

The English But and Its Equivalent in Standard Arabic: Universality vs. Locality

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Abstract—This paper attempted to compare and contrast the discourse functions of the English primary contrastive discourse marker *but* with its equivalent in Standard Arabic *lakin*. A judgment test of forty-eight examples was presented to 5 Arabic-English speaking informants and 5 English native informants. The results showed that, like *but* in English, *lakin* functions as the primary contrastive discourse marker in Standard Arabic. The analysis of the results showed that although the English *but* can be translated to Arabic using other discourse markers such as *bal*, *bianama*, and *lakinna*, none of them can function as the primary contrastive discourse marker equivalent to the English *but* because they cannot capture the semantic meanings of the English *but*. Only *lakin* can capture most of the semantic meanings of the English *but*. However, while *lakin* and *but* share many of the discourse functions, they greatly differ when it comes to non discourse marker functions. *Lakin* does not have the same semantic meanings of *but* in non discourse marker sequences. The study concluded with several suggestions for teaching and research.

Index Terms—discourse analysis, discourse markers, *but*, English, *lakin*, standard Arabic

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, a sizeable body of linguistic inquiry has been concerned with the study of connective words such as *but*, *however*, *instead*, *as a result*, etc. in English and other languages. In the literature, researchers approach these connective words under a variety of labels including *discourse markers* (Schiffrin, 1987; Schiffrin, 2008; Fraser, 1990, 1997, 1999, 2005, 2008), *discourse connectives* (Blakemore, 1987; 1992; 2002), *discourse operators* (Redker, 1991), *cue phrase* (Knott, 2000; Knot & Dale, 1994; Knott & Sander, 1998; Sander & Noordem, 2000), *discourse particles* (Schorup, 1985), *semantic conjuncts* (Quirck et al, 1985), *sentence connectives* (Halliday & Hasen, 1976), *pragmatic formatives* (Fraser, 1988, 1990; Schiffrin, 1987). In addition, researchers disagree on what words are considered connectives. For example, Fraser (1999) rejected Schiffrin's classification of *Oh!*, *Look!*, *I' know* as connective words. In this paper, the term discourse markers (hereafter DMs) will be adapted because it is the most wide-spread and considered to be the most inclusive (Barderia, 2008; Fisher, 2008), and the focus will be on the contrastive discourse marker (hereafter CDM) *but* in English and its equivalent in Standard Arabic (hereafter SA).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Definition and Meaning of a DM

Despite wide research interest in the area of DMs from around 1985 (e.g., Schorup, 1985; Schiffrin, 1987) to the present (e.g., Fraser, 2008; Bazzanella, 2008), a generally acceptable definition and unified treatment of DMs are still lacking (Bazzanella, 2008; Fraser, 1999; Hussein, 2008c). This might be due to the relative newness of research on DMs (Malamud-Malowksi, 1997) and the disagreement among researchers on what to classify as DMs (Fraser, 2005). Schiffrin (1987) gives a thorough account of the importance of DMs to discourse coherence. In so doing, she employs *conversational analysis* as her approach towards the analysis of DMs. According to her, DMs are “sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talks” (Schiffrin, 1987, p. 31). This definition characterizes DMs as dependent in their occurrence on the content where they may occur. They also function as brackets by which the boundaries between the units of talk are signaled. Schiffrin's definition is unexhaustive. That is, she only dealt with *and*, *because*, *but*, *I mean*, *now*, *of*, *or*, *so*, *then*, *well* and *y' know*.

Fraser defines DMs as “lexical expressions, independent of the basic sentence structure, which signal a sequential relationship of a specific sort between the basic message conveyed by the utterance of which they are a part and some earlier message, and they have a core meaning signaling the general nature of this relationship” (Cited in Malamud-Malwaski, 1997, p.17). Fraser's definition is more comprehensive and discernible than Schiffrin's because of his treatment of a large number of DMs in English and other languages. In another context, Fraser (1999, p. 936) briefly defined DMs as “a linguistic expression ... which: (i) has a core meaning which can be enriched by the context, and (ii) signals the relationship that the speaker intends between the utterance the DM introduces and the foregoing utterance ... “These two definitions in fact summarize most of the characteristics associated with DMs.

To begin with, Fraser argued that every DM has a core meaning. To explain this, let us examine the following examples.

- (1) a. John was sick *So* DM, don't expect him.
 b. John was sick, *so* scj he went to bed. (Fraser, 1993, p.6)

Fraser claims that *so* in (1.a) has the meaning of a DM since it relates the proposition in sentence 2 (S2) with the proposition in sentence 1 (S1). *So* here signals a consequent relationship. It is used to relate two separate messages. In (1.b), *so* is functioning as a subordinate conjunction connecting two propositions with the same message. The DM, which introduces the message in S2, provides the hearer with a comment on the basic message in S1. To demonstrate this, let us consider the following examples furnished by Fraser.

- (2) a. John is very sick. *Therefore*, he was admitted to the hospital.
 b. Sandy delivered a baby. *Therefore*, she took a leave from her job.
 c. I like Laura. *Therefore*, I would do whatever she asks me. (Fraser, 1993, p.7)

Although the core meaning of *therefore* is the same in the three examples given above, it allows different interpretations for the contexts where it occurs. It is the job of the hearer to figure out the intended core meaning inserted within the particular discourse context (Fraser, 1993)

Although DMs have core meaning, they don't contribute to the propositional content of either S1 or S2. According to Fraser (1993, p. 6), "a discourse marker does not participate as a part of the propositional content of the sentence. It is detachable and may be deleted without changing the content meaning and the grammaticality of the sentence." Malamud-Makowski supports Fraser's view and maintains that a DM is "a part of a sentence, but it is not part of the proposition expressed in such sentence" (1997, p. 20). The following examples explain this point further.

- (3) a. Mohammed is Saudi. *In contrast*, Ali is Egyptian.
 b. Nora speaks French. *And* Anna speaks Japanese.

The two DMs *in contrast* in (3.a) and *and* in (3.b) do not affect or change the meaning of the two sentences. They merely function as lexical clues by which the hearer can sense some relationship between the two segments. The absence of the DMs *in contrast* and *and* is unharmed to the meaning of the proposition in S1 and S2. Let us delete the DMs from the two sentences and see what might happen to their meaning.

- (4) a. Mohammed is Saudi. Ali is Egyptian.
 b. Nora speaks French. Anna speaks Japanese.

