

# Allāh Lexicon and Arabic

## The Function of Allah Expressions in Arabic Interaction: A Conversation Analysis Study

Habeeb Mohsin Areef Al-Saeedi

Department of English, College of Education, University of Al-Qadisiyah, Al Diwaniyah, Iraq

**Abstract**—beside their literal meanings, Allāh expressions have acquired over time a number of non-literal meanings that have become accessible to speakers as conventionalized meanings. The present study highlights that Allāh expressions can be used as devices to achieve certain conversational purposes such as holding the floor, changing the topic, closing a turn or ending a conversation. It is a conversation analysis study concerned with investigating the function of Allāh expressions; it aims at exploring what function these expressions may achieve in Arabic everyday interaction.

**Index Terms**— Conversation analysis, Allāh Lexicon, Allāh Expressions, Insha'Allāh, Al-Hamdulillāh.

### I. INTRODUCTION

Allāh expressions are commonly used by all speakers of Arabic; it seems hard or even impossible to imagine a conversation in Arabic without a number of Allāh expressions. The employment of these expressions in everyday conversation is taken for granted as a non-negotiable fact. Further, non-Arabic speaking Muslims from diverse linguistic backgrounds are very willing to use Allāh expressions in their everyday interaction. They code-switch from their mother tongue to Arabic, a language that they do not speak, particularly with regard to the production of some phrases such as; ma sha'Allāh, alhamdulillah, bismillah and insha'Allāh.

The current study is divided into three parts; the first one is devoted to the theoretical framework. It involves two sections: section one provides a detailed description of Allāh lexicon and fixed expressions; it also discusses the previous studies achieved in this field. Section two deals with the origin of these expressions in the holy Quran and Hadith of Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him and his family) with a description of their use and meanings.

Having done this, Part two presents the collected data materials and the applied methodology. The third part provides a conversation analysis of Allāh expressions based on their occurrence in the selected extracts. The analysis mainly focuses on the meanings and functions of Allāh expressions in

everyday Arabic interaction.

The findings of this study are summed up in the conclusion.

### II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

#### A. Allāh lexicon and Allāh expressions

Allāh lexicon is a term coined by Castleton 2006. It is used here as an umbrella term to refer to all Arabic phrases and expressions where the word Allāh is incorporated (hereinafter Allāh expressions). Further, Allāh lexicon is a rich repertoire to construct a long list of hundreds, maybe thousands, of Allāh expressions that appear as salient features of Arabic. They include but are not limited to:

[I]nsha' Allāh [God willing], alhamdulillah [Praise be to God], subhan Allāh [Glory be to God], masha Allāh [It is the will of God], baraka Allāhu fik [May God bless you], jazaka Allāh khayr [May God reward you], fi amanillah [God with God], inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un [From God we come and to Him is our return] and a multitude of others. (Morrow and Castlton 2007: 202).

These expressions, among many others, are commonly used in the day-to-day interaction as expressions of gratitude, greetings, welcomings and invitations by all speakers of Arabic, “including illiterates, [unaware] speakers of rudimentary Islam, and speakers with non-Muslim affiliation” (Masliyah 1999:113). Arabic, as Harrell, Abu-Talib, and Carroll (2003) observe, has “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” (cited in Morrow and Castlton 2007:205-6). Therefore, the Arabic language appears “saturated with a rich variety of expressions invoking Allāh explicitly or implicitly” (Clift and Helani 2010: 358).

The widespread use of Allāh expressions in everyday Arabic conversation, irrespective of the speaker affiliation, has been emphasized on by many scholars (see e.g. Abboud, 1988; Gilsenan, 1983; and Ferguson, 1983). The most comprehensive and panoramic collection of Allāh expressions is in Pimenta (1979,1983), where he discusses the religious and cultural

presuppositions drawn from them. In a pioneering study involving *Insha'Allāh* 'God willing' and its cognates, Ferguson (1983) examined what he called "God-wishes" in Syrian Arabic—in a corpus of thirty-one religious invocations. Castleton (2006) surveys what she calls "the Allāh lexicon" in different forms of communication. Further, in a very interesting study, Morrow (2006) notes that we can speak of the omnipresence of Allāh in the Arabic language as it permeates both spoken and written Arabic (Clift and Helani, 2014:358).

Allāh expressions are simply fixed phrases that have some specific meanings. According to the specialists, each language has its own set of fixed phrases that makes it unique and distinguished from all other languages. In other terms, fixed phrases express their uniqueness by their association with one language and one culture in which they are originated (Strakšiene, 2009: 18). They basically serve a twofold function: they define the cultural concepts of that society, on the one hand; and they reflect the system of ideological beliefs and values which constitute its cultural identity, on the other (Pawley 2007: 23).

