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## The Influence of Religion on the Speech Act of Request in Algerian Arabic: The Case of Classroom Discourse

**Abstract.** Although the relationship between the cultural components of religion and language is tightly linked, there was not much pragmatic research that studied the influence of religion on language use. To understand the relationship between these cultural components in Algerian society, this study aims to investigate the impact of Islam on Algerian Arabic use in a classroom context by analysing request speech act.

The data were collected through a Discourse Completion Task with the participation of 99 Algerian respondents. The data were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively drawing on the face-saving approach to politeness [Brown and Levinson, 1987] and speech act theory [Searle, 1969; 1975; 1979] and [Austin, 1962]. The results revealed that the religious lexicon plays a major role in shaping the speech act of request. Moreover, religion is used as a politeness strategy in Algeria to mitigate the face for both speakers and hearers. Also, the study proved that the society's religious values and norms motivate using religious expressions in Algerian requests.

**Key words:** Islam, Religious lexicon, Request speech act, language use, politeness strategy, Algerian Arabic, classroom context

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## Влияние религии на речевой акт просьбы в алжирском арабском языке: на примере классной беседы

**Аннотация.** Несмотря на то, что взаимосвязь между культурными компонентами религии и языка оказалась наиболее тесной, было проведено не так много прагматических исследований, в которых изучалось бы влияние религии на использование языка. Чтобы понять взаимосвязь между этими культурными компонентами в алжирском обществе, целью данного исследования является изучение влияния ислама на использование алжирским арабским языка в контексте классной комнаты путём анализа речевого акта просьбы. Данные были собраны из результатов выполнения задания по завершению беседы с участием 99 алжирских респондентов. Данные были проанализированы количественно и качественно с использованием подхода к вежливости, основанного на сохранении лица (Браун и Левинсон, 1987) и теории речевых актов [Сирл, 1969; 1975; 1979] и Остин [1962]. Результаты показали, что религиозная лексика играет важную роль в формировании речевого акта просьбы. Более того, религия фигурирует в Алжире в качестве стратегии вежливости, чтобы смягчить впечатление как со стороны говорящих, так и со стороны слушателей. Кроме того, исследование доказало, что религиозные ценности и нормы общества мотивируют использование религиозных выражений в запросах алжирцев.

**Ключевые слова:** ислам, религиозная лексика, речевой акт запроса, использование языка, стратегия вежливости, алжирский арабский, среда в классе

## 1. Introduction

Many researchers dealt with the impact of culture and social variables on language use [see, for example, Spencer-Oatey, 2000; Scollon and Scollon, 2001; Wierzbicka, 2003; Ferguson, 1982; Fishman, 2006]. Still, they did not give much attention to religion's influence on everyday language and, more importantly, in societies where religion has a significant role in people's lives, such as Algeria. Therefore, studying the relationship between language and religion is required in sociolinguistics and pragmatics. Thus, this study investigates the impact that religion may have on language use, like in request, considering the effect of Islam on Algerian Arabic in particular. Because of the existence of distinct cultures with their different beliefs and values, people's communication and their use of language differentiate across cultures. In each culture, "some social constraints language users encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication" [Crystal, 1997, 301].

This study concerns the reasons and factors that make Algerians use the religious lexicon besides the pragmatic force in everyday communication when performing requests. The significance of this study is that it deals with analysing the use of religious expressions in cultural contexts when performing request speech act and specifically in classroom interaction. Such analysis would contribute to the understanding of the socio-pragmatic and pragmatic features, and thus it enables to avoid communication misunderstanding in a cross-cultural context.

The Discourse Completion Task (DCT) was used to elicit Algerians' responses about nine situations in which they used requests in the classroom context. The questionnaires contained nine situations of request with different considerations of social variables of social power, distance and rate of imposition.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Religion, Culture, and Language

This study concerns the speech act theory to investigate the influence of religion on language use, particularly request speech act performance [Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969], revealing insights into the influence of religion on language use, specifically in classroom interaction. The emphasis also is given to Brown and Levinson's [Levinson, 1987] face-work because politeness and the face-work approach deal with the association between language use and social context.

