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## Speech Act of Invocation in Iraqi Arabic A B S T R A C T

This study investigates the speech act of invocation in Iraqi Arabic from a socio-pragmatic perspective. It also examines how speech act of invocation is realized within the framework of politeness theory, and how it is reflected among the Iraqi Arab speakers in special social contexts (such as greetings, weddings, funerals etc.). Since invocations are used in certain situations and contexts, they have a social function in the Iraqi society. Therefore, the inability to use such expressions in the appropriate way and the right tone may affect the social relationship.

This study aims at exploring invocations used by Iraqi Arab speakers in daily social situations, and finding out the social and religious influences on Iraqi Arab speakers when they express invocations. In this study, it is hypothesized that Islam has a great influence on the Iraqi Arab speakers.

The findings of this study have proved that speech of the females is different from that of the males; females use special expressions. They also have different concerns and attitudes from men. This study has also proved that Iraqi Arab speakers are influenced by the Islamic religion because they behave according to the Islamic instructions.

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## فعل كلام الدعاء في اللهجة العراقية العربية

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الخلاصة

تبحث هذه الدراسة فعل كلام الدعاء في اللهجة العراقية العربية من منظور تداولي اجتماعي. كما تبحث هذه الدراسة أيضاً عن كيفية تحقيق فعل كلام الدعاء ضمن الإطار العام لنظرية التأدب وكيف تنعكس بين المتكلمين العراقيين في سياقات اجتماعية خاصة (مثل التحية و حفلات الزواج و الجنائز ... الخ). و لأن تعابير الدعاء تستخدم في مواقف و سياقات معينة، فأنها تؤدي وظيفه اجتماعية في المجتمع العراقي.

لهذا السبب فإن عدم القدرة على استخدام مثل هذه التعابير بالطريقة المناسبة و النبرة الصحيحة قد يؤثر على العلاقات الاجتماعية.

تهدف هذه الدراسة الى اكتشاف تعابير الدعاء التي يستخدمها المتكلمون العراقيون في مواقف الحياة الاجتماعية اليومية، و كما تهدف هذه الدراسة الى اكتشاف التأثيرات الدينية و الاجتماعية على المتكلمين العراقيين عندما يستخدمون تعابير الدعاء. و تفترض هذه الدراسة ان الدين الاسلامي له تأثير كبير على المتكلمين العراقيين.

تثبت نتائج هذه الدراسة بأن كلام النساء يختلف عن كلام الرجال اذ تستخدم النساء تعابير خاصة، كما وان لدى النساء اهتمامات و مواقف مختلفة عن الرجال. كما و تثبت هذه الدراسة بان المتكلمين العراقيين متأثرون بالدين الاسلامي لانهم يتصرفون وفق التعليمات الإسلامية.

## ١. Introduction

Language is a good way of establishing and maintaining relationships with other people. Politeness is a linguistic phenomenon which links language with the society. Thus, language, society and politeness are interrelated (Trudgill, ١٩٧٤:١٣; Eelen, ٢٠٠١:١). According to Searle (١٩٦٩:١٦), "speaking a language is performing speech acts" and these acts are performed in conformity with certain regulative rules. Grice (١٩٧٥) suggests that people follow certain rules when they use language. People use these rules as guidelines in conversation. He proposes four *maxims of conversation* or the *cooperative principle* for effective use of conversation (cf, Levinson, ١٩٨٣:١٠١). Brown and Levinson (١٩٧٨, ١٩٨٧) propose the term *politeness* to soften some face-threatening acts, and maintain harmonious relationship between the interlocutors.

The speech act of invocation is realized through various expressions which are extensively used among the Iraqi Arab people (henceforth IA) in their daily life. Invocations are used in different situations and occasions. Tannen and Öztek (١٩٧٧:٥٢٢) consider similar expressions as formulaic and "perform a social function". Invocations can be used in greeting situations, weddings, funerals, religious ceremonies (Eids), etc. Social interactions are the best means for establishing and maintaining rapport between the interlocutors (ibid:٥٢٠). Ferguson (١٩٨٣:٦٥) defines such ritualized polite expressions as "brief bits of ritualized verbal exchanges ... which people use on appropriate occasions".

### ١,١ Aims of the study

This study aims at:

١. describing invocations as used by IA speakers in daily social interaction,
٢. identifying the pragmatic ways in which the speech act of invocation is realized in Arabic,

- ٣. finding out the social and religious influences on the ways of expressing invocations and
- ٤. examining the differences between Iraqi men and women when they express their invocations.

## ١,٢ Hypotheses

- ١- It is hypothesized that Arab speakers use a wide range of invocations in different social situations. Invocations are frequently used by IA speakers as part of social routines or social duties.
- ٢- It is also hypothesized that IA speakers are greatly influenced by their religion which is reflected in their language.

## ١,٣ Data collection

Various methods have been used to collect the data in the field of Arabic politeness formulas. Some researchers have employed the native-speakers' introspection (Al-Nasser, ١٩٩٣), others have employed personal observations to be cross-checked by native speakers (Ferguson, ١٩٨٣). A third method has been employed by Emery (٢٠٠٠) which is a questionnaire/interview technique.