Furthermore, the fixed phrases that uniquely belong to a particular language and cannot be expressed in another one appear as a "badge of belonging", since they are not only distinctive expressions, but rather are "ingrained in the thinking of the speech community" and can be seen as the "air that people breathe" (Wierzbick 2007: 49).

Due to the frequent use of these expressions in everyday interaction, the Arabic language appears to be an inseparable part of the Islamic faith for its speaker. It is, as Stewart Desmond (1968) puts it, the language of the Quran, and it has an even greater effect on its speakers than other languages have on their speakers. The following part provides more details about the origin of Allāh expressions in the Quran, Hadith and Islamic culture.

### B. The origin of Allāh expressions in the holy Quran and Hadith

As part of their Islamic faith and their religious affiliation, Muslims are keen to use Allāh expressions in their everyday interaction. The holy Quran, for instance, states that nothing happens except by God's will, so a Muslim believes that it is arrogant of him to promise or insist that something will happen when in reality s/he has no control over what the future holds. Therefore, believers cannot be truly sure that a given event will or will not take place because there may always be circumstances beyond their control that get in the way of their plans, and Allāh is the ultimate planner. Hence, the holy Quran always orders people to say *Insha'Allāh* 'God willing'. It says:

"ولا تقولن لشيء إني فاعل ذلك غداً، إلا إن يشاء الله ..."

"And never say of anything "Indeed I will do that tomorrow". Except (with the saying) 'If Allāh wills' (Al-Kahaf 22-23).

An alternative expression, which is commonly used by Arabic speakers, is "bi'ithnillah," "by the will of Allāh" which is also mentioned in the Quran in many passages such as "وما ... وَكَانَ لَيْسَ أَنْ تُؤْمِنَ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ" (Yunus: 100).

Likewise, the Quran encourages people to express their gratitude and thanks to Allāh by saying *Alhamdulillah* 'thank

God', as Allāh says: "لئن شكرتم لأزيدنكم" "If ye give thanks, I will give you more [...]" (Ibrahim 7).

Furthermore, the Quran asks the believers to celebrate the praises of Allāh by saying: "يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا" "O ye who believe! Celebrate the praises of Allāh, and do this often" (Al-Ahzab 33:41).

Similarly, the Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him and his family) also reminds the believers to always mention Allāh "إِذَا سَأَلْت فَاسْأَلِ اللَّهَ، وَإِذَا اسْتَعْتَيْت فَاسْتَعْتِ بِاللَّهِ" "If you ask, then ask only from Allāh; and if you seek help, then seek help only from Allāh". (Nawawi :19).

Consequently, it is an explicit order by the holy Quran and the Prophet to the believers to celebrate, praise, thank, seek help and always mention Allāh. That's to say, Allāh expressions and the prescription for their use come directly from the Quran; and thus, their use is mandatory for Muslims. Hence, the use of *Insha'Allāh* 'God willing' and its cognates are derived directly from one of the fundamental tenets of Islam; a belief in the Divine Will.

## III. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

### A. Data

The data of the current study consist of a corpus of ten hours of television interviews that represent different types of naturally occurring conversations. They were collected from different TV channels on youtube.com (see Appendix 1: Primary Sources). These interviews held by different reporters with some famous figures: sport, art and music stars in the Arab world. In each video, there are generally two participants: the interviewer (IR) and the interviewee (IEE).

The first step of processing data consists of watching the collected video recordings to select the extracts that contain features relevant to the purpose of this study. As a result, nine extracts that document the use of Allāh expressions with different meanings and various functions were chosen. The second step of processing data is transcribing as accurately as possible the selected extracts. All data have been transcribed according to the transcription conventions developed by the conversation analyst Gail Jefferson (2004) A brief summary is provided in Appendix (2).

The transcription, in the course of this study, appears in three lines. The first line is the utterance in its original form, the second line is a transcription of the talk. The third line presents an italicized idiomatic English translation to give a clear idea about what information speakers convey to each other.

### B. Methodology: Conversation Analysis (CA)

As the current study is concerned with a naturally occurring verbal interaction, the general methodological principles of conversation analysis are applied to analyze the collected data materials.

