The Uses of the Discourse Marker Zen in Iraqi Arabic Oral Discourse: 
A Discourse-Pragmatic Analysis

Muna Abd Ali Al-Abbad*
Prof. Mahmoud Ali Al-Qudah **

Received 10/12/2021 Accepted 15/1/2022

Abstract:
This study examined the discourse-pragmatic functions the DM Zen performs at the interpersonal and textual levels of Iraqi Arabic oral discourse. It also explored whether there is a relationship between the speaker's gender or educational level and the use of the DM Zen from a functional viewpoint. Brinton’s (1996) dual model of functions was employed as a framework of analysis. The results revealed that beside Brinton's (1996) proposed macro-level functions, the DM Zen was found to fulfil extra micro-level functions at both levels of discourse. The results also showed that the speaker's gender and educational level had no effect on the usage of the speech marker Zen in terms of functions.

Keywords: textual functions, discourse markers, interpersonal functions, oral discourse.
دراسه خطابيه- براغماتيه لوظائف اداه ربط الخطاب زَين في الخطاب العربي المحكي منى عبد علي العبّاد 
أ.د. محمود علي عواد القضاه

ملخص:
بحثت هذه الدراسة الوظائف الخطابيه-البراغماتيه على المستوى التواصلي والنصي لإداه ربط الخطاب (Zen) والتي تعد من أكثر أدوات الترابط في المحادثات شيوعاً في العراق. كما بحثت الدراسة فيما إذا وجدت أي علاقة بين جنس المتحدث ومستواه التعليمي واستخدام إداه الربط (Zen) من الناحية الوظيفية. اظهر تحليل البيانات التي تم جمعها من محادثات جرى بشكل طبيعي أن ضلعاً عن الوظائف التي اقتراحتها برينتون (عام 1996) في انموذجها، تؤدي إداه الربط (Zen) ووظائف التواصلية ونصيه أخرى. كما بين تحليل النتائج بأنه ليس لجنس المتحدث (Zen) ومستواه التعليمي أي تأثير يذكر على إداه الربط (Zen) من ناحية المحتوى الوظيفي. تؤدي إداه الربط (Zen) ووظائف التواصلية ومنطقية أخرى. كما بين تحليل النتائج بأنه ليس لجنس المتحدث (Zen) ومستواه التعليمي أي تأثير يذكر على إداه الربط (Zen) من ناحية المحتوى الوظيفي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الوظائف النصية، علامات الخطاب، الوظائف التواصلية، الخطاب الشفوي.

* الجامعة الأردنية/ الأردن/ munaalabbad@gmail.com
** جامعة الأميره سمية للتكنولوجيا/ الأردن/ mg@psut.edu.jo
1. Introduction

Generally speaking, in order to communicate orally, people need to construct discourse. That is, people jointly cooperate to create discourse as a framework for information structure by means of which they negotiate and exchange their ideas, attitudes and evaluations. Normally, in their exchanges, interlocutors utilize different speech markers to tailor their ideas and facilitate the flow of their conversation. Accordingly, DMs as linguistic elements with "low degree of lexical specificity" and "a high degree of context-sensitivity" (Anderson, 2001:40) are used to pragmatically perform their roles in oral discourse as coherence building and interactive devices.

To Trujillo Saez (2003: 4), the term 'DM' is preferred to other terminologies available in the field as it is “neutral between the function of connection” and the “way of leading the hearer towards a certain interpretation”. As a matter of fact, 'discourse markers' is a self-descriptive term. To put it in a more precise way, two components are in order here: discourse and markers.

They are discourse markers because they operate at the discoursal level rather than at the sentence level to "show connection between what is being said and the wider context", as Swan (1980:1) contended. This aligns with Aijmir (2002:1) who argues that "Discourse particles are placed …at different places in the discourse and give important clues to how discourse is segmented and processed". Namely, as coherence-building markers, they profoundly integrate discourse components linking up the upcoming proposition they introduce in (S₂) to the preceding one included in (S₁). Meanwhile, they are markers since their meaning is generally elucidated with respect to "what they indicate or mark rather than what they describe" (Blakemore, 2002:1). Interestingly enough, DMs are commonly found in everyday oral discourse of informal situations (Brinton, 1996:33-35).

However, DMs have their characteristics that set them apart from their homophones. They are as follows:

i. Non-truth conditionality: DMs affect neither the truth nor the falsity of the discursive unit hosting them (Schourup, 1999:227).

ii. Optionality: DMs are considered empty speech signs that are syntactically and semantically optional rather than mandatory items (Brinton, 1996:33-35).

iii. Initianality: DMs are predominantly confined to a sentence-initial position though some of them can be situated in a sentence-medial position with a very few of them are placed a sentence-final position
iv. **Multifunctionality**: Every DM has the potentiality to shift or multiply its roles according to the position it engages in the context of its use.

