Religious Expressions as Situation Bound Rituals in Iraqi Computer-Mediated Communication

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Abstract
This study aims at exploring the linguistic habits of Iraqi Arab speakers and the situations wherein Iraqis invoke religion and the lexicon of Allah in their daily online communication. Throughout this work, it was sought to answer the question whether the religious belief of Iraqis is reflected in online chats Iraqi by involving situation-bound rituals in their CMC and the functions these expressions fulfil in this communication. Although computer-mediated communication lacks nonverbal behaviour and prosodic features support the speakers' polite intention, many researchers assert that there are many resources whereby individuals can resort to in demonstrating their solidarity. The Methods is based on examining synchronic messages exchanged on WhatsApp and Viber in four groups with the participation of 99 participants in total whose age ranged from 15 to 70 years old, with different educational qualifications and religious orientations. Social distance between the participants varied from intimate to neutral, and large. Likewise, social rank ranged from equal footing to low-high relationships and high-low relationships. The setting involved different occasions such as congratulations, greetings, farewell, thanking, offering condolences as well as receiving bad news. The findings of this research have shown that Iraqi Arabic speakers incline to enhance the politeness of their message by involving religious vocabularies that take mostly the form of supplication. Besides, the religious lexicon stands as a form of etiquette that promotes the speakers' and the addressee's faces. FIt is hoped that this work would lead to further studies related to religious expressions across computer mediated communication.
Keywords: computer-mediated communication (Iraq), religion, pragmatics, politeness, speech acts, situation bound utterances

Introduction

Politeness is a widely researched area in pragmatics. Since the development of this theory, it has become a subject of investigation by many researchers, whether via exploring the norms of conversation in a particular culture, studying cross-cultural, or investigating intercultural communication. Researchers have also paid substantial interest to the difference in politeness strategies between computer-mediated communication and face-to-face interaction. Due to the collectivistic nature of Arab societies, people tend to establish solidarity and harmonious relationships. They are keen on promoting their positive face and that of their addressee. Further, there are linguistic habits that might distinguish them from speakers of other communities (Bouchara, 2015).

The recent interest has been extended to studying politeness as a pragmatic and sociocultural phenomenon (Al-Khatib, 2012). Besides, religion, in its association with politeness, has been investigated by some researchers. For example, Bouchara (2015) has conducted a study in the Moroccan context with an emphasis on greetings and the role of religion in enhancing their politeness. Kadhim (2017) has studied Al-Husseini expressions as situation bound utterances in the Iraqi community. Nevertheless, throughout the study of the literature and to the researcher's best knowledge, the linguistic habits in the Iraqi society and the pragmatic aim behind uttering religious expressions, as situation-bound rituals that carry the religious implications, have not been investigated in online chat yet. Hence, it is essential to fill this gap and extend the body of research into a study that tackles the polite aim of recruiting religious vocabularies and the lexicon of Allah in computer-mediated communication from a socio-pragmatic perspective.

The objective of this study is to extend the theories of politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987) into a new area of investigation represented by the influence of religion on politeness. While focusing on the Iraqi society, it also aims to explore the contexts in which situation-bound rituals that involve the lexicon of Allah and religious vocabularies in daily online synchronic communication and the pragmatic aims behind. In this regard, this study opens an eye to the speech behaviour of Iraqis, the influence of their Islam as a religion, and Quran as a holy book on their polite language use in their computer-mediated communication. Therefore, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent Iraqi Arabic speakers involve situation-bound rituals in their CMC?
2. What are the functions these expressions fulfil in this communication?

The theoretical part of this work consists of four parts: the first one presents a brief summary of speech act theory as well as an explanation of the speech acts related to this study. The second part describes the strong association of the Islamic religion with language mostly reflected in the expressions adopted by Arabic speakers in their desire to manifest positive politeness. Next, situation bound utterance will be explained, focusing on its different usage in the western and eastern, particularly Muslim, cultures. Computer-mediated communication will be tackled, including its users' adherence to politeness strategies, with the aim of promoting their positive and negative image and that of their addressee. The practical side presents the methods of data collection ending with highlighting the religious expressions with an explanation of their functions. Then, discussion interprets the findings of this study in relation with the literature

discussed in the theoretical pert. Finally, this work ends with the conclusion arrived at and the resources adopted.

Literature Review
Speech acts theory

Before proceeding on to politeness in Islam, it is relevant to provide a brief summary of speech act theory developed by Austin (1975). He has stated that some utterances have the grammatical structure of a statement, yet they are not subject to truth-conditional analysis. Listing the verbs that perform actions, Austin sought the possibility of applying a grammatical formula in defining performative utterances, consisting of a first-person singular subject with a verb in the simple present tense. An optional self-referential adverb can also be used in this formula.

(1) I (hereby) first person verb-present singular active voice X…….
    I hereby pronounce you husband and wife

Utterances are of two types: 'explicit performatives' and 'implicit performatives'. The former follows this formula and contain a performative verb that makes explicit what kind of action is performed. The latter there is no performative verb, as in:

(2) a. I promise that I shall be there (explicit performative)
    b. I shall be there (implicit performative)

Then, Austin introduce three acts performed simultaneously upon uttering a sentence incorporating both explicit and implicit performatives (Austin, 1975, pp. 98-101):

  i. **Locutionary act:** This is the act of producing a meaningful utterance.
    (3) Shoot her.
 ii. **Illocutionary act:** This is the act performed intentionally upon uttering a linguistic
      expression.
    (4) He urged me to shoot her.
iii. **Perlocutionary act:** This is the bringing about of consequences or effects on the audience
      through the uttering of a linguistic expression.
    (5) He persuaded me to shoot her.

Austin has categorised illocutionary verbs into five classes according to the effect found in their explicit form:
    Verdictives: "giving a verdict by exercising judgment", for example 'verdict'.
    Exercitives: "exercising power, rights, and influences", for example 'warn'.
    Commissives: "promising or undertaking", for example 'promise'.
    Behabitives: "showing attitudes and social behaviour", for example 'apologies'.
    Expositives: "fitting an utterance into the course of an argument or conversation", for example, 'state'

In an attempt to systematize and formulate Austin's speech acts, Searle (1969, 1975) presented his 'neo-Austinian analysis'. In the first place, he distinguished between two types of rules: 'the constitutive' and 'the regulative'. The former defines an activity or creates it, and the latter regulates a pre-existing activity. Furthermore, Searle noted that speech act utterances contain functional indicating devices, defining them as formal features in the utterance that determine the illocutionary force. These devices include word order, stress, intonation contour, mode of verbs, and the set of illocutionary verbs. He names these features 'illocutionary force indicative devices' (henceforth IFID).