Conversation Analysis (CA) is an approach to talks and social interactions. The term emerged in the writings and lectures of Harvey Sacks, Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson in the late 1960s and early 1970s as a sub-discipline of sociology. It is a bottom-up data analysis method that studies

the naturally occurring talk-in-interaction. In other words, language, as (Sindel 2004: 8) points out, is not the focus of CA but rather the practical activities in which language is deployed. Therefore, CA stresses that analysis should not be based on prior theoretical assumptions. This means that the analysis is achieved according to the participants' own perspective (Hutchby and Wooffitt 2008: 20).

According to the CA perspective "[h]uman actions are meaningful and involve meaning-making" (Heritage 2011: 209). However, an utterance is socially meaningful only when it is understood and shared by a recipient of the act. The understanding of an activity, in other words, is inherent in the sequence of its events, and precisely in the turn-by-turn mechanism, because each action in social interaction can be understood as responsive to a previous action and a frame to a subsequent one. That is to say, utterances are not single events, rather they are connected in a network of actions which can be noted by identifying the patterns, practices or devices employed by participants to produce meanings and actions.

#### IV. THE ANALYSIS

The functions of Allāh expressions in Arabic interaction.

Each one of Allāh expressions can be used as inseparable unit at the beginning, middle or end of a sentence to convey different meanings and serve various functions. They may occur as independent clauses, accompanied by prolongations, pauses or discourse markers such as (and, but, so, because, will, etc.). Based on such occurrences and beside their literal meaning, which is in most cases an invocation to God, Allāh expressions operate as important devices to achieve some conversational purposes.

##### A. Allāh expressions as transition words and floor holding devices

When a speaker wishes to continue speaking, the simplest and the most frequent technique is to employ an "utterance incompleter"; they are words like "but", "and", "however" and other clause connectors" (Coulthard, 1977:57). The importance of these devices is generated from their ability to turn a potentially complete turn into an incomplete one.

Consider extract (1) which is an interview with an Iraqi footballer after winning China 3-0 and being qualified to the final of Asia Cup in Sydney, Australia.

##### Extract 1: Asia Football Cup

1. IR شنو شعورك بالفوز والتأهل الى نهائيات اسيا

shano sha'aorak ba'ad elfowz wa ba'ad alta'ehal ila naha'eyat asia

What are your feelings after winning and qualifying to the finals of Asia?

2. IEE بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

In the name of Allāh the most gracious the most merciful

3. اول شيء شعور لا يوصف بعد كسب ثلاثة نقاط المؤهلة الى (1.0) النهائيات

awal shi sha'aorak la yousaf ba'ad kaseb thalath niqat mo'ahilah ila alniha'eyat

Firstly, it is an indescribable feeling after winning three points that qualify us to the finals.

4. ان شاء الله سوف نعمل الكثير على سدني ان شاء الله وتقدم شيء العراقي يفرحه ان شاء الله للشعب

<Insha'::::Allāh> sowfa na::'amal alkatheer ala:::: Sydney Insha'Allāh wa noqadem shi lilsha'ab al iraqi yofaraho °Insha'Allāh°.

God willing we will work hard for Sydney. God willing and we will do something for the Iraqi people that make them happy God willing.

5. IR: اشكرك انا حمودي توصل بالسلامة ان شاء الله

ashkorek ana hamoodi tosal bilsalamah Insha'Allāh↓

Thank you Hammodi, hope you a nice trip, God willing.

In an answer to a question about his feelings of winning and qualifying to the final of Asia, The IEE starts his utterance in line (2) by using the expression >bismillah alrahman alraheem↓< 'In the name of Allāh the most gracious the most merciful'; it is an expression used by all Muslims as an opening word when they initiate a speech or even a work, task, trip or anything else. In line (4), Insha'Allāh 'God willing' occurs three times; they are undoubtedly used as invocation and hope regarding the future as the IEE talks about something that will take place in the future. But the question is why he repeats this expression three times and do they have the same function.

First of all, repeating this expression is a normal trait of Arabic interaction. Insha'Allāh 'God willing' can be seen as the most repeated expression in the various types of interaction. However, the presence of (سوف 'will') along with the prolongation of the vowel 'a', in addition to its pronunciation in a slower pace than the surrounding speech indicates that <Insha'::::Allāh> 'God willing' is used here as a transition word to build up an extended turn whereby the IEE intends to gain time and formulate his utterance.

The second occurrence is used as a floor holding device that the IEE employs to express his desire to continue speaking and completing his turn as well as to provide new information, particularly when it occurs merged with the discourse marker ( "و and). Whereas, the third occurrence is used to express a will of handing over the floor and close turn. This can be seen clearly in the IR's following turn, in line (5) as he thanks the IEE and close off his turn with the same expression Insha'Allāh 'God willing'.