The present study mainly adopts the third method in collecting the data. A modified discourse completion test (a questionnaire) has been designed to collect the data. The researcher has interviewed the informants (native speakers) who are all friends and acquaintances. Each situation has been described and the informants have been asked to answer the questions as if they used the expressions of invocations in their daily life. The utterances of the subjects have been written down, as accurately as possible, whether they were in Standard Arabic or colloquial Arabic. The subjects are ٤٠ Iraqi Arab native speakers, ٢٠ males; ٢٠ females. They are from Shirgat town, Salahaddin Governorate. The subjects are between ٢٣ and ٤٠ years of age. Some are university graduates and others are high school graduates.

## ١,٤ Value of the study

It is thought to help English learners of Arabic how to use such ritual expressions in real life situations. It gives a clear picture about the nature of the Iraqi people. It can also be a good source for researchers who are interested in studying speech acts across cultures.

## ٢. The speech act of invocation

Despite the scarce literature of invocation, it can be located within the framework of speech act theories. Following Searle's (١٩٦٩:١٢-١٨) categories of speech acts: *assertives*, *directives*, *commissives*, *expressives* and *declarations*, the speech act of invocation belongs to the *expressives* which reflect the speaker's feelings and emotions towards a state of affair. It can also be categorized as an expressive illocutionary act, whose goal coincides with the social goal.

Expressives are used to maintain harmony between the speaker and hearer (Leech, ١٩٨٣:١٠٤). Al-Jarim and Ameen (١٩٩٩:١٨٩,١٩٧) point out that invocations might be realized by a requestive performative which requires a request "pray to Allah" even if it was impossible to be achieved or obtained at the moment of speaking.

According to Bach and Harnish's (١٩٧٩:٤١) taxonomy of speech acts, invocations belong to acknowledgements. Acknowledgements express feelings towards the addressee whether the utterance is genuine or perfunctory, it is used as a duty without real feelings. Acknowledgements carry "the speaker's intention that his utterance satisfy a social expectation to express certain feelings and his belief that it does"(ibid). They point out that acknowledgements are mostly associated with particular kinds of occasions. They are used in certain situations and are expected to satisfy the social expectation (ibid:٥١).

Drawing on the definitions above, the speech act of invocation expresses the speaker's wish or prayer for the hearer. The speaker wishes that a future event is realized and this event is intended for the hearer's interest. Although it is a requestive prayer addressed indirectly to Allah, invocation is directly expressed to satisfy the positive face wants of the hearer.

### ٣. Politeness

When people speak, they usually behave politely and pay more consideration to others because it leaves a feeling of satisfaction in their souls. In addition, they satisfy the face wants of the others and simultaneously receive consideration from others (Bach and Harnish, ١٩٧٩: ٦٤; Sifianou, ١٩٩٢:٨٢-٨٣)

Brown and Levinson (١٩٧٨;١٩٨٧) elaborate on Goffman's notion of face which he (١٩٦٧:٥) defines as " the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself ". Brown and Levinson (١٩٨٧:٦١) define face as the personal "public self-image" that every individual desires to enjoy and has the right to claim this image for himself/herself. They (١٩٧٨:٦٧) regard face as the norms and values specified by members of a given society. They (١٩٨٧:٦١) divide face into two aspects:

- a- Negative face which refers to the person's "freedom of action and freedom of imposition". For instance, orders and requests restrict the freedom of individual and affect the hearer's negative face.
- b- Positive face which refers to the personality or " the positive consistent self-image" of the individual in his/her society.

### ٤. Speech act of invocation in Iraqi Arabic (Data analysis)

An eclectic model of analysis is used in this study. The general framework of the data analysis is basically based on Searle's (١٩٦٩) and Bach and Harnish's (١٩٧٩) concepts of "Speech Act Theory", and Brown and Levinson's (١٩٧٨, ١٩٨٧) "Politeness Theory". Two more related studies are also taken into

consideration in the data analysis: Tannen and Öztek's (1977) study "Health to our Mouths: Formulaic Expressions in Turkish and Greek" and Emery's (2000) study "Greeting, congratulating and Commiserating in Omani Arabic".

Tannen and Öztek (1977: 517-518) categorize the situations, in which polite formulas are used, into three categories: rapport establishment situations, anxiety-provoking situations and happy occasions. Emery (2000: 200) analyzes greeting and parting routines in Omani Arabic under the first category, whereas condoling and congratulating are analyzed under the other two categories.

Since invocations are context-bound expressions, and are used in certain situations and occasions, data collected from our subjects will be analyzed according to these three categories.

#### 4. 1. Rapport Establishment situations

Tannen and Öztek (1977: 520) point out that "any social interaction is an occasion for establishing rapport between participants". Greetings, leave-taking, invitations, sneezing and favour receiving situations can be analyzed under this category.

##### 4.1.1. Greetings

Every Muslim around the world should learn some important expressions such as the greeting *assalamu alaikum* "peace be upon you". This greeting is used all over the Arab-speaking communities and countries (Ferguson, 1970: 54; Al-Nasser, 1993: 24). According to Sibawaihi, greeting is used as invocation which means "I wish or invoke Allah that peace always be upon you" (Sahrawi, 2000: 213). The same thing can be applied to *sabah ulxair* "good morning" and *masaa' ulxair* "good evening" – meaning I invoke Allah to make your morning or evening good. Although greeting is an independent speech act used to start conversation and has been studied by some scholars, it is an indirect speech act of invocation.