Austin's felicity conditions have been updated by Searle and Vanderveken (1985) dividing them into seven type:
   i. Propositional content
   ii. Preparatory conditions
   iii. Sincerity condition
   iv. Illocutionary point
   v. Degree of strength of illocutionary point
   vi. Mode of achievement
   vii. Degree of strength of the sincerity condition:
      (Green, 2007, pp. 6-7); (Vanderveken, 1998, pp. 171-183).

Searle (1975b), as cited in Huang (2004, pp. 106-109) has classified illocutionary points into five categories:
   i. Assertives (Representatives): This type of speech act commits the speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition as in asserting, claiming, concluding, reporting, and stating.
   (6) The soldiers are struggling on through the snow. (Huang, 2004, p. 106; ex. 4.27c.)
   ii. Directives: These are acts that show speakers' attempts to make their addressees do something such as requesting, questioning, commanding, ordering, and advising.
   (7) Open the door
   iii. Commisives: These acts commit the speaker to a future course of action as in promising, threatening, offering, refusal, and threats.
   (8) I will never let you down.
   iv. Expressives: These are the expression of a psychological state of happiness, sadness, like/dislike. They can be seen in thanking, apologising, welcoming, and congratulating.
   (9) I apologise
   v. Declaratives: These acts produce changes in some current state of affairs. A speaker would effect changes in the world by performing this act as in christening a baby, declaring war, firing from employment, excommunicating, and nominating a candidate.
   (10) President: I declare a state of national emergency. (Huang, 2004, p. 106; ex.4.31a.)
   A later development in this theory is the distinction between direct and indirect speech acts. An indirect speech act is multi-purpose function. In the following example, the sentence can play a dual role, one being a question and the other a request. (Huang, 2004, p. 110).
   (11) Will you lock the door, please?

Searle's (1975b) model of indirect speech acts proposes the existence of two illocutionary forces associated with the indirect speech act, one of which is literal and the other non-literal. The former is secondary, while the latter is primary. Searle affirms that the meaning might be arrived at through taking the contextual conditions into consideration, where inferences play a vital role in this process to arrive at a successful interaction.

Speakers rely on indirect speech acts for the purpose of obtaining a social or communicative advantage, enhancing politeness, and avoiding anything that might causes embarrassment to the hearer and possibly to the speaker.
A summarised explanation for the speech acts involved in this study:

1. Congratulations

Congratulation is an expressive speech act through which a speaker can express his feelings and emotions towards the addressee (Searle, 1976). This act is mostly performed when the interlocutor achieves a desirable thing for which the speaker shows that he/she shares in the other's joy.

As to Leech's (1983) classification of congratulation is as 'convivial'. He describes some speech acts, among them are compliments, thanking, and congratulations, as "intrinsically polite" that aim at promoting the addressee's positive face (Leech, 1983, 2014); (Brown & Levinson, 1987). This speech act is associated with the approbation and modesty maxims in which speakers are recommended to minimize the hearers' dispraise and maximize his/her praise (Leech, 1983).

The common (IFIDs) associated with this speech act is '*congratulations*' (see Levinson 1983; Aijmer 1996). However, Elwood (2004) remarks that different situations demand different patterns and expressions.

2. Thanking and Gratitude and their Responses

Gratitude are listed within the expressive acts in Searle's (1975) typology because the illocutionary point is to "express the psychological state specified in the sincerity condition about a state of affairs specified in the propositional content." (p.12). The objective of showing appreciation is to establish and maintain solidarity with the interlocutor. On the contrary, failure of being thankful might create an unpleasant feeling and can negatively influence the relationship between the speaker and the hearer (Eisenstein & Bodman 1993). Thanking is defined by Searle (1969, p.65) as "an illocutionary act produced by a speaker as a reaction to a past act carried out by a hearer which the speaker considers that has been beneficial to him/her." Since they refer to a past or ongoing action, thanking and gratitude are post-events or retrospective acts.

Coulmas (1981) distinguishes between the different types of thanking: firstly, thanks for a favour, promise, offer, invitation; secondly, thanks for material things such as gifts immaterial thinks as in desires, compliments, congratulations, information; thirdly, thanks for an action done by the addressee; finally, thanks that imply indebtedness, or those that do not signify indebtedness.

Okamoto and Robinson (1997) state that thanks and gratitude are expressed via different expressions, whose choice is determined by the relationship between the interlocutors and characteristics of the action, i.e., the weight of imposition of the action on the hearer, which might

involve the amount of effort, time, money, etc. demanded by the action. The greater the imposition on the giver, the more polite the gratitude and its form should be.

Further, as Coulmas (1981) demonstrates, thanking is universal speech act to such an extent every language. Nevertheless, each language has a range of conventional devices adopted by its speakers to carry out such an action.

3. Compliments

As it is with the previous two speech acts, by Searle (1979) lists compliments within the expressive acts. It is described by Kasper and Schmidt (1996), as "a particular relation between the speaker(S) and the hearer (H): (Whether it explicitly or implicitly attributes credit to the person addressed for her/his good (characteristic, skill, possession, etc.) is valued positively by the S and the H." (as cited in Jibreen, 2017, p. 7). Further, compliments are also given mitigate face-threatening acts like criticisms, apologies, requests, to initiate a conversation, and are used instead of some speech acts such as greetings gratitude, apologies, and congratulations (Han, 1992, cited in Yousif, 2003).

As in congratulations, compliments according to the notion of politeness are also listed within the convivial acts in the sense that the social goal of this speech act is to maintain comity (Leech, 1983, 2014). In its relation to face and politeness, a compliment is part of positive politeness and, hence, it is a face-saving act (Brown & Levinson, 1987). While it promotes the addressee's positive face, Leech (2014) classifies compliments within the acts that threaten the speaker's positive face as it demands the speaker express his tributes and show admiration.

Nevertheless, the evaluation of face-saving acts varies from one culture to another. In some cultures, a compliment might threaten the addressee's face when associated with the evil eye. Therefore, a compliment, in Arab communities, is advised to follow specific formulae so as the evil eye can be excelled, and to transmit the message to the complimented that the speaker does not aim at envying him/her (Nelson, Al-Batal & Echols (1996).

4. Greetings and Leave-taking

Farewells and greetings are well-defined speech acts, marking the boundaries of a conversation. They may focus on individual expressions used in such interactions, such as *hello, good morning, how are you, goodbye, or farewell* (Jucker, 2017). Although they are ritualised and are devoid of propositional content, they are, in fact, more complex (Searle, 1969). They are often embedded in more extended exchanges; hence, such speech acts are performed either via interactional sequences or formulaic expressions that regularly occur in these sequences. Therefore, a salutation is an indication that includes both greetings and farewells, are highly formulaic (see Levinson,1983; Aijmer, 1996)

After this brief cover of indirect speech acts, politeness and the related concepts, the next section introduces the concept of Islam, its morals, and the influence of religion on language in general and politeness in particular.

