that consists of 12 months (lunar months) with 355 days. Interestingly, four months in this calendar are called the ħarām months (i.e. *thul-qiʕda, thul-ħidʒa, muħarram,* and *radʒab*). During those months Muslims are not allowed to start a war or even hunt animals or cut tress. According to Kamil and Darojat (2019) in the pre-Islam era these moths were also a period of no war.

In the context below Ali is advising Ahmad not to hunt animals during this period.

علي: شو بتساوي؟
Ali: What are doing?

أحمد: بحاول أصيد هذاك الغزال.
Ahmad: I'm trying to hunt that deer?

علي: بتحكي جد؟! احنا بشهر *حرام*، شهر رجب. مابصير تصيد حيوانات بهذا الشهر، *حرام*.
Ali: Are you serious?! We are in the *ħarām* month of *Rajab*. You cannot hunt animals in this moth it's *ħarām* .

The word *ħarām* حرام is used by Ali in the second turn to mean holy month while it is used in the same turn at the end of the sentence to mean forbidden. Both meanings are well understood by Ahmad.

Furthermore, the word ħaram is used in Arabic for non-religious places such as university campus, الحرم الجامعي *alħaram aldʒāmiʕī,* (Al Jallad, 2008). The reason behind this usage is that campus is a forbidden place where students and others inside it must obey the rules and keep away from any violation in this place. This represents a shift of using the word from religious contexts to other contexts to give polysemous meanings.

(c). Showing Sympathy

The word *ħarām* is used by Jordanians to sympathize with other people when they suffer or experience something bad. In this case, the term is usually accompanied by the vocative article *jā*. Hence, *ħarām* here is not connected to Islamic rules. It can be interpreted as 'what a pity!'. In the following context Amal and Bushra are feeling sorry about Ali because he lost all his money. They use the utterance *ħarām* to show their sympathy.

آمال: علي خسر كل مصاريه في البورصة *يا حرام*
Amal: Ali lost all his money in the stock market, *jā ħarām*.

بشرى: اه يا حرام
Bushra: yeah, *jā ħarām* (what a pity!).

In this context, Amal and Bushra are feeling sad for the other person's loss. Thus, *jā ħarām* is used to show sympathy and affection toward others. Usually, it is used after hearing sad news as a reaction to express compassion and pity to an unpleasant event or situation.

(d). Expressing Dissatisfaction for Wasting Things

When wasting things, the expression *ħarām ʕaleih* 'ħarām on you' can be used to show regret, dissatisfaction or the need to stop that waste. Here it means "what a loss!". In the dialogue below, Amal wants to throw away a dress of hers but Bushra thinks that the dress should be kept.

آمال: هاد الفستان مابدي اياه بدي أكبه
Amal: I will throw away this dress. I don't like it anymore.

بشرى: حرام عليك لاتكبيه.
Bushra: *ħarām ʕaleih* (*What a waste)*, don't throw it away.

Bushra here is feeling that the dress is still new and should not be thrown away. It is a way of saying 'what a waste!'

(e). Sarcasm

Using *ħarām* in a sarcastic way to show disbelief and disagreement is very common in Jordanian Arabic. In the dialogue below, Bushra does not believe Amal. She sarcastically shows her suspicion of Amal's through using the expression ياحرام *jā ħarām* twice.

آمال: ماظل معي مصاري بالمرة.
Amal: I ran out of money.

بشرى: *يا حرام يا حرام*، صدقتك! أكيد إنك مكنزة.
Bushra: *jā ħarām! jā ħarām!* I believe you. You certainly hoard money.

The intonation is essential in this case to show the intended meaning. It clarifies that the second speaker does not sympathize with the first interlocutor; she just does not believe Amal though she says she does.

(f). Expressing Reprimand and Anger

ħarām ʕaleīk can be used to express anger towards a disgraceful or unfair behavior. For instance, in the following context a woman is yelling at her husband for being unfair to her and of the way she has been treated by him.

الزوجة: *حرام عليك* تعمل فيي هيك أنا ما بستاهل منك هالمعاملة.
Wife: *ħarām ʕaleīk (You're unfair).* How could you do this to me? I don't deserve to be treated this way.

الزوج: الحق عليك، إنت السبب
Husband: It is your fault. You are to be blamed.

In this context, *ħarām ʕaleīk* is used to blame others for bad behavior. It is a way to inform the addressee that what he/she has done is not acceptable and have hurt feelings.