*assalamu alaikum* is the formal greeting in Arabic, and can be used at any time. It is used by both males, females, educated and uneducated people. The traditional response to this type of greeting is *wa alaikum ussalam wa rahmatullahi wabarakaatu* "and Allah's peace, mercy and blessings be upon you". This reply tends to be longer and more polite than the greeting itself because the responder wishes and invokes Allah to endow the initiator three illocutionary acts "peace", "mercy" and "blessings". Although the responder flouts Grice's maxim of quantity, he follows the instructions of the Glorious Quran: "when you are greeted with a greeting, greet in return with what is better than it, or (at least) return it equally" (Surah An-Nisaa', verse: 86)\*. The responder can also reply with the short expression

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This rendering is taken from Al-Hilali and Khan, (1996: 123)

*waṣalāikūm ussalām* "and peace be upon you". From the social point of view, the process of greeting and its reply is a polite, social and religious duty that is performed to enhance the social relationships between the members of the Arab societies. Brown and Levinson (١٩٨٧:٥١) state that the function of the ritual of greeting is to avoid conflict.

The formal greeting is always followed by *kif ḥalāk* or the colloquial Iraqi *shlonāk* \_both mean "how are you?" and normal reply is *bḫir alḥamdulilāh allāh 'isalmaḥ* "fine, praise be to Allah. May Allah protect you". Again the responder feels grateful and indebted to the initiator for asking about his health and well-being. Therefore, he responds with "praise be to Allah" and also gives the initiator an appropriate invocation "May Allah protect you" and pays the initiator back more linguistic acts in order to express his gratefulness and indebtedness. Our data reveals one salient feature (extra invocation) in the women's speech (greeting) which is *domaḥ bḫir inshallāh* "may you always be good! If Allah will". This expression is uttered by the initiator of the greeting which is regarded as a third move (by the initiator) in the act of greeting. These expressions should be uttered in a friendly tone as if they emit from the heart. Otherwise it is regarded as a cold or weak greeting.

### ٤, ١, ٢ **Leave-taking**

Cross-culturally speaking, expressions which are used in leave-taking situations "belong to a small set of specific speech acts"(Ameka ١٩٩٩:٢٦٨). For Tannen and Öztekin (١٩٧٧:٥١٧), such expressions are regarded as obligatory formulas in such situations. Leaving the house and going to work or leaving a friend for a short time are among the most frequent situations in our daily life. However, one's destination might be distant and staying for long time is another possibility. Leaving the house, an Arab may receive, from those who stay behind, different types of invocations which may vary according to the distance he/she covers. The most conventional expression is *maṣassalāma* "good bye" or lit. "safety be with you". Though this utterance is a general wish, it is an indirect speech act of invocation, which implies "I ask or invoke Allah that safety be with you when you travel".

Another widely used formula, especially by women, is *allā maṣaḥ* "May Allah be with you". It is a conventional invocation addressed to those who leave. It means that he travels under the patronage (supervision) of Allah.

IA speakers feel obliged to give a friend, a relative, or even a family member a good farewell when he/she travels for a distant place and intends to stay for long time. The following expressions are used in such situations:

*trooḥi w tiji bissalāma* "(I wish) you go and come back safely" and *tauṣal bissalāma* "you arrive safely" used by both male and female subjects. The normal response to these two invocations is *allāh yisalmaḥ* "may Allah keep you safe". In this

situation, the interlocutors pay mutual consideration to each other and both faces are saved. Some speakers, especially women, pray to Allah to see the traveler again *inshufak b'xir inshalla* "see you well, if Allah will". Women tend to be more concerned about the traveler and express their concerns through the use of *dirbalak sala nafsak* "take care of yourself".

Women also use certain expressions like *tšadif ilxir* "you meet all the best" and *darbak axdar* "your road is green" –meaning your way is smooth and you face no difficulties or troubles when you travel.

Few more farewell expressions are also used: *fi aman illah* or *fi r'ait illah* "in Allah's protection" –meaning "you travel under the protection of Allah". These utterances are direct invocations used by both women and men.

All of these leave-taking expressions are considered indirect speech acts of invocation and are regarded as Arabic culture-specific expressions. The propositional content of these invocations is a wish or request of Allah's help for the addressee to travel well and arrive his/her destination safely.

As for English, the original propositional structure of *good bye* was the invocation "God be with you" which has been shortened to *good bye*. "God be with you" was used as a farewell (Watts, ۲۰۰۳:۱۷۹).

#### ۴, ۱, ۳ **Invocations used on feasts or invitations**

Feasts and invitations are the most traditional ways in which Arabs express their feelings and intimacy towards each other. Invitation is the characteristic feature of Arabs who are famous of their hospitality. The quality and quantity of food signal their generosity. In Arab societies, hospitality requires immediate and detailed welcomes. It is expected from every Arab individual and the absence of such behavior affects the individual's status and reputation (Al-Khatib, ۲۰۰۶, ۲۷۳; Feghali, ۱۹۹۷:۳۵۳). Islam governs most of Arabs' behaviors, and gives them instructions about their daily life. It obligates them to accept invitations and attend such social gatherings (Al-Ubaid, ۲۰۰۴:۶۳۹-۶۴۰).