The meaning in (4.a) and (4.b) is still intact. This raises the question whether the meaning of DMs is procedural or conceptual. Fraser (1999) claims that the meaning of a DM is procedural rather than conceptual. He maintains that "an expression with a conceptual meaning specifies a defining set of semantic features, as the case with a boy and hypothesis. On the other hand, an expression with a procedural meaning specifies how the segment it introduces is to be interpreted relative to the prior..." (Fraser, 1999, p. 944).

B. Position of DMs

As a result of being not part of the structure or the meaning of a sentence, DMs can occur in various positions within a sentence. Some of them may occur in sentence-initial position. Others may occur in sentence-medial position. A few of them may occur in sentence-final position (Fraser, 1993). Fraser supplied the following examples to show these positions.

- (5) "I am willing to ask the dean to do it.
 i. However, you know he won't agree.
 ii. You, however, know that he won't agree.
 iii. You know, however, that he won't agree.
 iv. You know that he won't agree, however." (Fraser, 1993, p. 5)

With regard to the position of the DM *but*, the focus of this study, it can only appear in initial and medial positions. It cannot appear in final position. The following examples illustrate this point.

- (6) a. Water freezes at 32 degrees *but* it boils at 212 degrees. (Fraser, 2008, p. 193)
 b. A: John is at home. B: *But*- I just saw him in the mall. (Fraser, 2008, p. 194)
 c. A: You must go today. B: *But* I (**but*) don't want to go (**but*) (Fraser, 2008, p. 195)

In (6.a), *but* appears in medial position between S1 and S2. In (6.b) and (6.c), *but* appears in initial position introducing S2. However, as in (6.c), *but* cannot appear in S2 medial position or in final position.

C. The English But

In the first book titled *Discourse Markers*, Schiffrin (1987) discussed *but* intensively. She grouped and presented *but* with two DMs: *and* and *or* in a lengthy chapter. As with the other ten DMs she discussed in her book, Schiffrin investigated *but* in relation to discourse coherence. She described *but* as a DM of three types of contrast: *a referential contrast*, *a functional contrast*, and *a contrastive action*.

Schiffrin's use of *referential contrast* can be accounted for in terms of Lackoff's (1971) dichotomy: *semantic opposition but* and *denial of expectation but* (Bell, 1998). Schiffrin provided the following examples to explain this point.

- (7). "Jane: I used t' go every summer. My mother'd send me down with relatives. *But* I used t' cry I wanted to go home.
 I didn't like it.

Debby: When you go home. You liked the summer there. No?!

Jane: I'm not one for staying too long down there." (Schiffrin, 1987, p. 156)

(8). "Debby: And you were born in North Philadelphia.

Ira: a. No. I was born in uh in- in South Philadelphia.

b. but I moved to North Philadelphia when I was a year old." (Schiffrin, 1987, p.159)

In (7), there is a sense of *denial of expectation*. Contrary to the expectation that children enjoy being at the seashore with their relatives, Jane did not enjoy her time. In contrast, North Philadelphia and South Philadelphia are semantically opposed. There is also a semantic contrast between being born and being a year old as shown in (8) above.

But also has a *functional contrast* in that it signals units of ideas. In (9) below, Henry and Irene are both Jewish who hold different ideas about intermarriage between people with conflicting religions. Irene does not believe in such marriage, and she believes that one day there will be one religion. In contrast, Henry shows extreme position towards such intermarriage on the basis that Jewish people are tolerance to other people who are in turn intolerance to Jews. The utterance presented by *but* marks the contrast between the hypothetical situation (that would force him to disavow his position) and the actual situation (that allows him to maintain his position)" (Schiffrin, 1987, p. 154). Schiffrin further describes this contrast as inferable only because a particular proposition violates speaker/hearer expectations, which is not based on prior proposition in the discourse, but on expectation which is influenced by background experience and knowledge.

(9). a. You're not livin' in a world where you have equality completely.

b. You put that in this world, I'll go along with it.

c. If I stays that way,

d. And where it does not make any difference

e. Yes. I'll go with that in a second.

f. I won't disagree with anything>

g. *But* the- the Arabs call us infidels...

h. The Christian call us pagans... (Schiffrin, 1987, p. 154)

Finally, Schiffrin (1987) argued that *but* functions as a *point-marking device*. That is to say, the speaker may return to a previously stated idea or action to support his or her position. She referred to this as *contrastive action but*. She provided the following example to support her view.

(10). Henry: And not- and there is less=

Irene: But it's not a matter of -even=

Henry: *But* today there is less respect

[Henry continues] (Schiffrin, 1987, p. 164)

In this example, *but* signals Henry's return to a previous point (*there is less respect*) to defend himself against Irene's challenge. However, Schiffrin contends that *but* is not only used to correct misunderstanding or defend one's position, but it also can be used to perform a remark which disagrees with a previous remark, as in (11).

(11). Henry: Y'see you move across the way, you live in a big house. And, you belong to eh may be a country club.

Zelda: eh: it's a different phrase of living! *But* it doesn't necessarily mean you have to! (Schiffrin, 1987, p. 144)

Schiffrin's treatment of *but* and the other DMs lack comprehensive data. She focused on the conversation of a few Jewish speakers in Philadelphia. The sample is not adequately representative. It only included a few speakers whose English was not the language of heritage. Moreover, the subjects appeared to be influenced by their Jewish background which makes the data restricted to the type of conversation they produced.

Within the framework of the *Principle of Relevance Theory*, as proposed by Sperber and Wilson (1986, 1995), Blakemore (1987, 1989, 1992, 2000) examined the semantic and pragmatic uses of *but* in English. She argued that the *Principle of Relevance Theory* is important in that it helps the hearer understand the function of discourse connectives such as *but*. She contended that "a speaker who has a specific interpretation in mind may direct the hearer toward the interpretation by making a certain set of contextual assumptions immediately accessible thus ensuring their selection under the Principle of Relevance" (Blakemore, 1989, p. 21). Based on this view, Blakemore (2000) rejected Grice's (1975) notion of *conventional implicature*, which holds that propositions are implicit because they are not part of what is being said.

Blakemore (1989, 2000) treated DMs, including *but*, as linguistic devices which the speaker may use to constrain the hearer's interpretation of a given utterance. According to her, these devices do not contribute to the propositional content of the utterance in which they occur. Instead, they guide the interpretation process by determining certain context and contextual effects. In other words, DMs are conceptually empty *but* have procedural meanings.