In extract (2) below, the IR's utterance 'God willing a constant joys to the Iraqi people oh God' is produced in a form of invocation to congratulate the players and the Iraqi people on the occasion of winning and qualifying to the final of Asia Football Cup; to which the answer comes in a form of reciprocal invocation but certainly with a function to serve.

##### Extract 2: Asia Football Cup 2

1. IR ان شاء الله دوم الافراح على الشعب العراقي يارب

inshaAllāh dom alafrah ala alsha'ab aliraqi yarab

God willing constant joys to the Iraqi people oh God

## 2. IEE ان شاء الله

>Insha'Allāh<  
God willing

## 3. وان شاء الله الشباب يقدمون أكثر وأكثر

w'inshaAllāh alshabab yaqadmoon akthar wa akthar  
And God willing the players will do more and more.

Insha'Allāh 'God willing' also occurs three times with a different function for each occurrence. The first one occurs in line (1), in the IR's utterance, as an invocation to Allāh to spread happiness and joy over all Iraqi people. It is used as transition word; it is of politeness and part of the Islamic faith to add the expression Insha'Allāh 'God willing' when speaking about something of the future. Further, it also appears as a useful strategy with a considerable productive capacity that enables the speaker to formulate his utterance and build up an extended turn.

The second occurrence in line (2) stands by itself as an independent turn constructional unit. It comes as a reciprocal invocation that carries a complete answer to the IR's turn. It means here (Yes, I hope so).

In line (3) Insha'Allāh 'God willing' occurs merged with the discourse marker ('و' 'and'). So, beside its usual function as an invocation to Allāh, this expression appears as an inseparable part of the discourse marker (and) that the IEE employs it to express his desire to start a new turn constructional unit in line (3), because the new information is provided just after it. Hence, this occurrence enhance the assumption that Insha'Allāh 'God willing' is used here to hold the floor and prepare the ground for an extended turn.

Beside Insha'Allāh 'God willing' there are other expressions that can be used to achieve similar functions. In the following extract (3), the IEE employs Alhamdulillah 'thanks God' to express his gratitude and thanks to Allāh. It can also be seen as a floor holding device for an extended turn by the speaker.

**Extract 3: Greek Trip**

## 1. IR رحلة اليونان كيف كانت ؟

Rihlat alyounan kaif kanet↓ ?  
How was the Greek trip?

## 2. IEE والله كانت كويسة الحمد لله واستفدت منها

WAllāh kanat kowaisah alhamdulillah↑ wa astafadit minha  
by Allāh it was good, thanks God, I get benefit from it.

## 3. والله لك الحمد وووو ذا الموسم لعبت يعني مع الهلال

WA::Allāhum lek alhamd >wo:::tha almowsim la'abit  
ya'ani ma'a alhilal<

And thanks God and this season I played I mean with Al-Hilal.

## 4. تحقق يعني حلمي من وأنا صغير

TAHAQAQ ya'ani helmi min wana sagheer  
It has been achieved, I mean my childhood dream

## 5. وان شاء الله مو باول بطولة

WINSHALLĀH mo beawal batoolah

and God willing it will not be the first championship.

Alhamdulillah 'thanks God' in line (2) occurs at the end of a TCU to thank god for having a nice and successful trip to Greek. When we talk about an achievement, Alhamdulillah 'thanks God' is the appropriate expression to be employed to express thanks and gratitude to God. In line(3) the IEE employs this expression again but in a long form proceeded and followed by the discourse marker (and) with a prolongation in the vowels ('a' and 'o')on the both sides. All these techniques seems used to hold the floor and gain time to prepare his utterance because the new information are provided just after it. Then, when The IEE moves, during the conversation progress, to talk about the future, he uses Insha'Allāh 'God willing' which occurs merged with the discourse marker 'and', and it is pronounced exclusively louder than the surrounding words to signify that the IEE wants to hold the floor and to add more information. Moreover, in extract (4) below, and in an interview with an actress in Dubai International Film Festival, the IEE employs another expression which performs the same function as the expressions that have been discussed so far.

**Extract 4: Dubai International Film Festival -1**

## 1. IR (xxx)

## 2. IEE و احب اني كل سنة اتواجد

ao: ahib ani kol sana atwajed  
And I'd like every year to be here.