In this study, discourse analysis and pragmatics as complementary disciplines come into play to show how language is processed by participants in their discourse to express a variety of attitudes and emotions by means of DMs. The former is taking the first step to sketch out a brief analysis of the way DMs are employed to contextually structure the ongoing talk. Concurrently, the latter appears in a later stage to lead us to analyze DMs "in terms of actual uses of the language" (Al-Masri, 1999:7). Thus, it guides us to see the way interlocutors and context intrinsically interplay to produce the contextual effect meant making use of DMs. Below this assumption, DMs allow us to get a better understanding of the way speakers structure their discourse, support their argument and fill in gaps in knowledge in such a way that cognitively stimulates the recipient to reach the optimal interpretation of the message conveyed and attain the speaker's intention with minimum effort.

Generally, DMs function at two distinct levels: textual and interpersonal. Textually, Brinton (1996:7) claims that DMs signify "a sequential relationship between the current basic message and the previous discourse". Their role consists in connecting between the preceding and the following information, weaving it together into a meaningful organized discourse in such a way that explicates the speaker's intention and facilitates the hearer-interlocutor communication. Therefore, DMs are widely considered for "instructing the reader (hearer) about how the discourse was uttered" (Angermuller, 2014:141). Interpersonally, DMs frame the participation framework wherein each speaker and hearer is assigned a role to express judgments and evaluations in addition to many other demands.

Seminal contributions have examined the way DMs function as context-dependent markers. Schleef (2005) surveyed the uses of the DM *Ok* within the context of English academic discourse. He stated that *Ok* was mainly employed to serve either as a transition marker or a backchanneling marker.

Buysse (2012) explored the functions of *so* among English native speakers and Belgian non-native speakers. His results revealed that *so* gives ten pragmatic functions pertaining to three domains: ideational, interpersonal and textual.

Mutiara (2017) studied the functions of Jakarta Indonesian DM *Kok* when employed in the speech of three-year-old and four-year-old children.
The findings showed that Kok prefices the child's utterance, as a focus-marker, to emphasize a preceding idea.

Kittopakarnkit (2020) sought the functions of DMs in Chinese conversation textbooks. He concluded that as introductory items, DMs are used either as opening markers or commentary markers. However, they are positioned utterance-finally to ask for opinions and to end the discourse.

Within the Arabic context, Clift and Helani (2010) identified the uses of DM inshallah in Syrian Arabic. Their results revealed that inshaallah (إن شاء الله) was tremendously utilized as a marker of hope for the future and topic-transition.

Kanakri and Al-Harahsheh (2013) discussed the use of the DM ʿady (عادي) in Jordanian Arabic. Nine functions in relation to this marker was identified including mitigating, permission, contempt, courtesy, acceptance and indirect criticism among others.

Al-Azzawi's (2014) study, however, examined the DM yamawwad' (يا معود) in the Iraqi Arabic context. This marker was found to be employed either to open a topic or to signify courtesy, request and hope.

Again, Al-Azzawi (2015) scrutinized the DM ʿady in Iraqi Arabic. The results exhibited that ʿadi may give the pragmatic meaning of 'no worries, okay and Yeah I hear you among others.

Similarly, Al-Azzawi's (2016) investigated the way the DM yaˁni (يعني) was utilized in conversational Iraqi Arabic. The results reported that yaˁni was employed to serve such functions as agreement and modification besides intentions.

Adai and Majeed (2020) delineated the functions of the DMs dilcy (ضعلى) and kabaddy (كبدى) utilized by Iraqi Arabic youths in social media. The study results revealed that these markers came out with varied functions depending on the context of their use.

2. Problem of the study

A closer look at the literature reveals that the discourse-pragmatic research of DMs in Iraqi Arabic has received scant attention wherein the studies conducted in the area do not exceed the limits of the four research studies mentioned. Three of these studies were conducted by the same author beside that was introduced by Adai and Majeed. This suggests that spoken discourse has been brought to the forth as an area worthy of
investigation lately. Accordingly, the need to achieve more research on DMs in Iraqi Arabic is deservedly justified here. Further, the study of the use of DMs in relation to gender and education as social variables are underlined by the scarcity of the studies as well. Therefore, the relation between the usage of the DM at hand in terms of function and the speaker's gender and educational level as sociolinguistic variables that constitute a vital part of the communication context also needs to be underscored.

3. Research questions
   1. What are the discourse uses and pragmatic functions of the DM Zen at the interpersonal and textual levels of Iraqi Arabic oral discourse?
   2. Do females differ from males in their uses of the DM Zen in terms of its functions? How they differ if there is any difference?
   3. To what extent do people of well-educated class differ from poorly-educated people in their uses of the DM Zen in relation to functions?

4. The study's contribution to the field of linguistics
   1. This study raises the readers' awareness of the pragmatic significance of DMs in contact and the implications they have with respect to their functions for coherence and continuity of discourse.
   2. Sociolinguistically, it enables foreigners to have a better understanding of the norms of Arabic usage in Iraqi community.