Relevant to the focus of this study is her focus on the English *but*. Blakemore (1989, 2000) classified *but* into two types: *denial of expectation but* and *contrast but*. She argued that in both cases, *but* instructs the hearer to derive a negation of a proposition of which its value is determined by the interpretation of the first clause. However, they differ in terms of the role played by the first clause. She gave the following example to demonstrate her argument.

(12). a. John is a Republican, *but* he's honest. b. John is not honest. (Blakemore, 1989, p. 26).

Blakemore argues that in (12.a) *but* indicates that the hearer is expected to have derived the proposition in (12.b) from the proposition in S1. In this respect, *but* is seen as a constraint on the meaning of the proposition in S1. *But* here is used to prevent the hearer from the derivation of an implication which the speaker thinks is not true.

Unlike *denial of expectation but*, *contrast but* forms a conjoined utterance because it has “and” as part of its meaning (Blakemore, 2000, p. 29). However, *but* is used differently from *and* in that it can only connect two propositions. It is used to present the hearer with a single conjoined proposition whose relevance is dependent on the way in which the first conjoined influences the context for the interpretation of the second. Blakemore supplied the following example to support her view.

(13). Mary votes Labour, Susan votes SDP, Anne votes Tory, *but* Jane votes for the Communist Party. (Blakemore, 2000, p. 29)

The task of the hearer in (13) is to find out how Jane is different from the others: Mary, Susan, and Anne.

In a series of studies, Fraser (1997, 2005, 2008) characterized the core meaning of *but* in English. He summarized the core meaning of *but* as follows:

... the target of S2 with the CDM *but* can be either the direct, an implied, a presupposed, or an entailed message. In all cases, *but* signals that S2 is to stand in contrast to a message conveyed by S1, and any refinement of this simple contrast to a more specific one, for example, that in a protest use it directly rejects the S1 direct message, follows from the context and the messages involved and does not follow from an ambiguity of the core meaning of the CDM *but*. (Fraser, 1997, p. 8)

According to Fraser (1997), the only core meaning of the DM *but* is to signal a simple contrast, and this actual contrast may be interpreted from the S1 message. The contrast could be the direct S1 message as in (14).

(14). John is tall. *But* Sam is short. (Fraser, 1997, p. 8)

Fraser (1997) argued that the two messages contrast in at least two corresponding areas. These contrasts may be along well-defined continua, such as height in (14) above. The order of S2 and S1 in (14) is irrelevant and can be reversed with no change in interpretation.

Fraser (1997) suggested other ways to identify contrast between the direct S2 and S1 messages. First, there may be only one area of contrast but an *also*, *too* or *either* will be used or implied as in (15).

(15) a. John gave toys to Mary. *But* he gave toys to Jane (, *also/too*.)

b. Tim is not short. *But* Max is not short (, *either*.) (Fraser, 1997, p. 8)

Second, S2 is denying the content in S1. This denial arises from the content of S2 and S1, not as a function of the core meaning of *but* (Fraser, 1997). Fraser called this “protest” *but*, which must involve two speakers, as shown in the following example.

(16) A: Harry is honest. B: *But* he’s NOT honest. (Fraser, 1997, p. 8)

Third, S2 may provide a reason for a confirmation which had been deleted, as illustrated in (17).

(17). A: James is not in his office. B: *But* (he IS in his office since) I just saw him there. (Fraser, 1997, p. 9)

Fourth, if the hearer cannot detect an explicit contrast, s/he should look for a presupposed message of S1, as shown in (18) or an entailed message of S1, as illustrated in (19).

(18). A: Three of my four kids are in school. (Presupposed: The fourth is not.). B: *But* all of your children are in school.

(19). A: Nancy is enjoying being a bachelor. (Entailed: Nancy is a male). B: *But* Nancy is female. (Fraser, 1997, p. 9)

Finally, the target of the CDM *but* may be implied, an indirect message of S1, as illustrated in (20).

(20). a. John is a politician. (Implied: Politicians are dishonest.) *But* he is honest. (Fraser, 1997, p. 9)

In (20), the segment “He is honest” contrasts a widespread implication that all politicians are dishonest. The speaker of (20) apparently wants to avoid the implication that this is his viewpoint (Fraser, 1997)

Fraser (1997) further argued that If the target contrast of S2 is an implied, presupposed or entailed message, the order of S2 and S1 is critical, and S2 and S1 cannot be interchanged. Thus, (21.b) does not mean the same thing as (21.a).

(21) a. John is a politician. *But* he is honest. b. John is honest. *But* he is a politician (Fraser, 1997, p. 9)

With regard to the syntactic sequences of *but*, Fraser (1997) suggested the following five sequences:

Declarative. BUT+ Declarative

(22). We didn't leave late. *But*, we arrived late. (Fraser, 1997, p. 7)

Declarative. But+ Imperative/Interrogative

(23). a. The shipment of candy has arrived. *But*, don't touch it.

b. It's all alright Sue wasn't here today. *But*, when will she be able to come? (Fraser, 1997, p. 4)

Imperative. But+ Declarative

(24). Take a letter. *But*, I don't want you to send it right away. (Fraser, 1997, p. 4)

Imperative. But+ imperative

(25). Take a letter. *But*, tell me if I am going too fast (Fraser, 1997, p. 4)

As a non-DM, the English *but* has some systematic functions (Fraser, 1997). The first non-DM use of *but* is that of a “topic change pragmatic marker” (Fraser, 1996, p.7). In this regard, *but* has the task of signaling a reorientation of the conversational topic where there is no semantic contrast between S1 and S2 (Fraser, 1997), as shown in (26) below.

(26). I promise to go. *But*, leave me alone for the time being. (Fraser, 1997, p. 4)

The second non-DM use suggested by Fraser (2005) occurs when *but* is a preposition, with the meaning of *except*. Fraser claims that the object of the preposition *but* is an exception to the information given in S1. The following example demonstrates this use of *but*.

(27). Come anytime *but/except* now. (Fraser, 2005, p. 18)

The third systematic use of the non-DM *but* is that of an adverb. *But* may have the meaning of *only*, *simply*, *just*, and sometimes *merely*, as shown in the following examples.

(28). a. I *have but/only/just* a moment. b. He is *but/merely* a child. (Fraser, 2005, p. 18)

The fourth systematic use of the non-DM *but* occurs with the combination *all but* (*nearly/almost/ practicably/almost*) where the interpretation is just less than the scope content.

(29) a. He has *all but/nearly* clinched the championship.
b. The paper money in Russia is *all but/practicably* worthless.
c. They are finding it *all but/almost* impossible to make a living. (Fraser, 2005, p.18)

The final systematic use of the non-DM *but* proposed by Fraser (2005) occurs when S1 is an apology and carry a deferential tone, as shown in (30).

