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A Sociopragmatic Study on the Influence of Religion on Invitation Speech Act in Algeria

دراسة براغماتية اجتماعية حول تأثير الدين على خطاب الدعوة في الجزائر

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Article info:	Abstract
Article history: <i>Received</i> :28-04-2020 <i>Revised</i> : 23-05-2020 <i>Accepted</i> : 03-01-2021	Language and religion have both been considered as influential components of culture that influence each other. In an attempt to understand the relationship between religion and language, this study aims at examining the influence of religion on language as a communicative means, focusing on the effect of Islam and Islamic values and beliefs on the everyday language of Algerian speakers of Arabic. To explore the extent of religion's influence on language use, the study investigates the use of religious expressions in the daily speech through analysing invitation speech act. This study mainly uses qualitative analysis based on speech act theory (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969) and Brown and Levinson's (1987) face-saving approach of politeness. It has been found that religious lexicon play a significant role and influence in the performance of invitation speech act. In addition, the use of religion as a politeness strategy appears to function as a way of protecting the self-image of both the speaker and the hearer. Moreover, the participants' responses reveal awareness of the religious and ideological motivations behind the use of religious expressions.
Key words: <i>Religion</i> <i>Religious expressions</i> <i>Speech acts</i> <i>Invitations</i> <i>Pragmatics.</i>	

ملخص	الكلمات المفتاحية:
إن اللغة لا تعمل بشكل منفصل أو فردي فهي دائماً ما تكون على اتصال وثيق بالثقافة والدين كما أن الدين يعتبر آلية قوية في تطوير ثقافات العالم ولا يزال له تأثير قوي على الحياة اليومية. في محاولة لفهم العلاقة بين الدين واللغة، تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى فحص تأثير الدين على اللغة كوسيلة تواصل، مع التركيز على تأثير الإسلام والقيم والمعتقدات الإسلامية على اللغة اليومية للمتحدثين الجزائريين للغة العربية. و سنحاول من خلال هذه الورقة البحثية استكشاف مدى تأثير الدين في استخدام التعبيرات الدينية في الخطاب اليومي من خلال تحليل قانون خطاب الدعوة. تستخدم هذه الدراسة بشكل أساسي التحليل النوعي القائم على نظرية فعل الكلام (أوستن، 1962؛ سيرل، 1969) ونهج براون وليفنسون (1987) للواجهة. وقد وجد أن التعبيرات الدينية تلعب دوراً وتأثيراً هامين في أداء بعض أعمال الكلام. بالإضافة إلى ذلك يبدو أن استخدام الدين كإستراتيجية مهذبة يعمل كوسيلة لحماية الصورة الذاتية لكل من المتحدث والمستمع. علاوة على ذلك أظهرت ردود المشاركين عن الوعي بالدوافع الدينية والأيدولوجية الكامنة وراء استخدام التعبيرات الدينية.	دين التعبيرات الدينية أفعال لفظية خطاب الدعوة براغماتية.

1-Introduction

There are numerous studies that confirmed the influence of cultural and social factors on the use of language (see, for example, Spencer-Oatey, 2000; Scollon and Scollon, 2001; Wierzbicka, 2003; Ferguson, 1982; Fishman, 2006). However, these existing research did not clearly examine the influence of religious values and beliefs on everyday language use. This neglect is not understandable in societies in which religion is present in almost every aspect of life, such as in Algeria. Thus, research into the interaction between religion and language is needed in the fields of sociolinguistics and pragmatics.

This study therefore aims at discussing how religion influences language use, i.e., invitation as a communicative behaviour in cultural speech communities, by focusing on the effect of Islam on the everyday language of Algerian speakers of Arabic in general and Tlemcen speakers in particular. In order to expose this direct effect, this research takes the form of a sociopragmatic study. Sociopragmatics examines interlocutors' beliefs based on relevant social and cultural values (Leech, 1983); i.e. those aspects of language use related to cultural and social norms and practices. Thus, different cultures hold different cultural values and beliefs, which are reflected in the use of language and how people communicate. The performance of communicative acts largely incorporates culture-specific constraints that govern how people say what to whom and in what circumstances (Gumperz and Hymes, 1986).

The significance of this study is that it focuses on analysing religious expressions in their cultural context. This should permit an understanding of pragmatic and sociopragmatic meaning, while avoiding misunderstandings in terms of intercultural and cross-cultural communication. The semantic meaning of these religious expressions is expected to potentially cause pragmatic failure (Thomas, 1983). Misunderstandings might then result from the absence of pragmatic understanding. This study points out the motivations and reasons that induce Algerians to invoke the religious lexicon, along with its pragmatic force, in their communication in everyday life such as invitations.