5. Research methodology
   The study was based on a corpus of informal face-to-face conversations and phone calls taking place among family members, friends and relatives. The study included 120 informants who are native speakers of Iraqi Arabic. The informants were divided into 60 well-educated (30 men and 30 women) and 60 poorly-educated (30 men and 30 women).
   The sample of well-educated informants constituted 15 postgraduate students who joined the Master and doctoral programs for the academic year 2020-2021. It also included 45 out of 82 third and fourth-year students. All the educated informants were students at the department of English of College of Arts at the University of Basra.
   Poorly-educated informants represented 60 out of 150 people. This group included farmers, clean-up agents and guards who work in the College of Arts at the University of Basra. All the informants live in Basra city center. Dealing with a small-scale study, the number of the sample seems to be the most suitable in such a case. This aligns with Sankoff who stated that "complex communities' samples of more than about 150 individuals tend to be redundant, bringing increasing data-handling
The Uses of the Discourse Marker……. Muna Al-abbad, Prof. Mahmoud Ali Al-qudah


The data were collected over a period of six months. Casual conversations were audio-recorded using Sony IC Recorder, ICD-BX140 recorder type. Remarkably, the topics involved in conversations were of every day concern. To check their validity, the excerpts intended to be used to investigate the pragmatic functions meant were given to a panel of jurors; three professors who are native speakers of Iraqi Arabic and who instruct English in the department of English at the University of Basra.

The data obtained were analyzed within Brinton’s (1996) framework employing qualitative method of analysis. The pragmatic functions of the DM Zen were investigated with reference to two levels of discourse: interpersonal and textual. Interpersonally, the DM Zen acts as an attention-grabber, mitigating and backchanneling markers, besides indicating agreement and emphasis. Textually, it marks relations of relevance, initiates and closes discourse, marks topic-shift, introduces a turn and serves as a verbal filler. The DM tokens were transliterated using IJAES transliteration system. Later, they were translated into English as translation "provides rich details about both source and the target items involved" (Aijmer and Simon-Vandenbergen, 2004: 1797 cited in Mei, 2012:45).

6. Results and discussion

6.1 Functions of the DM Zen at the interpersonal level

6.1.1 Attention-grabber and Focus-marker

Interpersonally, the DM Zen was placed within the well-educated men's utterance to act as an attentional clue and as a focus-marker as well, as exemplified below:

Example (1)

المعلم: اليوم درسنه عن ال فيرب. تو، زَين؟ زَين، منو يگدر يگلّي كم فعل عدنه وشنو هي؟

[Transliteration] ʔalmuˈallam: alyawm darisnah ˈan al firb. tu. by, zayn? zayn, minw yagdir yglly kam fiˈal ˈidnah washinw hiyya?

[Translation] Teacher: We are studying today 'verb to be' in English, Zen (Alright)? Zen (Ok), who knows how many verbs we have and what they are?

In this situation, a well-educated participant told his students about the topic of the main concern for that day which is the English 'verb to be' issue.
As an interactive marker, the DM Zen was employed to serve two jobs. As an attentional cue, it concluded the teacher's first utterance to grab his students' attention to the key topic that is supposed to be discussed for that day. Simultaneously, it initiated his second utterance to signal a focus of the speaker's attention; to check his students' knowledge of the topic in process and refresh their minds as well.

The same function was revealed to be served in the well-educated women's speech too, as shown below:

Example (2)

محاربة: سولفينة عن تجربتها مع مرض كورونا.
وادا: لا يكمن كورونا شي طبيعي. هو طبيعي، زين؟ يوم بعد يوم تزيد عدد الإعراض، زين؟ عندج حرجة بالبلعوم، الكحة ما تطلع، زين؟ لا اكل ولا شرب، زين؟ والريحه اللي تشميتها قد شي مقرز، زين؟


Wadad: lahhad yagwl kuruna shy tabyʿy. mw tabyʿy, zayn? yawm baʿad yawm tazyd ʿindach ʿlaʿarad, zayn? ʿandach harqa bi ʿalbilʿwm. ʿalkaha ma tatalʿ, zayn? La akal wala shirb, zayn? Walryha ally tashmynha fad shay muqazaz, zayn?


Wadad: No one can say it is a normal disease. It is not a normal disease, Zen (Alright?) Look, day by day your symptoms are becoming complicated, Zen? Throat pain, Zen? No cough, Zen? No appetite for food and drinks, Zen? And you smell a disgusting sick thing, Zenz?

This exchange took place between an interviewer who is affiliated to one of Basra local broadcasts and a fourth- year student in the department of English. The discussion revolved around the student's experience with the disease in point as an already infected person. The informant repeatedly utilized the DM Zen during the course of her in- progress talk to call her interlocutor's attention to the importance of the information given and to ensure that her addressee follows her train of thought. Meanwhile, the DM Zen was overused to emphasize the severity of the disease in point.