#### 2.1.1 Religion and Culture

Tillich [Tillich, 1968] concerned the relationship between religion and culture as inseparable; he stated that "Religion is the substance of culture, culture is the form of religion" [Ibid., 42]. Tillich's viewpoint was constructed upon the theological and philosophical frameworks of culture. Also, in his study, he was concerned with the systematic analysis of culture, which enabled him to discover the religious core of culture. Intercultural communication occurs between people from different cultures, but for some scholars, it is the product of face-to-face communication [Gudykunst, 2002, 179]. The influence of religion on culture differs from one culture to another according to the presence of religion as a part of the society's everyday life or its marginalisation or privatisation presence in another society [Casanova, 2008]. Thus, intercultural communication between people from different cultures is influenced by the impact of religion on those people's cultural identities and thus can lead to miscommunication and cultural conflict.

#### 2.1.2 Language and Culture

Many researchers were interested in studying language and cultural relationships, taking the example of Whorf [Whorf, 1956] and Sapir [Sapir, 1970], who hypothesised that our perception of the world is determined by the language that influences our world image. However, they have been criticised [e.g., Au, 1983; Rosch, 1987]. Other researchers, such as Gumperz and Levinson [Levinson, 1991], came up with new suggestions focusing on language's impact on culture regarding language use in a sociocultural context. But these new studies, which were based on the linguistic relativity theory as suggested by Sapir and Whorf, were dealing with the relationship that exists between language and culture in the form of the impact that language exercises on both culture and people's world perception [Whorf, 1956; Sapir, 1970]. However, the focus of this theory is given to language and thought relationship but not vice versa; thus, it is not in concern with our study that deals

with the cultural and religious impact on language use and, in particular, request speech act.

Nida [Nida, 1998, 29] states that “[L]anguage and culture are two symbolic systems. Everything we say in language has meanings, designative or sociative, denotative or connotative. Every language form we use has meaning, carries meanings that are not in the same sense because it is associated with culture and culture is more extensive than language”.

In intercultural interaction, culture is the most important extralinguistic factor, which impacts a community’s communicative behaviour and shapes its members’ style. In intercultural communication, the individual’s communicative behaviour is determined by his cultural norms and values, which vary from one culture to another; as Larina notes, culture is a context of communication which is based on a community’s prior experience. The distinct features of each culture determine how the speakers express their thoughts. What is characteristic of one culture can often be unacceptable from the point of view of the other [Larina, 2015]. Thus, peoples’ values, politeness perceptions, and worldviews vary across cultures.

Wierzbicka [Wierzbicka, 1985, 145] claims that linguistic differences come from cultural aspects and are closely related to cultural differences, which influence the individual’s intercultural communication that can be achieved successfully by understanding these differences.

In collectivistic cultures such as Russia or Algeria, people use collectivist expressions to express themselves (e.g., using the pronoun “we” to show solidarity as in: “мы ложимся спать” or “نروحو نرقدو” which mean in English “we go to sleep” this expression that might be used by a mother talking to her child to show the solidarity).

On the other hand, in individualistic cultures, individualistic terms are employed as forms of expressions using the pronoun (I) [Triandis, 1989]; English culture, for example, values distance rather than solidarity, as we can notice from their proverbs, e.g., “He travels the fastest who travels alone” whereas, in collectivist cultures as Russia, they give much concern to closeness in their relationships which can be noticed in Russian proverbs as “It is better to have 100 friends than 100 roubles” (“Ne imey sto rubley, a imey sto druzey”). [Larina, 2008].

This notion of collectivism is also supported by Islam, which motivates unity and solidarity between the society’s members [At-twajri, Almuhaiza, 1996].

In other words, in communication, people are governed by their cultural values and norms that shape their communication utterances and enable them to make themselves understood and understand others from the same culture because they share the same cultural schemata. However, in the case of intercultural communication, people differ in their cultural beliefs and values, which may lead to communication failure [Matsumoto, Juang, 2008]. Thus, what is required in intercultural communication is to pay attention to what is sayable and what is not acceptable in others’ cultures to avoid any possible misunderstanding.

### 2.1.3 Language and Religion

Many researchers were concerned with studying the impact of language on religion [e.g., Chruszczewski, 2006; Mooney, 2006; Zuckerman, 2006]. Zuckerman [Zuckerman, 2006] focused on rejective or receptive phono-semantic matching, which proved that language could identify religious identity; this claim was supported by the example of Muslims in medieval Arabic in Jerusalem demonstrated their rejection of Christianity by replacing “kanisat alqiyama” (the church of resurrection) with “kanisat alqumama” (church of rubbish) using phonetic similarity.