Politeness and Religion in Arabic

Islam is an Arabic verbal noun, derived from the triliteral root s-l-m. It is also derived from the Arabic verb *aslama*, meaning 'to give up, to surrender, to resign oneself' (to God). Ideally, each person submits and is surrender to God and His will (Abdalati, 2010). Masjid Al-Huda (2011), asserts that "Muslims believe in one, unique, incomparable God; in the angels created by Him; in the prophets through whom His revelations were brought to mankind; in God's complete authority over human destiny; and in life after death" (as cited in AlKhatib, 2012, pp. 481-482). Without any discrimination, they also believe in all the messengers of Allah. Further, an essential belief in Islam is the 99 names associated with Allah's traits. These names stand for kindness, forgiveness, graciousness, compassion, mercy, kindness, pity, etc. (Abdalati, 2010).

In Islam, the Holy Quran is the last word of God. Because it tackles aspects of life, it is the primary source of Islamic commandment. All the subjects that concern human beings are covered in this book, including wisdom, doctrine, worship, and law. Its basic theme, though, is the relationship between God and His creatures. Meanwhile, guidelines are provided for a stabilised equal society and proper human relations. Islam regulates aspects of human life through detailed commandments, instructions, and code of conduct (Abdalati, 2010). Islam aims at a well-knit society where ethics is the core concept (Al-khatib, 2012).

Religion, on the other hand, strongly interferes with people's manners of behaviour and communication (Al-Khatib, 2012). It is integrated with people's behaviour by bounding their relationships, displayed in the language they communicate with, which adds a more religious sense to their polite expressions (Alsabbah, 2017). Bouchara (2015) has asserted that there is cohesive relationship between politeness and religion which is demonstrated via linguistic expressions as well as the pragmatic function of the utterances that are likely to govern the use and interpretation of politeness strategies in Arabic. Such a tendency is justified by Harrel, Abu-Talib, and Carroll (2003), who remark:

> It is an important cultural pattern that compliments or words of praise should be accompanied by a deferential reference to God. Without the reference to God, such statements appear crude, and in older, more traditional social circles, they are taken as bad omens which bring misfortune. References to God of this sort are usually not directly translatable into English. (p. 352)

Regarding the incorporation of religion within politeness, Hamady (1960, p. 160) asserts that Arabic politeness is strongly marked by its religious character. He notes:

> Religion is, to a large extent, the source of politeness. The terms of bienseance where God's name is either uttered or implicitly understood are numerous. The habitual consciousness of God in everything is so deeply rooted that He is always invoked even when His name is not pronounced. (Cited in Bouchara, 2015, p. 75)

In exploring the relationship between politeness and religion, Prophet Muhammad emphasised morality, saying: "You cannot treat people by means of your wealth; hence, you should treat them by means of your moral conduct" (al-Bukhari, 2010, cited in AlKhatib, 2012, p. 483). He also

says: "If you have nothing to give, give a kind word or even just an affectionate smile" (al-Bukhari, 2010, cited in AlKhatib, 2012, p. 483). In this domain, Al-Khatib (2012) has studied the linguistic aspects of politeness in the Holy Quran from a socio-pragmatic perspective. By examining a large number of verses taken from more than 18 chapters of the Quran, he has observed that besides the primary function of the qur'anic verses, represented by calls for submission to God, many moral and theological messages have been identified. There was also a substantial number of instructions regarding the mutual relationship between God and humankind, amongst human beings, and towards society. Such information, as he states, has to be depicted in both the linguistic and structural features of the verses. As to politeness, its strategies are expressed via multiple channels, including direct method of address, storytelling, and exemplifying. He has concluded that except for the off-record politeness strategy, the Holy Quran incorporates the other three strategies of politeness, suggested by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987), namely: bald on-record, positive strategy, and negative strategy. Furthermore, Al-Khatib (2012) investigates the politeness principles proposed by Leech (1983), stating that "politeness is a form of behaviour that establishes and maintains comity." (p. 132) He has detected that the Holy Quran adheres to strict rules and conventions that regulate mutual relationships, rights, and obligations.

Bouchara (2015) states that in addition to the three social variables of politeness (power, social distance, and degree of imposition) put forward by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987), religion is another hand-in-hand significant factor that might affect face threat. Islamic religion and culture impact politeness and harmonious relationships. Bouchara (2015) clarifies that religion is the key factor that governs social behaviour. He further mentions that despite the obvious influence of French on the speech and behaviour of the ruling elite upper classes in Morocco, religion constitutes a substantial part of Moroccans speech regardless of people's religious belief.

It is deduced that this close connection between the Arabic language and religion might stem from its being the language of the Quran and the Sunna. Being central to the Islamic faith makes it inseparable from the Arabic identity in general and the Iraqi Muslims in particular. According to Morrow and Castleton (2007), the standard Arabic language unifies not only the Arabic countries but also "shapes and molds that world." (p. 202)

This review of the association between politeness and the Islamic recommendations enforces the necessity of observing the fixed expressions shared by the members of a given society and the variation in incorporating them between tradition-oriented culture and future-oriented cultures as well as the incorporation of religious expressions by Muslim communities.

Situation Bound Utterances in Oriented Cultures

Formulaic language is "multi-word collocations which are stored and retrieved holistically rather than being generated de novo with each use" (Kecskes, 2007, p.139). Examples of formulaic language are Collocations, fixed semantic units, frozen metaphors, phrasal verbs, speech formulas, idioms, and situation-bound utterances (Kecskes, 2000). Such expressions are part of the pragmatic competence and reflect native-like behaviour. They are also culture-specific that express the values, attitudes, and expectations of a particular culture (Kecskes, 2014).

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Within formulaic language are situation bound utterances (SBU), which are tied to the pragmatic competence and language socialisation and are associated with particular events and situations (Kecskes, 2014). Coulmas (1981) states that "a great deal of communicative activity consists of enacting routines making use of prefabricated linguistic units in a well-known and generally accepted manner" (p. 1). Such expressions are familiar to everyone in the speech community and are expected to be understood according to the communicative goals and conventions of those members. Thus, Kecskes (2014) assures the necessity of learning these routines in any foreign language to make language use sounds native-like.

Situation bound utterances vary across cultures. What might be a requisite in one culture is not necessary to be the same in another. This variation makes it difficult to transfer them from one language to another, as they will not carry the same meaning and function they used to have in the original language. In addition to being culture specific, SBUs are strongly associated with sociocultural values (Kecskes, 2014).

Strongly related to sociocultural values, the slightest differences between cultures can lead to different cognitive mapping and lexicalisation (Kecskes, 2003). A significant example is welcoming guests. Although they are valued equally in American, French, and Hungarian societies, Kecskes (2014) highlights interesting differences.