## 3. لأنه ما شاء الله كل سنة في تطور لتطور

La'enahu >masha'Allāh< kol sana fi tatawor la  
tatawor↓

Because as Allāh wills, every year, it moves from one development to another

The IEE answers the question of the IR about her participation in the festival; the answer, in line (2), seems satisfactory and good enough. However, the IEE decides in line (3) to add more information; so, she employs the expression Masha'Allāh 'as Allāh wills' proceeded and merged with the discourse marker 'because'. It is used to hold the floor and prepare the ground for an extended turn as the new information are provided just after it.

To sum up this section and as the analysis of the extracts (1-4) shows, it is appropriate to say that Allāh expressions can be employed as floor holding devices, particularly when they are proceeded or followed by discourse markers or when there are prolongations in the vowels whereby the speaker intends to gain time and formulate his turn.

**B. Allāh expressions as signals for closing turn and shifting topic.**

According to their occurrence in the everyday interaction, Allāh expressions can also be used as a strategy to close turn, shift topic or even end a conversation. Let us consider the following extract (5), where a guest in Dubai International Film Festival answers a question about his participation in the festival.

**Extract 5: Dubai International Film Festival – 2**

## 1. IR (xxx)

2. IEE انا مشارك أ.....: كضيف هالمرة  
ana musharek a:: kadhaif (.) halmarah  
I Participated as a gust this time
3. ما عندي فلم مشارك  
ma'andi film musharek  
I don't have a participated film
4. ان شاء الله في دورات قادمة ان شاء الله  
INSHA'ALLH fi dawrat qadimah insha'Allāh↓  
Good willing in the next sessions Good willing  
Insha'Allāh 'God willing' at the beginning of line (4) is a normal occurrence as the IEE intends to speak about something of the future, the next festivals. However, using this expression in a louder tone than the surrounding utterance and after providing a complete answer in line (2 and 3) confirms that it is used as a transition word to build up an extended turn and to add more information. Whereas, Insha'Allāh 'God willing' with a falling pitch at the end of line (4) signifies a wish of handing over the floor to the IR. In short, The IEE uses this expression as a closing word to convey a message to the IR that he has finished what he wants to say, and he wants to relinquish the floor.

An alternative expression, which expresses the same meaning and serves the same function, is used in the following extract (6); it is an interview with Al-Muqaweloon football player after winning Al-Ahli 1-0.

#### Extract 6: Al-Muqaweloon and AlAhli match

1. IR يمكن دا راجع للجهد طبعاً اللي انت بتقدمه يا احمد يعني اكيد عامل السن و الخبرة  
Youmkin da rajj'a liljohed elli anta bataqodumah yahmed ya'ani amil alsin wa alkhabrah.  
This may be related to the effort you make Ahmed, I mean the factors of age and experience
2. IEE وبعدين يعني واحد وثلاثين سنة مش مش كبير اوي  
Wa ba'adeen ya'ani 31 sana mesh mesh kabeer awi.  
And then, I mean 31 year is not very old
3. يعني يعني عادي يعني ف.....: كرتيانو عنده 33 سنة و احسن لعيب  
في العالم  
ya'ani ya'ani a::di ya'ani f:: cristiano ando 33 sana wa AHSAN LA'AEEB FI ALA'ALIM  
I mean it is normal, Cristiano is 33 years old and he's the best player in the world.
4. ف.....: مفيش حاجة اسمها سن يعني  
F::: mafeesh haja asmaha sin ya'ani  
So, there is nothing called age I mean.
5. IR طب انا اتمالك كل التوفيق فيما هو قادم بأذن الله  
tab ana atamanlek kol altawfiq fima howe qadim bi'thnAllāh  
Ok, I hope you all success in what is coming by God's will

Bi'thnAllāh 'by God's will' is one of Allāh expressions that are communally used in everyday interaction. It plays the same role of the expression Insha'Allāh 'Good willing'. In line (5), it occurs as an invocation and hope regarding the future since the IR's utterance is concerned with an event that may take place in the future.

However, a significant feature can be drawn from this occurrence. The expression Bi'thnAllāh 'by God's will' serves here another function; it is employed to announce the end of the IR's turn. In other terms, It is used as a signal to expresses his wish to close the topic and end the interview especially when the IEE thanks him and leave the place.

Another example that supports the assumption of using Allāh expressions as signals to close turns. In extract (7) below, the IEE employs both expressions Insha'Allāh 'God willing' and Bi'thnAllāh 'by God's will' in his turn; they express the same meaning (an invocation and hope regarding the future) but serve different functions.