Since invitations indicate benefit to the invitee and cost to the inviter (Leech, ۱۹۸۳:۱۳۴), and the inviter spends money on preparation of food, Arab speakers feel themselves indebted to the inviter and try to pay him back through words (linguistic behaviour). Arabs feel that the bare expression of *shukran* "thank you" is not strong enough to express their gratitude and thankfulness to the inviter. Therefore, our informants used a variety of expressions (invocations) to express their gratitude and indebtedness: *kathar allah xirkum* and *allah yzid iln'ama* "May Allah increase your bounty". Another wide-spread formula used by IA men and women: *Sufra daima* which means "your bounty is unending" or "May Allah keep His blessings on you". These utterances may be accompanied by *barak allah bikum* "May Allah's blessings be upon you". Some educated speakers use the

standard Arabic gratitude *shukran*  $\text{ʔala fʔusn alʔyafah}$  “thank you for the good hospitality”. The appropriate answer for these utterances is *alif*  $\text{ʔafya}$  literally “one thousand health” and *sharaftuna* “you honored us”. Thus, both faces are maintained and preserved. This is because, as Goffman (1967:6) points out, one’s face and the face of the other participants share similar wants. Traditions of the social group and the context of situation determine how much consideration speakers have to pay for face. Women use some peculiar formula *bilafrah inshallah* or *tdirunuh bilafrah inshallah* “you prepare this food again on happy occasions in your house”. In this invocation, women seem to focus on happy occasions.

Some religious men use pure invocations from the tradition (Hadith) *alahuma aʔim man aʔamana wa isqi man asqana* “O Lord, feed those who fed us, and water (quench) who watered (quenched) us”. Men also use *ʔamreen inshallah* “may your house be inhabited by its people, if Allah will”. The answer is *allah yʔamar darak* “May Allah keep your house inhabited by its owners”. A third move is used by the inviter (host) *allah mʔayeeʔum sharftoona* “May Allah welcome you, you have honored us”.

### ٤, ١, ٤ **Invoking for those who sneeze**

Following the tradition of the prophet (PBUH), every Muslim should invoke for those who sneeze. One of the duties that Muslim owes to his fellow Muslim is to say *yarʔhamuʔa allah* "may Allah have mercy on you" when he/she sneezes. Islamic religion is part of the Arab culture and constitutes a major part of Arab individual's repertoire. Thus the impact of Islam is clear on the Arab speakers and Arab culture.

*Yarʔhamuʔa allah* is a polite and religious formula which is used when one sneezes. The listener, in return, should reply with a more polite and longer formula *yahdeekum wa yuʔliʔ balakum* "I ask Allah to guide your steps and put your affairs in order". This is a widely used formula by both men and women. But women use a special word for sneezing babies which is *ʔumur* "longer life" or *ʔafiya* "more health". No answer is expected from the baby. These two words imply "I ask Allah to bestow upon the baby longer life or more health".

### ٤, ١, ٥ **Invoking after receiving favour or help**

Arab culture is collectivistic. It stresses solidarity, group membership and strong societal relations. People care about themselves, their families, relatives and others who live in their neighborhood. People also show a great degree of commitment to one another rather than acting as independent individuals (Barakat, 1993:24). Since Arab culture involves all these characteristics, we expect strong cooperation and a spectrum of favours are exchanged among the Arab individuals in their daily life.



Help and favours vary considerably and are exchanged in different situations of life. Any help should be rewarded by a positive linguistic act. The IA speaker can thank the helper or can invoke for him/her. He/she can also combine the two speech acts to inform the addressee that he appreciates his/her efforts. Both IA men and women use the general invocation *jazak Allah xair* "may Allah reward you better" and *barak Allah beek* "may Allah bless you" which are used when the person receives any type of favour or help. They also use a common invocation *rahim alla waldeek* "May Allah have mercy on your parents" with the response *w waldeek* "and your parents". Old people use the last invocation extensively. *Kathar Allah min amthalak* "May Allah increase those like you" and *Allah yif alha fi mizan hasanatak* "May Allah make it (this favour) in your good deeds" are also used by IA men and women. Women seem to have certain expressions like *alla yqadraq ala fik ilxir* "May Allah enable you to do good deeds" and *njazeek bilafrah* "we return it to you on happy occasions". All of these expressions are invocations and used to express the speaker's gratefulness and gratitude. It is clear that the use of invocations is strongly preferred by IA speakers rather than the use of the mere *shukran* "thank you" or *ana mamnuun* "I am grateful".

#### ٤,٢ Anxiety-provoking situations

This category includes the situations of loss and health (Tannen and Öztekin, ١٩٧٧:٥١٩). Arab people sometimes undergo times of stress and sorrows; therefore, stronger solidarity is expected from relatives and acquaintances. Death, sickness and situations in which a family has a missing or imprisoned member are analyzed under this category.

#### ٤,٢,١ Invoking for the dead (deceased)

The phenomenon of death is a special ritual in the Arab societies. Arabs deal politely with this phenomenon and pay the dead all the due respect. Arabic provides its speakers with a variety of expressions that are used in this ceremony or upon meeting one of the dead's kins. Arabs do not refer to the deceased person as *almait* "the dead", but instead they use more delicate expressions to refer to him or her such as *almaghfoor lahu* and *almarhoom* – meaning "the forgiven person". Whenever the dead's name is mentioned, some ritual expressions accompany it such as *Allah yirhamuh* "May Allah have mercy on him" Mentioning the name of the person only, the person might be viewed as vulgar or impolite (Al-Hiti, ١٩٩٣:١٨٨). Emery (٢٠٠٠:٢١٣) points out that condolences are paid on death occasion for the following reasons: "to share grief of the bereaved and express solidarity, to emphasize the transitory of life on earth, and to give encouragement".