Example (3)

حليمة: اليوم عدناه كومه شغل وعدناه زياره مريض هم، زين؟

[Transliteration] halymah: ʿalyawm ʿadanah kawmah shughal wa
The Uses of the Discourse Marker …… Muna Al-abbad, Prof. Mahmoud Ali Al-qudah

\[\text{cdanakah zyarat maryd ham, zayn?}\]

[Translation] Halyma: Today, we are a bit busy. And, we'll pay a visit to a sick person, Zen (Alright)?

As a listener-oriented device, the DM Zen was employed by a poorly-educated informant's speech while talking to her colleague whom she works with at the university as a clean-up agent to attract her colleague's attention to the fact that they have to do their best because they have a couple of errands to run at that day. Emphatically, the DM Zen was also used to emphasize the informant's unwillingness to be involved in any other social acts, such as chatting.

Poorly-educated men also recruited the DM Zen in their speech to perform the function in process, as exemplified below.

Example (4)

\[\text{rayh libaghdad asbw} \text{c wajay wa hay alsyarah } \text{c} \text{andak } \text{amanah wa yaryt twadyha liltaslyh wayaak ham, zayn?}\]

[Translation] I am going to Baghdad for a week. Please, take care of my car, and I hope you will send it to a repair shop, Zen (Alright)?

Here is a phone call that took place between a poorly-educated informant; a driver at the university, and his colleague at work. The informant concluded his speech with the DM Zen to grab his colleague's attention to what he said, and emphasize his indirect request regarding fixing his car.

6.1.2 Agreement marker

The study findings demonstrated that as an affirmative response, the DM Zen was employed by the four opposite groups of informants in different social contexts to voice the listener's acceptance to fulfill the speech act requested or the suggestion offered and thus, reinforcing solidarity among interlocutors, as exemplified below:

Example (5)

\[\text{khally narwh lilmaktabah almarkazyyah alyawm ba} \text{c} \text{ad alghada naqrah lilaimtihan.}\]

[Translation] I'm going to the central library today after tomorrow for the exam.

Hمام: زَين، خَلَّي نرَوح.


humam: zayn, khally narwh.
Let's go to the Central library after lunch to study and get prepared for the exam.

Humam: Zen (Ok), let's go.

This conversation occurred between a well-educated informant who is a third-year student and his colleague in the department of English.

Example (6)

خاله، عمّي اتصل يگول خلّي خالتج تجي بسرعه.

حببّه: زَين، جاءه.

Example (7)

بس گلي لاخوچ راح ياخذون منّ ه شهر مقدّم حتى يضمن البيت ما ياخذه غيره.

حوراء: زَين، راح اگله.

Example (8)

خابرني عيني. عندك تليفوني وخابرني.

سامي: زَين، نبقى على اتصال.
Sammy: (Ok), we'll keep in touch.

This communicative event took place between a poorly-educated participant and his friend who did not see him for a long time. While concluding their talk, the participant's friend asked him to keep in touch.

6.1.3 Mitigating marker

As a tag mitigator, the DM Zen was utilized in some contexts mainly to alleviate the hardness of the declaring intention and the harsh illocutionary force of directive acts like orders (Heilser 1996:297). In this regard, the DM Zen is "a verbal equivalent to a gentle hand on the shoulder", as Crystal (1988:47) opines. The following situations depicted the function in process.

Example (9)

زيّت السيّاره واغسلها و بعدين دخلّها للكراج قبل لا تروح للدوام, زَين بّيّه؟

[Transliteration] zayyat alsyarh waghsalha wa ba‘dyn dkhllha lilqaraj qabl la tarwh lildawam, zayn ybbah?

[Translation] Oil and wash the car, then bring it inside before leaving to work, Ok, son?

In this exchange, a well-educated participant asked his son to oil his car and then bring it into the garage before going to the university.

Example (10)

قفّل بيبان القاعات كلها وتأكد من القفل قبل لا تطلع زَين خويّه؟

[Transliteration] qaffl byban alqa‘at kulaha wata?akad min alqufl qabl la tatla‘, zayn khwyh?

[Translation] Make sure that all halls are locked before departure, Ok, brother?

This communicative event took place between a poorly-educated informant; a chief guard at the College of Arts and his colleague whom he asked to ensure locking of all the doors of the college halls before going home.

Example (11)

لا تدخل للحجره النظيفه انت، ونعلك, زَين حبوّي؟

[Transliteration] la tadkhul lilhajarih alnazyfah antah wni‘alk, zayn habbwby?

[Translation] Don't enter the room wearing your sandals, Ok dear?

In this social context, a well-educated informant asked her son not to enter the room while she was cleaning the house.
Example (12)

[Transliteration] shyl darajtak minna la yad‘am byha altulaab, zayn ybbah?

