

What is Your Color? A Study of Najdi Bedouin Greetings

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Abstract

This study investigates the greetings of the Bedouin speakers of the Central Najdi Dialect in Afif, Saudi Arabia. It analyzes the greetings used by the subjects and examines the impact of the contextual factors of age, social status, social distance, period of absence, and formality of situation on their choice, and it also identifies the politeness strategies they opted for. The study uses a discourse completion test, interviews, and fieldnotes to collect its data. The study involves 50 subjects randomly chosen from the area. It shows that the subjects use the Islamic greetings, phatic questions, welcoming greetings, temporal greetings, and expressions of longing. It also demonstrates that the subjects use individual and group greetings that are differentiated by the second singular and plural pronoun inflections. Moreover, it shows that the subjects utilise some greetings the reference of which is made to the third singular and plural person pronouns. Also, it reveals that some of the greetings used take the present and past tense markers.

Keywords

Pragmatics of speech acts, Saudi greetings, politeness formulas, contextual factors, Central Najdi Dialect

Introduction

There is a plethora of evidence that greetings are a universal linguistic and cultural communicative phenomenon (Duranti 63-97; Wei 56-62; Zeff 2-11; Emery 196-216). The speech act is essential, without it a speaker would not be considered competent in any communicative community. Greetings are learned explicitly at an early stage when a speaker begins to be exposed to their mother tongue (Greif and Gleason 159; Dogancay 51; Kendon 2; Duranti 63) or learn a second language (Clarke 19; Davies 76). Greetings are an important speech act that serves many functions in any conversational exchange. They are used as attention getters and identifiers (Firth 30), and to control and determine the nature of different

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communicative events (Youssef et al. 52; Goody 40). They highlight the roles and identities assumed by individuals in encounters and their perceived ranks within their social groups (Goody 40; Kendon 4; Riley 127). The routine functions as a lubricant that guarantees the continuation and achievement of the goals of a communicative event (Caton, 292). The speech act helps in reducing potential aggression, uncertainty, or anxiety (Firth 15; Duranti 64). The routine also forms an essential part of politeness strategies (Emery 200; Davies 75; Goffman 91; Laver 290; Brown and Levinson 99). Greetings positively bolster the social relationships of interactants as well express their mutual respect and solidarity (Goffman 77; Youssef et al. 54). They demonstrate the interactants' positive acceptance of one another in different situations (Goffman 151; Firth 7).

This paper aims at studying the verbal greetings of the Bedouin speakers of the Central Najdi Dialect (CND) in Afif Governorate, Saudi Arabia. The speech acts used by speakers of CND have not been studied by many researchers. The study provides descriptions and analysis of the routines performed by the subjects in different social situations. The segregation between sexes in Saudi society has led to the rise of distinctive linguistic and pragmatic systems used by men and women. This phenomenon is well documented by many researchers (Al-Shehri 13; Turjoman 206-208; Al Amro 116-119). The study focuses exclusively on the male population performance of the speech act. Moreover, the study attempts to find out the impact of the contextual factors of age, status, social distance, period of absence, and formality of situation on the subjects' choice of greetings. It also aims at deciding the type of politeness strategies used by the subjects in greetings by classifying them using Brown and Levinson's politeness classification. It attempts to find out if the positive politeness strategies are more prevalent in the subjects' production of greetings as other studies claimed to be a feature of Arabic cultures (Bentahila and Davies 101; Al-Harashseh and Boucif 206).

Literature Review

In her study *Saudi Gender Differences in Greetings and Leave-takings* (2005), Turjoman examines the Saudi greetings and leave-takings, as well as the effect of age, social status, social relation, and setting on the subjects' selection. The subjects of the study were 237. The study showed that age and social relation of interlocutors had an impact on their choice of routines, while the other factors had no significant effect. Women were found to take longer time exchanging greetings, use more superlatives and metaphors, and repeating formulas more than men do. Al-Shehri's study *Gender Differences in the Greeting Rituals of the Saudis in America* (2009) investigates the sociolinguistic features that characterise the Saudi male and female greetings in the US and the influence of American culture on their

performance. The study used semi-structured interviews to collect its data from 21 subjects. It shows that Saudis use distinctive verbal and nonverbal greetings and adhere to rules of their culture in their performance. It demonstrated difference in male and female greeting rituals.

Emery studied greetings in Northern Omani Arabic and found that Omanis use specific linguistic routines for entering and leaving houses, religious festivals, and the arrival of rain. The choice of formulas is determined by setting, gender, age, kin relationships, and occasion. The researcher found that older generations are more linguistically conservative and use old formulas more than younger generations who opt for pan-Arabic ones. The study shows that among the old, women are more conservative than men. It also demonstrated that young women are more innovative than young men. It concluded that Omani Arabic greetings remain relatively stable despite external influences. Rababa'h and Malkawi investigated the greetings of Jordanian Arabic speakers, their degree of politeness, and factors governing their choice. The study showed that the Jordanians use religious, culture specific, and time-bound greetings. It has found that greetings are preceded by address terms and followed by inquiries about health. It shows that the religious greetings are used more than any other type. It demonstrated that Jordanians consider religious greetings and those accompanied by address terms more polite than other types and the choice of greeting formulas is determined by age, sex, context, time, kin relationships, and social status. Rawashdeh studied greetings used by Jordanians and examined the impact of social media and contact with Syrian refugees on their choice. The study showed that social media influenced the greeting routines especially of urbanite Jordanians, while contact with Syrian refugees had no impact.