In Iraqi society, the family of the deceased person receive people from ٣ to ٧ days. At this period of time, relatives, neighbors and acquaintances come to console the family of the deceased. Taken from Islam, there are some prayers

people use on such an occasion such as *allah yirhamu* "may Allah have mercy on him" and *allah yighfir lu* "may Allah forgive him". The traditional response to these invocations is *yirham waldeek* "may Allah have mercy on your parents" even if the parents are still alive. Some Iraqis use a combination of three speech acts of invocation *allah yirhamu w yaghfir lu w yulhim ahlu alṣabr wal silwan* "May Allah have mercy on him, forgive him and bestow patience and oblivion on his family".

Iraqis, both men and women, use *ilbaqya bhayatkum* "the remaining days in the deceased person's life may be added to your life" with the response *hayataḳ al baqya* "may your life be long", and *allah yirhamuh w ḡawḏu aljanna* "May Allah have mercy on him and compensate him with paradise (instead of this worldly life)". Some subjects invoke Allah to make it the last sad occasion for the family like *ḡatimt alahzan inshallah* "may it be the last of your sad occasions, If Allah will". Some subjects either religious or educated use the standard Arabic invocation *aḡsan allahu ṣaza'akum wa ḡhafara li maitakum* "may Allah alleviate your sorrows and have mercy on your deceased person". The first part of the last utterance is used to express solidarity and show sympathy whereas the last part is used as a pure invocation for the deceased person.

Some expressions reflect the Muslims' view that man is mortal in this worldly life, such as *inna lillah wa inna ilaihi rajiḳoon, ḳulna ṣalḡal ṡariq* "we belong to Allah and to Him we return again, all of us are on this path". The first clause means that Allah has created us and surely we will return to Him. It is not an invocation but a verse or "*ayah*" from the Glorious Quran and used as a condolence to soften the sorrow of the family. The second clause *ḳulna ṣalḡal ṡariq* reflects this reality and we will have the same fate. This is the judgment of Allah and we have to accept it.

### ٤,٢,٢ Invoking for the sick

Visiting the sick is a salient duty and obligation to which the Arab speakers should commit. The importance of such visits emerges from two perspectives: the first is social in that these visits stress in-group membership and strengthen intimacy among members of the society; and the second is religious in that such visits are regarded as one of rights or duties that the Muslim owes to his fellow Muslim. From religious point of view, when the Arabs visit the sick, they will be rewarded by Allah.

Generally speaking, Arab people throughout the globe invoke Allah's help to get the sick recovered from his/he sickness. Compared to our female subjects, most of IA male subjects prefer *ajur w ṣafia* "reward and health" which means that the sick is afflicted by a disease and the speaker (visitor) asks Allah to endow the sick good reward and more health. The more educated people use the standard Arabic *as'al allah an yushfeek* "I ask Allah to get you recovered". It is a pure

invocation in which the speaker requests Allah to get the sick recovered and that the addressee returns to his normal health conditions. These expressions reflect the influence of religion on the Arab speakers.

When the patient undergoes a surgical operation or suffers from a severe illness and stays in bed for longer time, the following expressions are used especially by women:

*tgoom bissalamah* or *tinhaq bissalamah* "to get up safely", these two utterances may be post-modified by *inshallah* which refers to the will or aid of Allah.

The visit to the sick person may take time and may include a sequence of inquiries. It is opened by *il hamdulilah ṣasalama* "praise be to Allah for your safety". This ritual formula precedes the above mentioned expressions (the act of invocation). The visitor asks the sick about his health or wellbeing, and to what extent he has recovered (got well). Upon leaving, the visitor says the colloquial *nḫali ṣindkum iḫafia inshalla* "may we leave health in your house, If Allah will". The normal response is *allah ḡafik* "may Allah keep you healthy" (May Allah endow you health). These reciprocal conventional, ritual and religious expressions are used in such situation, and they leave good psychological and spiritual feeling in the sick's mind and soul. All of these invocations (prayers) are paid for Allah with a strong faith and hope that these invocations will be answered by Him.

### ٤, ٢, ٣ Invoking for the absent, missing or imprisoned person

Iraqi people visit the family of the missing or imprisoned person, and ask if the family has received or heard any good news about their absent member whether it is a son or a father. They use certain expressions to express their solidarity and to show that they care and share the family their feelings. These expressions are realized through invocations. IA speakers use *as'al allah an yraj'uh salim ghanim* "I ask" (invoke) Allah to return him safe and triumphant<sup>\*</sup>". This utterance is a direct invocation which is realized by the performative verb *as'al* "I ask or invoke Allah that the absent or the missing person comes back home safe". Some use the general invocation *as'al allah an yraj' kul ghaib l'ahlu* "I ask Allah to return every absent and missing to his family" with *ameen* "amen" response. Others use *allah yijma'kum fi aqrab waqt* "May Allah reunite the family soon", and the short form *yirja' bissalama* "may he come back safely" is also used.

