

Cultural Courtesies: Decoding Politeness Formulas in the Aseer Dialect of Arabic

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المخلص

تحلّل هذه الدراسة عبارات اللطف والمداراة في لهجة منطقة عسير باستخدام نظرية الاستعارة المفاهيمية وفرضية التجسيد كإطارين نظريين. تضمنت الدراسة تحليل 300 عبارة، منها 210 عبارة متعلقة بأجزاء الجسم و90 عبارة مرتبطة بالتوضحية والتفاني والولاء. وأوضحت الدراسة معاني هذه العبارات والطريقة التي وظّف بها متحدثي هذه اللهجة الاستعارات والتجسيد للتعبير عن أفكار مجردة كالحب والاحترام والتقدير والتلطف. كما أوضحت الدراسة التوافق الثقافي لهذه الصيغ واتساقها مع القيم الاجتماعية في مساهمة للحفاظ على التراث الشفهي في منطقة عسير. كما عززت نتائج الدراسة فهمنا لصيغ اللطف وفتحت الطريق للمقارنات بين اللهجات واللغات وتطبيقاتها في مجالات متنوعة مثل اللغويات الإدراكية والدراسات الأثنوجرافية ورسم الخرائط الدلالية.



Abstract

This study analyzes politeness formulas within the Aseer dialect of Arabic, employing Conceptual Metaphor Theory and the Embodiment Hypothesis as theoretical frameworks. With a dataset encompassing a total of 300 formulas, comprising 210 related to body parts and 90 linked to devotion formulas, the research unravel the conceptual metaphors and metonymies inherent in these expressions. The study elucidates the cultural alignment of these formulas and their consistency with societal norms, contributing to the preservation of oral heritage in the Aseer region. The findings highlight how human beings utilize metaphor metonymy to embody abstract ideas, emphasizing the cultural significance of these politeness formulas and their connection to the physical and cultural experiences of the Aseer community. The outcomes of the study do not only enhance our understanding of politeness formulas but also pave the way for cross-dialect and cross-linguistic comparisons and applications in various fields, such as cross-cultural pragmatics, ethnographic studies, semantic mapping, and cultural preservation.

Keywords: *Aseer; dialect; embodiment; metaphor; politeness*

Introduction

Politeness is a fundamental aspect of human communication, reflecting the intricate interplay between language, culture, and social dynamics. This research embarks on an exploration of politeness formulas employed by speakers of the Aseer dialect of Arabic. The Aseer dialect of Arabic, primarily spoken in the southwest region of Saudi Arabia, including the mountainous area known as Sarat Aseer, offers a unique linguistic landscape for the study of politeness. The Aseer region has a long-standing tradition of linguistic richness and has, over the centuries, utilized language to convey distinct values and identities. This oral tradition, significantly influenced by the historical context and cultural heritage of the region, serves as an indispensable resource for understanding the intricate dynamics of politeness in this society (Mattson, 2012). From ancient times, Arab tribes on the Arabian Peninsula have employed language to celebrate qualities such as honor, generosity, and courage, often expressed through poetry. These linguistic embellishments continue to play a pivotal role in conveying social and affective messages in the speech community of Aseer region.

Furthermore, the role of religion in shaping politeness expressions in the Aseer dialect is of paramount importance. The Holy Quran, with its divine sophistication, style, and aesthetics, has significantly influenced the linguistic traditions (Donner, 2010). This influence is apparent in the politeness formulas analyzed in this work. The Quranic verses, interwoven into the daily lives of people, contribute to the rich tapestry of expressions utilized for politeness (Nazzal, 2005). The focus on politeness expressions in the Aseer dialect is not only a linguistic exploration but also a cultural and sociolinguistic inquiry. These politeness formulas, deeply rooted in the Aseer society, serve as a fundamental sociolinguistic element of communication within this community. They offer valuable insights into how cultural values, linguistic nuances, and the particularities of Aseer region shape politeness. These expressions hold a special place in everyday conversations, revealing their ubiquity in the linguistic repertoire of the Aseer people. Moreover, these expressions underscore the interplay between culture and language, reflecting the complex relationships among language, identity, and social practices in the region.

This work delves into the study of metaphor and metonymy within the politeness formulas. Although prior research has extensively addressed the translatability of metaphors and idioms, such studies primarily concentrated on literary genres (e.g. Al-Harrasi, 2001; Awwad, 1990; Farghal & Ahmed, 2001; Menacere, 1992; Merakchi & Rogers, 2013), figuration in masterpieces (e.g., Abu Libdeh, 2011; Maroth, 2002; Simawe, 2001) and translation issues (e.g. Al Salem 2014; Zahid 2020). Notably, everyday conversational utterances, particularly those related to politeness, have received less attention in this regard. Therefore, this study bridges the gap by investigating the metaphor and metonymy within the politeness formulas that are deeply embedded in the Aseer dialect. Another research gap pertains to the limited exploration of pragmatics within the Aseer dialect of Arabic. While variational pragmatics has successfully highlighted variations across different pluricentric languages, such as the distinctions between Irish English and British English (Barron, 2017) and Egyptian Arabic and Saudi Arabic (El-Dakhs, 2021), there is a notable absence of similar research focusing on the Aseer variety of Arabic. This research will aim to address this gap by delving into the politeness formulas in the Aseer dialect, contributing to the broader field of variational pragmatics.

The following parts begin with an introduction to the Aseer dialect of Arabic, followed by a historical overview of politeness, an examination of the relationship between politeness and idiomatic expressions, a discussion of politeness practices in the Arab world and specifically in Saudi Arabia. The paper then outlines the scope of the study, the methodology used, and concludes with a detailed discussion of the findings and their implications.

Aseer Dialect of Arabic

Saudi Arabia, a vast country in the south west of Asia, is divided into five main regions: northern, southern, eastern, western, and central (Najd). Each region has unique geographical features, with the central and northern areas comprising vast deserts, the eastern and western regions being coastal, and the southern region characterized by mountains. This diversity in topography also influences the cultural and linguistic differences in the country. Dialects in Saudi Arabia exhibit what linguists Chambers and Trudgill (1998) call geographical dialect continua. As one moves away from a specific location, the linguistic differences between two areas become more pronounced. Therefore, many southern dialects in the Aseer region can be challenging for speakers of other Saudi dialects to understand due to the rugged topography and historical isolation. However, the dialects spoken in highland villages and cities of Aseer tend to be mutually intelligible with other Saudi dialects. As one moves towards the lowlands, such as Arabic Tihamah, the dialects become less intelligible (Alqahtani, 2015).

Several studies have provided descriptions of various Saudi dialects. For instance, Prochazka (1988) covers a wide range of dialects from all regions. Ingham's work (1994 and 2013) provides detailed descriptions of Najdi dialects. Abboud (1979) focuses on the morphology of the Hāyili dialect in the north of Najd, while Ingham (1971) describes the Hījāzi dialect of Mecca. However, detailed studies of the dialects spoken in the southern region, particularly in Aseer, are relatively scarce. Al-Shahrani (1988) offered a description and analysis of the phonological system of the Shahrani tribe's speech in the southern region of Aseer. Similarly, Nakshabandi (1988) provided a depiction of the morphology and phonology system of the Arabic dialect spoken in Abha, the administrative capital of the southern province, while Al-Azraqi's (1998) study focused on describing its syntactic system.