(12) Make yourself at home. (English)
(13) Faites comme chez vous. ('Do as [you do] at home.') (French)
(14) Érezze magat otthon. ('Feel yourself at home.') (Hungarian)

Despite the functional equivalence of these expressions, the imperative verb *faites*" is equivalent to *to do*. In Hungarian, the imperative verb "érezd" is equivalent to feel, which shows that languages differ in highlighting the important things in the same situation.

Moreover, a distinction is made by Kecskes (2003) between situation-bound routines, such as *take care* and *welcome abroad* and situation-bound rituals, such as *God bless you* and *thank you.* The latter is associated with interactional rituals, as Goffman (1967) remarks. Generally, situation-bound rituals associate the actual situation with other situations, events, or agents. Kecskes (2003) adds that they are adopted more frequently in 'tradition-oriented cultures' including Japanese, Arabic, Chinese, and Turkish. Such expressions are somehow obligatory without acceptable substituted phrases. Matisoff (1979) asserts that:

> Often it is not so much that the speaker is using an emotive formula that actually belies his true feelings, as that the formula has become a surrogate for the true feeling, an almost automatic linguistic feature that constant usage has rendered as predictable and redundant as the concord in number between subject and verb (p. 6).

Situation-bound rituals are usually fixed sets of incomplete utterances. These expressions are not considered insincere as individuals in these cultures have accepted their evidence for the true feeling. In Turkish, for example, many formulaic expressions consider humans as powerless; God and the magic power of words are the two sources of power. Turks would say *Allah kolaylik versin,*

meaning 'May God give ease', when they ask for God's assistance (Tannen & Oztek, 1981). The diversity between cultures in recruiting situation bound utterances is observed by Bear (1987), who demonstrates that some situations that demand verbal reaction in tradition-oriented cultures are, on many occasions, not recognised by English native speakers.

There is a remarkable difference between cultures in the inclination to formulaic expressions. Nelson et al. (1996) note that Arabs are prone to insert such formulae more than the Americans do. Further, it is sometimes difficult to find an English equivalent to Turkish, Chinese, or Japanese situation-bound rituals. This diversity is because situation bound routines in future-oriented cultures, like the American, are preferred more than situation-bound rituals. In Kecskes's (2003) standpoint, situation-bound routines, in contrast to situation-bound rituals, give confidence and certainty to people in conversation as it can be interpreted in one particular way. For future-oriented cultures, expressions, such as *See you soon*, *I'll talk to you later*, *Look forward to seeing you again*, *Why don't we have lunch tomorrow?* are quite natural and do not attempt to establish rapport between the participants.

Having introduced the tendency of incorporating fixed expressions in daily communication within the members of tradition-oriented countries and since computer-mediated communication is the method of obtaining data, it is essential to specify a section for it, illustrating whether politeness strategies differ from face-to-face interaction.

Politeness in Computer-mediated Communication
Computer-mediated communication (henceforth CMC) is a recent means of human communication, whereby people can interact via written language, which enables the establishment and maintenance of social relationships (Taleghani-nikazm, 2012). It came in response to the rapidly developing technologies for telephone- and computer-mediated communication enabled a wide range of "semiotic resources, better access to direct participation, and greater user mobility" (Kasper 2008, p. 283). As Kecskes (2014) demonstrates, interaction in CMC takes place between one or more interlocutors via telecommunication networks. It includes different types of interaction, among which are chat, computer messages, e-mail, computer conferencing, forums, and online bulletin boards. Some of these methods permit real-time interaction, whereas others are fixed in response time (Taleghani-nikazm, 2012). Kádár and Haugh (2013) and Kecskes (2014) indicate that CMC can be one of the fastest-growing fields of discursive research, serving as a major source of data. Locher (2010) identifies three reasons for such noteworthiness: firstly, due to the diversity in text types, genre, and the involved communities of practice, online language develops its own sets of norms like netiquettes that offer a significant source of studying the variable norms of politeness. Secondly, the possibility of a larger audience than private FtF interaction added to the variety of arising politeness in different ways of online communication while merging the private and public interaction. Thirdly, due to their multimodal nature, online socialisation provides unique polite messages via emoticons.

In comparing CMC with FtF interaction, because of the modification in the speech system, CMC lacks some elements FtF is rich with, such as physical encounter and paralinguistic cues. To indicate interest, understanding, or confusion, nodding head, maintaining eye contact, raising and lowering intonation, and changing the facial expressions are all elements that can assist in changing

the verbal messages in FtF and promote its solidarity. Further, different sociocognitive and emotional meanings can be conveyed. In online communication, these cues are replaced with the language and its multimodal, semiotic systems. It has been shown that different devices have been developed by the participants that might perform the same function nonverbal behaviour can do to overcome the constraints imposed on CMC (Carter, 2003; Golato & Taleghani-Nikazm, 2006; Park, 2008). These devices involve contractions, abbreviations, such as lol (laughing out loud), OMG (Oh my god), and capital letters (signifying the intensity of attention to the recipient). To simulate gestures and facial expressions, emojis can be adopted.

Research on politeness in the e-mail, synchronous chat, and web discussion board concluded that there are some linguistic and paralinguistic similarities and differences between FtF interaction and online communication. After taking into account the topic and the setting, it is found that direct forms of speech acts have been utilised in CMC more frequently than FtF interaction. Secondly, the speech style is mostly short and concise in online chats, contributing to the fact that the conversers need to catch up with the stream and speed in online chat programs (Dorta, 2008; Park, 2008).

Taleghani-nikazm (2003) concludes that in reducing the intensity of a specific act, speakers in online conversation tend to utilise linguistic strategies in designing the Non-linguistic features adopted in FtF interactions. Furthermore, verbal and nonverbal devices can be employed in managing face work in online communication. Thus, the cognitive assessment of the participants determines the evaluation of the social variable of politeness.

Contrary to this view, Westbrook (2007), Dorta (2008), and Park (2008) assert that as in FtF, positive and negative politeness strategies are employed in online interaction. They demonstrate that an example of enhancing solidarity, proximity, and interpersonal relationship among the participants is seeking common ground via expressing shared background knowledge, interest, or experiences. Negative politeness, on the other hand, is depicted when individuals give apologies and employ conventional indirectness, such as 'could you meet me at 10 Am?' as well as using discourse markers of politeness represented by the pragmatic modifiers like hedges, for example (Lakoff, 1973), which all contribute to soften the intensity of face-threatening acts (Harrison, 2000; Al-Shalawi, 2001; Westbrook, 2007; Dorta, 2008; Park, 2008). By exploring synchronous and asynchronous transcripts in CMC, Hiemstra (1982) has realised that, as it is the case in FtF interaction, there is a high rate of face-threatening acts like disagreements, criticisms, requests, and giving directives in CMC. He has concluded that remedial politeness is employed with a considerable frequency in CMC to reduce the intensity of these acts. As far as positive politeness is concerned, researchers attribute the usage of simplified syntactic structure and informal speech style to the participants' desire to show solidarity, decrease social distance. Hence it promotes harmonious relations (Harrison, 2000; Park, 2008).