Religion has profoundly impacted the development of human history and cultures, besides its influence on everyday life. Not only this, but religion also prompted people to settle, go to war, make achievements, etc. Thus, it is unsurprising to see the impact religion may have on people’s everyday conversations and dialogues in which religious expressions have particular pragmatic usages.

This religious impact on language can be explained by Qanbar’s research [Qanbar, 2011]; his study was focused on Yemeni Arabic and how Islam can influence language use in this society. The emphasis was given to taboo words and their relation to the

sociocultural norms of this Islamic society. The results revealed that in Yemeni Arabic, words like “pig” or “dog” are considered taboo because of the religious designation of these animals as dirty and impure. Thus, whenever Yemeni people use these words, they must associate them with expressions like “akramakum Allah” (may God dignify you). Qanbar considered these words as “minimisers” used to mitigate the face and to express politeness in some cases; for example, religious expressions such as “Allah y’aychek” or “Allah yahfdek” (may God protect you or give you long life) are used in requests to mean the word “please” and to lessen the threat on the hearer’s face.

The religious expressions, especially the lexicon of “Allah” (God), are found in most Arabs’ and Algerians’ communicative activities. Therefore, religion, as a cultural belief of Arabs in general and Algerians in particular, has been demonstrated in Algerians’ daily language. From a sociolinguistic angle, these religious formulae are used in Algerian Arabic as politeness devices to lessen the threat and mitigate the face. “This sociolinguistic phenomenon is considered unique and related only to the Arabic language” [Morrow, Castleton, 2007, 202].

The lexicon of “Allah” is used in most Muslims, including Algerians’ daily speech and activities “...tradition has found countless circumstances and formation for its delivery. Some of these phrases, reminders of Allah’s 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, 86].

Such religious expressions are remarkable in any Algerian conversation, and not observe the use of such religious terms, especially the lexicon of “Allah” (translated to “the God”) that is used implicitly or explicitly in most Algerians’ speech acts as a greeting, inviting, cursing, requesting, etc.

Morrow and Castleton [Morrow, Castleton, 2007] state that what characterises Arab Muslim identity is his religion and Arabic language. As Morrow notes: “The Arabic language is saturated with a wide variety of expressions invoking Allah explicitly or implicitly and <...> the name 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, 45].

The overuse of Allah expressions is a kind of belongings to this Islamic culture and a way Muslims assign Allah’s influence on their life in all aspects and situations. “The Arabic language is an inseparable part of Islam” [Medhi, 1978, 109]. Thus, in Algerian Arabic, one can notice the wide range of religious lexicons used in most of their communicative functions.

## 2.2 Speech Act Theory

One of the areas of interest in pragmatics is the study of how language users produce and understand speech acts. Speech act theory concerns studying how words are used to present information and to carry out actions such as requesting, apologising, inviting, thanking, refusing, etc. [Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969]. The speech act theory suggests that people use an unlimited set of expressions to realise a limited set of purposes in the form of speech acts. Austin [Austin, 1962] was the first to come up with this concept, stating that words are not just used to say something or describe the world, but the speakers use words to do an action or let others do something.

Searle and Austin claimed that every speech act contains simultaneous forces that work together and complete each other. This theory deals with how many utterances are delivered for performing locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts.

1. Locutionary force is the speaker’s intention translated into words. So, it is the performance of an utterance.

2. Illocutionary force is what the speaker wants to convey. It can convey the exact intention without any extra interpretations. The intended meaning of an utterance can be expressed appropriately by thinking about the appropriate locutionary expression before the performance.

3. Perlocutionary force is the actual effect the speaker may have on the hearer by making him do something. It is the feedback the speaker gets that can be positive or negative.



This classification shows how these forces work together to achieve a specific action appropriately by realising the exact intention into words (locutionary act) to get the intended result (perlocutionary act). Searle distinguished five illocutionary acts: assertive, directive, commissive, expressive and declaration.

This theory is of concern in the present study because the illocutionary purpose request as a directive speech act is to direct the hearer to make something (perlocutionary effect). The speaker considers this classification shows how these forces work together to achieve a specific action appropriately by realising the exact intention into words (locutionary act) to get the intended result (perlocutionary act). Searle distinguished five illocutionary acts: assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declaration.