Interestingly, unlike other Arab countries with prominent local dialects functioning as standard varieties, Saudi Arabia lacks a unified "standard Saudi dialect." While some initially believed the Najdi variety spoken in Riyadh could serve as a standard, more recent investigations in the western province have shown the emergence of separate regional standards, notably based on the koineised dialect of Jeddah (Alqahtani, 2015). Given the mentioned dialectical situation in Saudi Arabia, it is essential to highlight that this research specifically concentrates on studying politeness formulas in the Aseer dialect which is spoken in the highlands of the Aseer region, Sarat Aseer. This focus allows for a more detailed and targeted analysis of politeness phenomena in a specific linguistic context.

Literature Review

Politeness History

Research on linguistic politeness started with Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle (CP). The principle suggests that in conversation, people are generally expected to cooperate with one another to achieve shared communicative goals. CP consists of four maxims: quality, quantity, relevance and manner. Although Grice's model does not explicitly address politeness, it laid the groundwork for subsequent research, including that of Leech (1983). Leech proposed two rules of Pragmatic Competence (PC), be clear and be polite, where politeness is considered a universal construct.

Another significant contribution to politeness research is Politeness Theory (PT) by Brown and Levinson (1987). Although PT was initially introduced in 1978, it underwent revisions before its widely cited work was published in 1987. PT centers around the concept of face, which refers to the desire to be respected and not offended. It encompasses both negative face which means the desire for autonomy and not being imposed upon, and positive face which refers to the desire to be liked and admired by others. PT suggests that in communication, face wants of both the speaker and the hearer can be challenged by Face Threatening Acts (FTAs). FTAs are communicative behaviors or actions that have the potential to damage an individual's positive or negative face. In the context of politeness theory, FTAs are situations where the speaker's message might impose on the hearer's desire for social approval, positive face, or autonomy, negative face.

To mitigate the potential face threat, people employ various politeness strategies to lessen the impact of the act. Brown and Levinson (1987) identified five types of strategies: negative politeness, which shows deference to avoid offense; positive politeness, which highlights friendliness and solidarity; bald-on-record, which involves being direct and not using any politeness markers; off-record, which hints at a request without making it explicit; and do not do the FTA strategy, which avoids causing any offense at all. Among these strategies, politeness formulas are often utilized in positive politeness to maintain positive face and convey admiration.

Critics of Politeness Theory, such as Mills (2003) and Locher and Watts (2005), have challenged its universality claim. They advocate for a more localized investigation of politeness. However, despite this criticism, Politeness Theory remains a valuable lens through which to gain insights into the Arab politeness. Within the Arab context, the concept of "face" is of paramount importance, symbolizing an individual's aspiration for respect, esteem, and the avoidance of offense during social interactions. This critique highlights the need for a nuanced understanding of politeness, which, in turn, underscores the significance of the insights of Politeness Theory in this study.

As a sign of the importance of face in the Arab culture, the saying *احفظ ماء وجهك* which literally translates to keep your face water preserved and idiomatically means preserve your dignity, holds cultural value. This traditional phrase emphasizes the need to uphold one's self-respect, honor, and reputation, while avoiding embarrassment or humiliation. It serves as a reminder to individuals to protect their status and integrity, refusing to let others negatively impact them. Wisely and judiciously navigating various situations is encouraged to maintain a

favorable position and earn the respect of others. Politeness Theory (PT) is in harmony with this cultural emphasis on preserving dignity and honor during communication, making it essential to grasp face wants for effective interactions in Arab societies, where fostering harmonious relationships and avoiding conflicts are primary objectives (Almusallam, 2022).

Furthermore, PT integrates the concept of "face" with negative and positive politeness strategies, even though it does not explicitly address politeness formulas. In Arab culture, linguistic forms and politeness formulas play a vital role in communication, enabling individuals to navigate social hierarchies, show deference, and uphold harmonious relationships (Samarah, 2015). Given that Arab societies often have well-defined social hierarchies and power dynamics, PT's recognition of negative politeness strategies, involving deference and respect, aligns with cultural norms, particularly when addressing individuals of higher social status using appropriate honorifics and linguistic expressions (Ameri et al., 2023).

Politeness and Idiomaticity

To comprehend the idiomatic nature of politeness formulas, Coulmas (1979) introduced the concept of Routine Formulas (RFs), expressions recurrently used in specific social situations. These RFs, highly idiomatic and contextually bound, are pragmatically conditioned and reveal cultural values. Therefore, considering context and shared cultural and linguistic knowledge between speakers and addressees is essential to gain a comprehensive grasp of politeness formulas.

Schlund (2014) further emphasized the importance of analyzing politeness formulas on a macro-level, combining pragmatic, semantic, and formal elements, which offers insights into the cultural value systems attached to these expressions. Additionally, research by Buckingham (2006) on idioms in general highlighted the presence of shared cognitive metaphors underlying idiomatic expressions, leading to cross-linguistic commonalities in their interpretation. In addition, shared frames between speakers and addressees, as highlighted by Kiefer (1996), contribute to successful communication of idiomatic utterances, such as politeness formulas, within a given cultural context.

The literature reviewed above showed that context, cultural values, social norms and shared frames shape our perception of politeness. Previous research has addressed these aspects separately, but the current study seeks to enrich the comprehension of politeness formulas in the Aseer dialect of Arabic by considering figuration in linguistic behavior. Through analyzing politeness formulas within the broader cultural context, this research aims to reveal the profound implications and functions embedded in these formulas, bridging the gap between politeness and idiomaticity.

Politeness in the Arab World

The study of politeness in the Arab world has attracted considerable attention. Several studies have contributed into the intricacies of politeness formulas used in spoken Arabic. Among these works is Ferguson's research (1976, 1983) which stands out as a landmark study. His comprehensive analysis of politeness formulas in Levantine Arabic provided a foundation for understanding similar expressions in other Arabic dialects.

Ferguson's research emphasized the significance of root-echoing formulas and God wishes in politeness expressions. Root-echoing formulas are pairs or clusters of initiator-

response expressions where the response echoes a triconsonantal root present in the initiator as in the root, like b r k, which is echoed in the response as in:

Initiator: مبروك Mabrook (congratulations)

Response: الله يبارك فيك Allah ybark feek (Thank you)

In addition, Ferguson (1976) argued that God wishes formulas are employed in various contexts by both Muslim and Christian Arabs, regardless of their religious background. God wishes refers to any expression that includes a supplication of God, incorporating either His name or one of His names, whether explicitly or implicitly. Applying Ferguson's insights to the Aseer dialect of Arabic is applicable given that both Syria, where Ferguson conducted his research, and Saudi Arabia speak Arabic. Additionally, both countries share the same religious background as Muslims and have an abundance of God wishes formulas.

Apart from Syrian Arabic, several researchers have investigated politeness in Jordanian Arabic. Al-Adaileh (2007) conducted an experimental study comparing politeness orientations in British and Jordanian cultures, revealing differences in apology strategies. Daoud (2017) studied politeness formulas in spoken Jordanian Arabic and investigated two key features of these idioms: figuration and traces of religious texts. The main objectives are to explore the conceptual metaphors within these idioms, demonstrating their coherence with cultural values, and to identify echoes of religious discourse in the discussed formulas. Daoud's study sheds light on the conceptual metaphors and religious influences present in politeness expressions, which is relevant to the Saudi context as well.