The only aspect available in FtF not in CMC is interruptions, which are conversationally important, potentially dysfunctional, or indicative of dominance (West, 1984). On the other hand, facilitated by technology, CMC can be rich with interpersonal intrusions via clicking the send bottom.

To sum up, as Morand and Ocher (2003) propositions suggest that despite online communicators are often reported to be impolite, with the prescription of improving the politeness level of this medium, politeness theory can prove to be a useful tool for CMC research. They add that positive and negative tactics can prove being useful in analysing CMC transcripts and their relational regularities and patterns.

Methods

This section describes the method adopted in collecting the data of this study. Because of the reputed claim that online exchanges tend to be short and lack complete structure, it was thought to examine whether Iraqis tend to use messages that are equivalent to ftf Interaction or emoticons and abbreviation, which are currently adopted in social media, would replace these expressions. The following subsections describe the participants whose expressions are examined, and the instruments recruited in collecting data:

The participants

The number of the participants in this study was 18, 23, 50, and 8 in the first, second, third, and fourth groups, respectively, making the total number 99 participants. As to their age, it ranged from 15 to70 years old, with different educational qualifications. Regarding their religious orientations, it was thought to include participants of different tendencies. Some of them are more reserved in their religious beliefs, and others are less strict. Regarding the social distances between the participants, the data involved different relationships. Some of them were intimate; others were neutral, and some with large social distance. Social rank, or power, was of variable difference, ranging from equal footing relationships to low-high relationships and high-low relationships. The participants are from different Iraqi cities, characterised by either conservative or less conservative communities. Some of the participants are English citizens who have been living in England for more than two decades, and others live in Arabic countries, Dubai in this study, which is of a less religious atmosphere. It might be claimed that individuals, who inhabit cities of religious environment, incorporate religious expressions more than those who live outside Iraq or in more liberated Iraqi cities (Alsabbah, 2017).

Instrument and setting

Instruments used in collecting data are WhatsApp and Viber. They applications provided in the Playstore and IOS that can be used to chat via text, voice call, or video call. They can also be used to share photos, videos, files, send a location, recordings, music, and making group chat. They can be installed in numerous Smart phones like Android, iPhone, Windows Phone, and some types of Nokia phone (Chairunnisa & Benedictus, 2017). Facebook is a social networking application, which widely used as it helps in keeping people close to their family and friends. People can post and comment on what others post.

Synchronic messages exchanged on WhatsApp and Viber in four groups has been traced. Also, several comments on Facebook have been observed. These interactions involved different occasions; some of them were positive with good news while others were negative with sorrow incidents. Thus, the participants performed different speech acts ranging from congratulations, greetings, farewell, thanking, etc.

In this research, qualitative method of analysis is adopted including samples that strengthen the research results. This type of research method is done through constructing reality and understanding its meaning. It is originated from the depth, nuance, context, multidiscipline, and complexity. The result of qualitative research could be derived from valid findings through comparison and conclusion (Somantri, 2005).

For the next part of the study, the formulaic expressions will be identified with a comprehensive explanation for the pragmatic function they perform.

Findings

In this section, the formulae that interlocutors exchange in their synchronic chats will be investigated. Most of these expressions involve the lexicon of Allah; meanwhile, they carry a polite aim. As will be shown below, they are classified according to their pragmatic function and the speech act performed.

Congratulations

In the examined online interactions, the participants were experiencing different events, among them are expecting and welcoming babies, promotions, moving to a new house, passing viva, and being awarded the Ph.D. degree. The following extract is a sample of the congratulations offered to the awarded person:

(15)

RS01: عجمقيقفوملاالله شاء وان الدكتوراه ش هادة على ول اصح تمحان ا ازياجنلاب معه شرتةوركتلدا تنا بارك
We congratulate our Sister Dr RS08 for passing her viva and gaining the Ph.D. Insha'Allah Good luck and advancement will be granted to everybody.

RS09: وا ايندلا في الدرجات في فعلا أساوتةوركتلدا يا بارك مفلا
One thousand congratulations, Dr. I ask God to raise your ranks in life and after death.

RS08: احمةليذه على ... مكيلهت ىجن جز اركش مهيلخحوي مكيلعك بارك الله يتذتاسوخين
الدرجات ىجنأ في مكرفو همكرومأ هل سيبير جعملوي يوغلبلهأب
May God bless you my brothers and sisters. Thanks a lot for your congratulations. Thank God for this gathering and friendship with which God compensated our alienation from our home country. Hopefully, everybody will succeed, and may God facilitate your affairs and pleases you with the highest ranks and marks.

In examining the variant expressions Iraqis use in their congratulations, it is observed that in addition to the Illocutionary Force Indicating Devise (IFID) represented by the word مبروك *'congratulation'*, they express their good wishes via seeking the will of Allah that assist them in promoting their ranks and achieving success. It must be noted that with the increase of religiosity, people's messages take the form of supplication, asking God for more success, blessing, luck, and happiness not only during life but also hereafter (life after death). In response, the addressee also expresses his/her gratitude and returning the same wishes for the congratulator. Such additional expressions promote the level of politeness and show the sincerity of emotions.

Upon the congratulations on the birth of a new baby, the most common situation bound ritual takes the form of religious wishes by saying, يتربى بعزكم انشاء الله '*may he/she to be raised with your grace Insha'Allah'.* By inserting *Inshallah*, the speakers wish that the baby may be raised in the parents' prosperity and care. People also thank God for the safety of the mother, الحمد على سلامة . They also ask Allah to protect the baby and his family from harm, and the strength this wish with a famous expression اللهم صل على محمد وال محمد '*Allah blessings be upon Muhammad and his family'.*

In return, the congratulated person thanks God for this gift and returns the same wishes to the congratulator, hoping that they will be protected from any harm. It will be demonstrated in the next section that Iraqis mainly use the expression رحم الله والديكم '*may God mercy your parents'* when they desire to express gratitude. Below is an example of the expressions used on such occasion:

(16)

RS47: ماشاء الله الف الف مبروك يعني بلورتوية ولودم مبارك انشاء الله في هذه الايام المباركه من شهر شعبان.قرة عينكم و جعلها مة ؤى مة جعله الله من الدالحين وفظكم جميعا ان شاء الله من كل مكروه بحق الص لى محمد وال محمد .

Masha Allah, One thousand one thousand congratulations. A blessed birth Inshallah in these sacred days of the month. Thank God for RS48's safety. May Allah make him one of the righteous children, and may He protect you from any harm in the name of Allah's blessing upon Muhammad and his family.