The method used has been the participant observation methods of ethnography which have long been important in qualitative research work and allow the researcher to get natural data where the informants speak spontaneously. In our use of participant observation, the data were collected through note-taking and recordings which allows us to observe how participants produce and understand pragmatic information and how they interact in contextual settings.

2. Literature Review

In this study, the researcher utilises speech act theory in order to investigate the influence of religion on language use, particularly on speech act performance, and the role of the lexicons of Allah in communicating invitation speech act (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969), revealing insights into the influence of religion on language use, specifically in daily communication. Brown and Levinson's (1987) face-work approach is also used in order to examine the influence of religion on language use. Typically, Brown and Levinson's (1987) approach, and politeness in general, are considered to be a social approach to pragmatics. Politeness and face-work approaches emphasise the association between language use and social context.

2.1. Language and culture

The relationship between culture and language has drawn major attention from different researchers, at least since Whorf (1956) and Sapir (1970) hypothesised that language plays a significant role in determining or influencing how we see the world. While the validity of their hypothesis has been challenged (Rosch, 1987), many other researchers have cited a genuine emphasis from language on culture, particularly with regard to the sociocultural context of language use (Gumperz and Levinson, 1991; Kashima and Kashima, 1998). However, the majority of these studies approach the language-culture relationship by discussing the influence of language on culture or on people's worldviews, as linguistic relativity theory suggests in the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (Whorf, 1956; Sapir, 1970). The theory of linguistic relativity as it addresses the influence of language on thought but not vice versa

makes it inappropriate for use in this study, which is concerned with the impact of culture (specifically of religion as a cultural component) on language use, and particularly the performance of speech acts.

2.2. Individualism vs. Collectivism

In general, cultural differences are derived from two tendencies: individualism and collectivism, with the former focusing on an individual's goal, while the latter emphasizing the goal of a group of people as it is the case in the Algerian society. To date the individualism-collectivism dimension has captured most popular appeal and concerns whether cultures emphasize individuals or groups across a variety of domains (Hofstede, 2001). Simply defined, *individualism* is the extent to which individuals are perceived as a basic unit of analysis while *collectivism* is the extent to which groups (and individual membership within groups) are perceived as a basic unit of analysis (Oyserman & Sorensen, 2009). Thus, individualism highlights separateness, each person is a unique and worthwhile individual. Collectivism highlights connectivity between and among persons; persons gain meaning and worth through connection.

Therefore, individualism and collectivism can be used as criteria to differentiate Western cultures from Arab cultures. However, these two tendencies do not appear separately; instead, they coexist in all cultures, and it is the matter of predominance that determines which culture a country belongs to. In many researches, Western cultures are empirically proved to be more individualistic than Arab Cultures (Hofstede, 2001). Correspondingly, American culture gives priority to individualism, which is self-oriented, by emphasizing on individual goals, independent self and internal attribution. On the other hand, Algerian culture is characterized as a culture focusing more on collectivism, which is others-oriented, and stress in-group goals, interdependent self and external attribution.

This orientation of collectivism has the potential to be influenced by cultural factors and components, such as religion. For example, Islam greatly emphasises the notion of unity among community members, stressing the notion of being a part of a group (At-twajri and Almuhaiza, 1996). Other collectivistic religious

cultures (e.g. Judaism and Hinduism) value group affiliations known to be fundamentally motivated by religion (Cohen and Hill, 2007). In contrast, the influence of Protestantism on American culture might contribute to the individualistic orientation of the US, as the Protestant identity and motivations revolve around developing an individual relationship with God (ibid).

The following discussion will demonstrate how religion and language are characterised as distinguishing and influential components of culture. Religion in culture is not limited to rituals and religious activities, but more widely informs how people view their role in the world.

2.3. Language and Religion

Religion has been a powerful mechanism in the development of world cultures and continues to have a strong impact on everyday life. The impact of religion on human history and identity is stronger than anything else; it has prompted people to settle, to go to war, and has inspired some of the most precious human achievements in art, architecture, etc. It is, therefore, not surprising that religion can also be traced in our everyday speech, not only when we are speaking about religion, but in casual conversation or in discourse. In such usages, they function as a special group of pragmatic expressions.