Sadiq (2022) studied blessings formulas in Egyptian Arabic revealing how these expressions have evolved to serve various pragmatic functions. This research offers insights to exploring politeness formulas in the Aseer dialect of Arabic, particularly regarding their pragmatic usage. However, further research specific to the Aseer dialect is needed for direct comparisons. Other works have also contributed to the understanding of politeness formulas in Arabic. Howwar (2013) explored the translatability of idioms in Arabic compared to English, emphasizing the importance of equivalence as a translation strategy for idioms. Alaoui (2011) analyzed requests, offers, and thanks in Moroccan Arabic and English. Piamenta (1979) compiled data on stereotyped formulas used in various Arabic dialects, including Levantine Arabic, highlighting their usage in daily speech and religious contexts. Although these studies offer valuable insights, they do not specifically address politeness formulas as their primary focus.

Politeness in Saudi Arabia

In the Saudi Arabian context, several researchers have explored various aspects of politeness, shedding light on requests (Alageel, 2016), compliments (Alamro, 2013), (im)politeness (Alqarni, 2020; Alshammari, 2020), refusal strategies (Alateeq, 2016), direct speech acts (Alfaleh, 2019), invitations (Alfalig, 2016), greetings (Turjoman, 2005), complaints (Alenzi, 2019; Alfadda, 2019) and online communication among young adults (Zamakhshari, 2018). These studies shed light on how politeness is expressed and understood within the cultural norms of Saudi Arabia. Alageel (2016) focused on the requesting behavior of Saudi Arabian women in contemporary Arabic-speaking situations, delving into the strategies they use and their cultural implications, shedding light on how politeness is manifested in gender-specific contexts within Saudi society. In another study, Alamro (2013)

examined compliment behavior in Saudi Arabic, providing valuable insights into how compliments are given and received in Najdi Saudi Arabic, crucial for understanding the expression of positive sentiments in the culture.

Refusal strategies were explored by Alateeq (2016). The study shed light on how individuals navigate delicate situations while maintaining politeness in Saudi Arabian social settings. Understanding these strategies is valuable for effective communication and interaction within the Saudi cultural context. Additionally, Alenzi (2019) investigated online politeness and identity construction of young Saudi adults, exploring how they construct their identity through online communication and express politeness in virtual spaces, providing insights into the interplay between politeness, identity, and modern communication platforms.

Furthermore, Alfaleh (2019) examined direct speech acts in communication between Saudi Arabian family members, contributing to our understanding of politeness within intimate relationships in Saudi culture. Zamakhshari (2018) delved into the intricacies of identity, gender, and (im)politeness in Twitter interactions concerning women driving in Saudi Arabia, showcasing how gender-related issues are negotiated in online spaces and how politeness plays a role in expressing opinions and attitudes. In the study conducted by Turjoman (2005), an in-depth examination of Saudi gender differences in greetings and leave-takings was undertaken. This research brought to light the cultural intricacies embedded in politeness practices during routine interactions, thereby enhancing our understanding of the prevailing cultural norms within Saudi Arabian society.

In Alqarni's (2020) study within the Aseer region, the focus was on mock impoliteness, specifically in the context of evil eye expressive and responsive strategies within the Bani Buhair tribe. The study revealed that the concept of evil eye was not a random occurrence but followed a structured protocol. Buhairi eyers employed various linguistic strategies, such as similes, metaphors, questions, and negation, in performing the evil eye, while recipients responded with revengeful expressions, religious supplications, complaints, or threats. The uniqueness of this study lies in its exploration of a specific cultural phenomenon, evil eye, as a form of mock impoliteness. Unlike traditional politeness or impoliteness models, such as those proposed by Leech (1983) or Brown and Levinson (1987), Alqarni places evil eye within Haugh and Bousfield's (2012) framework of mock impoliteness. This departure from conventional models offers a distinctive perspective on the nature of evil eye as a non-impolite speech act. In contrast, our study delves into politeness formulas within the broader Aseer dialect and contributes to the understanding of politeness formulas in everyday conversations.

The study on decoding politeness formulas in the Aseer dialect of Arabic addresses a gap in the existing literature by specifically exploring the cultural nuances of politeness formulas in the Aseer region. With the Aseer region being known for its touristic nature and commitment to preserving nature and culture, the Aseer dialect of Arabic holds a crucial position as one of the pillars of the local culture. Understanding politeness formulas in this dialect is essential for facilitating effective communication and fostering mutual understanding between tourists and locals, thereby enriching their interactions with the local community.

Language, Thoughts and Body Parts

Our exploration of politeness formulas in the Aseer dialect is grounded in Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) and the Embodiment Hypothesis, offering a robust theoretical

foundation. CMT, developed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), conceptualizes metaphors as essential structures that shape thought, extending beyond mere linguistic tools. As politeness formulas often involve abstract concepts such as respect, sympathy, and love, the application of figurative language, metaphor, and metonymy in our dataset aligns seamlessly with CMT. The Embodiment Hypothesis, an extension of CMT challenging the conventional belief that cognition is detached from the body (Pelkey, 2023), emphasizes the close connection between language and bodily experiences. Studies by Huisman et al. (2021) and Devylder et al. (2020) underscore this connection, challenging the notion of a universal, shared bodily experience across languages.

Heine's "structural template" (1997) and Pelkey's cross-linguistic evidence (2017, 2018) indicating systematic organization reveal consistent patterns in body part relations across linguistic variations. Basso (1992) illustrates linguistic diversity through Western Apache, where the mapping of bodily concepts onto automobile meronymy unfolds across three levels: the overarching category of "body," which encompasses all general parts; the category of "face," which includes the "hood" and "windshield"; and the category of "innards," encompassing everything beneath the hood. Within this linguistic framework, the car's hood is metaphorically equated to the "nose," the windshield to the "forehead," headlights to "eyes," front wheels to "arm/hands," rear wheels to "leg/feet," electrical wiring to "veins," battery to "liver," and the gas tank to the "stomach.". Inspired by this linguistic diversity, our parallel investigation into the Aseer dialect aims to explore how politeness formulas integrate body parts into linguistic expressions.

Lakoff (1987) and Barsalou's (1999, 2003) work emphasizes the integration of bodily experiences into cognitive categorization, highlighting the unity between perception and conception. These theories provide a theoretical background for understanding how the body, through metaphorical language, shapes the conceptualization of politeness in the Aseer dialect. This study builds upon these foundational theories, utilizing their insights to unveil the intricate layers of meaning and cultural values embedded in politeness formulas within the Aseer dialect. Additionally, Pelkey's recent work (2023) on embodiment and language contributes to contextualizing our analysis within the broader discourse on the relationship between language and the embodied mind.

Scope of the Study

The research concentrates on verbal politeness formulas in the Aseer dialect of Arabic. These formulas, crucial for maintaining face wants amid potential Face Threatening Acts (FTAs), have stable roots, serving pragmatic goals. The research delves into how Aseer Arabic speakers utilize metaphor and metonymy in these politeness formulas. The study aims to contribute to the understanding of politeness in Arabic, particularly focusing on the understudied realm of figures of speech in politeness formulas, addressing this gap through the following research questions:

1. How do speakers of the Aseer dialect employ metaphor and metonymy in the construction of politeness formulas?
2. What underlying concepts are represented by the tropes used in politeness formulas in the Aseer dialect of Arabic? How do these concepts relate to the cultural values of the speech community?