RS48: رحم الله والديكم اليسلمكم ويحفظكم لله الحمد والشكر نعمه من رب العالمين يارب يفرحكم بحق محمد وال محمد

May Allah mercy your parents, protect you from any harm. Thank God, it is a grace from Allah. I beseech Allah to please you with your children in the name of His blessing upon Muhamad and his family.

Having discussed congratulations and the events wherein various wishes are expressed, the next section presents the formulaic expressions in showing thanks and gratitude.

Thanking and Gratitude and their Responses

In exploring gratitude alongside their responses in the Iraqi online communication, it is remarked that the lexicon of Allah is often inserted upon performing this speech act. Among the expressions identified in the examined chats were:

(17) رحم الله والديكم
    May God mercy your parents.
(18) الله يجزيك خير
    May God reward you with the best.
(19) اشكرك و يباركك
    Thanks, and may God bless you.
(20) شكرا الله يعطيك العافية ويخليك النا
    Thanks, may God grant you health and keep you safe for us.

In the next example, after the payment of £300 on behalf of RS35, although he RS35 will pay the money back, RS35 expresses his sincere appreciation in a long utterance.

(21)

RS35: بتحياتي.. نخبركم وما اعدنا عليكم امونمي بسلاي ازعلتيكم لحى جدا اسف   جزي شكرا..... عليكم
وفقه الموقكم لكم جيتني وتنم حجي الىلاح و

May God mercy your parents. Thank you very much. I am so sorry if I bothered you, but I feel you are close to me, and I have nobody to ask for help. My regards and greetings to your husband and accept my wishes for your prosperity.

RS23: نخبركم دي اعوما و عليكم امونمي هم اي ول. واجبي وهذا هل ا اخيا اسفت داعيت كو والله والخير الخير اخوي ت لات حسين بلو
الله شاء ان خرج والتوم خطاك دد يسوفقك اليه

Dear RS35, you are like my big brother. By God, there is no need to apologise. We are family members, and this is my duty towards you. Likewise, I feel free to ask you for help. May Allah grant you success and help you to accomplish your study Insha'Allah.

By using the IFID 'thank you', RS35 apologies for his request, justifies it, sends greetings to the interlocutor's husband, and ends his message by wishing them success. In return, RS23's response was a denial of any effort, praising back the first speaker, dismissing any need of apologising, and ends with the supplication of success and high achievement.

In other cases, when people want to thank the addressee for a service presented, they support it by asking God to protect the interlocutor, her husband, and the kids:

(22)

RS22: حاجه نجاح حون فدرسي في يوملاي وهم وبلي بي   ا يلجحيلخي

May God save your kids and their father and hopefully, you will celebrate his graduation.

In response to the gratitude, the addressee needs to reply to this thanking by supplicating mercy to the first speaker's parents. See the following extract:

(23)

كاهيل

May God mercy your parents

ه رحم لرابم جميموال وو

And may mercy go to your parents

Sometimes, the hearer returns the wish and thanks for God. In the next example, the speaker is telling the addressee that she is doing her duty, and it is only God who must be thanked:

(24)

مفينة الجنا ولجن هذا امهريم جزيتي حمي   الش

Thank is for God, dear. This is my duty.

Closely related to thanks and gratitude, compliments and their responses will be explored in the next section.

Compliments

Within this section, I highlight instances when a compliment is expressed, and a praise is given by examining the formulae which Iraqis use in performing this speech act, see the following sentences usually written in commenting a post on Facebook.

(25)

احسنت على النشر جزاكم خيرا

Well done on this publication. May Allah reward you for good.

A Compliment is given not only for achievements but also to praise the appearance of somebody. As in congratulation, the expression اللهم صلي على محمد وال محمد Allah blessings be upon Muhammad and his family' depicts the will of the first speaker of excelling the evil eye. See the following extracts:

(26)

اللهم صلي على محمد وال محمد هذي البنات غيرو كبران ات ماشاء الله

May Allah's blessings be upon Muhammad and his family. The girls have grown up, Masha Allah.

(27)

الله يبارك فيك ويتقبل اعمالك ان شاء الله

God bless you and accept your deeds by God's willing

Whether the speaker is complimenting or congratulating his/her address, the expression *Masha' Allah* is mostly attached to the performed act. According to Wikipedia, the tri consonantal root of shā' is to will. The literal translation is 'God has willed it'. The exact meaning is that '*what Allah wanted has happened'*. In comparison with *Insha'Allah*, which means 'if Allah wills', referring to future events, *Masha' Allah* is used in the past tense. The reason why *Masha 'Allah* is used with compliments and congratulations is to express admiration for the will of Allah and complimenting it. In some cultures, people utter this expression, believing that it would protect the completed person from jealousy and the evil eye. This protection is understood to come from Allah only. A speaker might express his/her polite wishes enforcing them *with Insha'Allah* by expressing their wish for more success and advancement.

Significantly mentioned, Iraqis mostly use the name of almighty '*Allah'* to show admiration and praising the appearance of the beholder:

(28)

يعني ماما تكلو شلون حلوه طلعة الله

Darling, my mother says you look gorgeous, Allah

The last manner of showing exclamation and surprise to be presented in this section is by using سبحان الله *Subhan Allah*. This phrase can be translated as 'praised be to God or glory (be) to

God'. It gives the meaning that God is perfect and above any inaccurate descriptions. However, there is no counterpart for this phrase in the English language, so all the above definition explains its meaning.

In response to compliments and praise, the complimented expresses his/her gratitude, supporting it with wishes that encompass the lexicon of Allah and, in return, wishing prosperity for the first speaker that will be achieved with the help and will of Allah. The next identified speech acts to be discussed below are greetings, farewells, and leave-taking.

Greetings and Leave-taking

Greetings and farewells in the Iraqi culture are of different types; in addition to morning and evening greetings, there are Eid and Ramadhan (the fasting month) greetings. As to leave-taking, it might include travel wishes, temporary leave-taking, or farewell.

Morning salutations are صباح الخير 'good morning', مساء الخير 'good evening'. The most famous Islamic greeting is السلام عليكم / *Assalamu ʕaleikum*. Salaam is a word that is derived from the root *slam*. It refers to peace, commonly translated as 'peace be upon you' and means: May you remain safe from every pain, sorrow, and distress. It is usually responded with م عليكم *Waaleikum salaam* 'and peace be upon you too'.

This formula is one of the Islamic regulations, stated explicitly in the Holy Quran which directs Muslims on how they should greet each other: "wa ?iða huyyitum bitahiyatin fahayyu bi?ahsana Minha ?aw rudduha ?inna ?al-laha kana ҫala kulli šay?in hasiba" 'When a (courteous) greeting is offered you, meet it with a greeting still more courteous, or (at least) of equal courtesy. God takes careful account of all things' (En-Nisa, 86).