For the imprisoned people, Iraqis use *allah yfarij ṣannu w ṣan kul maḍlum* "May Allah release him (from jail) and release every oppressed person". IA people believe that the willingness of Allah can make (turn) difficult things come true. It is clear that the speech act of invocation is part of the polite system of Arabs

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\*- the absent travelled for a goal such as business or to study, the word 'triumphant' means that the absent achieves his goal or gets what he has travelled for.

despite the fact that these invocations are used due to religious considerations and influences.

Iraqi women use some different expressions such as *ya rab ṣan qarīb tfrāhun brajṣtu* "O my Lord, may you be gladdened by his return". They also use *ya rab tismaṣun aḡbar ṡaiba ṣannu ṣan qareeb* "O my Lord, may you hear good news about him soon". It seems that Iraqi women share the family similar feelings and sorrows since they focus on the words "gladness" and "good news" in their invocations. The words "O my Lord" shows that the utterance is emitted from the bottom of the speaker's heart. It is also a direct request to advocate the Lord to answer this invocation. One of our subjects uses a combination of speech acts *inshallah yirjaṣ bissalama w tfrāhun bih* "If Allah will, may he come back safe and you be gladdened by his return".

### ٤,٣ Happy Occasions

Tannen and Öztekin (١٩٧٧:٥١٩) categorize happy events into occasions and gains. Occasions are subdivided into general such as Eids and personal such as weddings and new-born babies. Gains include possessing new items.

### ٤,٣,١ Invocations in the Eids

Muslims around the world have two Eids or feasts (the Lesser and Greater Feasts): they are two religious celebrations. The Greater Feast or *Eid al-Adḡa* is celebrated on the ١٠<sup>th</sup> of Dhu al-Hijjah\* and lasts for four days. The Lesser Feast or *Eid al-Fṡr* directly follows Ramadan and lasts for three days. Ramadan is a month in which Muslims fast during day hours and they devote their time to worship Allah. Allah made this Eid after Ramadan to be as a reward for their hardship (Agha, ١٩٩٩: ٩).

These celebrations are the best time for tolerance and making conciliations among the disputed people in the society. People put aside their disputes and wear their best clothes. In these celebrations IA people exchange visits, greet others and exchange wishes and invocations, whether on the roads or through home-visits. Men usually go to the mosques to perform Eid prayer which is performed after sunrise. When they finish, they start handshaking, and exchange invocations. Speakers choose, out of their linguistic repertoire, the suitable expressions that suit this occasion. There is a variety of wishes that function as invocations which can be used by the interlocutors. IA men use *ṣid saḡeed wa kul ṣam wa antum biḡair* "happy Eid and every year you be well", *ṣidḡum mubaraḡ w yinḡad ṣaleeḡum biṣṣaḡa wa salama* "blessed be your Eid, may Allah return it with safety and health". These are general invocations used in both celebrations. The first utterance is a general wish and its reply is *w inta b'alif ḡir* "and you be good a

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٤- it is the twelfth month of the Muslim lunar Calendar. In these days Muslims go to Mecca to do pilgrimage and they give sacrifices to their Lord

thousand times". The suitable response to the second utterance *ʕidkum Mubarak* is either *wa ʕidak* "and blessed be your Eid, too" or *allah ybarik beek* "May Allah bless you". In Eid al-Fiṭr IA men use *taqabal allah ʕiamakum* "May Allah accept your fasting", *taqabal allah minna w minkum alṭaʕat* "may Allah accept the worship from you and us", and *taqabal allah mina w minkum ʕalifi al aʕmal* "may Allah accept the best deeds from you and us". Since IA people fast and worship Allah and do good deeds such as pray extra prayers, read the Glorious Quran and feed poor people, IA speakers use the above mentioned utterances to invoke Allah to accept all these good deeds. Eid is regarded as a holly occasion in which invocations are most likely to be accepted by Allah. The response to these invocations is *mina w minkum ajmaʕeen* "from you and us all" which is a short form of "may Allah accept the best deeds [from you and us all]".

There is also a famous wish which is used by both men and women *ikʕeed iljai fi macca (or hajji) inshalla* "the next Eid you be in Mecca or hajji, if Allah will". This invocation is usually used on Greater Feast *Eid al-ʕḍḥa* because the words Mecca and Hajji are associated with this Greater Feast. *ikʕeed iljai ʕirees inshalla* "next Eid, you get married and be bridegroom, if Allah will" is also used by men, whereas *ikʕeed iljai ʕaroot inshallah* "next Eid, you get married and be bride, if Allah will" is used by women and addressed to unmarried women.

IA women extensively use *ʕasakum min ʕwada* "may you be among the attendees of the next Eid"- meaning "we hope that you will live up to the next Eid and enjoy this ceremony". *tahqeeq il amani* "may your dreams become true next Eid", and *yinʕad ʕaleena w ʕaleekum biʕṣaḥa w aḥafia* "healthy returns for you and us". These utterances are mostly used by women and scarcely used by men.

### ٤,٣,٢ Invoking for the bride and bridegroom

Weddings are common ceremonies all over the world. Friends, neighbours and relatives are involved on such happy occasions. They are expected to deliver expressions which suit such occasions, and to share the happiness. Invocations, which are considered face-satisfying acts, are part of the social and religious system; therefore, they are used in this situation.

IA male speakers use the standard Arabic *mubarak, as'al allah an yubarik fi zawajikum* "congratulations, I ask Allah to make your marriage blessed". This ritual utterance reflects the speaker's rejoicing on this occasion. It involves the word "congratulations" that pre-modifies the head act of invocation. According to Abdul-Ra'of (٢٠٠٦:١٥١), words that express good wishes such as *mubarak* are "foregrounded to deliver cheerful words that are pleasant to the addressee". After that, the speaker delivers the head act of invocation (the direct speech act of invocation).