3. Are there any discernible patterns or characteristics in the genre of politeness formulas in the Aseer dialect of Arabic?

Methodology

To address the research questions, the researcher adopted a qualitative analysis approach to the data. She thoroughly examined politeness formulas that incorporate figurative language, focusing on their lexical constituents and semantic properties, particularly in the context in which they are commonly used. Moreover, the researcher referenced the Cognitive Metaphor Theory by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) to identify which cultural values align with the metaphorical system reflected in the dataset under investigation. In addition, the researcher engaged in discussions about the conversational functions of these expressions, aiming to uncover as much sociolinguistic information encoded in them as possible. This comprehensive analysis allows for a deeper understanding of the significance and cultural implications of these politeness expressions in the context of the Aseer dialect of Arabic.

The data of the present study was collected from two sources: naturally occurring data and introspection. Collecting naturally occurring data is regarded as a highly recommended method in linguistic research (Wolfson, 1981). It allows for spontaneous interactions in real-life situations, providing authentic insights into speakers' actual expressions and reactions to natural contexts (Cohen, 1996). However, this method also presents some challenges, such as the infrequency of specific speech acts in natural settings, difficulty in controlling variables, time-consuming data collection and analysis, and potential intrusion on demotic communication when using recording equipment or relying on note-taking (Cohen, 1996).

Considering the benefits of collecting naturally occurring data for linguistic research, the researcher chose to use naturally occurring interactions as a primary data source for the research. To address the difficulties of recording interactions, she employed Grainger's (2011) log-book method. Whenever she encountered relevant incidents during conversations, she promptly documented them in a log book to preserve the accuracy of sequencing and content.

As a native speaker of the Aseer dialect of Arabic and deeply familiar with the cultural nuances, the researcher contributed additional formulas to the data based on her intuition and language knowledge. Given that some expressions are used in very specific occasions not fully covered by naturally occurring data, the researcher's experiences and sensibilities as a native speaker served as a valuable complementary resource. The researcher aligned with Lakoff's (1973) perspective on sociolinguistic data, endorsing introspection as a reliable method for data collection and analysis. While some may argue that other data-gathering techniques are more error-proof, any data collection ultimately involves some level of introspection (Sapsford and Jupp, 1996).

For this research, introspection is especially suitable as the aim is to explore the internal semantic and lexical components of the politeness formulas, rather than examining external variables that may influence their use. To assess its reliability, the researcher observed that her own usage of formulas aligned with that of other native speakers in corresponding contexts, providing further confidence in the effectiveness of introspection for research purposes. By combining naturally occurring data with introspection, this study has a dataset of 300 politeness

formulas giving a comprehensive understanding of politeness formulas and enriching the cultural aspects of polite discourse.

Analysis

In this analysis section, our detailed investigation delves into politeness formulas within the Aseer dialect of Arabic, aiming to unravel the complex relationship between metaphorical expressions, cultural values, and politeness. Guided by Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory and the Embodiment Hypothesis, our exploration employs these theoretical frameworks to comprehensively examine how speakers of the Aseer dialect employ metaphor and metonymy in crafting politeness formulas. Our dual theoretical framework aims to unveil the layers of meaning behind politeness formulas in the Aseer dialect, contributing to a deeper understanding of the intricate dynamics between linguistic choices, cultural nuances, and the expression of politeness.

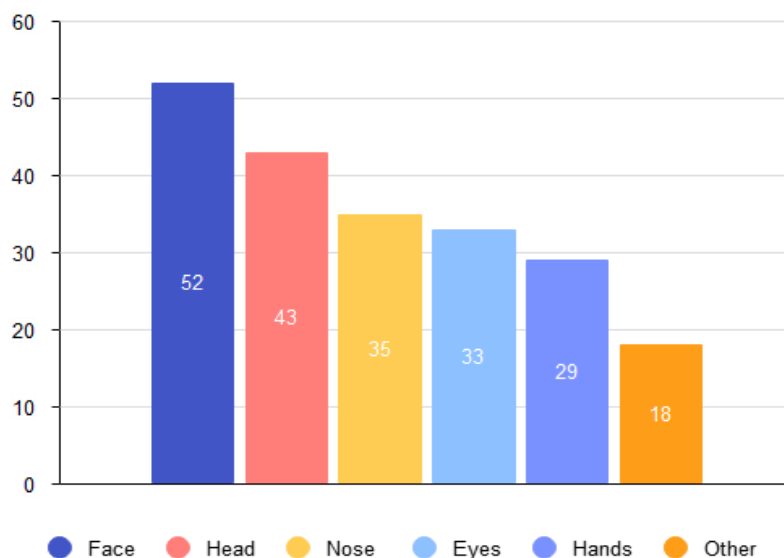
The analysis commenced with a dataset comprising 300 politeness formulas. The initial step involved classifying these formulas into two primary categories: body parts politeness formulas and devotion politeness formulas. Within the body part politeness formulas category, a detailed examination was conducted on a total of 210 expressions. This subset encompasses various body parts, including the eye, head, mind, hand, tongue, nose, face, mouth, forehead, neck, eyebrows, beard, mustache, hair, and hands. Notably, the most frequently occurring body parts in the dataset were the face, head, nose, eyes, and hands. The remaining 90 politeness formulas were associated with devotion. The devotion formulas were further categorized into two major themes: death and pain, with 50 formulas related to death and 40 related to pain.

Body Parts Politeness Formulas

In this section, we will elucidate how speakers of the Aseer dialect of Arabic employed body parts in formulating politeness expressions. The analysis reveals that the most frequently utilized body parts in these formulas are the face, head, nose, eyes, and hands, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Classification of Body-part Politeness Formulas



Face

In the Aseer dialect of Arabic, the concept of 'face' forms the basis of Politeness Theory, as first proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). Protecting one's 'face' and not threatening the 'face' of others is perceived to trigger politeness behavior. The term 'face' is metaphorical and refers to a person's willingness to be appreciated (positive face) and to avoid offense (negative face). Brown and Levinson (1987) asserted the universality of this concept by using 'face' as a foundation for their theory.

The majority of politeness formulas in our dataset are related to the concept of the face. The data includes 52 politeness formulas specifically associated with the face. Table 1 presents some of the politeness formulas found in the dataset, along with two additional examples of impoliteness formulas from outside the dataset, providing further insight into the concept of the face in the Aseer dialect.