(g). Showing Disapproval

In this context *ħarām ʕaleīk* is employed to express a sort of denial of disapproval. In the following context, a cook on a Facebook page is cooking a traditional dish. He adds one new ingredient to the dish. One comment on the Facebook is criticizing the addition of the unusual ingredient. A comment replies to it by saying *ħarām ʕaleīk* to show disapproval of the opinion.

التعليق : هالمنسف بشبه كل اشي إلا المنسف
A: this mansaf cannot be a real one.

الرد: *حرام عليكي*، والله شكله بشهي
B: *ħarām ʕaleīk* (come on!). It looks so delicious.

This expression is used as a way of saying, "how could you say that? or you're not telling the truth". Here *ħarām ʕaleīk* performs the meaning of unfair, prejudicial, exaggerated and underestimated.

(h). Son/Daughter of Ħarām

Like the expression *son of ħalāl*, *son of ħarām* is also used to perform more than one function. In the following, *ħarām* means either an "illegitimate child" or "a villain".

1. Illegitimate Child

When the child is not a result of a legal marriage, he/she is called *ibn/bint ħarām*. This usage is based on the fact that illegal relationships are forbidden in Islam, hence the expression describes the state of the relationship between the mother and the father and not the child itself. In the following dialogue Ahmad is describing the son of Sami as ابن حرام Ɂibn ħarām because his father and mother are not married.

علي: مبارح شفت سامي وزوجته ومعهم ولد صغير.
Ali: I met Sami and his wife yesterday, and they had a little boy.

أحمد: هما ما تزوجوا وهذا الولد *ابن حرام*
Ahmad: They are not married and this child is Ɂibn *ħarām* (illegitimate).

This usage is not formal and it is somehow a taboo word and very offensive because the situation itself is completely rejected in the Jordanian community.

2. A Villain

Since the term *ħarām* is associated with negative connotations in most cases, it functions as a negative description of a person. When someone is described as the son of *ħarām* (while he is a legitimate child), then it implies that this person is a villainous, bad, nasty, deceitful etc.

Below, Ahmad is describing a man as being the son of *ħarām* because that man swindled him out of 20000 dinars. Ahmad agrees with Ali about that because this description of that fraud as being the son of *ħarām* is appropriate in this case.

علي: ابن هالحرام! نصب علي وسرق مني 20,000 دينار
Ali: he is such a son of *ħarām* (villain). He swindled 20,000 JDs out of me.

أحمد: فعلا انه/ابن حرام
Ahmad: He is really son of *ħarām* (he is a deceitful person).

Ali grumbles about the scam he was exposed to. *Ibn ħarām* also conveys further meaning. It might be used for accusing males and females of immorality and prostitution.

(i). Making an Oath

The term *ħarām* is also used for oath which is particularly related to divorce. For instance, in the following dialogue Sami is refusing an expensive present. He is making an oath by using the word *ħarām* to convince Khaled to accept to share them the dinner.

أحمد: تفضل معنا على العشا.
Ahmad: you're welcome to share us our dinner.

علي: والله مابقدر مشغول ولازم أروح.
Ali: I'm sorry. I'm busy and I have to leave.

أحمد: بالحرام لتقعد
Ahmad: I *swear* you'll share us.

It is very common in the Jordanian community to use the word *ħarām* to make an oath. Almutlaq (2013) clarifies that oath has several types such as religious swearing. He also explained that (I swear by divorce) علي الطلاق or (*ħarām*) بالحرام are used as a way to make an oath in Jordanian Arabic. It literally means 'I swear to divorce my wife if I (you) do this or that' (Almutlaq, 2013).

These types of swearing are not a formal way of making an oath. According to Thneibat (2023) it is used as a strong way of swearing because it is believed that divorce will take place if the oath is not fulfilled. She also argues that making oaths by using marital relationships is limited to informal situations. This supports Almutlaq (2013), who highlighted that this type of swearing is used because the swearer tends to utilize this type to indicate that it is difficult and socially unacceptable to reject what he is swearing about. Moreover, according to Thneibat (2023), it is common to swear by divorce (*bi-ttalāq*) that corresponds with *bil-ħarām*, which means divorce will take place if the speaker is no telling the truth.

It is also important to highlight that this type of oath is only used by married males. They make oaths in Arabic using *ħarām* and *ħalāl* as in علي الحلال يحرم علي، و بالحرام *jiħram ʕalaīi, ʕalaīi alħalāl* and *bil-ħarām*. It can be noticed from the previous analysis that *ħalāl* is not always used for positive functions. Likewise, *ħarām* is not always related to negative functions as well.