Individuals who are stricter in their religious belief use the complete expression عليكم / ورحمة الله وبركته 'May Allah's peace, mercy, and blessing be upon you'. They advise others who might use a more informal greeting like *hello* or *hi* to use the Islamic one. Even when the first speaker uses a more casual greeting or the shortened Islamic one, they reply with the complete form. This tendency can be evident in examining the following exchange between two students pursuing their Ph.D. in one of the British universities.

(29)
RS23: هلو حبي
Hello love
RS23: سؤال مة
A question please
RS27: عليكم / ا
Peace be upon you
RS27: عليكم   لحنا موسلمين غييرتلقولي
Aren't we Muslim? Why don't you say peace be upon you?

On another occasion, a similar exchange took place between the same participants:
(30)

RS23: بسبس
ps ps
RS23: What's up
RS27: Salam

RS23: 😬 😬 😬 😬 😬 *peace be upon you*

Ps ps is a sound generally made to call a cat and is usually used between very close friends. When responded with the formulaic expression, RS23 realised the mistake that she committed after she had been advised of using the Islamic greeting. In order to manifest her feeling, RS23 enriches her message by inserting a grimacing emoji, showing bared teeth, which is generally used when a mistake or unfavourable situation has arisen.

Besides Alsalm Aleikum**,** there are other ways of salutation, which also incorporate the lexicon of Allah as in اسعد الله مساءك 'may God make your evening happy' and اسعد الله صباحك 'may God make your morning happy'.

Another type of greeting identified in online data are those related to the Ramadhan, the month of fasting in Islam, and that of Eid. With the approach of Ramadhan, people would exchange typically religious messages, since the event is religious, saying:

(31) رمضان الكريم
    Ramadhan is generous.
(32) عساكم من عواده
    I wish you (all) (celebrate) it again and again.
(33) تقبل الله الطاعات
    May Allah accept your obedience.
(34) لكم   ت
    May Allah accept your fasting.

Usually, individuals are not satisfied with these expressions in isolation; the more religious a person is, the more he/she might support this greeting with supplication and wishes to reflect their sincerity and enhance the solidarity of their message. Below is a message received from a friend characterised by religious interests:

(35)
RS28: رمضان الكريم علينا وعليكم وعلى كل امة محمد وال محمد وانشاء الله يكون شهر الطاعات وقبول ا عمال فيمن علين بالله بفضله وكرمه
RS28: May Ramadhan is generous on you, us, and all the Islamic nations. Inshallah, this month will be the month of worship and the acceptance of deeds and obedience. May Allah grant us paradise with his generosity.

As to Eids, the most casual greetings exchanges in this event include:
(36) عيد سعيد
    Happy Eid

(37) ايامكم سعيدة
   May your days be happy.

(38) عيدك مبارك
   Eid Mubarak

(39) كل عام ونتم بخير
   May every year you are fine.

Similar to these of Ramadan, these greetings are supported with religious wishes to promote its positive politeness:

RS28: تقبل الله صالح اعمالكم ورزقكم الجنة وان شاء الله يعيد فرحكم وعيدكم وعيى كل احبائكم وانتم بافضل حال بحق محمد واله
May Allah accepts your good deeds, grant you paradise, and Insha'Allah, it returns while you and your beloved in the best condition by Muhamad and his family.

Having explored greetings exchange online, I turn to farewells; an act perfumed when people leave, travel, or end a conversation. Upon leave-taking, Iraqi might say:

(40) بياك
   God with you

(41) فـي امان الله
   In the trust and protection of Allah

(42) برعاية الله فظه
   Protected and cared for by Allah

Likewise, upon farewells, the hearer would typically say

(43) ان شاء الله تو صلون بالسلامة
   Insha'Allah, you arrive sound and safe.

More wishes would be attached depending on the type of travelling. If the travel is to a religious place, like Mecca (a city in Saudi Arabia, where people from different parts of the world go to perform the rituals of pilgrimage and Umrah), the following wishes were given:

(44)
RS20: الله يتقبل وان شاء الله يوصلون بالسلامة
May Allah accept their visit, and Insha'Allah they arrive sound and safe.

RS34: نسأل الله القبول
We ask God acceptance.

In this example, the first speaker wishes the acceptance of this visit to a religious place, asking God the safety of their trip. In reply, the second speaker asks God to accept this visit.

Bad News, Death, and Dissatisfaction

Further to what has been outlined above, this section reviews the expressions that individuals use upon getting bad news. The first event to be examined is death, a common topic which most people react to passionately. In most cases, condolences are offered by using the following formulae:

(45) انا الیه راجعون
 we are from Allah, and to Him, we are returning

(46) مه
 may Allah be merciful to him/her.

(47) الباقي
 Allah is immortal

(48) و كم ا رل شاء الله
 and may Allah make your reward great Inshallah

(49) البقي مجیك
 May the reminder of years be added to your lifespan.

(50) اسكنها جنل لو واسعه
 May Allah inhabits her/him in His vast paradise.

(51) ال هكم الص بر ال سلوان
 May He grant you patience and consolation.

(52) الل همي حشرها مع محمد وال محمد
 May Allah confine her with Muhamad and his family.

(53) ال ه ا الله
 There is no lord worthy of worship except Allah.

(54) الرحمه ولغفران لروحها
 Mercy and forgiveness are for her soul.

(55) اللهي جعلها خاتمة ا ان وصيركم
 May Allah make it the end of sorrow and strengthen you on this loss.

(56)
 There is no power and no strength but in Allah.

(57) اللهي جمعك وايا ها ي دار الجنان
 May Allah mercy gathers you with her/him in paradise.

(58) طيب الله ثراه
 May Allah perfume her/his grave.

It is observed that the participants use expressions that seek forgiveness to the lost person, paradise, patience for his/her departure, end of sorrow, and beseeching strength from God. Notably, the more sincere and polite a condolence aimed to be; the more religious supplications are attached. In some cases, a text message combines more than one fixed formulae:

(59)
لق تعنا وتسأرنا لبفاة والدنك، فجعك هب جعها ف عد الله ن ضب ها، ولا الله ولا الیه راجعون. أحسن الله عزطكم، وعظم الله أجركم، وصبّركم لهى مصيتلكم، وجلها الفى ميزان حرنتلكم. ان الله ما أخذ وله ما أعطى وكل شيء عندمب أجل مسمى، فيطر بر وا تس اب لها ب أن نقول ه ن سلها فسريح حجنك ه، فاايل همك الصبر ال سلوان انشاء الله

We were severely influenced by the death of your mother. It was a sorrow for us as it was for you. We are for Allah, and to Him, we are returning. May Allah make your reward great, strengthen you on your tragedy, and count it within your good deeds. For God, what he reclaimed and what he gave, and everything is determined by a specific date. We ask God to forgive her, inhabit her in his paradise and grant your patience and consolation.