Table 1

Face Expressions

| Face Expression | IPA Transcription | Literal Meaning | Actual Meaning |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| بَيِّضُ اللهُ وَجْهَكَ | /bajjad ʔalla wadʒhak/ | May God whiten your face | Good job |
| أَبْيَضُ وَجْه | /ʔabjad wadʒh/ | You have a white face | You are virtuous |
| وَجْهَكَ فَالْخَيْرِ عَلَيْنَا | /wadʒhk fa:l xajr ʕaleina/ | Your face brings good luck | You are auspicious |
| سَوَّدَ اللهُ وَجْهَكَ | /sawwad ʔalla wadʒhak/ | May God blacken your face | An offensive insult for wrongdoings |
| أَسْوَدُ وَجْه | /ʔaswad wadʒh/ | You have a black face | You are disrespectful |

Face expressions are commonly used to compliment, praise, or show politeness (Elarbi, 1997). An example is the phrase: "بَيِّضُ اللهُ وَجْهَكَ," which literally translates to "May God whiten your face." This expression is employed to show admiration for someone's accomplishments or good deeds. Related expressions are: "أَبْيَضُ وَجْه" meaning "You have a white face". This expression means that you are known for always doing good deeds.

Moreover, within Aseer culture, the symbolism of the 'face' as a harbinger of blessings and good fortune aligns with the concept of chained conceptual metonymy elucidated by Hilpert (2010). This chained metonymy involves the use of "face" to represent the entire person or physical presence, creating a metaphorical extension to convey the significance of one's being. A notable expression embodying this cultural understanding is "وَجْهَكَ فَالْخَيْرِ عَلَيْنَا," where the term "face" encapsulates a broader meaning. Drawing on Lakoff's theory of conceptual metaphors (1987), the phrase transcends a mere description of physical appearance, becoming a profound acknowledgment of gratitude for the individual's presence. This utilization of metonymy and metaphor not only reflects linguistic intricacies but also mirrors the rich cultural tapestry within the Aseer dialect.

Conversely, the Aseer dialect of Arabic also employs 'face' expressions that are intimidating, impolite, or cursing. For instance, "سَوِّدَ اللهُ وَجْهَكَ" means "May God blacken your face," expressing indignity for wrongdoings. Describing someone with the expression "أسود وجه" meaning "You have a black face" entails that you have a reputation of engaging in wrongful actions and consistently make poor choices.

The metaphorical utilization of the term 'face' in the Aseer dialect serves as a linguistic manifestation of the culture's deeply rooted values and beliefs. Grounded in Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory and the Embodiment Hypothesis, this analysis explores the interplay between language and culture. The metaphorical extension of 'face' involves conceptual mechanisms that illustrate how the physicality of the face extends to embody broader concepts related to values and blessings. This perspective emphasizes the inseparable connection between the body and linguistic expressions, providing an understanding of how cultural values become intricately embedded in the metaphorical use of 'face' within the Aseer dialect.

Head

The politeness formulas in the Aseer dialect of Arabic provide support for Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) hypothesis that our biological bodily realities influence the way we use body part metonymies and metaphors. For example, the term "head" holds significance as it is positioned at the top of our body, housing the brain that controls every process and decision we make. This is akin to how someone described as "head of the group" is perceived as the one who controls and makes decisions for the group, mirroring the role of the biological head. Similar uses of the term "head" are also found in other languages, including English. Table 2 shows some expressions related to the head in the Aseer dialect of Arabic.

Table 2
Head Expressions

| Head Expression | IPA Transcription | Literal Meaning | Actual Meaning |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| كلامك على راسي من فوق | /kalaamk ʕala raasi min fwoq/ | What you say is on the top of my head | You are absolutely right |
| والله انك ترفع الراس | /wallaahi ʔinnak tarfaʕ ar-ra's/ | You bring my head up | You make me proud and uplifted |
| قدرك على الراس | /qadrk ʕala ar-raas/ | Your value is on my head | You are highly valued |
| تاج راسي | /taaj raasi/ | You are a crown on my head | You are precious |
| نزلت راسي في الأرض | /nazalt raasi fil-ard/ | You drag my head to the ground | You undermine my dignity and self-esteem |

In Aseer dialect of Arabic, politeness formulas involving the term "head" emphasize certain semantic aspects that are not solely based on the speaker's physical experiences with the head. For instance, the conventionalized formula "على راسي" meaning "on my head" is used

to express approval of someone's request with pleasure. The concept of "head" is perceived as significant due to its association with protecting one's life, dignity, and honor. When someone says that a request is "على راسي من فوق" meaning "on the top of my head," it elevates the importance of fulfilling that request as if it were a command to be wholeheartedly committed to.

In Saudi Arabian culture, the "head" is considered a symbol of dignity and pride, which is evident in expressions like "رفعت راسي" meaning "you raised my head", a compliment bestowed upon someone for a remarkable achievement that brings pride not just to them but also to their family or tribe. This perspective aligns with the broader discourse on face and identity, as scholars like Al Musallam (2022) and Labben (2017) delve into the emic meanings of face in the Arab culture. These studies contribute to the ongoing debate on face, providing insights into the complex interplay between cultural values, identity, and the conceptualization of head in Arabic-speaking societies.

Similarly, "طاحت روسنا في الأرض," meaning "you dragged our heads to the ground," is a scolding expression that reflects the significance of the head as a locus of dignity. The orientational metaphor of UP and DOWN is prevalent in these expressions, aligning with the conceptual metaphor "status is up" proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). Within this coherent cognitive pattern, humans use to conceptualize various abstract concepts based on our physical experiences and spatial orientation. This metaphorical mapping is deeply ingrained in our language and thought processes, influencing the way we understand and communicate about emotions, social status, and moral values. Expressions like "pride is up" and "happy is up" make sense, while ones like "shame is up" would be contradictory.

The dataset revealed an occurrence of 43 instances specifically related to the head (Figure 1). This emphasis on the head in politeness formulas underscores its significant role within the cultural and linguistic fabric of the Aseer community. The prevalence of politeness formulas related to the head highlights the nuanced ways in which cultural values and bodily metaphors intricately intertwine in the linguistic expressions of respect and honor, and shed light on the specific linguistic choices that convey politeness within this unique linguistic context.

Nose

In Arabic culture, especially in Saudi society, the concept of the "nose" holds symbolic significance in certain expressions. The data includes 35 formulas related to the nose as seen in Figure 1 and Table 3 has some examples of nose expressions. One of these expressions is "على خشمي" which translates into on my nose. This expression is used when someone makes a request to another person. The response "على خشمي" is a way of expressing wholehearted willingness and eagerness to fulfill that request.

It conveys a sense of respect, hospitality, and a strong desire to assist the person making the request. The proper response to this expression in Aseer culture is either "عليه الطيب" meaning perfume is on your nose, or "عليه الشحم" meaning fats are on your nose. The two response variations illustrate the following cultural concept:

- "عليه الطيب Perfume is on your nose": This phrase metaphorically represents the idea of offering something pleasant and valuable to the person making the request. Perfume is associated with pleasant scents and luxury, and saying that "perfume is on your nose" implies that the person is being treated with something delightful and special. It reflects the host's eagerness to please and accommodate the guest's wishes.
- "عليه الشحم Fats are on your nose": This phrase has its roots in traditional hospitality practices, particularly in Bedouin cultures where food resources are scarce. Offering someone the fats of a slaughtered animal is a generous gesture, as it signifies providing the best and most valuable part of the meal. This polite response entails that the host is emphasizing their commitment to providing the guest with the finest hospitality, even if it requires sacrificing something valuable. It underscores the importance of generosity and taking care of the guest's needs.

Both variations of the response convey a deep sense of respect, honor, and the willingness to go above and beyond to fulfill the request. They highlight the cultural values of hospitality, kindness, and consideration for others' needs and desires. The expressions reflect the strong bonds and social connections within Aseer society, where people often show their affection and care through such idiomatic and symbolic language.