Thus, religion as a set of the cultural beliefs of Algerians in particular and all Arabs in general, is inlaid in the language Algerians daily use. An outstanding sociolinguistic aspect in Algerian Arabic is seen in the overuse of religious formulae as politeness devices. "This sociolinguistic phenomenon is regarded as unique and related only to Arabic language" (Morrow and Castleton, 2007, p.202). There are maybe thousands of religious expressions or 'lexicon of Allah', to use the term these authors have coined for this phenomenon. The lexicon of Allah is found in all communicative activities: "... tradition has found countless circumstances and formation for its delivery. Some of these phrases, reminders of Allah power, characteristics, capacity and identity have been seen to appear in conversation multiple times each day in venues from the market to

the television news.” (Morrow, et al., 2006, p. 86)

It is difficult to listen to an Algerian Arabic conversation and not hear at some point a phrase that includes *Allah* (literally translated to ‘the God’) or *llah* (‘God’). Occurring as interjections, greetings, phrases of gratitude, and curses, these Arabic phrases which include an explicit or implicit reference to God can be found throughout conversation. Morrow and Castleton (2007) state that both Arabic language and the Muslim faith are the two major elements in the Arab Muslim identity, they continue to say that the widespread of Allah expressions in Arabic is one way through which Muslims assign Allah’s influence over every area of Muslim’s life. In this context, Morrow adds:

“Arabic language is saturated with a rich variety of expressions invoking Allah explicitly or implicitly and the name of Allah permeates both spoken and written Arabic to the point where we can speak of the omnipresence of Allah in the Arabic language. As a result, an Arabic speaker could scarcely conceive of a conversation where the name of God would not appear” (Morrow, 2006, p.45).

Medhi (1978, p.109) postulates that “Arabic language is an inseparable part of Islam”. With a similar point of view, Steward (1968, p.14) claims that “[t]he Arabic language is more than the unifying bond of the Arab world; it also shapes and moulds that world”; in view of that, “it has even greater effect on its speakers than other languages have on their speakers” (ibid. p.14). Many instances where religious lexicons are used for particular speech function are found in Algerian Arabic.

2.4. Speech Act Theory

One major feature of pragmatics is studying speakers’ appropriate production and comprehension of speech acts. The speech act theory is concerned with explaining linguistic meaning in terms of the use of words, sentences and utterances in various speech acts (e.g. requesting, asserting, thanking, promising, inviting, etc.) (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969) The concept of speech act was first coined by Austin (1962) who stated that words are in themselves actions. In other words, he defines them as utterances a speaker produces to do something or in order to get others to do something, not merely saying

something. Austin (ibid) states that the speech acts in English are named after the verbs that carry their semantic connotations such as thanking, compliment, request, and apology. The speech act concept implies that, though the number of utterances in a language is unlimited, people use these infinite utterances to achieve a finite set of purposes which are called speech acts. According to Austin’s theory, these acts can be divided into three constituents:

- (i) Locution is the basic act or the performance of an utterance. It is the actual meaningful linguistic expression and its ostensible meaning.
- (ii) Illocution is the intended meaning of an utterance as a socially appropriate verbal action. In other words, it is the meaning or the function that the communicator intends to convey by the utterance.
- (iii) Perlocution is the actual effect of an utterance that the communicator wants to exercise over the addressee, such as convincing, enlightening, inspiring, or otherwise getting the addressee to do or realise something, whether intended or not.

This classification shows Austin’s differentiation between three aspects of every performance of a particular utterance: what a speaker says and what he/she wants to carry out by saying this (i.e. the force behind the utterance) and the consequences impact of the given utterance. These concepts are important in relation to the present study because invitation is conveyed linguistically (i.e. Locution) both in order to convey some information (i.e. with an illocutionary intention in mind) and also to achieve a particular type of effect on the hearer (i.e. with a perlocutionary effect). For instance, in saying /ku:l zi:d, ma: tehjem/ (help yourself, eat more, don’t be shy), one is not merely an invitation to eat, but performing an act of insisting. In fact, we assume that the good social feeling factor is a kind of perlocutionary effect conveyed through the hearer’s recognition of the illocutionary intention of the speaker and the hearer’s acceptance of that intention.

In a broad sense, speech act theory aims to explain speakers’ ways to use language to accomplish the intended actions and hearers’ ways to realise the utterance’s intended meaning. Among the three

constituents, it is the illocutionary act that has been extensively considered in pragmatics research. Illocutionary acts are strongly linked with the concept of illocutionary force, “the communicative plan or design behind a speaker’s remark” (Leech, 1983, p. 200).

2.5. Brown & Levinson’s Facework View

Brown & Levinson’s (1987) (here after B&L) theory is based on three universal assumptions of politeness in speech acts: 1) all individuals have ‘face’ as self esteem; 2) all speech acts have potential to threaten a speaker’s face; 3) speakers use various linguistic strategies in order to eliminate or limit the effects of such threats. The logic behind these assumptions is that a speaker’s choice of strategy is rational, because expressing politeness in speech act serves as a form of self-defence to keep our face. B&L (1987, p.61) redefined ‘face’ as “the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself” which consists of:

(a) negative face: the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction i.e., freedom of action and freedom from imposition.