#### Extract 7: Dubai International Film Festival 3

1. IR (xxx)
2. IEE مشاركتي دائماً بالتواجد  
musharakti da'eman biltawajod  
My participation is always to be present.
3. و لكن ان شاء الله في السنوات القادمة نحوو:: نحاول نكون متواجدين بأعمالنا  
<wa lakin> inshaAllāh fi alsanawat alqadimah nhoo:: NHAWIL nakoon matawajideen be a'amalna.  
and but God willing, in the next years, we will try to be present by our works.
4. (0.3)
5. بأذن الله  
Bi'thnAllāh  
by Allāh's will  
Insha'Allāh 'God willing' occurs in line (3) proceeded by the discourse markers 'and, but'. The IEE answers the question about her participation in Dubai International Film Festival in line (2). Then, in line (3) when she wants to extend her turn to add more information, she employs the expression Insha'Allāh 'God willing' merged with the discourse markers ('and' and 'but') to hold the floor and continue her turn.  
In line (5) she uses Bi'thnAllāh 'by God's will' at the end of her turn to signify a wish to close her turn or shift the topic particularly when it comes in an independent turn and after a pause of (0.3) in line (4).  
Accordingly, to conclude this section, the analysis of the extracts (5-7) shows that Allāh expressions may serve other functions; they can be used as signals to relinquish the floor, shift topic or end conversation. Hence, one expression can serve different functions. The following section provides more examples.
- C. One expression with various functions  
The expression Allāh ya'tik al'afye 'may Allāh bless you' which is communally used in the Levantine Arabic has, as

Ferguson (1983:69) points out, different meanings and functions according to the situations it occurs in.

- It is probably used as a salutation to someone who is doing some fairly heavy manual work or to someone who has just finished a job, and in the later one it could be interpreted as a kind of congratulation or praise.
- It may also be said to someone who has achieved a service to the speaker, e.g. we may say it to a waiter in a restaurant as an expression of thanking; the formula is understood here as a thank you.
- Finally, it may be used as an encouragement to someone who is about to start a difficult task.

Extract (8) below shows that the expression Allāh ya'tik al'afye 'may Allāh bless you' occurs three times.

### Extract 8: The league championship

- IR يعطيك العافية  
ya'tik al'afye  
bless you
- IEE الله يعافيك  
Allah ya'afik  
May Allah bless you
- IR كيف امورك  
Keif Amorak  
How is it going?
- IEE والله تمام الحمد لله  
wallah tamam alhamdulilah  
by Allah it is OK thanks God
- IR: أيش اخبارك  
Eish Akhbarek  
How about your news?
- IEE هههه الحمد لله :  
hahaha Alhamdulilah  
Laugh thanks God
- IR كيف عبداللطيف الغنام معاك  
keif Abedallatif alghanam ma'aak  
How is Abedlatif Alghanam with you?
- IEE والله تمام الله يعطيه العافية والله مساند  
Wallah tamam allah ya'tih al'afye wallah masand  
By Allah he is OK may Allāh bless him by Allah he supports me
- IR والشاهوب  
wa alshalhoob  
and Al-Shalhoob
- IEE كلهم والله الاثنتين بصراحة ساندوني من اول والله يعطيهم الف  
الف عافية واهديهم البوري الان

Kolhom wallah alathnain besaraha sanadony min awal we allah ya'atihim alif alif afiya wa ahdeehum aldowri

All of them, by Allah, the two have supported me from the beginning and Allāh bless them and now I present them the league championship.

- IR حلو  
hillo  
Nice

Allāh ya'tik al'afye 'may Allāh bless you', sometimes briefly pronounced, as ya'tik al'afye 'bless you' is used in line (1) as an expression of salutation that the IR uses, at the beginning of the interview to greet the IEE who, together with his team, have just achieved a hard task, winning the league. Whereas, in lines (8) and (10) it is used as an expression of thanking the IEE uses to thank and praise the coaching staff for their support and efforts that helped the team to win the league championship.

### D. Plasticity and richness of Allāh lexicon

Allāh lexicon is not confined to a limited number of expressions. The word Allāh may be added to unlimited number of verbs that Arabic speakers use in their everyday interaction. They convey different meanings and serve various functions according to the situation they occur in.