Table 3

Nose Expressions

| Nose Expression | IPA Transcription | Literal Meaning | Actual Meaning |
|------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|--|
| على خشمي | /ʕala xaʃmi/ | On my nose | Response to a request meaning absolutely |
| من فوق خشمك | /min fuuq xaʃmk/ | Over your nose | I will take it forcefully. |
| رافع خشمك | /ra:fiʕ xaʃmk/ | Your nose is elevated | You are arrogant |
| طلع من خشمي | /tʕalaʕ min xaʃmi/ | It is out of my nose | A sense of being fed up by something/someone |

On the other hand, the expression "من فوق خشمك", over your nose, takes a more assertive stance and conveys a determination to obtain something, often forcefully if necessary. The imagery of something being "over your nose" portrays a sense of urgency and directness. This expression is face threatening and considered impolite.

When portraying someone as arrogant, the idiomatic expression "رافع خشمك", you are elevating your nose is used. By invoking the image of an elevated nose, the expression captures the essence of haughtiness and arrogance. Just as the physical act of raising one's nose conveys an attitude of looking down upon others, the phrase serves as a metaphor for the subject's belief in their own superiority. The expression "طلع من خشمي", it is out of my nose, is used when one is exasperated or fed up. It is an informal way of saying "I have had enough and reached my limits." These expressions are not only linguistic tools. They act as mirrors reflecting the core values of Aseer culture – warmth, determination, humility, respect, and emotional expression – while demonstrating the intricate interplay between language and culture.

The richness of nose-related expressions in Aseer culture, as explored through the lens of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) and the Embodiment Hypothesis, showcases how the physicality of the nose is metaphorically extended to convey profound cultural meanings. The expression "على خشمي" exemplifies the embodiment of willingness, aligning with CMT by mapping the tangible act of something on the nose to the abstract concept of wholehearted commitment. The subsequent responses, "عليه الطيب" and "عليه الشحم," further embody cultural values, illustrating generosity and hospitality through the metaphorical association of pleasant scents and valuable fats. The assertive expressions like "من فوق خشمك" and "رافع خشمك" draw on bodily imagery to signify determination, urgency, and arrogance, linking back to the embodiment hypothesis. Finally, "طلع من خشمي" links the physical act of something coming out of the nose to the abstract concept of reaching one's limits, embodying the emotional experience of exasperation. These nose-related expressions serve as linguistic mirrors reflecting the core values of Aseer culture, emphasizing the intricate interplay between language, embodiment, and cultural nuances.

Eyes

The term "عيوني" meaning "my eyes," frequently finds its place in politeness expressions. Metaphors utilizing this concept in politeness formulations seem to center around the significance of the eye as a vital sensory organ and, consequently, as a possession of deep emotional value. Table 4 shows eye expressions. The expression "في عيوني" meaning in my eyes, serves as a potent way to pledge unwavering protection, particularly in cases where the speaker is entrusted with safeguarding valuable items or taking care of someone, often a minor.

Table 4

Eyes Expressions

| Eyes Expression | IPA Transcription | Literal Meaning | Actual Meaning |
|------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| في عيوني | /fi ʕujuni/ | In my eyes | a strong commitment to safeguarding or taking care of something or someone with utmost dedication |
| من عيوني | /min ʕujuni/ | From my eyes | An answer to requests, absolutely (informal) |
| عيني/عيوني | /ʕjni/ or /ʕjuni/ | My eye(s) | Address or respond to someone who is dear to you (informal) |
| يا حبة عيني | /ja ʔabbat ʕjni/ | You are the pupil of my eye | Address or respond to someone who is dear to you (informal) |

Another expression is "من عيوني", which translates to "from my eyes." In situations where someone makes a request, the person being asked might respond with "من عيوني," conveying a strong commitment to fulfill the request with pleasure. This expression, however, is informally used and reserved for close family members and relatives, typically not used when interacting with individuals of the opposite gender. It showcases a heartfelt willingness to go

out of one's way to accommodate the request, further underscoring the close and affectionate nature of the relationship.

Address terms using the word 'My eye(s)' imply a metonymy of endearment and are highly informal. Examples like "يا عيونني," meaning my eyes, or "يا حبة عيني" meaning pupil of my eye, express deep affection, often for close family members.

The metaphor "EYE IS A CONTAINER," discussed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), Heine (2014), and Kraska-Szlenk (2014), is evident in the expressions in Table 4. The first two examples resembles the eye as a container. "LOVED ONES ARE THE EYE OF THE LOVER" is the conceptual metaphor in other examples.

While similar to the "heart" metaphor, the "eye" metaphor emphasizes human beings and valuables. While there are instances where "EYE IS THE LOCUS OF EMOTION" holds true, the context here emphasizes intense love and care. These usages of 'eye' in Aseer dialect of Arabic illustrate its rich symbolism, reflecting emotions, endearment, politeness, and character traits across various idiomatic expressions.

Hands

In the Aseer dialect of Arabic, the formulation of politeness formulas related to the hands reveals a rich interplay between conceptual metaphor theory and the embodiment hypothesis. Across 29 instances of such formulas, as depicted in Figure 1, speakers leverage metaphors rooted in embodied experiences and cultural associations to convey nuanced meanings.

As shown in Table 5, the formula والله انك يدي اليمين directly taps into the Conceptual Metaphor PART FOR WHOLE. Here, the "right hand" serves as a metaphor for trustworthiness and reliability. The embodied experience of relying on one's right hand for various tasks extends metaphorically to describe someone as a trustworthy assistant, demonstrating the cognitive bridge between physical actions and metaphorical meanings.

Table 5
Hands Expressions

| Hands Expression | IPA Transcription | Literal Meaning | Actual Meaning |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| والله انك يدي اليمين | wallāh ʔinnk jadi l.jami:n | You are my right hand | You are my trustworthy assistant. |
| أنت صاحب اليد العليا | ʔanta ʂa:ħib ʔal.jad il.ʕelia | You are the owner of the upper hand | You are the leader and the one who has control. |
| أياديك بيضاء | ʔaja:djek baji:dā | Your hands are white | You are always generous and helpful to people |

Another expression, أنت صاحب اليد العليا intricately weaves together the spatial orientation metaphor of UP–DOWN from CMT. By referring to someone as the "owner of the upper hand," the metaphor extends to signify control and leadership. The embodiment hypothesis posits a

connection between bodily experiences of physical dominance and the metaphorical extension to authority, emphasizing the cognitive underpinnings of linguistic expressions.

A third expression, أياديك بيضاء employs the metaphorical use of color, where "white" symbolizes purity and cleanliness. The hands, as extensions of actions, metaphorically convey generosity and helpfulness. The conceptualization of "clean" hands extends to morally upright actions, highlighting the embodiment of moral values in linguistic expressions related to politeness. In these instances, Aseer dialect speakers showcase how cognitive processes, influenced by embodied experiences and cultural metaphors, intricately shape language use. The analysis underscores the complex interplay between language, culture, and cognition in the construction of politeness formulas related to the hands.