(b) positive face: the positive consistent self-image or personality (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interlocutors

B&L (1987, p.61) also note that their notion of ‘face’ is “derived from that of Goffman (1967) and from the English folk term, which ties ‘face’ up with notions of being embarrassed, humiliated or ‘losing face’” and that it is “something that is emotionally invested, that can be lost, maintained or enhanced and must be constantly attended to in interaction” (ibid.). B&L assume that people cooperate with one another in maintaining each other’s face in interaction, that is, “normally everyone’s face depends on everyone else’s being maintained, and since people can be expected to defend their face if threatened, and in defending their own to threaten each others’ faces, it is in general in every participant’s best interest to maintain each others’ face” (B&L 1987, p.61)

Almost any social interaction involves acts that are potentially threatening to one, or both, of these aspects

of ‘face’. Such acts were labelled ‘Face Threatening Acts’ (FTA) in B&L’s terminology. These may be expressions of disapproval, contradictions directed towards another person, as well as expressing inappropriate or exaggerated emotions, or being uncooperative by showing a lack of attention to what someone is saying. Moreover, Brown and Levinson contend that the concept of face itself is universal, though the manifestations of face-wants may vary across cultures with some acts being more face threatening in one culture than in another. B&L (1987) suggest that all cultures provide a speaker with two kinds of strategies to offset the imposition involved with any communicative act: positive politeness and negative politeness.

Positive politeness is associated with solidarity, and involves the speaker’s desire that the hearer should feel wanted, appreciated and somehow part of the group. The use of negative politeness involves a conflict for the speaker between wishing the message to have the desired effect but also wishing to minimize the imposition felt by the hearer. Negative politeness thus acts to redress the impact of an FTA. In polite requests, for example, the use of negative politeness strategy makes the request appear to be indirect, leaving the speaker the possibility of declining the request. At the same time there is a wish on part of the speaker that the intended meaning will take effect.

2.6. Invitation Speech Act

Inviting is a recurrent act in daily life and it is generally understood as a device to enhance good relationship between the members of a community. Among Arabs, it is considered as of part of good manners and the completion of a religious practice based on generosity and hospitality meant to consolidate family ties, neighbourhood and friendship. Al Khatib (2006) argues that:

“Socially, the conventional expectations of Jordanian society are that brothers, sisters, relatives, friends and even neighbours will remain in contact with each other, and be mutually loyal and helpful. One way through which Jordanian people tend to express their feelings toward one other is by inviting one another” (Al khatib, 2006, p. 273)

As is the case with the Jordanian society, in Algeria, people commonly invite each other and not especially for any particular event or celebration but rather as a social practice which is governed by some routines and formulas based on some cultural clues and a mutually shared background which makes it easy for both the inviter to extend invitations and to the invitee to interpret them and respond to them accordingly.

Thus, invitations serve a number of functions in Arabic. They can strengthen family ties, solve controversies, establish and maintain solidarity, prevent cheating and aggression, provide a change and emphasize social status. It is worth mentioning that some of these functions stem from a religious background and some stem from a traditional background. In fact, religion and tradition are important factors prevailing in every aspect of communication and behaviour in the Algerian society.

The multifunctional use of the invitation has an effect on the communicative strategies used in the interaction. Most of these strategies attempt to respect the face wants of those taking part in social interaction. In other words, invitations are widespread in everyday life, particularly in the maintenance of good relationships. For Americans, invitation is regarded as an act that may threaten the invitee's negative face as the extent of imposition increases (B&L, 1987). In other words, in American culture, when the inviter extends an invitation, the invitee is forced to choose between accepting the invitation or rejects it. An attempt will be made in this study to demonstrate that upon inviting Algerian people engage in a 'facework'. Specifically, they take into account the vulnerability of 'face', and therefore take certain procedures to maintain it. Moreover, societal norms as well as the grammatical structure of the language, form the invitation speech act.

3. Research Methodology

This study uses a qualitative approach and describes inviting speech act. Thus, the pragmatic feature addressed in this study is that of invitation, a highly complex speech act that functions as invitation making and accepting strategies. The study of the aforementioned speech acts and their related

array of religious expressions reveal the dynamics of interpersonal polite behaviour, reflecting the socio-cultural values prevalent in Tlemcen speech community. The reason this speech act, namely, invitation was chosen, was that it is important for social interaction and the accomplishment of social commitments and are thus very revealing for the communicative patterns and the socio-cultural norms of any linguistic community. That is, every female speaker of Tlemcen society must be able to perform such speech act even if the speech act in question has a lower frequency of occurrence in the collected data than other speech acts. In fact, invitations have to be investigated within discourse and social interaction.