*birrafaah walbanin* "may you live in prosperity and have a lot of children" is mostly used by IA men. Although asking Allah to bestow the bride and bridegroom a lot of children might seem strange in some societies like Japanese and Western people, it is preferred and used by Arab people. Agha (١٩٩٩: ٣٤) views that this formula is learned from the Glorious Quran *al-malu wal banoon zinatul-hayat addunia* "wealth and children are the adornment of the life of this world" (Al-Kahf, verse: ٤٦)\*. Other expressions are also used by IA men such as *afrahkum daima inshallah* and *rabbi yif'al ayamkum kulha afrah* "may Allah make your days full of happiness". Both men and women use *ma nijikum ghir bilafrah* "we only visit you on happy occasions".

Most IA women use *mabruk shaiyin ilxir saliha* "congratulations, you see all goodness with her" with the response *xir isibak inshallah* "may you be endowed with goodness". Women's utterance is a clear wish or invocation that this bride be good omen to the family and bring with her all good things to the house of bridegroom. IA women (especially old women) use *minak ilmal w minha akyal*, literally "money from you and children from her" which means the bridegroom provides money for the new family and the women's task, among other things, is to have (give birth to) children. Women also use *allah ytamimha salikum bxir* "may Allah complete your happiness".

### ٤,٣,٣ Invoking for the new-born baby

New-born baby is one of Allah's gifts to parents, therefore; it is regarded as a happy occasion which makes family members, neighbors, relatives, and friends feel happy. From the Eastern culture perspectives, the first baby symbolically succeeds his father in the family chain. This occasion obligates Arab people especially women to deliver congratulations, blessings and invocations with gifts to express their happiness to the family. On this occasion, the family prepares feast and invites all the relatives, neighbors and friends.

According to Bach and Harnish (١٩٧٩: ١٢٥), acknowledgements are part of the social rituals and conventions and are expected in certain occasions. Since invocations belong to acknowledgments, they are the most suitable linguistic acts that function well on this happy occasion.

Iraqis especially close relatives can see the child with the expression *bismillah, mashallah*, or *allamuşalli salnabi* "in the name of Allah", "what Allah has willed!" and "Allah's blessings and prayers be upon the prophet" to protect the baby from envy. Some families do not allow people outside the family to see the child. They use pretexts like "he just slept" which means do not bother or disturb him.

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This rendering is taken from Al-Hilali and Khan, (١٩٩٦: ٣٩١)

Men always congratulate the father when they meet in the street or at the workplace. Most of our subjects use *mabruk yitraba bizzikum inshallah* "congratulations, to be brought up with your prosperity, If Allah will". Addressing the positive face of the father, the IA men start their utterances with the word *mabruk* "congratulations" to express their happiness and show the hearer that they share him his happiness. Sometimes, the word *mabruk* is repeated two times before the speaker utters the direct invocation (head act) *yitraba bizzikum* which means that the baby will be brought up and live under the father's prosperity and custody. The speaker seals his utterance with *inshallah* "If Allah will" with a strong hope and desire (faith) that his utterance (invocation) comes true or be realized. Thus, the speaker satisfies the positive face of the hearer and creates a friendly atmosphere and leaves a feeling of satisfaction in the hearer's soul.

Since women are mostly concerned with this happy occasion, more light will be shed on their expressions. Unlike men, Iraqi women first ask about the mother's health because she suffered a lot. Therefore, they start with *alhamdulillah rassalama* "praise be to Allah for your safety". They also use *inshalla al durriah al salihah* "If Allah will. May Allah make him a good boy", and *rabbi yij'alu min il awalad isalihin* "may my Lord make him good boy!". Other women use *inshallah yikbar w tifrahoon bih* "If Allah will, may he become adult and you celebrate his wedding!". Women's invocations center around the boy being good. They pray to Allah to enable the family to raise him well and he becomes well-behaved. These invocations are also followed by *allah yihfaduh* "may Allah protect him" and the response is *yihfadlich awladich* "may Allah protect your children". Such invocations need to be uttered in a warm tone and enthusiasm.

### ٤,٣,٤ Invoking for possessing new items

Possessing new items rejoices their owners. This rejoice varies according to the value of the new item. Possessing a new house or buying a new car can be regarded as a happy occasion like having a new baby. Iraqi people congratulate the family with this possession in order to share the happiness and express solidarity. Two ritualized acts are present in such a context: linguistic and non-linguistic acts. The latter includes giving gifts like a kitchen set or a clock mostly for the possession of a new house, whereas the former can be realized in certain expressions. The majority of our IA subjects use *tshufun xiru w yikfikum sharu* (for the house) and *tshufun xirha w yikfikum sharha* (for the car) "may you see or have all goodness". These utterances are indirect speech act of invocation and mean "May Allah endow you all good and protect you from bad things for having the new house or car".

The second formula used by our subjects is centered on the family's bounty. For the new car, they use *allah yirziqum minha* "may Allah make it a cause for your blessings and a cause for increasing your bounty". For the house, they use *allah*

*yif alha dar xir*  $\varsigma$  *alikum inshallah* "May Allah make it a bless and goodness for you all, if Allah will".