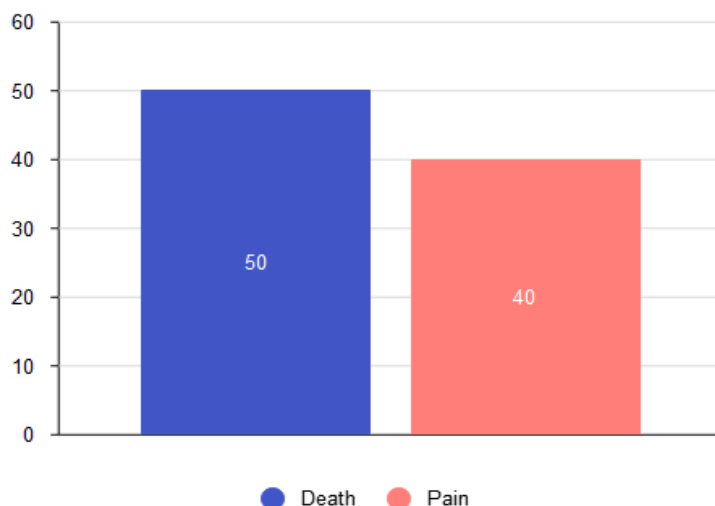
The analysis of politeness formulas related to various body parts in the Aseer dialect of Arabic unveils the cognitive bridges between embodied experiences, cultural metaphors, and linguistic formulations. The top five occurrences—face, head, nose, eyes, and hands—have been examined, shedding light on the diverse ways in which Aseer speakers construct polite expressions. Notably, the dataset extends beyond those body parts to include bones, heart, moustache, and beard, totalling 18 instances labelled as other in Figure 1.

Devotion Politeness Formulas

In the upcoming section, we will delve into politeness formulas linked to devotion. These devotion-related formulas were systematically classified into two overarching themes: death and pain, encompassing 50 formulas associated with death and 40 formulas related to pain as seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Classification of Devotion Politeness Formulas



Death

In the Aseer dialect of Arabic, the death-related formulas within the dataset, constituting 50 formulas, reveal a profound cultural and emotional connection between speakers and their addressees. These expressions are scenarios in which speakers express their genuine willingness to sacrifice their own lives for the well-being of their loved ones. This

cultural phenomenon aligns with the conceptual metaphor theory and embodiment hypothesis, showcasing how linguistic expressions reflect embodied experiences and cultural values.

The formulas encompass a range of sentiments tied to mortality as shown in Table 6. For instance, "الله يطعني عنك" literally translates to "I redeem you with myself," illustrating a sincere commitment to taking on the mortality of the addressee. This reflects a strong metaphorical gesture of self-sacrifice, rooted in the embodiment of love and affection.

Table 6
Death-themed Formulas

| Death Expression | IPA Transcription | Literal Meaning | Actual Meaning |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| الله يطعني عنك | /ʔalla yaʔʕanni ʕnk/ | I redeem you with myself | These formulas refer to genuine willingness to bear mortality on behalf of the person to whom it is directed. |
| الله يجعلك ذا يدليني في قبري | /ʔalla yjʕlk ðā yedlli:ni fi: qabri/ | May God make you the one who places me in my grave | |
| الله يسبق بي | /ʔalla yesbuq bi:/ | May I die before you | |
| جعلني فداك | /jeʕlni fda:k/ | May I be sacrificed for you | |

Similarly, "الله يجعلك ذا يدليني في قبري" expresses a wish for the addressee to be the one placing the speaker in their grave. This vivid scenario symbolizes a profound connection, with the speaker desiring their loved one to be present even in the final moments of their life, highlighting the deep emotional bond. In addition, this formula ensures that the speaker will precede in death, sparing himself from experiencing the pain of losing them if they die first.

The formula "الله يسبق بي" conveys the hope that the speaker dies before the addressee, showcasing a desire to spare their loved one the pain of loss. This expression embodies the cultural value of protecting others, reflecting the intertwining of linguistic expressions and embodied experiences.

Another popular formula is "جعلني فداك", meaning "May I be sacrificed for you." It further exemplifies the embodiment of sacrifice and devotion. This formula emphasizes the speaker's willingness to offer their life in exchange for the well-being of the addressee, showcasing the depth of love, respect, and commitment.

The popularity of these death-related expressions in the Aseer dialect underlines the cultural significance of self-sacrifice and profound emotional connections within the community. The use of death as a metaphorical construct in language emphasizes the intricate interplay between cultural values, embodied experiences, and linguistic expressions in the Aseer society.

Pain

Politeness formulas related to pain, showcased in Table 7, provide insights into the interplay of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) and the Embodiment Hypothesis. These linguistic expressions not only serve as communicative tools but also encapsulate a profound connection between language, emotions, and lived experiences.

Table 7*Pain-themed Formulas*

| Pain Expression | IPA Transcription | Literal Meaning | Actual Meaning |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| بي عنك | /bi ʕank/ | I take your pain | May I bear it instead of you |
| الله يجعلني آخذ ضيمك | /Allah yjʕalni ʔākud ḍaymk/ | May I take your pain | May God make me take your burden |
| الله لا يطعمني حزنك | /Allah lā yiṭʕmni ḥuznk/ | May I not taste your sadness | May I not experience the sorrow of losing you |
| جعله بعمرى | /dʒeʕlah bʕumri/ | May what you have be in me | May I bear the difficulties you are experiencing |
| فينى ولا فيك | /finī w-lā fik/ | May what you have be in me not in you | May I bear your pain on your behalf |

The first formula, *بي عنك*, utilizes the metaphor of taking pain, embodying the speaker's willingness to bear the emotional burden on behalf of the addressee. Through this linguistic construct, the speaker metaphorically shares the physical and emotional load, reinforcing the notion of empathy and shared experiences. The metaphorical use of "taking" pain underscores the embodied nature of the expression, symbolizing the speaker's commitment to relieving the addressee's sorrow as shown in *الله يجعلني آخذ ضيمك*. This linguistic embodiment reflects a shared emotional experience, where the speaker wishes to physically carry the burden of the other's pain.

Through the metaphor of "tasting" pain, this formula, *الله لا يطعمني حزنك*, links the experience of sadness to a sensory metaphor. The speaker expresses a fervent wish to avoid the emotional impact of the addressee's sorrow, embodying a desire to shield themselves from the negative emotions associated with the other's distress. The metaphorical wish for what the other person has to be in the speaker is repeated in many formulas like *جعله بعمرى*. It reflects a desire to share in the difficulties and challenges experienced by the addressee. This expression embodies a commitment to bear the hardships on behalf of their loved one, further illustrating a shared existence and mutual emotional support.

The metaphorical use of "in me" and "not in you" signifies the speaker's readiness to endure the pain on behalf of the addressee. This linguistic embodiment emphasizes the speaker's empathetic connection and willingness to bear the emotional burden, showcasing a deep sense of shared experience and emotional commitment. In these pain-themed formulas, the Aseer speakers leverage embodied metaphors to convey their emotional states and deepen interpersonal bonds. These expressions not only reflect shared experiences but also embody a physical and emotional connection.

Discussion

Studying politeness formulas in the Aseer dialect aligns with the idiomatic nature of these formulas, as emphasized by Coulmas (1979), and delves into the embodied nature of language, drawing on Lakoff and Johnsons' (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory and the Embodiment Hypothesis. The unique linguistic features in the Aseer dialect of Arabic, due to its geographical and historical isolation (Alqahtani, 2015), necessitate a focused analysis, highlighting the contribution of our research in addressing the scarcity of detailed studies in this specific linguistic context.