[Translation] Keep your bike away from here so that the students might collide with it, Ok son?

This communicative event occurred between a poorly-educated informant; a clean-up agent at the university and one of the students whom he asked to move his motorcycle away so that others can pass. Concluding their requests with the DM Zen, the speakers, in all the above-mentioned occasions, could manage to save their listeners' positive face instead of threatening their negative face by using coercion.

6.1.4 Threat marker

Conversely, the DM Zen was also employed in informants' speech to act as a marker of implied threat. This suggests that the pragmatic function of threatening came into play as a micro-level function to be added to the list of the functions proposed as a dialect-specific function, as shown below:

Example (13)

يمّه، انه اشمرت الطوبه على الحائط وكسرت الجامه مال الصوره.

الام: زين، باس خلّي تكظّك ايدي وتشوف.

[Transliteration] yummh, anah ashmarat altwbah ounsel alhayit wakasarat aljamah mal alswarh.

alʔam: zayn, bas khally tkazzaq aydy watshwf.

[Translation] Mum, I threw the ball to the wall and the glass of the picture was broken.

Mother: You did? Zen (Ok), you'll see when I catch you how you dare break it!

This exchange took place between a poorly-educated informant and her young son who told his mother about his irresponsible behavior of breaking a picture glass while playing with his ball. Notably, the mother introduced her speech with the DM Zen charged with a threatening tone to express her attitude towards her son's claim. That is only to inform him to wait his punishment as a result of his bad deed.

Example (14)

سالم: تروح تجيبلي دفتر المحاضرات من احمد؟
The Uses of the Discourse Marker …… Muna Al-abbad, Prof. Mahmoud Ali Al-qudah

لا ماروح.


salim: zayn, basytah.

[Translation] Salim: Would you mind going to Ahmad bringing me the lecture notebook? I will not.

Salim: Zen (Ok).

In the excerpt above, a well-educated informant, an MA student, asked his brother to bring him his friend's notebook who, on his part, refused to do the act requested. Being frustrated by his brother's negative response, the informant prefaced his speech with the DM Zen, relatively stressed, to convey his brother the message of an indirect threat.

6.1.5 Approval marker

Nonetheless, when associated with a positive opinion, the DM Zen was shown to be employed in the talk of all the opposite groups of informants to voice the listener's approval for the already existing assumption; the feeling that the act in point is good or fine. In this regard, the DM Zen was often produced alone without being followed by other utterances, as exemplified below:

Example (15)

[Transliteration] hadhh hafydy alzghyr, abn binty, shatir bialkumbywtar. yadz labwh risalah alkitrwnyyah. yu′rif. hadhh ham mawa′idany yijybly aflam kulha ʿarabyah, gally mathalan adha altilinxyn kharbaan... nariman: zayn!

[Translation] My little grandson is very smart with computers. He sends his father an electronic message. He knows that. He promised to provide me with Arab movies if the TV is not working.

Naryman: Zen (Great!)

This exchange occurred between a poorly-educated informant and her colleague at work whom she told about her grandson’s proficiency in using computers. In the context in process, the informant utilized the DM
Zen to imply that such an act meets her approval.

Example (16)

اگلّك هلايام يغولون طالع برنامج عن الراديو يعالج مشكلات الشباب، شلون مثلا يخابرون،

ا انه عندي هيج مشكله، يحاول مقدّم البرنامج يلگاله حل.

عقل: زَين!

[Transliteration] aqllak halayam yagwlwn taliّ barnamaj ّ alaa alraadiw yaّ alij mushkilat alshabab. shilwn mathalan yakhabirwna, ana ّ andy hych mushkilah, yuhawil muqddam albarnamaj yolqalah hal.

عقل: zayn!

[Translation] Hey, listen! Some said there is a radio program discussing the young problems. They make phone calls, explaining the problem they have, and the program presenter works on finding a solution.

عقل: Zen (Fine!)

This communicative event occurred between a well-educated informant and his friend wherein they discussed the issue of the 10 PM program that was specialized to deal with the youth's problems. The informant used the DM Zen to express his approval of the idea proposed as a good thing.

6.2 Functions of the DM Zen at the textual level

As a topic management means, the DM Zen can be utilized to "mark the transition across the boundary as a default or expected one" (Condon, 2001:496). Accordingly, the DM Zen textually had the advantage of opening and closing off the frame of topics through regulating turn-taking order besides marking transition from one topic to another, as explained below:

6.2.1 Initiating a topic

Example (17)

 جميل: شلونك واثق؟

زَين! والله سمعنه صوتك.

[Transliteration] jamyl: shlwnak wathiّ q?

zayn! wallah samiّ nah sawtak.

[Translation]
Jamyl: How are you, dear Wathiq?
Zen (Good! In the end), we've heard from you.