Table (1)

some verbs that can be used as parts of Allāh expressions

Trust in	يتوكل	Take away	يبعد	Bless	يبارك
Ask forgiveness	يستغفر	Bring closer	يقرب	Protect	يحمي
Seek refuge	يستعيذ	Expel	يطرد	Support	ينصر
Give	يرزق	Arrive	يوصل	Guide	يهدي
Recover	يعافي	Rescue	ينقذ	reward	يجزي
Heal	يشافي	Turn away	يصرف	Glorify	يعز
Open	يفتح	Teach	يعلم	Succeed	ينجح
Inter	يدخل	Illuminate	ينور	Win	يفوز
Give off	يخرج	Save	يحفظ	Provide	يزود
Multiply	يكثر	Improve	يحسن	Help	ايوفق
Direct	يوجه	Lengthen	يطيل	Guide	يسدد
Grant	يمنح	Increase	يزيد	Thank	يشكر
Forgive	يعفو	Write	يكتب	Simplify	يبسط

Let us consider, for instance, extract (9) which is reported by Rachid Wadia in (Morrow 2006:84–85). it is a conversation in a vegetable sūq in Settāt, Morocco. It shows the ubiquity of Allāh expressions with different meanings and functions.

### Extract (9): vegetable sūq

- Buyer: كم البطاطا  
Kam al-batātā?  
How much are the potatoes?
- Seller: توكل على الله  
Twakkal 'alā Allāh.

You put your faith in Allāh. [Meaning: offer me a price]

3. Buyer: درهمين للكيلو

Dirhamein b'kilo.  
Two dirhams a kilo.

4. Seller: الله يجلب راس المال

Allāh yjīb rās al-māl.  
"May Allāh bring my expenses." [Meaning: at this price, I can't recoup my cost]

5. Buyer: الله يهديك، الله يجعل البركة

Allāh yahdīk. Allāh yaj 'al al-bāraka.  
"May Allāh direct you, Allāh provides enough."  
[Meaning: Oh, come on, Allāh provides.]

6. Seller: الله يهدينا كاملين، ولكن والله ما وصلت راس المال

Allāh yahdina kāmlīn, wa lakin, wallāh ma wasalt hta rās al-māl.

"May Allāh direct us all, but by Allāh, you didn't even reach my expenses" [Meaning: Your price is far too low.]

As it is obvious that the word 'Allāh' has been added to a number of verbs to form expressions that serve different meanings and various functions. In other terms, speakers can formulate many expressions in their formal and informal day-to-day interaction to achieve some conversational purposes.

In a short conversation between a seller and buyer at the vegetable market, four expressions are spontaneously formulated and employed. They are: put your faith in Allāh, May Allāh bring, May Allāh direct you and Allāh provides. They occur in a form of a reciprocal invocation between the co-participants but they, at the same time, convey different meaning other than the apparent ones as they are clearly explained in the extract (9). Thus, by adding the word Allāh to some verbs, we may obtain new expressions that can serve some important interactional purposes

#### CONCLUSION

Allāh expressions are not only a combination of words grouped together, rather they have strategic functions. They are used as quintessential speech formulas and standard recipes for achieving certain interactional purposes.

The analysis of Allāh expressions has demonstrated that Insha'Allāh 'God willing' and its cognates are not only expressions of invocation and praise to Allāh. Rather, they can also be conceived as effective tools to achieve certain conversational purposes. They are used as devices to hold the floor and continue turns in interaction; and as signals for closing turns and shifting topics where a speakership change is possible.

The analysis has also revealed that the frequent use of Allāh expressions in different positions of speakers' turns provides them with the possibility to serve various functions. In other words, they appear as multifunction devices used to build, hold or close turns. They are used as a transition word to build up an extended turn, or a floor holding device deployed to keep going

on in interaction, or even a signal to express a desire to close a turn and hand over the floor to a co-participant.

Another significant point to be considered here that Allāh lexicon is not confined to a limited number of expressions, but rather many other expressions can be formulated by adding the word Allāh to unlimited number of verbs that can be employed to serve various functions according to the situation they occur in.

#### APPENDIX 1

##### Primary Sources

- Sadaalmalaeb an interview with Al-Hilal football Player Ahmed Ashraf, [https:// www.mbc.net/](https://www.mbc.net/) 14.2.2019
- Al-Sharqiya tube channel. Interviews with Iraqi National team players after winning china 3-1 <https://www.youtube.com/user/SharqiyaTube> 15.3.2019
- ON Sport HD channel, an interviews with Ahmed Ali Al-Moqaweloon player [https://aflam 4you.tv/on-sportlive\\_212.html](https://aflam4you.tv/on-sportlive_212.html) 10.3.2019
- Hia Magazine.com. interviews with gusts Dubai Film Festival [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCI7k SseW3LkOCS7ldPOvPjg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCI7kSseW3LkOCS7ldPOvPjg) 10.3.2019

#### APPENDIX 2

##### Transcription Notation

The transcription conventions used in the transcriptions are as follows:

- [word the brackets on the left indicate the starting point of overlap
- word] the right-side brackets indicate the termination of overlapping
- = equal signs indicate latching between utterances
- (1.0) numbers in parenthesis indicate the interval in tenths of seconds
- (.) a full stop in parenthesis indicates a micro-pause, usually shorter than two tenths of a second
- °word° the degree signs indicate that the word or phrase are pronounced quieter than the surrounding speech
- >word< the utterance or its part is pronounced in quicker pace than the surrounding speech
- < word > the utterance or its part is pronounced in slower pace than the surrounding speech
- WORD word in the upper case indicates that word was pronounced exclusively louder than normal utterance
- (( )) Observer note
- wo:rd/word: colon after a vowel or a consonant indicates the prolongation of utterance
- word underlined word or syllable indicates that it is accentuated by the speaker
- hh an inbreath
- (word) words or phrases in parenthesis are dubious
- Word translation in English

Word	word in bold indicates the occurrence of
(x)	the analyzed Expressions inaccessible word by the observer , the number of “x” signs corresponds to the number of syllables
↑	rising pitch
↓	falling pitch
IR	the interviewer
IEE	the interviewee
* *	stars delimitate the gaze direction to the interviewer

Wierzbick, A. (2007). “Reasonably well: Natural Semantic Metalanguage as a tool for the study of phraseology and its cultural understandings”. In P. Skandera. (Ed.), *Topics in English Linguistics: Phraseology and Culture in English*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter..

#### REFERENCES

- Abboud, F. (1988). “Speech and religious affiliation in Egypt”. In Mohammad Ali Jazayery and Walter Winter (eds.), *Languages & cultures: Studies in honour of Edgar C. Polomé*, 21–27. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Abdullah Yusuf Ali (n.d). English translation of Quran. <http://search-the-quran.com/search/Surah+Al-Fatiha/8> 21.2.2019
- Castleton, Barbara (2006). “Frequency and function of religiously-based expressions”. In J. A. Morrow (ed.), *Arabic, Islam and the Allāh lexicon: How language shapes our conception of God*, 71–115. Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press.
- Clift, R. & F. Helani (2010). “InshAllāh : Religious invocations in Arabic topic transition”. *Language in Society*, 39, p. 357-382, doi:10.1017/S0047404510000199.
- Coulthard, M. (1977). *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis*. London: Longman.
- Ferguson, Charles A. (1983). God-wishes in Syrian Arabic. *Mediterranean Language Review* 1:65–83.
- Gilsenan, Michael (1983). *Recognizing Islam: Religion and society in the modern Arab world*. Pantheon.
- Heritage, J. (2011). “Conversation Analysis: Practices and Methods”. In D. Silverman (Ed.), *Qualitative Research 3rd Edition*. London: SAGE .
- Hudson, R. A. (1996). *Sociolinguistics 2nd edition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hutchby, I. & R. Wooffitt (2008). *Conversation Analysis 2nd edition*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Jefferson, G. (2004). “Glossary of transcript symbols with an introduction”. In G. H.Lerner (Ed.), *Conversation Analysis: Studies from the first generation*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins, p.13-23.
- Masliyah, S. (1999). “A Cross-Cultural Misunderstanding: The Case of the Arabic Expression InshAllāh ‘If God Wills’”. In L. Woytak (Ed.), *Dialog on Language Instruction Vol. 13 No. 1 & 2*, p. 97-116.
- Morrow, J. & B. Castleton (2007). “The Impact of Globalization on the Arabic Language”. *Intercultural Communication Studies XVI*, No. 2, p. 202-212.
- Nawawi, Yahya bin Sharaf ( ). 40 Hadith Nawawi. Eds. Awareness group in Zulfi. KSA. <https://sunnah.com/nawawi40/19.20/2/2019>
- Pawley, A. (2007). “Development in the study of formulaic language since 1970: a personal view”. In P. Skandera (Ed.), *Topics in English Linguistics: Phraseology and Culture in English*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Piamenta, Moshe (1979). *Islam in everyday Arabic speech*. Leiden: E.J. Brill.
- (1983). *The Muslim conception of God and human welfare: As reflected in everyday Arabic speech*. Leiden: E.J. Brill.
- Sidnell, Jack (2009). *Conversation Analysis: Comparative Perspectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2009.
- Strakšiene, M. (2009). “Analysis of Idiom Translation Strategies from English into Lithuanian”. *STUDIES ABOUT LANGUAGES*. 2009. No. 14, p. 13-19 ISSN 16482824.<http://archive.minfolit.lt/arch/22001/22101.pdf> (2019.01.12)