The incorporation of body parts into politeness formulas, inspired by Lakoff (1987) and Barsalou's (1999, 2003) work on the integration of bodily experiences into cognitive categorization, adds a distinctive layer to our analysis. This resonates with Pelkey's (2023) recent work on embodiment and language, providing a theoretical background for understanding how the body, through metaphorical language, shapes the conceptualization of politeness in the Aseer dialect of Arabic.

The semantic analysis conducted in this study, particularly through the exploration of figurative formulas employing conceptual metaphors and metonymies, plays a crucial role in enriching the pragmatic aspect of politeness expressions, aligning with Brown and Levinson's framework (1987). While Brown and Levinson primarily focus on linguistic strategies to mitigate face-threatening acts (FTAs) and uphold politeness, our examination of figurative language delves into the underlying conceptual metaphors and metonymies that shape these politeness formulas. By unraveling the metaphorical extensions and metonymic associations within politeness formulas, we uncover the implicit cultural values embedded in the Aseer dialect.

The first research question investigate the way speakers of the Aseer dialect employ metaphor and metonymy in the construction of politeness formulas. The analysis showcases that conceptual metaphors are utilized to convey politeness by drawing on underlying cognitive mappings that map abstract concepts onto more concrete, tangible domains. For instance, expressions such as "May I bear your pain" (بي عنك) employ the metaphor of carrying a burden, where the speaker metaphorically takes on the emotional or physical pain of the addressee. Additionally, metonymies play a crucial role in politeness formulas, allowing speakers to use one element to represent another in a contextually meaningful way. An example is found in the formula "May what you have be in me" (جعله بعمرى), where the speaker employs metonymy to express a willingness to share or bear the hardships and challenges faced by the addressee. Both metaphor and metonymy in politeness formulas contribute to the creation of nuanced, culturally embedded expressions that go beyond surface-level linguistic structures, offering a deeper understanding of how Aseer speakers navigate politeness through figurative language.

The second research question addresses the underlying concepts used in politeness formulas and the way these concepts relate to the cultural values of the Aseer community. The analysis indicates that politeness formulas are not merely linguistic constructs but rather reflections of cultural norms and interpersonal dynamics. Both the body-part politeness formulas and the devotion formulas encompass the underlying concept of empathy and shared emotional burdens. Aseer speakers employ this trope to convey a profound sense of

compassion and a willingness to bear the suffering of the addressee. This aligns with cultural values emphasizing communal support and the significance of emotional bonds within interpersonal relationships. In addition, the formulas underscore the concept of shared experiences, challenges, solidarity, self-sacrifice, and interconnectedness within the Aseer community. Thus, these underlying concepts reveal a cultural ethos that prioritizes empathy, shared responsibilities, and mutual support, shaping the pragmatic functions of politeness formulas in the Aseer dialect of Arabic.

The third question focuses on the patterns or characteristics in the genre of politeness formulas in the Aseer dialect of Arabic. The politeness formulas observed in the Aseer dialect of Arabic exhibit three prominent patterns: supplicating to Allah, expressing selflessness, and utilizing terms of endearment. Each of these patterns serves distinct linguistic and cultural functions, contributing to the overall politeness strategies in this speech community.

Firstly, supplicating to Allah is a prevalent pattern in these formulas, reflecting the deeply ingrained religious and cultural values of the Aseer community. By invoking Allah, speakers express humility, dependence, and a sense of shared vulnerability in the face of challenges. This pattern not only adheres to the cultural importance of seeking divine assistance but also serves as a polite way to express empathy and concern for the interlocutor, as the speaker places the matter in the hands of a higher power.

Secondly, expressions of selflessness are evident in the formulas, where speakers willingly denigrate themselves in the process of expressing care and support for the addressee. This selflessness goes beyond mere linguistic politeness and delves into a genuine willingness to endure pain or challenges on behalf of the interlocutor. It showcases a profound sense of solidarity, emphasizing communal bonds and the speaker's readiness to sacrifice personal well-being for the sake of the other.

Lastly, the use of terms of endearment to praise and compliment the addressee adds another layer to the politeness formulas. By employing affectionate language and expressions of praise, speakers convey a positive attitude and deep respect towards the interlocutor. This pattern emphasizes the importance of maintaining positive face, contributing to the creation and reinforcement of social bonds. Terms of endearment, in this context, function as linguistic tools to uplift the addressee and foster a positive interpersonal relationship.

In addition, our study contributes to existing literature by providing a detailed examination of politeness formulas in the Aseer dialect, bridging the gap in the scarcity of studies on southern Saudi dialects. This addition aligns with the theoretical framework, offering a more comprehensive view of body part expressions in Aseer dialect adding it to the various languages and cultures investigated before (Al-Adailah, 2012; Al-Ramahi, 2016; and Kövecses, 2005, 2010).

Limitations and Implications

The present research has certain limitations that warrant acknowledgment. Firstly, the study's focus on the Aseer dialect restricts the generalizability of our findings to a broader Arabic linguistic context. The Aseer region's unique linguistic features and cultural distinctiveness may limit the applicability of our results to other Arabic dialects. Future

research should encompass a more diverse range of dialects to establish a comprehensive understanding of politeness formulas across Arabic varieties. Secondly, the absence of recorded or analyzed context in our research positions it more as a semantic analysis rather than a pragmatic analysis. The study would benefit from incorporating authentic examples of utterances between interlocutors, integrating face theory, and exploring Face Threatening Acts (FTAs) to provide a more holistic examination of politeness formulas in communicative contexts.

On the other hand, the identified limitations open avenues for future research to build upon and extend our findings. First and foremost, researchers could conduct a comparative analysis across various Arabic dialects, investigating the universality and variability of politeness formulas. This would involve exploring how different linguistic and cultural factors shape politeness strategies in diverse Arabic-speaking communities. Expanding the scope beyond Arabic dialects, researchers could engage in cross-linguistic and cross-cultural comparisons, exploring politeness formulas in different language families. This broader perspective would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of politeness across diverse linguistic and cultural landscapes.

Additionally, our research hints at the potential applications of politeness studies in various domains, including cross-cultural pragmatics, ethnographic studies, semantic mapping, conceptual metaphor analysis, and cultural preservation and revitalization. Future studies could delve deeper into these areas, exploring practical implications and applications in real-world contexts.

Conclusion

The present research provides a comprehensive exploration of politeness formulas within the Aseer dialect, unraveling the intricacies of metaphor and metonymy utilization. By employing Conceptual Metaphor Theory and the Embodiment Hypothesis, we unveil the profound connection between language, culture, and embodied experiences in the formation of politeness formulas. The incorporation of body parts and devotion formulas within politeness constructs adds a unique layer to our understanding, emphasizing the interplay of linguistic and cultural dimensions. While this study marks a significant step in unraveling the politeness formulas specific to the Aseer dialect, it concurrently sets the stage for future investigations. The findings contribute not only to the discourse on politeness theories and semantics but also open avenues for further research into the multifaceted dimensions of politeness across diverse linguistic and cultural landscapes.

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Bio

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