Using *ħarām* to make an oath can be used in different situations and different forms. For example, يحرم علي *jiħram ʕalaī* (let it be disallowed for me) is used to express that *someone has never done something*. For instance, if Ahmad wants to strongly assert that he does not smoke he may say:

يحرم علي إذا عمري دخنت
jiħram ʕalaī if I ever smoked.

In other functions, it can be used to swear to not do something. For instance:

يحرم/ حارم علي فوتت داركو
jiħram ʕalaī that I step into your house (I will never revisit you).

It is usually used after a strong disagreement with someone to indicate ending the relationship with them.

(j). Women/ Relatives

The word حرمة *ħurma* (a feminine noun derived from ħaram) means a woman in spoken Jordanian Arabic and the plural is حريم *ħarīm*. Even though it is not very common to use this word, it is still used by some people and well understood by all Jordanians. In the following dialogue, Ahmad is asking about a woman that he does not know and Ali

is responding that she is their neighbor. He uses the word *ħurma* instead of *mara* (the common word that means a woman in Jordanian Arabic).

أحمد: مين المرة اللي أعطتك الأوراق؟
Ahmad: Who is that woman who gave you the papers?

علي: هاي *الحرمة* جارتنا سميرة.
Ali: This *ħurma* is our neighbor Samira.

On the other hand, the word محارم *maħārim* are used to refer to someone's relatives whom the man/woman cannot marry (i.e. mother/father, grandmothers/grandfathers, sisters/brothers, daughters/sons, ants/uncles, nieces/ nephews); thus, the terms refer to males and females alike.

Interestingly, the word *ħurma* حرمة البيت can be used to refer to the privacy of houses. For instance, Ali is telling his child that he cannot enter anyone's house without permission because the house has its own *ħurma* (privacy).

(Ahmad is a child. He opened the door and entered the house without ringing the bill).

علي: أحمد ما بصير تعمل هيك مرة ثانية لازم ترن الجرس، البيت اله حرمته ولازم تحترمها.
Ali: Oh Ahmad you cannot do this again. You need to ring the bill. You need to respect the *ħurma* of the house.

These usages are not far from the literal meaning of *ħarām*. The women are called *ħarīm* because there are some restrictions when dealing with women in Islam. Regarding the privacy of the house, the word *ħurma* is applicable because there are social restrictions imposed on strangers when entering a house.

V. Conclusion

This paper investigated the multiple meanings of *ħalāl* and *ħarām* and their pragmatic functions in Jordanian Arabic. These two terms are very common in the Jordanian community. The term *ħalāl* literally means religiously permissible but it is used to perform several pragmatic functions such as referring to cattle, property, possessions and money, legitimate child, a positive description of a person, a villain, praising others, granting others, eligible bachelor/bachelorette and it may refer to the marriage relationship as well.

Ħalāl has positive connotations due to its literal meaning (i.e., religiously allowed or permissible). However, it might be used ironically to describe a bad person. On the other hand, the term *ħarām* literally means religiously forbidden and it is used to perform eleven pragmatic functions: religiously forbidden, dissatisfaction about wasting, expressing reprimand and anger, illegitimate child, a villain, showing disapproval, making an oath, women, relatives of certain type, privacy of the house and holy places and months. Although *ħarām* is associated with negative connotations in most of its pragmatic usages, it has a positive connotation when talking about holy places and months that are highly valued by Muslims. In addition, some of its derivations such as *ħurma* convey other meanings i.e., women, close relatives and the privacy of a house. In sum, the two terms and their derivatives are pragmatically flexible that their meanings can be extended to be used in different situations and social and religious contexts.

Appendix

Phonetic symbols: ا ā, ب b, ت t, ث Θ, ج dʒ, ح ħ, خ x, د d, ذ th, ر r, ز z, س s, ش ʃ, ص ş, ض ḍ, ط ṭ, ظ Ḍ, ع ʕ, غ gh, ف f, ق q, ك k, ل l, م m, ن n, هـ h, و w, ي y, ◌َ a, ◌ُ u, ◌ِ i, long ي ī, long و ū.

References

[1] Alazzawie Abdulkhaliq. (2015). ʕadi as a Discourse Marker in Spoken Iraqi Arabic. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, *5*(7), 1352-1360.

[2] Al-Ghoweri, Helen. (2016). Pragmatic functions of aḵalakom'allah (May God elevate you) in Jordanian spoken Arabic. *Imperial Journal of Interdisciplinary Research*, *2*(6), 271-274.

[3] Al-Harahsheh, M. & Kanakri M. (2013). The Pragmatic Functions and the Translatability of "Ťayib" in Jordanian spoken Arabic. *US-China Foreign Language*, *11*(3), 196-202.