(30) I apologize for saying this, *but* don't you think you should drive more slowly? (Fraser, 2005, p.18)

Fraser (2005) listed unsystematic uses of the non-DM *but* in English. He described some of these as unique idioms. He didn't comment on them. They are reproduced in (31) for consideration.

(31) a. *but good*: I'll get you *but* good.
b. *If I could (would/had) but* Verb...: If I could *but* explain.
c. *Rhetorical question*: What belief is so foolish *but* some will embrace it?
d. *can (could) not help but wonder if ...*: I can't/couldn't help *but* wonder if we did the right thing yesterday.
e. *but of course*: A: Is it done? B: (*But*) of course it's done/*it's not done.
f. *but the thing that/what pleases him/her most/least*: He is happy with his work, with his marriage, and with his children. *But what/the thing that pleases him most* is the fact that he has finally stopped drinking.
g. *but above all*: Thanks are due to John and Mary. *But above all*, I want to thank Harry.
h. *but for = except for*: *But for* the grace of God, that was I. ((Fraser, 2005, p. 19)

D. *But across Languages*

To cross-validate the findings of these studies that examined *but* in English and establish a universal theory of the discourse functions of *but*, other researchers investigated the DM *but* in their languages. For example, Fraser and Malamud-Makowski (1996) compared English CDM with those in Spanish, including *but* in English and its counterpart in Spanish *pero*. They described the differences and similarities between *but* and *pero*. In terms of the English *but*, they found that *but* was the most general CDM. They also found that *but* occurs in some positions where other CDM may not occur. Fraser and Malamud-Makowski claimed that *but* does not only function as a denial of expectation and semantic constraint, but it has more general relationship than this. As a discourse marker, they argued that *but* signals both a *contrast* and a *denial*. *But* signals that S2 should be interpreted as a denial of a proposition arising from S1. However, the denial *but* tends to be a simple one. *But* also signals implicit, explicit, and assumed contrast. Finally, they argued that *but* in English can occur in the same utterance with all of the other CDMs. Like English Fraser and Malamud-Makowski found that the Spanish *pero* (*but*) was the most general CDMs in the Spanish language. It can be used in a wider range of contexts than the other CDMs. They found that *pero* tend to appear more often in naturally occurring data. Like *but* in English, *pero* is not subject to mood restrictions. That is, it can occur after declarative, imperative, interrogative, and performative structure.

In another study, Permikul (1999) investigated the discourse marker *tɛɛ* (*but*) in Thai. She found that *tɛɛ* was the most frequent and common CDMs in Thai. As in other languages, *tɛɛ* signals that proposition in S2 in is in contrast with the proposition in S1. She also found that *tɛɛ* can occur in a number of positions on the condition that the construction is of that: S1 CDM S2. However, Permikul found that that *tɛɛ* is not normally used as a concessive marker connecting S2 and S1. The analysis of the data showed that *tɛɛ* is often accompanied by two Thai words *klab* (a model verb) and *kɔɔ* (a particle). Permikul found that *tɛɛ* can precede a question, either by a new speaker or by the same speaker. Finally, she found that that *tɛɛ* in Thai is interchangeable with all other CDMs, but not vice versa.

Othman (2000) examined the *tetapi* (*but*) in Malay. She found that *tetapi* in Malay signals that S2 is in either explicit or implicit contrast with the segment in S1. Othman found that *tetapi* has the widest scope and imposes the fewest restrictions between S2 and S1 with which it is contrasted. That is why *tetapi* may substitute for all Malay CDMs, except for some instances of *sebaliknya* (*instead*). Finally, the findings showed that *tetapi* can only occur in initial position.

Fraser (2005, 2008) examined whether there is a single, primary CDM equivalent to the English *but* in other Languages and whether the uses of this primary CDMs are the same across languages. He constructed a judgment test and sent it to native speakers of Arabic, Catalan, Chinese, Danish, Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Japanese, Korean, Norwegian, Spanish, and Swedish. The judgment test included the following contexts.

1. Those contexts that accept the DM use of *but* in English

John is not fat ___ is very thin.

We started late ___ we arrived on time.

2. Those contexts that reject the DM use of *but* in English
I rarely open the door. ___ I simply ignore them.
Mary didn't make a trivial mistake. ___ she made a horrendous error.
3. Those uses of *but* that are not DMs in English
All left ___ one.
He is ___ a child.
I'll get him ___ good. (Fraser, 2005, p. 19)

The results showed that all speakers identified a primary CDM equivalent to *but* in English. With a few exceptions, all the uses of *but* as a DM in English were judged to be similarly used by at least one of the individuals from each language. In many cases, all agreed.

Fraser noted that the most consistent disagreement was with sequence such as (32) where speakers from a variety of languages indicated that an alternative form (Spanish: *pero/sino*; German: *aber/sondern*; Hebrew: *ela/aval*) was required in this context. This was to be expected. There was no other outstanding exception.

(32) John is not tall *but* short. (Fraser, 2005, p. 20)

The sequences of non-DM uses of *but* provided some curious results. Three of the sequences were surprisingly judged acceptable across many of the languages.

- (33) a) You may think I'm crazy, ___ where is the dog?
b) Thanks go to John and Mary. ___ above all, I want to thank Harry.
c) You have to get up early. ___ after all, how much sleep do you need? (Fraser, 2005, p. 21)

The example in (33.a) is acceptable to nearly everyone. Fraser claims that these results were unexpected and will require further research.

Unfortunately, Fraser didn't elaborate in his discussion of the results. Although Arabic was included among the languages in which he tested the universality of the CDM *but*, he didn't mention it in his discussion.

Hussein (2008a) examined the different meanings encoded by the DM *but* in English. He argued that *but* in English encodes a general procedure meaning that can be applied in four different ways to derive the following meanings of *but* in English: "denial of expectation, "contrast, "correction" and "cancellation." He claimed that these meanings come under the terms "contrast" but are separate. To support his position, Hussein used data from SA. He argued that the four linguistic expressions that correspond to *but* in SA (*Lakinna*, *bainama*, *bal*, and *lakin*) are translations of the four different meanings of the general procedure encoded by *but* in English. Thus he rejected the ambiguity account of *but* in English suggested by some theorists such as Anscombe and Ducrot (1977) and Horn (1989). Hussein's study has some defects with its treatment of the concept of ambiguity of the DM *but* in English. He focused on the meanings of *but* in SA to reject the ambiguity associated with it in English without examining the variety of meanings *but* has in English. Furthermore, the other DMs in Arabic (*Lakinna*, *bainama*, *bal*, *lakin*) not always mere translation of *but* in English. Another legitimate argument is that he assigned single meaning of the English *but* to each of these four DMs in Arabic. *Lakin* in Arabic can cover these four meanings of *but* in English, i.e., *denial of expectation*, *contrast*, *correction*, and *cancellation*, while the others do not.