This theory is of concern in the present study because the illocutionary purpose of request as a directive speech act is to direct the hearer to make something (perlocutionary effect). The speaker considers request as the act that can make the hearer act. For instance, *يُحفظك اسمحلي علابالي دير ونجيتك مي تقدر تعاوني في التمرين الله* (Sorry, I know I am bothering you, but can you help me in the homework may God preserve you!). Here the speaker intends to make the hearer help him with the homework politely using indirect request with softening expression referring to God to make the hearer feels good, where the hearer's comprehension and acceptance of the exact intention of the speaker helps to get the appropriate feedback (perlocutionary effect conveyed).

An illocutionary act is a pragmatics consideration strongly linked with the illocutionary force concept, "the communicative plan or design behind a speaker's remark" [Leech, 1983, 200].

### 2.2.1 Request as a Face-threatening Speech Act

Drawing on Brown and Levinson's theory, requests are considered the most studied speech acts in cultural studies. The big interest in this speech act stems from the threat it causes on the hearer's face.

Thus, a request is a directive speech act that makes the hearer do something of interest to the speaker. Based on the speech acts classification suggested by Brown and Levinson [Brown, Levinson, 1987], requests are considered face-threatening acts since the hearer's face can be threatened (threatening his freedom by imposition). Requests can be achieved directly and thus threaten the face or by adopting any strategy proposed by Brown and Levinson to lessen the threat. El Hadj Said claimed that "requests imply an intrusion on the hearer's territory; it is to threaten his or her "negative face" and limit their freedom" [El Hadj Said, 2016, 74].

A request may be misunderstood, especially if the interlocutors come from different cultures. Larina [Larina, 2008] states that "the breakdown of communication and misunderstanding occurs between a foreign speaker who understands the form of the utterance and its linguistic meaning but misses its pragmatic meaning". For example, when the request is performed between Russian and English interlocutors, a pragmatic failure may occur:

A: would you like to read, B?

B: No, thank you.

In this case, the pragmatic meaning in A's sentence was not grasped by B, who just dealt with the surface meaning (Yes/No question) and ignored the deep meaning of the request because this polite request in an English classroom is not clear for Russians who thought that the speaker is consulting their preferences [Thomas, 1983, 101].

### 2.3. Politeness Strategies in Request

#### 2.3.1. Face-saving Approach to Politeness

Brown and Levinson's work was considered the best approach for studying speech acts and face-saving work [Ji, 2000, Kádár, Haugh, 2013]. Brown and Levinson [Brown, Levinson, 1987] claimed that the person's face is "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" and is "something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction". They divided the person's image into two aspects:

They assumed that the person's self-image is constituted of two aspects of the face:

- a negative face is the inclination of a human being to have a particular territory and a zone to stay far from other impositions because of his property;

• a positive face deals with the person's self-image, and nobody wants to be touched.

Any interaction may involve acts that can threaten the face, called "face-threatening", like ordering, disagreement, expressing exaggerated emotions, etc.

This concept of face-threatening is universal and differs from one culture to another, where some acts may be more threatening in one culture than the other. So, it is only by politeness that the face-threatening is lessened. For Brown and Levinson [Brown, Levinson, 1978], politeness is a strategy to maintain social order and achieve successful communication between interlocutors.

According to Brown and Levinson [Brown, Levinson, 1987], face-threatening acts (FTAs) can be minimized by employing four politeness strategies:

• bald on record by which the requester is not making any redressive action to reduce the threat;

• positive politeness occurs when the requester mitigates the hearer's positive face. This can be achieved by seeking friendship with the hearer, treating him as an in-group member or by solidarity with the face;

• negative politeness is used when the speaker wants to reduce face threat to preserve the hearer's negative face from any imposition; this strategy can be achieved by asking questions using modal verbs (e.g., could, would, etc.), by apologizing in case of imposition, hesitating, impersonalizing mechanics by employing passives that enable the hearer to get "an 'out,' a face-saving line of escape, permitting him to feel that his response is not coerced" [Brown, Levinson, 1987, 70].

• off-record indirect strategy is a politeness strategy that relies upon implication, and the requester uses utterances as hints or metaphors that have various interpretations that will be interpreted by the requestee as request or not.; the face threat potential weightiness governs the preference of one strategy not the other besides the interlocutors' social power, distance, and rank of imposition. These sociocultural factors determine politeness [Brown, Levinson, 1987].

The threat can also be avoided if the speaker does not perform FTA [Brown, Levinson, 1987].

### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1 Sample

In this study, the target population comprises 95 Algerian students as participants who were chosen randomly to avoid any bias. Students are selected to be the study's respondents because of the social variables that might be used differently in an academic context and the availability of three cases of interaction with different kinds of relations between student-teacher, teacher-student and student-student. Moreover, Algerian University students are selected as the study's participants since the objective is to investigate the influence of religion on request speech act in a classroom context.

#### 3.2 Procedure

This study collected data via a Discourse Completion Task that included three situations. The questionnaire is organised in the following way: Section One deals with participants' information, whereas the second section includes three main cases of classroom interaction, each of which is described in terms of the social power of the interactants, the social distance between them and the ranking of imposition of the speech act. Moreover, each case contains three different situations of requests, i.e., where students and teachers performed their requests.

The obtained data were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively, drawing on speech act theory [Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969] and the face-saving approach to politeness [Brown, Levinson, 1987]. Such a method enables the researcher to discover how religious expressions are used in Algerian requests and to determine the sociocultural values that define linguistic performance.

The discourse completion task (DCT) has been adopted in this research since it is thought that the DCT is the best method to collect speech act data [Tran, 2006; Labben, 2016]. Also, it is easy to use and enables the researcher to control variables of Power, Distance and Rank of Imposition. On the other hand, many scholars have criticised the method because of the authenticity of data [Labben, 2016], which does not represent the

formulas as they occur in natural situations [Tran, 2006] in addition to the absence of turn-taking and non-verbal aspects that take place in natural interaction.

In this study, the speech act of request is investigated for its frequent occurrence in everyday speech. Its nature enables speakers to use religious expressions by referring to God as a form of politeness. Moreover, it can reveal any culture’s communicative patterns and sociocultural norms.

Most of the obtained data were translated into English since the original obtained data was in Arabic.

Table 1. Different considerations of social variables across three situations of request

<i>Cases</i>	<i>Social Power</i>	<i>Social distance</i>	<i>The degree of imposition</i>
<i>Student-teacher interaction</i>	S < H (-P)	Equal (=D)	Moderate (R°)
<i>Teacher-student interaction</i>	S > H (+P)	Equal (=D)	Moderate (R°)
<i>Student-student interaction</i>	S= H (=P)	Equal (=D)	(-R)

S= speaker, H= hearer, P= social power, D= social distance, R= rank of imposition

### 3.3 Data Analysis

This section starts with a quantitative analysis of the most employed politeness strategies in classroom requests throughout three different situations of requests with different weigh of social power, distance and rate of imposition between classroom participants. The analysis of the use and functions of religious expressions in requests is made qualitatively regarding the theories of Brown and Levinson [Brown, Levinson, 1978, 1987], Searle [Searle, 1969; 1975; 1979] and Austin [Austin, 1962].

### 4. Results and Discussion

Table 2. Percentages of politeness strategies adopted in classroom requests

SITUATIONS	STRATEGY TYPE	PERCENTAGES
<b>S1: Student Requests the Teacher to Send the Homework by Email</b>	N	75%
	P	19%
	ON-R	0%
	OFF-R	0%
	DON'T DO FTA	5%
<b>S2: Teacher Requests the Student to Send the Homework by Email</b>	N	6%
	P	2%
	ON-R	89%
	OFF-R	3%
	DON'T DO FTA	0%
<b>S3: Student Request to Another Student to Help with the Homework</b>	N	26%
	P	35%
	ON-R	38%
	OFF-R	1%
	DON'T DO FTA	0%

N: negative politeness, P: positive politeness, ON-R: bald-on record strategy, OFF-R: bald-off record strategy, DON'T DO FTA: don't do the face-threatening act.

#### 4.1 The Use of Religious Expressions in Situation One

In this situation, students are the requesters, and teachers are the requestees. Thus, the power variable is focused (-P), and the direction goes from low to high. Students did

not use bald-on-record to perform requests because the request went from low (student) to high (teacher). Mainly, indirect requests were employed by students as a kind of politeness. As indicated in Table 2, 5% respondents used to mitigate their faces from embarrassment by choosing not to do FTA. 19% of students preferred to use positive politeness strategies to request their teachers by being optimistic, and 75% of the Algerian students' requests were made using negative politeness strategies to reveal their consideration and knowledge of the social variables determining their relations with teachers.

Throughout the different politeness strategies employed by Algerian students to perform requests, religious expressions were used frequently as follows:

#### Positive politeness strategies

(1) أستاذ ربي يعيشك ابعتلي الواجب بالإيميل حاب نخدمو اليوم

'Sir, God bless you, send me the homework I need to do today'.