The data are collected by means of audio-recordings and note-taking about language behaviour which may lead to have rich and authentic data which form the backbone of the fieldwork. These formulas are analysed on the basis of the face-saving model of politeness (B&L, 1987) and speech act theory (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969). Thus, this method of investigation has made it possible to discover a great deal about how religious expressions function in Algeria and the cultural values that form the bases of linguistic performance.

Consequently, whenever we had the opportunity to observe people speaking we took notes of their speech. The situations were varied: family conversations; shops and the street. The problem of note-taking is that it is not possible to have long conversations, yet, it gives a naturalistic data on how people speak. All note-taking was done immediately after each interaction and discreetly away from the participants so as not to arouse suspicion among the speakers and not remind them they were under observation. The data obtained show that this method is, in some situations, very helpful.

In this study, our target population comprises female participants from Tlemcen speech community. They were chosen randomly to avoid any type of bias which may affect the findings of the study. Women are chosen to be the respondents of this study because politeness is usually connected with gender (Mills, 2003). According to Holmes (1995) women are

more polite than men because women enjoy talking and make it as solid harmony maintenance. We are curious to know what types of strategies are used by Tlemcen female speakers.

The first step in order to organize the data was transcribing the most important data. This should provide on one hand a good initial understanding of inviting speech act when dealing with note taking and on the other hand a good grasp of ‘facework’ phenomenon. As the original data was in Algerian Arabic, the transcribed data were then translated into English. Then, for the purpose of the study (literal translations are given in a separate table or parenthesis).

4. Results and discussion

This section demonstrates the ways participants employed religious expressions in their performance and in accordance to the perceived function of invitation.

4.1. The Function of Religious Lexicon in Inviting

The following conversations demonstrate that the offering of hospitality is highly valued within Arabs in general and Algeria in particular. An invitation to dinner, for example, may mean the offering of a wide range of food. The more diverse of food the host offers the higher he would be ranked on the scale of generosity. Thus, another mark of hospitality is that when someone is invited for a meal, the host has to keep on offering the invitee to eat just a bit more. That is to say, the invitee would be kindly asked to eat above and beyond his capacity of eating.

Conversation (1) old female/ young female

Context: an old woman inviting her niece for dinner

A: **llah jxalli:k, llah jahhafdek**, rfed, rfed ma: tahfemf

B: ra:h ?dda:mi, **llah jaxlef**, ʃlæ:ʃ jaʔʔit ʃumrek tata

A: had əʃʃi ʔli:l, bSSahtek, ma: ʃandna ma: xSarna ʃli:k

If the guest stops eating, the host may urge him to continue

A: **fi:k dʒæ:h rabbi**, ku:l, jha:sbek

B: Saħhit tata, wallah ila kulʃi dʒæ:k bni:n, **llah jaʃte:k əSSaħa**

Literal translation

A: May God preserve you, May God keep you safe, help yourself, help yourself do not be ashamed

B: It is next to me, May God recompense you, why have you put yourself to a lot of trouble aunt.

A: It is nothing much, with health, we lost nothing for you

If the guest stops eating, the host may urge him to continue

A: by the wealth of God, help yourself, have some more.

B: thank you aunt, I swear by God that the food is delicious, May God grant you health

As mentioned in conversation (1), the host may encourage the guest to eat with such religious expressions: /**llah jxalli:k llah jahhafdek, rfed, rfed** ma: tahfemf/ (may God preserve you, May God keep you safe do not be ashamed); /**fi:k dʒæ:h rabbi, ku:l, jhæ:sbek**/ (by the wealth of Allah, help yourself). Moreover, to enhance the positive face of the inviter, the invitee tends to use a combination of positive politeness strategies, such as thanking and appreciating.

One important positive politeness strategy is that of giving gifts to Hearer; not only tangible gifts, but also human-relation wants, particularly, positive face wants of being liked and admired. In our data, give gifts to Hearer is realized by the use of the speech act of thanking and compliments. Conversation (1) is a good example. In turn B, the speaker uses religious expression as thanking speech act /llah jaʃte:k əSSaħa/ (May God grant you health) and compliments /kulʃi dʒæ:k bni:n/ (the food is delicious).

Conversation (2) old/ old females (acquaintances)

Context: A neighbour/ woman went to another woman’s house to complain about the noise the children of this latter are making.