In a phone call with his colleague, a well-educated informant initiated a
The Uses of the Discourse Marker …… Muna Al-abbad, Prof. Mahmoud Ali Al-qudah

speech with the DM Zen for signifying the initiation of a topic.

**Example (18)**

نوریّه: زَين، همّه احنه صارلته تلث سنین نحچی عن سلبيات التعليم الالکتروني والوضع من

سي الى اسوه.

نوریّه: زَين، احنه الامهات تعبنه من وضع النت بالبيت، من وضع الكهرباء وحتى التدريس

هم والله.

[Transliteration] nwryyah: zayn, hassh ahnah sarlnnh talith sinyn nahchy ا'an salbiyyaat alta'ilym alalkitrwny wa alwadc min saya? ala asw?.


[Translation] Noryya: Zen (Listen), we've talked about the disadvantages of e-learning for three years. No change! What occurred is the opposite. Getting bad. From bad to worse. Zen, we've, as mothers, got tired of the terrible internet service and electricity at home.Moreover, we've got tired of teaching at home.

In this interview that was conducted by one of the local broadcasts, a poorly-educated informant was asked to give her opinion concerning the cons and pros of the e-learning.

**6.2.2 Closing a topic**

**Example (19)**

طبعا انه اعرف انتي زعلانّه

بسمه: بالعكس، اصلا اليوم بالذات چنت ناويّه اجيلكم للبيت.

بسمه: زَين، اشوفچ انشاالله.

[Transliteration] tab'an anah a?rif anty za'lanhh.

bisumih : bialcaks, asilam alyawm bialdhaat chnt nayyh ajylkum lilbayt.

basma: zayn, ashwfch anshaallah.

[Translation] Definitely, I know you're furious!

Basma: On the contrary, I've decided to pay you a visit today. Zen (Ok), see you later.

As opposed to the above-mentioned function, the DM Zen initiated a well-educated informant's speech while talking to her friend whom she did not meet for a while only to serve as a means to voice her desire to terminate the discussion with her.
Example (20)

ماجد: ها موسى، صارلي اسبوعين اخابر وماكو جواب شالقضّيّه؟
محمد ما موجود. هو مشغول والده مريض و...
ماجد: زّين، زّين. من يجي خلّي يخابريني.

[Transliteration] majid: ha mwsaa, sarly asbw‘ayn akhabir wamakw jawab shalqadyh? muhamad ma mawjwd. hua mashghwl walidah maryd wa...
majid: zayn, zayn. min yjjy khally yakhabirny.
[Translation] Majid: Hey, man, Musa. I've kept ringing you for two weeks, and no answer. What's wrong with you?
Abu Mohammed is not there. He is busy. His father is sick and ...
Majid: Zen (Ok, Ok). Let him call me when he is back.

Here is a phone call that took place between a poorly-educated informant and one of the workers whom he asked about the chief shopkeeper. Interrupting his interlocutor's speech, the informant employed the DM Zen twice during the course of his speech to stress his intention to end the discourse.

6.2.3 Turn-taking marker

However, as a transitional device, the DM Zen was revealed to be employed in the speech of the well-educated informant in the first case and a poorly-educated informant in the second case to implicitly mark the turn transition and turn exchange aspects. Within this interactional context, the marker at hand served a two-fold function. On one hand, it indicated the speaker recognized that the first interactant completed his/ her turn to yield the floor to the other. On the other hand, it anchored the listener's willingness to take a turn and start talking, as shown below:

Example (21)

[Transliteration] akw nas ahwayh raja‘w min alʔurdun waswrya.
rashyd: zayn, hadha sinyh hanak yadfa‘ ajar wama mlqy shagal byh rizq ykffyh hwa wa‘ayilatah.
qlak arji‘ hana lil‘iraq bilkat alamwr tatahasan.
[Translation] There many people who have come back from Jordan
The Uses of the Discourse Marker ……

Muna Al-abbad, Prof. Mahmoud Ali Al-qudah

and Syria.

Rashyd: _Zen (You know)_ , s/he stayed there for years. He got no work to live on. So, s/he got back to Iraq in the hope things get better day by day.

**Example (22)**

اِنْهَ ما لَقْحٌ لَانَ اهْوَاهٍ نَاسٍ يَغُولُون يَضِرْ ما يَفْيِدْ.

**Transliteration** anah ma laqqh laʔn ahwayh naas yagwln yadhr maa yafyd.

**Translation** I won’t take the vaccine. A lot of people have said it is harmful.

۴ارافات: _Zen (Alright)_ , did you know some people who already took the vaccine and did harm their bodies?

6.2.4 Verbal filler

Verbal filling is a further novel function that was identified with regard to this domain. The corpus analyzed revealed that the DM _Zen_ was employed by all the opposite sets of informants in their in-progress talk as a gap filling marker to signal "the onset of a structural problem within the discourse" whereby it is the discourse level that specifies the type of the problem "at which it occurs, be it the act, the move or the exchange" (Heisler, 1996:298). To put it differently, as an insider filler, the DM _Zen_ lends its producers support either to keep steering discourse or to buy time so that they can search the suitable words and reformulate their thoughts while talking. With reference to this function, the following examples were set forth.