(2) السلام عليكم، بارك الله فيك استاذ تبعثلي الواجب بالإيميل كيعد كنت غايب كي مديتهولهم في القسم

(Peace be upon you. God bless you, sir; send me the homework by Email because I was absent when you gave it to them in class).

#### Negative politeness strategies

(3) اسمحلى استاذ والله اضطرريت نبعثلك ونطلب منك إذا لم يكن هناك إشكال، إذا تقدر تبعثلي الواجب؟

بالإيميل؟

'Forgive me, sir; I swear God I was obliged to send and ask you if there is no problem if you can send me the homework by Email?'

(4) استاذ تقدر نطلب منك تبعثلي الواجب بالإيميل؟ نحتاجو ربي يحفظك

'Can I ask you to send me the homework by Email? I need it; may God protect you.'

(5) ما عيش تبعثلي الواجب بالإيميل ربي يعيشك؟

'is it OK if you send me the homework by Email? God bless you?'

(6) ربي يطول عمرك ما تقدرش تبعثلي الواجب بالإيميل استاذ

'May God give you long life, sir. Can't you send me the homework by Email?'

The first situation reveals that Algerian students tended to use negative or positive politeness strategies to request their teachers as a way to show them their respect. This choice comes from the Islamic culture in Algeria, where in Islam and Quran, the teacher has a high status and is counted as a prophet who must be glorified.

The Algerian students' data revealed another indicator of the Islamic culture in the country by mentioning Allah (God) in their requests to mean the English word "please", as in the case of positive politeness strategy by giving gifts to the hearer to promote the positive face of the hearer; and make him feel liked and admired. In the above data, students' gifts to their teachers were performed through thanking and prayer. For example, *meaning Sir, God bless you, send me the homework I need to do it today.* Moreover, it is evident from the obtained data that students employ more formal greetings with teachers, expressed by religious expression of peace be upon you. This expression in religion shows a high degree of respect used even by prophets. Similarly, throughout other strategies, students employed different forms of religious terms to show their respect to their teachers, such as swearing in the name of God, a high degree of promise in Islamic culture. Respondents also referred to God in their requests by asking God to preserve their teachers or give them long life before requesting them as the hearer cannot decline the request for which Allah's name is used because pleasing Allah is the aim of the request.

#### 4.2 The Use of Religious Expressions in the Second Situation

The second situation is devoted to eliciting requests from teacher to student. According to Brown and Levinson, in this case, the three variables should be manipulated with a moderate rank of imposition ( $R^0$ ), an equal distance exists between participants ( $= D [S, H]$ ), and the focus is on the power [ $+ P (S, H)$ ] where the request is performed by teachers (+P) towards their students (-P).

In this situation, the bald off-record is the least strategy used by Algerian teachers' requests as asking their students to send the assignment indirectly. 7% of teachers' requests were used as negative politeness strategies as conventionally indirect requests, 8% of participants used positive politeness strategies as employing group identity markers (daughter, son, etc.). Bald-on strategies were used the most by 84% of teachers in the



form of direct imperative requests, and some teachers preferred to add some softening expressions to their direct requests.

**Bald-off record strategies**

(7) انتهت الحصة اليوم كي تروحوا للدار ان شاء الله علابالكم وانش ديروا كي العادة (7)

*'We finished today's lesson if God wills, when you return home, you know what to do as usual'.*

**Negative politeness strategies**

(8) سامر تقدر تبعثلي الواجب بالإنيميل الله يحفظك (8)

*'Samer, can you send your homework by Email? May God bless you?'*

**Positive politeness strategies**

(9) بنتي معلش تبعثلي الواجب للإنيميل نتاعي؟ (9)

*'My daughter, can you send your homework to my Email?'*

**Bald-on record strategies**

(10) الله يستركم الليلة ابعثوا الواجب بالإنيميل (10)

*'May God preserve you, today send your homework by Email'.*

So, in this situation, because the speaker (teacher) status is higher than the hearer (student), Algerian teachers showed considerable directness in frequently choosing bald on record. They preferred positive rather than negative politeness even when redressing the face threat.