A: mselxi:r

B: msennu:r, kiri:k, la:ba:s

A: naħamdou llah, smehli ma: taʃrefni:ʃ, ana dʒa:rtek teʃ ətteħt, llah jahhafdek, ila ma:ʃli:kʃ tʔu:l ledra:ri

ma: jaʕemlu:f əlhus, ərrazʒel ra:h ʕandi mri:d
 B: la:ba:s ʕli:h, du? nʔulhum jesuktou, ədxul llah
jxalli:k, ma: nahadru:f ʕand əlba:b
 A: Sahhit merra xra nʕallah
 B: ajwa hʕu:ma, w ka:n xi dxult
 A: **nedxullek felxi:r nʕallah**, ma:ʕi lju:m wallah xi
 rani maʕtə:na
 B: **ila thub rabbi, llah jefteh ʕli:k**, ədxul
 A: xi hedʔi:ʔa w namʕi
 A: hada huwwa ana nemʕi, **jkatter xi:rek**, Sahhit
 B: la:ba:s ʕli:h mula da:rek
 A: llah la: jwarri:lek ba:s

Literal translation
 A: good afternoon
 B: good afternoon, how are you, fine?
 A: praise to God, I'm sorry you don't know me, I am your downstairs neighbour, may God preserve you, I hope you don't mind to ask your children to make less noise, my husband is ill.
 B: I hope he is alright, I will immediately ask the children to be quiet, come in May God keep you safe, don't stay at the door.
 A: Thank you, another time (I will come), God willing
 B: Well what a shame! You should come in.
 A: I will visit you on happy occasions, God willing, not today I swear by Allah I'm just busy.
 B: If you like God/ For the sake of God, May God make you succeed, come on in.
 A: I just come in for a minute.
 A: That's time; I'm leaving, May your wealth increase, thank you.
 B: I hope the owner of your house (i.e., husband) is alright
 A: May Allah do not show you any suffering

Three speech functions are presented in interaction (2): first, the invitation is used by (B) as a device to repair the damage caused by (B)'s children.

Second, it is used as a sign of solidarity with the interlocutor whose husband is ill. And third, to adhere to a traditional norm which require Algerians to welcome unexpected visitors. So, on the one hand the conversation states the moves for the negotiation of the invitation extended by (A) to (B). And on the other hand it describes a speech event where the interlocutors are aware about the pragmatic restriction created by the situational context of this speech event i.e., (A) is: 1- invading (B)'s space: she is at (B)'s door; 2- the reason for this visit is a complaint, and (B) is receiving a complaint about her children in her house.

In lead (1) and (2), (A) is not receptive to (B)'s invitation. The invitee shows gratitude and gives an excuse to the inviter as a pragmatic strategy to decline the invitation: /Sahhit merra xra nʕallah/ (Thank you, another time (I will come), God willing); [nedxullek felxi:r nʕallah, ma:ʕi lju:m wallah xi rani maʕtə:na] (I will visit you on happy occasions, God willing, not today I swear by Allah I'm just busy). From a pragmatic point of view, it seems that the religious expression [llah jxalli:k] (May God keep you safe) is not enough for the hearer to interpret the invitation as a genuine one. We can conclude that the interlocutor needs more insistence from the speaker to accept the invitation. Or, probably, the invitee is not pleased to accept the invitation as a compensatory device for the damage caused to her by the children of the inviter.

In sequence (3) the following religious expressions particles [ila thub rabbi] (for the sake of God/ if you like God); [llah jafteh ʕli:k] (May God make you succeed) show that (B) is really pleased to receive (A). In fact, the inviter saves the invitee's face from being considered impolite as far as she accepts the first invitation (where no insistence is produced by the inviter). Thus, the invitee interprets the invitation as a genuine one and demonstrates how much respect she has for religious expressions. The interlocutor could not decline an invitation for which Allah is mentioned since; the act is intended to please Allah.

4.2. The Use of 'nshallah' in Inviting

'Inshaallah' is an indirect communication strategy used in Islamic cultures (Pishghadam et al., 2012)

which might serve different purposes. /nfallah/ (God willing) generally occurs in discussions about future events, ideologically rooted in an acceptance of the human inability to predict the future, and instead recognition that only God can know. Thus, /nfallah/ commonly occurs as a response to positive predictions about the future. Moreover, ending with /nfallah/ does not simply report or describe the will of God, it acts partly to distance ‘B’ from the action, putting it in the hands of God. Most importantly, it acts to close the issue being discussed. Nazzal (2005, p.271) came up with different functions such as “mitigating one’s commitment for carrying out a future action or failing to honour one’s commitment”, “avoiding the effects and adverse consequences of one’s specific action on others”, and “confirming one’s religious, linguistic, and cultural identity”.