Iraqis also congratulate others when buying or wearing new clothes. They use *tihreeha bikafia* "you use it up in health" or *tihreeha bilhana* "you wear it (use it up) in happiness". Although these utterances are compliments, they imply speech acts of invocations. Thus, Iraqis use invocations to compliment others. Instead of expressing admiration in the new clothes, IA speakers invoke or wish the addressee (owner) to wear it and use it in good health and feel happy whenever he wears it. The response for this invocation is *allah yafeek* "May Allah keep you healthy".

## ◦. Findings:

- ١- It has been found that invocations are part of the linguistic repertoire of IA speakers. These expressions are used in different social situations, and constitute a major part of the politeness system of the IA speakers.
- ٢- It demonstrates that IA people are familiar with certain occasions like weddings, Eids, funerals etc. These occasions are highly valued in the society and generate various appropriate expressions. Invocations are used on such occasions. In addition, invocations are used in greetings, leave-taking or favour receiving situations.
- ٣- Although IA men and women use common expressions, women, in most situations and occasions, tend to use their own expressions (invocations). Women seem to have different concerns regarding new-born babies and weddings, therefore; they use certain expressions like *umur* "longer life or *afiya* "more health" which are hardly used by men. They also care much about safety of others (the missing or prisoner) and use stronger invocations like *ya rab tisma'un axbar taiba annu an qareeb* "O my Lord, may you hear good news about him soon". This reflects a fact that women are not only more supportive than men but also have different concerns and attitudes.



- ξ- In their daily interaction, IA speakers use a mixed version of Arabic. They use both Standard and colloquial Arabic. However, educated people prefer to use more Standard Arabic whereas religious people prefer religious expressions taken from the Glorious Quran or the prophet traditions *ḥadīth*.
- ο- This study has proved the hypothesis that IA speakers are greatly influenced by their religion. This influence is clear and is reflected in their language. Religious expressions, especially invocations, are part of the linguistic and politeness system of IA speakers who extensively use them with the optional formula *inshalla* "If Allah will".
- Ϛ- This study supports Searle's claim that speech acts are performed in conformity with "regulative rules". IA people follow religious and social rules to perform the speech act of invocation.

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## List of Arabic phonemic symbols used for Arabic transcription

### Consonants:

The symbol	Example of Arabic words	Meaning of the Arabic words
'	as'al	I ask
b	mabruk	congratulation
t	trooħ	you go
th	kathur	increased
j	tiji	you come
ħ	raħma	mercy
x	xir	goodness
d	dar	house
ð	ðurriah	children
r	řaroot	bride
z	zawaj	marriage

s	salam	peace
sh	shukran	thanks
Ş	şabaḥ	morning
ḍ	ḍiyafah	hospitality
ṭ	ṭareeq	road
ṛ	ṛafia	health
gh	ghaib	absent
f	fi	in
q	qareeb	near (soon)
l	Allah	God
m	min	from
n	janna	paradise
h	rafaah	prosperity
w	waqt	time
y	yirjaṛ	return

Vowels:

The symbol	Example of Arabic words	Meaning of Arabic words
i	tismaṛun	you hear
a	mal	money
o	shlonak	how are you?
u	kulna	all of us

## Appendix

The following discourse completion test (the questionnaire) is designed to investigate the different expressions of invocations used by AI speakers in daily life situations. The researcher interviews the subjects. They are asked to answer these questions and their responses are written down by the researcher himself.

### ١. First situation: Greeting

-How do you greet a friend or an acquaintance?

-How does he/she respond to your greeting?

### ٢. Second situation: Leave-taking

One of your family members or a relative is leaving (for a short or long time).

- How do you say “goodbye” to him/her?
- How does he/she respond to your “goodbye”?

### **३. Third situation: invitation**

You are invited at your friend’s house.

- What do you say to him after the meal?
- How does he respond to you?

### **४. Fourth situation: someone sneezes**

A friend, who is sitting next to you, sneezes.

- What do you say to him/her?
- How does he/she respond to you?

### **५. Fifth situation: receiving a favour or help**

Someone has just done you a favour or helped you.

- What do you say to him/ her?
- How does he/she respond to you?

### **६. Sixth situation: death**

One of your relatives has passed away. You go to the family to give condolences.

- What do you say to the family?
- How do they respond to you?

### **७. Seventh situation: a sick person**

One of your relatives is sick and you visit him/ her.

- What do you say to him/her?
- How does he/she respond to you?

**٨. Eighth situation: a missing or imprisoned person.**

The son of your neighbour is absent, missing or imprisoned. You visit the family and ask about him.

- What do you say to them?
- How do they respond to you?

**٩. Ninth situation (occasion): Eid ceremony**

- How do you greet your friends and relatives in *Eid al-Adha* and *Eid al-Fitr*?
- How do they respond to your greetings?

**١٠. Tenth situation (occasion): wedding party**

Your neighbour has a wedding party.

- How do you congratulate the family, the bride and bridegroom?
- How do they respond to you?

**١١. Eleventh situation (occasion): new-born baby**

Your neighbour or relative has a new-born baby. You visit the family to congratulate them.

- What do you say to them?
- How do they respond to you?

**١٢. Twelfth situation: new house, car or clothes**

Your neighbour or relative has bought a new house, car or clothes.

- What do you say to them?
- How do they respond to you