This tendency in Algerian culture towards using more direct strategies, such as bald-on-record or positive politeness in requests, is related to the Algerian Islamic culture, which considers teachers as prophets who must be highly glorified. Thus, teachers in Algeria have more power than students. Moreover, from the collected data, teachers tended to use Islamic expressions in their requests even when they used direct strategies to soften the request, such as *الله يسترك/من فضلك/تعيش الله* (*May God preserve you or give you long life, etc.*). "Insha'Allah" is a religious expression used in Islamic countries to express indirectness [Pishghadam et al., 2012]. (*God willing*) is used by teachers to mean an optimistic prediction about the future in which students can do their tasks.

**4.3 Students' Use of Religious Expressions in the Third Situation**

The third case was meant to elicit requests between classmates. Unlike the previous situations in which the emphasis was put on P and D variables that determine the relationship between the requester and requestee, here, the focus is on the rank of imposition variable (R). The power and distance are equal [= P (S, H)] [= D (S, H)] because the participants are students. In comparison, the rank of imposition in this situation has a low value (-R).

In this situation, the request is made between students where the distance and power between students are equal in other communities. Most Algerian students use bald-on-record strategies in their requests to lessen the face threats by using no strategy, which means being impolite is extremely polite.

The results in the third situation revealed that 1% of the Algerian students tended to use bald off-record strategies in performing requests. The other indirect strategy students use is the negative politeness strategy in 26% of their requests. On the other hand, the rest of the participants preferred to perform requests in more direct strategies, as the positive politeness strategy was used by 35% of participants via in-group identity markers (brother, sister, etc.). Bald on record strategy was the most used by Algerian students (38%) to express their requests that are softened using some expressions such as (May you leave long, may God preserve you, may God protect you).

**Bald-off record strategies**

(11) كيف جاوبت انت (11)

*'How did you answer'.*

**Negative politeness strategies**

(12) تقدر تشرحلي كيفاه ندير الواجب ربي يخليك؟ (12)

*'Can you explain to me how to do the homework? May God preserve you?'*

(13) اسمحلي علابالي ديرونجيتك مي تقدر تعاوني في التمرين الله يحفظك (13)

*'Sorry I am bothering you, but can you help me with the homework? May God preserve you!'*

### Positive politeness strategies

(14) ياخويا نحتاجك تعاوني في التمرين

'Hey brother, I need your help in doing the homework'.

(15) عاوني شوي في الواجب والله غير ماراني فاهم فيها والو

'Help me a little bit with my homework. I swear I did not understand anything'.

### Bald-on record strategies

(16) ربي يحفظك فهمني في التمرين اللي منلكم

'May God preserve you, explain to me the homework you have'.

This situation is an excellent example of an informal request since it occurs between students. According to Brown and Levinson, less polite strategies are employed in case of a minor imposition is practised on the FTA.

It can be observed that Algerian students tended to use more direct strategies because the request to do a small favour does not require a high imposition. Algerian students use on-record strategies and imperatives because it is a kind of small favour which do not necessitate speakers to use indirect ways to request them in Algerian society.

In this situation, students use the religious expression /wallah/ (I swear God) to show their interlocutors the seriousness of the situation and that they need their help. In Islam, swearing shows the speaker's truthfulness, and the hearer must believe him because no one can lie when swearing. Like in previous situations, Algerian students also used religious expressions even if there was no face-threatening. However, religious culture in Algeria pushes any language users to refer to God spontaneously because it is a part of everyday speech.

### Conclusion

The present study aims to reveal the impact of religion on language use, emphasising the influence of Islam and Islamic values on Algerian Arabic use by analysing religious expression employed in the speech act of request in a classroom context.

The results revealed that religious lexicons are employed repeatedly in Algerians' requests. From the obtained data, all respondents employed religious expressions in performing requests across all the situations, no matter which social variables govern the participants' relationships. In Algeria, the reference to God or any religious glossary is used to save face-threatening requests and is considered polite. The hearer will feel comfortable requesting because he believes he is requesting for God's sake or to get a reward from Allah (God). Moreover, this reliance on religion in requests is not aimed only at achieving the speaker's intention (illocutionary force) but also at creating an effect on the hearer and making him make the request and accept it (perlocutionary force).

Therefore, this study provides an understanding of culture's impact on communicative activity. Thus, communication between interlocutors can be achieved successfully in addition to the impact of the cultural feature of religion on language use among Algerian speakers of Arabic. For further studies, researchers are recommended to employ the theoretical part used in the present study to investigate the impact of religion on other types of speech acts.

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