The most salient religious expression used in our data was [nfallah] (if God wills). The use of this expression is cultural-based as it is part of the Algerian religious beliefs. Pragmatically, this expression is used in order to distance S and H from the FTA. In the above dialogues (3) and (4), [nfallah] (God willing) is used when the interlocutor does not want to make a commitment. This case occurs when the invitee is not interested in the interlocutor’s invitation. The [nfallah] (God willing) response of the invitee is void of any compromise. It is a neutral response meant to comply more with a protocol code than to respond to the speaker’s invitation.

Conversation (3) old/ old (females) friends

Context: inviting a friend for coffee
 A: ra:ni fæmla hel fʃijja xedda, bæ:f tzi w tzi:b mʃa:k lebnæ:t
 B: Sahhit, nʃamlu medzhunda, **nfallah**

Literal translation
 A: I’m preparing a coffee tomorrow, come and bring with you the girls i.e., your daughters
 B: Thank you, we are going to do our best God willing

Conversation (4) young/young females (friends)

Context: inviting a friend for a wedding
 A: fu: linda had lexmi:s les fiançailles teʃi, bæ:f tzi,

ra:ni nesennæ:k
 B: **nfallah**, llah jSaxer

Literal translation
 A: look linda, my wedding is on Thursday, you must come, I’m waiting for you.
 B: God willing, May God bless your union

Conversation (5): old/old females (relatives)

Context: the conversation is between relatives living in different regions of Algeria (‘A’ from Tlemcen and ‘B’ from Oran), ‘B’ declines several invitations before this one.
 A: ajwa, fa:jwa? tzi:w lʃandna, əl ʃa:m əlli ma:ʃandu:f xa:h (smiling), wella ma: dzi:nakumʃ
 B: **wallah**, xi ndziw, nətenna xi ədra:ri jʃabbiw les vacances w ndziw, **nfallah**
 A: fu:f ri:k ʃteti əlkelma, ma: taʃmelli:f ki kul merra, w ma: tzi:f
 B: had lmerra ndzi:w **nfallah**

Literal translation
 A: Then, when do intend to visit us, the year which doesn’t have his brother, or not of the same status
 B: I swear by God, that we’ll come, we just let the children finish class and then we’ll come, God willing
 A: look, you gave me your word, don’t repeat the same thing, and you don’t come
 B: this time we’ll come, God willing

This dialogue (5) is a good example of an informal invitation which takes place between relatives. It can be observed that the invitee refuses the invitation of the interlocutor repeatedly prior to this last one. The inviter uses the following expression as a form of humour to formulate the invitation /fa:jwa? tzi:w lʃandna, əl ʃa:m əlli ma:ʃandu:f xa:h, wella ma: dzi:nakumʃ/ (when do intend to visit us, the year which doesn’t have his brother, or not of the same status), such utterance appears to be facilitated with understanding the amount of solidarity which links them to each other.

Commenting on this issue B&L (1987, p.229) assume that in context of friendship and intimacy,

conventionalised insults may serve as a mechanism for stressing solidarity. Upon hearing the invitation formulas, the addressee should notice that he is so important to the addresser; otherwise he wouldn't be invited over and over again with a great deal of insistence. In this particular context, the use of religious expression /wallah/ (I swear by God) together with /nfallah/ (God willing) can be seen as an indicator that the invitee has the intention to accept the invitation. To put it differently, in this manifestation /nfallah/ is similar to the English performative 'I promise'.

4.3. Code Switching and Religious Lexicon

The following Conversation (6) is an extended invitation between two friends, both young and both girls. The relationship between the two interlocutors and the situational context help the achievement of the pragmatic content of the invitation and its change into a genuine one. In fact, we can observe that the interlocutors are good old friends, so that they negotiate the invitation without creating any face-threatening act to both interlocutors. Additionally, the strategy used by the speaker was successful as to help the hearer accept the invitation.

Conversation (6) young/ young females (friends)

Context: two girls / friends meet in a cafeteria and one was very glad to meet her friend that day.

A: salut, quelle surprise!

B: **wallah** c'est use agréable surprise, ça fait vraiment plaisir de te revoir, ça fait comme même cinq ans quant ne c'est pas vu. Kiri:k ! kirihum darkum, ka:mel rahum bxi:r ?