III. CONCLUSION

To summarize this section, the English CDM *but* has received a great attention in the past three decades. Although researchers agree, to a great extent, on that *but* has the discourse function of contrast, they do differ in their approaches to explain this function. While a group of researchers (e.g., Schiffrin, 1987, 2008; Fraser, 1999, 2008) argue that *but*, like the other DMs, plays a crucial role in the interpretation of discourse by signaling coherence relations between discourse units, other researchers (e.g., Blakemore, 1989, 2000, 2002; Hussein, 2008a, 2008c) argue that *but*, like other DMs, is a procedure and an indicator that constrains the inferential part of the utterance interpretation by guiding the hearer to recognize the intended cognitive effect with the least processing effort. With regard to the universality of *but* across languages, it's still tentative to conclude that *but* functions the same across languages. However, the very few cross-linguistic studies conducted so far have shown that *but* may have universal aspects. For example, *but* signals *contrast* between the proposition in S1 and S2 across languages. It doesn't add to the meaning of either S1 or S2. Therefore, *but* has a procedural meaning rather than a conceptual meaning. However, it's not clear yet whether *but* is viewed as the primary CDM across languages, and can appear in almost the same sequences. Research is needed to investigate this area to reach a universal theory of *but* as a DM shared by all languages. It's the purpose of this current study to bridge this gap in the literature through comparing and contrasting the English CDM *but* with its equivalent in SA.

IV. RESEARCH PROBLEM AND HYPOTHESES

Arabic has not received adequate research concerning the functions of DMs on either the sentence or text level. Traditionally, the study of DMs in Arabic has been limited to the boundaries of the sentence with the grammarians' primary focus on studying the syntactic properties of DMs and the governing powers they have over nouns and verbs (Al-Batal, 1985, 1990). Because of their utmost interest in al-iraab case and mode inflections, the Arab grammarians

viewed DMs as inflection-changing elements than as text-building units. However, the Arab traditional grammarians gave little attention to DMs as cohesive and text-building elements. They studied them under an independent discipline called *al-balaagha* "rhetoric." Those grammarians dealt with some aspects of cohesion including *al-fasl wa al-wasl* "disjunction and conjunction." Their treatment was limited to *wa* "and" and its different uses, and thus does not provide a thorough understanding of the cohesive role of DMs in Arabic in general. A few modern Arab linguists (e.g., Al-Batal, 1985, 1990, 1994; Al-Khalil, 2005; Ghobrial, 1994; Hussein, 2008a 2008b) have tried to view DMs from a different perspective by placing more emphasis on examining the semantic and pragmatic functions of DMs in SA and colloquial Arabic. Although their treatment of DMs in Arabic is valuable, it does not provide a unified approach towards the study of DMs in Arabic, and thus does not contribute to the universal theory of DMs. In addition, some of these studies focused on colloquial discourse aspects of certain Arabic dialects such as Cairene Egyptian Arabic (Ghobrial, 1994), Lebanese Arabic (Al-Batal, 1994), and Syrian Arabic (Al-khalil, 2005). Others were concerned with only one literary text and classified DMs according to semantic meanings rather than their discourse functions, as in Al-Batal (1985, 1990). Others like Hussein (2008a, 2008b) discussed single DMs in SA such as *fa*, *bal*, *lakinna*, *bainama*, *lakin* based on the *Principle of Relevance theory*.

In order to further understand the functions of DMs from a universal perspective, it is essential to compare and contrast the sequences in which DMs occur across languages. Fraser (1988, 1993, 1996, 1997, 1999, 2005, 2008) has stressed the need to look at the extent to which DMs, especially the primary ones, "have the same nuanced interpretations across languages" (2008, p. 202). Unfortunately, despite the call for cross-linguistic studies on DMs there seems to be very few studies that investigated the universality vs. locality of DMs in general and primary DMs such as *but*, *and*, *so* in particular. Although we find several studies that compared and contrasted pair of languages (e.g., English vs. Spanish, English vs. French) in terms of DMs, we hardly find studies that did the same with Arabic vs. any other languages such as English. For this reason, any argument in favor of the universality of DMs shall remain tentative until more research with other languages is conducted. To contribute to this area of research, the current study examined the sequences in which the English *but* and its equivalent in SA may occur. Following Fraser (2005), this study addressed the following two null hypotheses:

1. There is a single, primary CDM in SA equivalent to the English CDM *but*.
2. The uses of this primary CDM (*But* in English and its equivalent in SA) are the same in both languages.

V. METHOD

A. Informants

Ten informants participated in this study. Five Arabic-English speaking informants answered a judgment test of forty-eight examples related to the possible uses of the CDMs *lakin* in certain contexts in which the English *but* may or may not occur. The other five informants were English native speakers who were requested to answer the judgment test in which the English CDM *but* may or may not occur. All the Arabic-English speaking informants were native speakers of Arabic and highly educated in English with MA and PhD degrees in linguistics, translation, or TESOL. There were four linguistics professors and one lecturer. Two of the professors have been teaching English/translation for more than 30 years. The reason for employing informants with high degrees in linguistics and translation was to avoid the problem of bilinguality. It was very important to make sure that the informants have equal proficiency in the two languages under investigation (Arabic and English). Similarly, the native speakers of English were educated, one with a PhD. in linguistics, and four with masters' degrees in English.

B. Instrument

In order to determine if SA has a primary CDM equivalent to the English CDM *but* and patterns of occurrence similar to that of *but* in English, Fraser's (2005) judgment test of *but* was adapted. Fraser developed and applied this test to other languages such as Catalan, Chinese, Danish, English, Finish, German, Greek, Hebrew, Japanese, Korean, Norwegian, Spanish, and Swedish. There were two versions of this test with the same items, but the informants received different instructions. The Arabic-English speaking informants were instructed to first determine the primary CDM in SA which they think is equivalent to the English primary CDM *but*. Then, they were instructed to write *Yes* if the Arabic primary CDM they selected (*lakin*) fits in the 48 examples and *No* if it does not. Native informants of English were instructed to write *Yes* if the English *but* fits and *No* if it does not.