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As in the recitation of Allah lexicon and resort to his will in promoting politeness, this lexicon is also inserted as a means of showing dissatisfaction for a situation, damning enemies, and ask for God's revenge. Chats on CMC demonstrate the inclination of Iraqi Muslims of resorting to God upon receiving lousy news, struck by a calamity, encounter a situation that is beyond their control. They put their trust in the hands of Allah and submit themselves to him by saying,

(60)
There is no power and no strength but in Allah
Further, in order to excel a bad possibility, as the speaker might say:
(61) سمح الله
May God forbid that.

On other occasions, individuals might display their dissatisfaction via impoliteness that also incorporates religious phrases such as:
(62) لعنة الله عليكم/عليهم
God damns you/them
(63) حسبي   نعم الوكيل
For us, Allah sufficeth, and He is the best disposer of affairs.

The expression in (65) is said by a person who is very confident in God's help, does not fear any of his creatures. It is usually uttered by people in other different situations, such as when they experience injustice, and they cannot recuperate their rights. Literary this expression means: I have confidence in God, I count, and depend on Him.

As a means of comfort, there is a strong inclination to mention the will of GOD, telling the addressee that what is happening is a test from Allah to observe the reaction and patience of the testified person.
Besides, to show sympathy, a speaker might say:
(64) الله يساعدك
(65) الله يعينك
both mean 'may God help you

In responding to attempts of comfort given by the first speaker, the data shows that the second speaker demonstrates the firm belief in the ability of God to solve any complications might be encountered and ask strength from Him in overcoming their missions by saying:
(66) نعم
Allah is the best
(67) الله كريم
God is generous

To understand the politeness repertoire, it is necessary to be aware of the meaning and function of such religious expressions, the context they appear in, and their suitable response. Otherwise, if they have been used mistakenly, they might lead to odd phrases and, hence, misunderstanding.

Discussion

This paper has investigated the integration of religion with language and culture in Iraqi society. Specifically, it studies the role it plays in enhancing the politeness level of utterances and the pragmatic function performed when incorporated within situation bound rituals in Iraqi computed mediated communication.

Contrary to the claim that computer-mediated communication has special politeness strategies, as people incline to emojis and shortened expressions (Carter, 2003; Golato & Taleghani-Nikazm, 2006; Park, 2008). The instances explored in this work demonstrate that Iraqis tend to transfer their verbal FtF politeness strategies to their written online interaction. They write lengthy text messages in showing the sincerity of their emotions. The goals behind are always promoting solidarity and enhancing the positive face of both the speaker and his/her addressee.

It has also been observed that there is an intensive rely on the lexicon of Allah in showing the sincerity of wishes and raising the politeness level. Such wishes that take the form of supplication, have been depicted in congratulations, thanking and gratitude, and greetings and leave-taking, not only in the performance of these acts but also in their responses. It is also realised that Iraqis resort to the will and grace of Allah when they receive bad news and when they want to express their dissatisfaction. This result is in line with the conclusion arrived at by Bouchara (2015), Nelson et al. (1996), and Harrel et al. (2003), who demonstrate that there are fixed expressions that reflect the religious orientation of Muslims in their daily communication.

In interpreting the literal meaning of religious phrases, it might imply to outsiders that individuals in Iraqi culture are deeply imbued with religion. Nevertheless, many participants in this work are not characterised by a strong religious orientation, and still, they insert the formulae. This observation is similar to what Davies (1987) remarks that even agnostic or atheist Arabs frequently invoke these formulae in their conversation while they might mean to convey their literal meaning. Similarly, Bouchara (2015), who studied the invitations in the Moroccan culture, remarks that the insertion of religious vocabulary is a habit in the sense that no matter the degree of commitment to the Islamic commandment, people resort to swearing and religious lexicon to enhances the politeness of these invitations, and to achieve their pragmatic end, i.e., the invitee accept that invitation.

Nevertheless, this study illustrates that regardless of the cities and countries the participants inhabit, they incorporate the same expressions spontaneously as if they became part of the culture and language. This conclusion contradicts Alsabbah's (2017) finding that the city where individuals live add a religious atmosphere, reflected in polite language use.

These expressions and their functions are taken for granted by Iraqis, whose interpretation is shared by the members of the community whereby they use them spontaneously in their communication, which might make externals to this religion and speakers of other languages struggle either in interpreting the intended meaning and, or their pragmatic function.

Also, the necessity of responding to many polite formulae such as وولىيكـبـلـرحمة, '*and mercy goes to your parents*' is replied to the expression of gratitude uttered by the first speakers who usually say, 'رحم الله ولىيك' '*may God mercy your parents*'. Likewise, the typical reply to Arabic greeting in Arabic الحمد لله '*God is thanked*' is not available in English were no-stereotype response is performed (Davies & Bentahila, 2012). Kecskes (2014) supports this remark saying that situation-bound routines are fixed expressions that mostly demand replies from the addressee, which is also a fixed expression. Otherwise it would be regarded as impolite not to reply. This variation in using formulaic expressions across cultures and their strong association with politeness can be seen a source of cultural misunderstandings (Davies, 1987).

Conclusion

At this modernised era, CMC has replaced face to face interaction, lacking many significant features such tone of voice and nonverbal communication. Many symbols and abbreviations methods are being recruited to compensate this shortage and to enhance the courtesy of CMC. As to Muslim Communities, Isalm has integrated within their language and interpersonal relations to indorse the scale of positive politeness. This study explored the adherence of Iraqis to incorporate the lexicon of Allah and religious expressions as situation bound rituals and the pragmatic functions to be achieve in online communication. Below is a summary of the results concluded through out this research.

It is found that written online interaction reflect the verbal FtF politeness strategies by sending long text messages to enhance solidarity and positive politeness. The lexicon of Allah has been heavily included in these messages in supplication that perform many speech acts such as congratulations, thanking and gratitude, and greetings and leave-taking. Such involvement has been observed not only in positive politeness but also in receiving bad news and expressing dissatisfaction by resorting to the will and grace of Allah and seeking His assistance.

From the data analysed that covered messages sent by people of variant ages, cities and countries of residence, and degree of religious orientation, it is realised that these expressions are share between the speakers of the same dialect, incorporated equally and spontaneously which could indicate that they have become part of the Iraqi culture and dialect, regardless the speakers' religious interest.

Further, there is a strong demand to respond to many of these fixed formulae which might be problematic for many outsiders when they are not aware of the necessary reply.

There was, however, slight reliance on emojis, abbreviations, and stickers in performing these acts which contradict the current tendency in relying on these facilities that help in speeding the online communication and reflect the sentiment of the message.

It is hoped that this study triggers future research that can show a better understanding of this type of communication, i.e., situation-bound rituals, particularly its relation Fwith intercultural communication and foreign language use.

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