A: tout le monde va bien, merci. adzi mʃana rana na:klu des glaces

B: Sahhit, wallah ila fraht əlli jaftek, w hamdullah əlli ri:k bxi:r, ana nxalli:k, je vois que tu es accompagnée et je ne veux pas te déranger.

A: tu ne déranges pas au contraire, hadu xi mes collègues teʃ l'université, **rabbi jfarhek**, ma: tradha:li:ʃ fi wadzhi, c'est juste une glace

B: sahha, ma: jku:n xi xa:trek, xi ma: tezʃaf

A: salut tout le monde (then she joined the group and sit)

Literal translation

A: Hello, what a surprise!

B: I swear by God, it's a nice surprise! It is a pleasure to meet you again. How are you? How is your family? Is everybody doing well?

A: Everyone is O.K. thank you. Come with us, we're taking some ice cream.

B: Thank you, I swear by Allah that I am very happy to see you again; and praise Allah that you are keeping well, I must leave you, I see that you have some company and I don't want to bother you.

A: You don't bother us at all; on the contrary, these are just university colleagues. May Allah make you happy don't turn it in my face [i.e., don't refuse my invitation], it's just for an ice cream.

B: OK, I'll do whatever you want, just don't get angry at me

A: Hello everybody

Arabic-French code switching is identified in this interaction as a sign of the educational level of the interlocutors and also as a socio-cultural marker of the speech behaviour of educated young Algerians. The opening of the conversation shows that (A) was very happy to meet her friend: quelle surprise! (Hello, what a surprise!) and the hearer's confirmation of her sharing this fact wallah c'est use agréable surprise, ça fait vraiment plaisir de te revoir (I swear by God, it's a nice surprise! It is a pleasure to meet you again). In order to show her happiness (A) invites her friend to join the group and have ice cream with them. Pragmatically, the strategy used by (A) to convince (B) to accept the invitation was adequate and at the same time expresses the speaker goodwill to invite the hearer: [rabbi jfarhek, ma: tradhali:ʃ fi wadzhi] (May Allah make you happy don't turn it in my face (i.e., don't refuse my invitation)

Generally, the use of French as a so called sophisticated way of inviting shows a lack of sincerity and authenticity of the invitation. Hence, the Algerian traditional strategy of conversational swearing is necessary and vital to give credit to their invitations and to achieve the pragmatic end of inviting which

is to convince the invitee to accept the invitation. Marrow and Castleton (2007, p.209) claim that “the loss of the Allah lexicon is a direct loss of culture, identity, sense of self, individuality, and community. It is the demise of cultural diversity and the harbinger of linguistic homogeneity”. Thus, the suppression of conversational swearing would be a serious blow when one remembers that Allah and Islam are the basis of Arabic-Islamic identity.

Marrow and Castleton (2007, p.207) stress the fact that the Arabic language is undergoing a reduction in the use of Islamic, Allah-centric expressions, which are being supplanted by simplified forms based on English and French norms. As Ferguson (1983, p.68) has observed, “the profusion of thank yous, good wishes, and the like of Arabic society is being reduced to the models of French and English usage”. Algerians switch to Arabic in which they can say what they cannot properly express in French especially when it comes to religious expressions. However, switching is not confined to these expressions, rather it continues; and the continuation takes different forms: it may occur in one item, short phrase or a complete sentence.

5. Conclusion

This study investigates the influence of religion on language use by analysing the nature of religious vocabulary when performing invitation speech act. From the data presented, it was noticed that religious expressions were used in all the interlocutors’ speech acts. The study revealed the use of religious expressions is a common practice and an important aspect among Algerian speakers. In Algeria, religious lexicon is a clue to validate an invitation and to save the invitee’s face. For the invitee it is difficult to refuse or negotiate an invitation when it is conditioned by a religious expression. On the one hand, because he feels his presence desired by the inviter and his face being safe, and on the other hand it is because he cannot decline to achieve any task where the name of God is pronounced. For it could be interpreted as an act of disrespect to God. Moreover, speakers tend to use religious lexicon, not only to confirm what they say (illocutionary force), but also to influence the

addressees or hearers to make them accept what is said or done and take it seriously, that is, to have an emotive function (perlocutionary force).

Thus, this study contributes to the knowledge about, and understanding of, the influence of culture and cultural aspects on language that are crucial for interlocutors wishing to communicate and interact appropriately in social situations. It specifically recognised religion as a distinguishing and influential component of culture, with notable influence on language. It has further demonstrated how the influence of religion on language is significant and evident among Algerian speakers of Arabic. For future research, it is recommended researchers would also benefit from applying the theoretical framework used in this study to investigate more religious expressions as manifest in different speech acts.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that she has no conflict of interest

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