Following Fraser (2005, 2008), the judgment test of *but* included the following contexts:

1. Those contexts that accept the DM use of *but* in English, as in: *John is not fat _____ is very thin.*
2. Those contexts that reject the DM use of *but* in English, as in: *I rarely open the door. _____ I simply ignore them.*
3. Those unsystematic uses of *but* that are not DMs in English, as in: *All left _____ one.*

Fraser (2005) clearly pointed out the deficiencies that accompanied the construction of the judgment test of *but*. First, he realized that he used the contrastive contexts of English and didn't consider if the contrastive contexts in the other languages he tested were different. Second, there was no guarantee that the respondents were truly bilingual, which might have biased their judgments. Third, Fraser realized that he left certain critical areas uncovered. To reduce or even eliminate the effect of the first deficiency, the Arabic-English informants were directed to use translation, whenever

necessary, to judge whether *lakin* is acceptable or not in these constructions. To avoid the second deficiency in this study, the Arabic-English speaking informants were chosen on the basis that they have higher degrees in English/translation with a long experience in their fields. With regard to the third deficiency, nothing was made to avoid it except proceeding with the results cautiously.

C. Date Collection and Analysis Procedures

Date was collected by distributing the judgment test of *but* to the informants in two ways. First, the researcher handed in the test to two Arabic-English speaking informants with whom he had immediate contact. To have more participants, the judgment test was sent out to more informants via the email. Only seven responded; three Arabic-English bilinguals and five native speakers of English. The frequency of the informants' responses were statistically introduced and discussed.

VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Primary CDM *But* in English and SA

The analysis of the results showed that the five Arabic participants identified *lakin* as the primary CDM in SA equivalent to the English CDM *but*. This came to no surprise because *but* is usually translated to *Lakin* in SA. However, it is very important to keep in mind that some other DMs may share some of the meanings of *lakin* in SA. For example, Hussein (2008) claimed that the English *but* can be translated to four meanings in SA: *bal* (denial of expectation), *bainama* (correction), *lakinna* (contrast), and *lakin* (cancellation). But the analysis of the results here showed that none of the three DMs (*bal*, *lainama*, *lakinna*) can be considered the primary CDM in SA equivalent to the English *but*. These three DMs can only occur in certain contexts where the English CDM *but* is used. It is the CDM *lakin* which can occur in many of the contexts where the English *but* is used. Let's discuss the following examples answered by the informants.

18. Take a drink, *but/lakin/*bainama/*bal/*lakinna* be careful you don't spill any.
12. I'm a nurse. *But/lakin/*bainama/*bal/lakinna* my husband won't let me work.
13. I know this bus goes to Count Hall. *But/lakin/*bainama/*bal/*lakinna*, does it also go to the gym?
26. A: Consider this triangle. B: *But/ lakin/* bainama /*bal/lakinna* this figure has four sides.
1. John is fat, *but/lakin/bainama/*bal/lakinna* Mary is thin.

The CDM *lakin* occurs in all the contexts where the English *but* is possible, whereas the other DMs *bainama*, *lakinna* and *bal* do not, except for *lakinna* which may occur in 12, 26, 1, and *bianama* in 1. This supports the informants' choice of *lakin* as the primary CDM in SA equivalent to the CDM *but* in English. A possible reason of why *lakinna* may replace *lakin* in some contexts is that both have the function of adversative (Al-Batal, 1985, 1990); that is, denial of expectation.

In addition, *lakin* covers all the discourse functions of the English *but*: *contrast*, *denial of expectation*, *correction*, *cancellation*. For example, *lakin*-clause in 12 introduces S2 as a denial of expectation of what the hearer may conclude from S1 in that since *she is a nurse* she should be working in a clinical facility. This is also could be a cancellation of the assumption that may arise from being a nurse. In 13, *lakin* conveys a contrast between two things: the bus going to Count Hall and the bus going to the gym. *Lakin* in 26 functions as a corrector or canceller of the information contained in S1. Speaker B corrects and cancels A's statement that this is a triangle because it has four sides than three sides. In 1, *lakin* contrasts between two peoples John and Mary in terms of weight. However, *bianam* and *lakinna* can replace *lakin* in 34e, just when S2 is in clear contrast with S1. Again, this finding refutes Hussein's (2008a) argument that the English *but* can be translated to Arabic as: *bianam* (contrast), *bal* (correction), *lakinna* (denial of expectation), and *lakin* (cancellation). The problem with Hussein's claim is that classifying the meanings of the English *but* in SA in this way is inaccurate and restricts the discourse function of *lakin* to only one function "cancellation" which is not true as revealed by the examples stated above.

Another evidence supporting the argument that *lakin* is the primary CDM in SA equivalent to the English CDM *but* comes from the possibility of using *lakin* in some of the unsystematic uses of *but* in English, but not the other DMs *bainama* and *bal*. To explain this, let's examine the following examples in the data.

6. You may think I'm crazy, *lakin/*binama/*bal/?lakinna*, where is the dog?
7. I'm not sure if this is relevant, *lakin/*bianama/*bal/?lakinna* isn't that bag leaking?
only *lakin* fits in sequences 6-7. *Lakinna* may fit semantically but not syntactically. Substituting *lakin* with *bianama* or *bal* will make the sentences semantically and syntactically unacceptable.

Finally, *lakin* in SA behaves syntactically very much like its counterpart *but* in English. According to Fraser (1997), the English CDM *but* can occur in five syntactic sequences, reproduced here for the sake of comparison.

Declarative. But+ Declarative

12. I'm a nurse. *But/Lakin/*bainama/*bal/lakinna* my husband won't let me work.

Declarative. But+ Imperative/Interrogative

14. The launch on the table. *But/lakin/*bainama/*bal/*lakinna* don't touch anything.

Imperative. But+ Declarative

24. Say what you will, *but/ lakin/*bainama/*bal/*lakinna* you're not going to make me get upset.

Imperative. *But*+ imperative

18. Take a drink, *but/lakin/*bainama/*bal/*lakinna* be careful you don't spill any.

Performative. *But*+ declarative/imperative

3. I suggest that you take some cookies, *but/lakin/*bainama/*bal/*lakinna* leave the cake alone.

5. You promise to help me. *But/lakin/*bainama/*bal/*lakinna* you let me down.

In 12, the English *but* and its equivalent in SA *lakin* preceded and followed by declarative sentences. Except *lakinna*, *bainama* and *bal* do not fit in this syntactic structure. In 14, *but* and *lakin* can be preceded by a declarative and followed by either imperative or interrogative sentence. None of the DMs *bal*, *bainama*, and *lakinna* can fit in this syntactic structure. The two primary CDM *but* and *lakin* can also fit in the syntactic structure where they can be preceded by imperative and followed by declarative as in 24. Once again, none of the three DMs *bal*, *bainama*, and *lakinna* can syntactically fit in this structure. Both *but* and *lakin* can be preceded and followed by imperative sentence, as in 18. None of the DMs *bal*, *bainama*, and *lakinna* can fit in this syntactic structure. Finally, another syntactic structure in which *lakin* and *but* can occur is what Fraser (1997) called performatice expression as shown in sequences 3 and 5. In this structure, SI includes a performative expression followed by *but* and S2. None of the other DMs, which Hussein (2008) (*bainama*, *bal*, *lakinna*) claimed to have the same meanings of the English *but* when it is translated to SA, can fit in this syntactic structure.