**Example (23)**

اَشْلَوْنَك اَحْمَدٌ؟ شَكْوُ مَاكَوْ؟

اَحْمَد: كَالْعَادِه، الْرَوْتَينَ الْيَوْمِيَّ مَاتِي. اَرْجَعُ للْبِيْتِ، زَيْنٌ؟ اِبْدَّلْ اَطْلَعُ، زَيْنٌ؟ اِرْجَعُ لِلسَّعْح. اِبْقَيْ

بالْشَغْلِ لِلسَّاعَةِ ۳ الْظَهْرِ وَبَعْدَهُ اِرْجَعُ لِلْبِيْتِ، زَيْنٌ؟ وْرِهِ الْارْبَعَةِ الْعَصْرِ، اِرْجَعُ لِلْمَحلِ، زَيْنٌ؟ وْرِجَعُ لِلْبِيْتِ اَنْوَبِ.

**Transliteration** ashlwnak ahmad ? shkw makw?

ahmad: kal′adah, alrwtn aliyawmy maty. aq′id alsubhah, zayn? abaddl atala′. zayn? arjy lilshughl . abqaa bialshughl lisaa′ah 3 alzahr wab′dayn arjī lilbyt, zayn? warah alarba′ah al′asr, arwh ilmahal, zayn? warji′ lilbayt anwb.
How are you, Abu Jasim? What’s up?

Ahmad: Nothing new! Daily red tape. I get up in the morning, *Zen* (Ok)? Then, I get dressed and depart, *Zen*? Go back to work until three pm. Get back home, *Zen*? After 4:00 pm., I go to my supermarket, *Zen*? This is my daily...

This excerpt was a part of a phone call that took place between a poorly-educated informant and one of his acquaintances who asked him about his affairs. While narrating his daily routine, the informant was shown to overuse the DM *Zen* during the course of his talk in an attempt to facilitate the flow of his discourse and to keep holding the floor as well. Over and above, as an attention-getter and a focus marker, the DM *Zen* was positioned sentence-finally to appeal the listener's attention and to make sure that the listener was following what was said.

**Example (24)**

[Translation] Let’s go to the market this afternoon. I want to buy a lot of things.

Kawthar: …eh, *Zen*, what about going out tomorrow? because I have to mark students' papers today.

This communicative event occurred between a well-educated informant and her sister who asked her to accompany her to the market at that day. Taking the context of use as a parameter, the DM *Zen* was employed in the informant's speech mainly to denote thinking process. That is, preceded by a pause like (eh...), the DM *Zen* gave the impression that the interlocutor was in search for the appropriate words so that she could decide what to say next as a justification.

**6.2.5 Topic-shift device**

Relevant to the textual domain is the function of topic-shifting. As a textual/ topic-shift marker, the DM *Zen* can be used in discourse to saliently and subtly signal the "transition across the boundary as a default or expected one" (Condon, 2001:496), as exemplified below:
Example (25)

الاب: هسه درجتك بالرياضيات اعرفناها. زين. گلي بالانگليزي شلونک؟

[Transliteration] alʔab: hassah darajatk bialriyadyaat aʔrifnaha. zayn, qaly balanqlyzy shlwnak?

[Translation] It is Ok concerning your score in Math. Zen, what about English?! 

In this communicative event, a poorly-educated father was talking to his son about his level in Mathematics. Then, he abruptly switched to ask about English to be the topic of his interest of concern.

Example (26)

مثال: شنو المشاكل اللي تواجهكم بالنسبه لشرح الدروس على موقع الجامعه الالكتروني؟

الطلبة: ...

مثال: زين، بالنسبه لكورونا كمرض, الوضعيّه شلونها؟

[Translation] Manal: What are the problems that face you regarding classes at the university website?

Students: ...

Manal: Zen, as to Corona as a disease, how is it getting? Bad or under control?

This excerpt was a part of conversation that took place between a well-educated informant, a teacher, and her students during their meeting on Microsoft Teams. Their discussion revolved around the cons and pros of e-learning and the problems they met in this concern. The informant began her utterance with asking her students about the problems they faced during their lectures on the university e-learning site. Then, she suddenly shifted her interest to ask about the way they dealt with COVID-19 as a disease using the DM Zen as her textual means for achieving such a shift.

Within the two contexts of interaction mentioned above, the use of the DM Zen has double implications. On one hand, it demonstrates how the upcoming referent swerves from the already existing referent though they are still relevant in one aspect or another. On the other hand, it aids the speaker to introduce the new topic or information fluidly; that is, in a way that diminishes its imposition on the recipient. One more, as an introductory
marker, the DM Zen when employed in such situational contexts, it could also give the implication that the speaker asks for or is in need of extra explanation about the point in process.

