Semantics and Pragmatics of Religious Formulae Used by Teachers in Saudi Arabian Classroom Talk

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Declaration of Candidate

I, Omar Almalki, hereby certify that this work has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution, and also that the sources of information used, and the extent to which the work of others have been utilized, have been indicated in the thesis. However, it should be noted that parts of Chapter 7 were presented by the author of this thesis at the 4th International Pragmatics Conference in Madrid, Spain, 2010 and some parts of Chapter 9 were also presented in the NSM workshop held by the Linguistics department of the Australian National University, Canberra, ACT, Australia on April 15th 2012.

Approval for the research was obtained from the Macquarie University Ethics Committee. The protocol number is:HE01MAY2009-D06460HS.

Signature

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my beloved father, known as Abu Omar, who supported me with everything he owns in order to achieve my goals and endured my travel overseas in the time he needs me[1].

[1] He passed away on 20th June 2012 while I was working on the final stages of this research [May Allah have compassion on him].

Abstract

This project investigates the use of Arabic Religious Formulae (henceforth, RFs) in Saudi Arabic teacher-student talk. It is underpinned by Speech Act Theory, Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) and its offshoot, Cultural Script Theory. Ethnographic methods were used to collect data and Conversation Analysis (CA) was crucial for transcribing data, shedding further light on the cultural significance of the speech acts and RFs used in teacher-student interaction. Thirty teachers from a range of disciplines were observed and audio-taped twice. A focus group discussion was conducted after the observation period in order to gather speakers' insights about their use of religious formulae. This triangulation reveals a wide range of communication functions and pragmatic roles that RFs can play in interactions. In addition, it identifies precisely the social and cultural embeddedness of the occurrence of RFs in Arabic teacher-student talk. The findings are original in revealing the characteristics of RFs, the way they construct speech acts, and how speakers challenge the ambiguous use of RFs. The study also contributes to our understanding of the cultural value of using RFs as part of a Saudi teacher role.

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List of Abbreviations

Code	Description
RFs	Religious formulae (plural)
RF	Religious formula (singular)
CA	Conversation Analysis
CST	Cultural Script Theory
SA	Standard Arabic
NEG	Negative
VOC	Vocative
SBV	Subjunctive
PRN:S	Pronoun (singular)/pronominal marker
PRN:PL	Pronoun (plural)/pronominal marker
T	Teacher
S	Student
Sc	Students- more than one student participates at the same time
S_1	Student one
S_2	Student two
S_3	Student three
-	Morpheme boundary
cf.	Compare
HQ	The Holy Qurʾān

Transcription Conventions

Symbol	Name	Use
[ ]	Brackets	Overlapped talk
=	Equal Sign	Latched talk
(0.0)	Timed Pause	Length of pause by seconds
(.)	Micropause	A brief untimed pause
↓	Down arrow	Indicates falling pitch
↑	Up arrow	Indicates rising pitch
?	Question mark	Indicates a rising inflection, not necessarily a question e.g. Ali graduated?
!	An exclamation	Indicates an animated tone, not necessary an exclamation e.g. Ali absent today!
→	Right-pointing arrow	Contains the discussed point in the analysis
>text<	Left carets	Indicates that the enclosed speech was delivered quicker than the surrounding talk
<text>	Right carets	Indicates that the enclosed speech was delivered slower than the surrounding talk
° °	Degree sign	Indicates that the enclosed speech is quieter than surrounding talk
:::	Colon(s)	Indicates prolongation of an utterance
(hhh) / (.hhh)	High dot	Audible exhalation/ Audible inhalation
( )	Parentheses	Contains transcriber's description

Orthography

Transliteration System of Arabic Consonants

Arabic Consonant	Symbol	Description	Arabic Consonant	Symbol	Description
ء	ʾ	Voiced glottal stop	ظ	ẓ	Voiced alveolar emphatic fricative
ب	b	Voiced bilabial stop	ع	ʿ	Voiced pharyngeal fricative
ت	t	Voiceless dento-alveolar stop	غ	gh	Voiced uvular fricative
ث	th	Voiceless inter-dental fricative	ف	f	Voiceless labio-dental fricative
ج	j	Voiced post-alveolar affricate	ق	q	Voiced uvular stop
ح	ḥ	Voiceless pharyngeal fricative	ك	k	Voiceless velar stop
خ	kh	Voiceless uvular fricative	ل	l	Voiced alveolar lateral
د	d	Voiced dento-alveolar stop	م	m	Voiced bilabial nasal
ذ	dh	Voiced alveolar fricative	ن	n	Voiced alveolar nasal
ر	r	Voiced alveo-palatal trill	ه	h	Voiceless glottal fricative
ز	z	Voiced alveolar fricative	و	w	Voiced labio-velar glide
س	s	Voiceless alveolar fricative	ي	y	Voiced palatal glide
ش	sh	Voiceless alveo-palatal fricative	Definite article	al-	
ص	ṣ	Voiceless alveolar emphatic fricative	Emphatic-	Doubled consonant e.g. رَبّى - rabbā	
ض	ḍ	Voiced alveolar emphatic stop			
ط	ṭ	Voiceless dento alveolar stop			

Transliteration System of Arabic Vowels

Short vowels	Symbol	Example	Long vowels	Symbol	Example	Diphthongs
ـَفَتْحَة	a	وَلَدْ–*walad*	ا	*ā*	تَعَالْ - *taʿāl*	aw
ـُضَمَّة	u	كُلْ–*kul*	و	*ū*	سُكُونْ - *sukūn*	ay
ـِكَسْرَة	i	مِنْ–*min*	ي	ī	مِيل- mīl	