B. Discourse Sequences of *But* and *Lakin*: Similarity vs. Anomaly

The purpose of this section was to find out the sequences in which the English and Arabic primary CDMs *but* and *lakin* may co-occur in an attempt to reach a universal linguistic account of *but* across languages. All informants in both languages agreed that the primary CDMs *but* and *lakin* co-occur in the sequences 1, 5, 11, and 18. These sequences are reproduced here for further consideration.

1. John is fat, *but/lakin* Mary is thin.

5. You promise to help me. *But/lakin* you let me down.

11. I could give you this book, *But/lakin* frankly, I don't want to.

18. Take a drink, *But/lakin* be careful you don't spill any.

Similarly, all informants in both languages except one Arabic-English speaker indicated that *but* and *lakin* fit in the sequences 10, 12-14, 23-25, 27, 29, and 31. They are reproduced below for consideration.

10. I'd take more, *But/lakin* I'm full.

12. I'm a nurse. *But/lakin* my husband won't let me work.

13. I know this bus goes to Count Hall. *But/lakin* does it also go to the gym

14. The lunch is on the table. *But/lakin* don't touch anything.

23. A: Now you know all the facts. B: *But/lakin* I'm still not convinced he is guilty.

24. Say what you will, *But/lakin* you're not going to make me get upset.

25. The flower was beautiful, *But/lakin* it was plastic.

27. A: All the boys left. B: *But/lakin* there were only two boys to start with.

29. A: When did he die? *But/lakin* he didn't die. he only left town.

31. A: John is home. B: *But/lakin* I just saw him at the store.

The informants' responses to the judgment test items 9, 15, 19, 22, 28, 30, 32, and 33 show less agreement between speakers in both languages. For each sequence, three out of the five Arabic-English speakers indicated that *lakin* can fit in these sequences. All native speakers of English said that *but* is acceptable in sequences 9, 15, 22, 28, and 30. Only 2 native speakers of English said that *but* is acceptable in sequence 9. Four of the native English speakers agreed that *but* fits in sequences 19 and 32.

9. Take one, *But/lakin*... don't take more than one.

15. A: It's warm in here. B: *But/lakin* turn up the heat anyway.

19. I cut a finger yesterday, *But/lakin* it wasn't mine.

22. A: John was assassinated in Dakar. B: *But/lakin* I always thought he died of natural causes.

28. A: I realize that John is sick. B: *But/lakin* John isn't sick.

30. A: I apologize for disturbing you. B: *But/lakin* you have nothing to apologize for.

32. I *should have* tried to open the door. *But/lakin* I simply ignored the boys.

33. Mary didn't make a trivial mistake. *But/lakin* she made a horrendous error.

With regard to the judgment test items 3, 4, and 26, two of the Arabic-English speakers agreed that *lakin* fits in these sequences. In contrast, all native informants of English agreed that *but* fits in these sequences. These sequences are illustrated here for consideration.

3. I suggest that you take some cookies, *But/lakin* leave the cake alone.

4. Take an orange, *But/lakin* leave the apples alone.

26. A: Consider this triangle. B: *But/lakin* this figure has four sides.

Finally, unlike the English *but*, *lakin* in SA does not fit in the sequences 2, 6, 8, 16, 17, 20, and 21. All native informants of Arabic said that *lakin* does not fit in these sequences.

2. John is not tall *But/*lakin* short.

6. John is a cop, *But/*lakin* he's also a carpenter.

8. Don't move your hand, *But/*lakin* don't talk either.
 16. A: What time is it? B: *But/*lakin* don't you have a watch?
 17. A: What time is it? B: *But/*lakin* why do you want to know?
 20. John died yesterday, *But/*lakin* he had been ill.
 21. A: John speaks perfect German. B: *But/*lakin* he was raised in Germany.

A possible interpretation of why speakers of Arabic judged *lakin* as unacceptable in these sequences is that S2 is not negating or denying the propositional content in S1. For example in sequence 6, S2 is an additional information about John. The English *but* has the meaning "not only a cop but also a carpenter." The Arabic CDM *lakin* does not have this meaning which can be conveyed by using *wa* (and). This further is shown in sequence 8 where both S1 and S2 are negative statements. Therefore, *lakin* does not fit in such a context because both sentences are already negated.

C. Unsystematic Uses of *Lakin* vs. *But*

With regard to the unsystematic uses of *lakin* in SA and *but* in English. All the Arabic-English speaking informants indicated that the CDM *lakin* cannot fit in the judgment test items no. 1-4 and 8-11, whereas the English native informants said that the CDM *but* fits in these sequences.

1. Everyone *but/*lakin* John was here.
2. Nothing *but/*lakin* soda would satisfy her.
3. He is nothing *but/*lakin* a child.
4. I have *but/*lakin* a moment.
8. A: Is it finished. B: *But/*lakin* of course it's done.
9. A: John didn't leave. B: *But/*lakin* of course he didn't leave.
10. He has all, *but/*lakin* clinched the championship.
11. I can't help *but/*lakin* obey her.

The English CDM *but* fits in these sequences because it has the meaning of *except* as in 1 and 2, *merely* as in 3 and *only* as in 4. *Lakin* in SA does not have these meanings and therefore it didn't fit in these sequences. A possible interpretation of why *lakin* didn't fit in sequences 8 and 9 is that *lakin* in SA introduces S2 as a *contrast*, *denial of expectation*, *correction*, and *cancellation* of information in S1. These two sequences do not allow *lakin* to occur because none of these functions is implied. In sequences 10, the English *but* has the meaning of *nearly*, and *except that* in sequence 11. It seems that *lakin* doesn't fit in these two sequences because it does not have these meanings in SA.