[4] AL Jallad, Nader. (2008). The concepts of al-halal and al-haram in the Arab-Muslim culture: a translational and lexicographical study. *Language design: journal of theoretical and experimental linguistics*, *10*, 077-86.

[5] Al-Khalidy, Hatmal. (2017). The Discourse Analysis and Pragmatic meanings of ta:lʕ in Jordanian Spoken Arabic'. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, *7*(4), 22-27.

[6] Al-Khawaldeh, S. K. Jarrah, M., & Alghazo, S. (2023). Evil-eye Expressive Strategies between Utterers and Interpreters: A pragmatic Study on Colloquial Jordanian Arabic. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *204*, 6-20.

[7] Al-Majali, B., & Al-Haq, F. A. A. (2021). Endearment Strategies Used by Spouses in Karaki Jordanian Arabic: A Socio-Pragmatic Study. *Journal of Legal, Ethical and Regulatory Issues*, *24*, 1-13.

[8] Almutlaq, Husein. (2013). A Sociolinguistic Study of Terms of Oaths in Jordanian Arabic. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, *3*(21), 225-228.

[9] Al-Rousan, Rafat. (2015). The Use of Discourse Marker "maʕ nafsak" in Saudi Arabic: A Pragmatic Perspective. *International Journal of Linguistics*, *7*(3), 33-48.

[10] *Cambridge Dictionary*. https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/pragmatic, 10-Jan-2023.

[11] Carston, Robyn. (2021). Polysemy: Pragmatics and sense conventions. *Mind & Language*, *36*, 108–133.

[12] Clark, Herbert. (1996). *Using language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[13] Deda, N. (2013). The role of Pragmatics in English language teaching. Pragmatic competence. *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, *2*(4), 63. Oxford Dictionary. https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/

[14] Farghal, Muhammad. (1995). The pragmatics of insˇallah in Jordanian Arabic. *Multilingua*, *14*, 253-270.

[15] Hamdan, J. M., & Rumman, R. A. (2020). The pragmatic functions of Yahummalali in Jordanian spoken Arabic. *Jordan Journal of Modern Languages and Literatures*, *12*(3), 327-345.

[16] Hanzaee, K. H., & Ramezani, M. R. (2011). Intention to *ḥalāl* products in the world markets. *Interdisciplinary Journal of research in Business*, *1*(5), 1-7.

[17] Harb, M., Jarrah, M., & Alghazo, S. (2022). Discourse markers within sentence grammar: Further evidence from ʕaad in Jordanian Arabic. *Ampersand*, *9*, 100082. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amper.2022.100082.

[18] Kamil, S., & Darojat, Z. (2019). Mosques and Muslim Social Integration: Study of External Integration of the Muslims. *Insaniyat: Journal of Islam and Humanities*, *4*(1), 37-48.

[19] Maschler, Y., & Schiffrin, D. (2015). Discourse markers language, meaning, and context. *The handbook of discourse analysis*, 189-221.

[20] Migdadi, F., Badarneh, M., & Momani, K. (2010). Divine will and its Arabic. *Communication Monographs*, *77*(4), 499.

[21] Thneibat, Amal (in press). (2023). *A Sociolinguistic Analysis of Oath Terms Used by Jordanian Youths Dirasat, Human and Social Sciences.*

[22] Wixon, D. et al. (2002). Usability in practice: Field methods evolution and revolution. In *Proceedings of CHI 2002 Conference, Usability in Practice session Field Studies—Evolution and Revolution*. http://www.teced.com/PDFs/Chi2002.pdf. 2-Jan-2023.

Bushra S. Majali was born in Jordan, 1989. She has a Ph.D. degree in Applied Linguistics from the University of Jordan. She has been a lecturer at Al-Balqa Applied University, Jordan since 2015. Before that she worked as a school teacher for two years in Jordanian public schools. And participated in *brain critical thinking course* held by American Peace Corps and other interpretation work with them. She is interested in several fields, as sociolinguistics, language planning, semantic, psycholinguistic and pragmatics. She was a speaker in Leiden university conference last year in Netherlands.

Amal Abdallah Thneibat is Jordanian. She is 33 years. She holds a Ph.D. degree in linguistics and Syntax. She obtained her degree from the University of Jordan. She has been a lecturer at Al-Balqa Applied University at the department of English since 2015. She has several published articles in Syntax, Sociolinguistics and Pragmatics. She is interested in Syntax, sociolinguistics, semantic, morphology, phonology, psycholinguistic and pragmatics.