6.2.6 Sequence/Relevance marker

The other promising function related to the marker at hand as a cohesive device is its contribution to signal sequence and relevance relations. The data analyzed evidenced that the DM Zen was contextually situated in the participant's utterance to support the coherence of discourse as a marker of thematic connection. Interestingly, coherence was indicated through the relevance relation of contrast and sequence this marker signified in discourse, as displayed below:

Example (27)

هَاَيْهِ المهْنِهِ كَلْش مَعْتِىَبِهِ اللَّكَ وَمَا تَفِيدَكَ إِبَدً. ابْراهِيم: زَينْ، اَنَّهُ مَرْتَاح بِيَهَا.

[Transliteration] hay almihanah kallash mut‘ibbh alik wama tafydak abad.

abrahym: zayn, anah martah byha.

[Translation] This profession is tiring. It won't benefit you.

Abrahym: Zen (but), I am satisfied with.

This exchange took place between a poorly-educated informant; a farmer at the university, and his colleague at work who told him about the unsuitability of the job of farming for him as an old man. Taking the context of use as a parameter, the DM Zen prefaced the informant's speech only to signal a relevance relation of contradiction; that is, to show how the interpretation of the assumption conveyed by the second segment was related to the already existing one via the relation of contrast. Having the function of but, the informant initiated his utterance with the DM Zen only to convey his colleague the message that 'Yes, I know that, but I am satisfied with'.

Example (28)

خَيَّبَتُ لابوج البارحة عن موضوع المنْحَه الامريكيه اللي گتيلّي عليه. حنان: زَين؟ ابوج شب وانطفة مِ عَرَف.


hanan: zayn?
The Uses of the Discourse Marker …… Muna Al-abbad, Prof. Mahmoud Ali Al-qudah

abwch shab wantifa min ‘araf.

[Translation] Yesterday night, I discussed with your father the American Scholarship you've told me about.

Hanan: Zen (So)?
Your father was upset!

This communicative event occurred between a well-educated informant and her mother wherein they discussed the issue of the American grantship that the informant already told her mother to tell her father about. Remarkably, the DM Zen was uttered alone by the informant to serve as an economic expression for the question 'So, what result did you get?' Mainly acting as So, the DM Zen was utilized to denote the sequential progression of discourse; that is, to make explicit how the second proposition as a result was associated with that introduced by the first segment as a premise.

7. Conclusion

Due to the importance of DMs in "demarcating discourse coherence and indexing social relationships" (Bolden, 2008:102), this study was achieved to show which functions were related to the DM Zen when employed by Iraqis in their spoken discourse. The results revealed that a set of micro-level functions were performed by the marker at hand with its interpersonal and textual categories beside the macro-functions proposed by Brinton (1996) in her model. In terms of its interpersonal class, the DM Zen served two extra functions including Approval and Threat. However, an extra textual function was added to the list of the sub-functions suggested wherein DM Zen was employed to ask the addressee to provide extra information. Accordingly, the manipulation of the DM Zen was proved. As for the impact of the speaker's gender and level of education on the usage of the DM Zen in terms of function, it was exhibited that neither gender nor education affected the usage of the DM Zen concerning its functions. That is, the two opposite sets of informants were found to use the DM Zen in relatively similar situations to convey the same propositional content. After all, further investigations are recommended to validate the conclusions drawn from this study with reference to other DMs and social variables like age and class.

References
Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 5(7), 1352-1360.
The Uses of the Discourse Marker …… Muna Al-abbad, Prof. Mahmoud Ali Al-qudah


Appendix

Transliteration symbols for Arabic vowels and some consonants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic alphabet</th>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ء</td>
<td>ء</td>
<td>ءامال</td>
<td>hope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ج</td>
<td>ch</td>
<td>chay</td>
<td>tea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ج</td>
<td>j</td>
<td>jamal</td>
<td>camel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ح</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>hub</td>
<td>love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>خ</td>
<td>kh</td>
<td>khubz</td>
<td>bread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ذ</td>
<td>dh</td>
<td>dhahab</td>
<td>gold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ز</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>zayt</td>
<td>oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ش</td>
<td>sh</td>
<td>shams</td>
<td>sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ص</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>s ayf</td>
<td>summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ض</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>d ayf</td>
<td>guest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ط</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>t i:n</td>
<td>mud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ظ</td>
<td>TH</td>
<td>THuhr</td>
<td>noon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ع</td>
<td>ـ</td>
<td>ـabd</td>
<td>slave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>غ</td>
<td>gh</td>
<td>ghabr</td>
<td>west</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>گ</td>
<td>q</td>
<td>qaal</td>
<td>said</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>و</td>
<td>w</td>
<td>ward</td>
<td>rose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ي</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>yawm</td>
<td>day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>