For the judgment test items 6, 7, 12, and 13, all native informants of English said that *but* fits in these sequences, except one informant who said that *but* does not fit in 6. In contrast, native informants of Arabic showed variation in their responses. For sequence no 6 and 7, four informants said that *lakin* fits in these sequences. Three out of the five Arabic informants indicated that *lakin* fits in 12. All the Arabic informants except one said that *lakin* does not fit in 13. A possible interpretation of why native informants of Arabic said that *lakin* does not fit in sequence 13 is that it does not have the meaning in English *except for*. The informants' responses are reproduced below for more consideration.

6. You may think I'm crazy, *But/lakin* where is the dog?
7. I'm not sure if this is relevant, *But/lakin* isn't that bag leaking?
12. Thanks are due to John and Mary. *But/lakin* above all, I want to thank Harry.
13. *But/*lakin* for the grace of God, there go I.

Finally, with regard to the informants' responses to the judgment test items 14 and 15, all the Arabic informants except one agreed that *lakin* does not fit in sequence 14. However, three out of the five Arabic informants said that *lakin* fits in sequence 15. The English native informants said that *but* does not fit in 14 and 15.

14. I will get you, **But/*lakin* good.
15. You have to get up early. **But/lakin* after all, how much sleep do you need?

The English native informants' rejection of *but* in 14 and 15 contradicts with Fraser's (2008) claim that *but* fits in these sequences where it is not used as a DM. The only possible account of this inconsistency is dialect variation.

However, the results pattern in this section bears some resemblance to Fraser's (2005, 2008) findings. Like the English informants and informants of the other languages in Fraser's study, native informants of Arabic judged *lakin* in 7 and 8 as acceptable.

7. I'm not sure if this is relevant. *But/Lakin* isn't that leaking?
8. Thanks are due to John and Mary. *But/Lakin* above all, I want to thank Mary.

But, unlike the informants of other languages in Fraser's study, there was disagreement between the native informants of English and Arabic concerning the acceptability of *but/lakin* in the following sequence.

15. You have to get up early. **But/lakin* after all, how much sleep do you need?

Like many of the informants in Fraser's study, Arabic native informants judged this sentence as acceptable with the CDM *lakin*, whereas native informants of English judged the English *but* in this sequence as unacceptable.

VII. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The main purpose of this study was to identify the primary CDM in SA which is equivalent to the English primary CDM *but*, and whether these two primary CDMs have the same patterns of occurrence in certain constructions. The

analysis of the results has clearly shown, as expected, that SA has a primary CDM equivalent to the English *but*, namely *lakin*. All the Arabic-English speaking informants selected *lakin* to be the primary CDM in SA equivalent to the English *but*. This choice was further supported by the analysis of the sequences in which both *lakin* and *but* may co-occur together. Despite that *but* is translated to other DMs in SA in certain contexts (e.g., *bal*, *bainama*), only *lakin* can fit in many of the sequences which the English *but* fits where these DMs cannot fit. As a result of this, the study's first hypothesis was supported in that SA has *lakin* as the primary CDM equivalent to the English primary CDM *but*.

With regard to the study's second hypothesis, it was supported partially. While both *but* and *lakin* can co-occur in many of the sequences, there were other contexts where *but* does occur, but not *lakin*. These sequences where *lakin* cannot occur are non DM sequences. In such sequences, the English *but* occurs because it has the semantic meanings of, for example, *except that*, *merely*, *only*, etc. In SA, *lakin* does not have these semantic meanings and therefore it does not fit in such sequences.

Overall, the findings of this study should be taken with caution. As stated clearly somewhere in this paper, there were some deficiencies in the construction of the judgment test items which may have affected the informants' responses. Foremost among them was the fact that contrastive contexts in SA may be different from the English ones. Second, the given sequences may not have covered all the possible areas in both languages where *but* and *lakin* could be used. Third, in some sequences the informants in both languages showed variation in their responses to these sequences. This is might be due to the dialect variations which the informants speak.

Finally, the study has some important implications for research and language teaching. To complete our understanding of DMs in Arabic and contribute to the universality of the theory of DMs, the following topics await further research.

1. There is a need to investigate the possible systematic and unsystematic uses of *lakin* in SA. The construction of sequences in which *lakin* is acceptable is necessary to understand its pattern of occurrence. The use of English sequences to examine the pattern of occurrence of *lakin*, as in the case of this study, may not show us other critical structures in which *lakin* may be used in SA.

2. Fraser (2008, 2005) calls for research to examine other primary DMs such as *so* and *and* across languages to find out how they behave linguistically. Researching these DMs in SA would contribute to our understanding of the theory of DMs.

3. Some researchers (e.g., Fraser, 1993, 1997, 1999, 2005, 2008) classified DMs in English to different categories, with each category having certain functions such as contrastive DMs (e.g., *but*, *however*, *nevertheless*, *in contrast*, etc), inferential DMs (e.g., *therefore*, *hence*, *accordingly*, etc), elaborative DMs (e.g., *above all*, *in addition*, *that is*, etc), and parallel DMs (e.g., *and*, *otherwise*, *or*, *too*, etc.). There is a need to investigate these categories in SA and decide whether these DMs function in SA in a way similar to other languages such as English.

4. There is a strong need to examine the coherence role of DMs in general and the CDM *lakin* in particular in different genres of Arabic texts (i.e., narrative, scientific, journalistic, etc.).

5. The acquisition of DMs by Arab learners of English as a foreign language is still an area of research that awaits the invasion of researchers. DMs are usually taught as part of the English grammar in classrooms, with the focus being more on their grammatical occurrence on the sentence level. The majority of students who complete their English programs lack an accurate understanding of the polysemy of these DMs and how they are used in English (Alhuqbani, 2010). Research is needed to investigate the students' understanding of these DMs, and how to teach them effectively.

Regarding language teaching, language instructors need to be aware of the current research findings in DMs and apply the findings to their teaching of DMs. It's obvious that teachers focus on a single semantic meaning of a DM in the classroom. For example, when teaching *but*, teachers tend to give the meaning in Arabic (*lakin*) without exploring the other meanings of *but* in English, and hence depriving their students of understanding the other meanings of *but*. Teachers may be excused for this because many of English textbooks overlook DMs as significant elements in the understanding of English texts. It's highly recommended that students majoring in English teaching or linguistics be given a course on DMs. This course should help those would-be-teachers and translators understand the theoretical approaches to the study of DMs and how to apply the findings in their teaching and/or translation career.

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