Saberi studied Persian greetings and the factors that determine its choice. The study collected its data from soap operas and role plays. The study shows that Iranians prefer positive politeness strategies when performing speech acts and the choice of strategies is determined by religious beliefs, age, social status, and kin relationships. Al-Harashsheh and Boucif investigated greetings used in Algerian context. They examined the impact of age, gender, social distance, context, regional affiliation, frequency of contact, and context on the performance of the routines. The study collected the data using audio recordings, oral DCT, and observation method. The study found that the subjects resort to positive politeness strategies, and that the speech acts served the functions of welcoming, expressing surprise, seeking information, determining relationships and attitudes, expressing concern for others, and enhancing solidarity.

In the study entitled *The Linguistic Etiquette of Greeting and Leave-taking in Jordanian Arabic*, Malkawi examines the different types of Jordanian Arabic greetings and the sociolinguistic factors that account for their selection. The study found that religious greetings are the most common and most polite routines.

Moreover, it shows that there are other time-specific greetings and context- or situation-specific terms. The study suggests that age, sex, context, and time are important factors in the structuring of greetings in Jordanian. It also reveals that there are some socio-cultural and socio-religious rules for initiating greetings in general. Hazaymeh studied the types of greeting in Jordanian Arabic and the social factors that determine their selection. The study found that the subjects use religious, rural, temporal English, and welcoming patterns. It also demonstrates that regional affiliation, religion, education, media, contact with the West, and social relations had impact on the selection of greetings. El-Hassan studied the linguistic etiquettes used in Jordanian shops and the sociocultural norms governing them. He investigated the different patterns used by shopkeepers, assistants, and customers. The research used audio tapes to record the exchanged greetings in natural settings. The study has found that the Islamic greeting formula is the most common type and the use of extended responses to it is considered as more courteous and religious.

Al-Abdul Halim studied the greetings of speakers of Jordanian Arabic. The data was collected from hospitals and universities. The study showed that there are many types of greetings used by the subjects and each type has more than one variant. It also demonstrated that the relation between interlocutors and their social status, sex, age, power, and setting influenced the type and expansiveness of the greetings they exchange. Shawish conducted a contrastive study to explore the greeting forms and strategies in Arabic and English. The study used a DCT to collect data from a sample that consisted of 30 students. The results revealed that the subjects used time-free and time-bound greetings with different distribution in Arabic and English and that they resorted to Arabic greetings more than the English ones. Kirdasi studied the greetings used by Arabs and Americans and the impact of contextual factors on their choice. The study found that the Arabs and Americans use different types of greetings. It also showed that the Arabs use nonverbal greetings more than the Americans and the latter resort to verbal routines more than the former. The study concluded that gender, social distance, and situational factors influenced the choice of greetings used.

The current study focuses on the greetings of the Bedouin speakers of the CND in Afif Governete in Saudi Arabia, as there is a dearth of materials that account for the speech acts used by speakers of the dialect. It investigates the greetings of the male population of the area. In addition to that, it probes the impact of a number of contextual factors on the subjects' preference of greetings as well as classifying the politeness strategies they used.

Methods

This study examines the greeting behavior of the male inhabitants of Afif, Saudi Arabia. The subjects of the study speak the Central Najdi Dialect (CND). The data was collected using a Discourse Completion Test (DCT), field notes, and post hoc interviews to find out the greeting forms, origins, explanations, and interpretation of the routines. The study conducted a DCT that was composed of fourteen items to collect its data. The test was written using the subjects' mother tongue. The goal of the DCT items is to collect the different types of greetings used by the subjects. The DCT items were written to cover the contextual factors of age, status, distance, period of absence, and formality of situation. Thirty randomly chosen subjects responded to the test. Moreover, the participant observation method was utilised to register the exchange of greetings between the interactants. The researcher wrote detailed descriptions of the verbal behaviors in field notes.

The study conducted post hoc interviews with another randomly chosen twenty informants to validate, consolidate, and complete the data gathered by the DCT. The interviews sought to answer the questions of when, how and why greetings are performed. It also sought to find out the interpretation of its meanings, functions, uses, temporal limitations, social restrictions, degree of politeness and formality, and the social and contextual parameters governing them. The study used Mann Whitney U Test to probe the impact of the contextual factors on the subjects' choice of greetings. The DCT items were sorted according to different factors and the mean rank of each group was calculated, then the results were compared using the Mann Whitney U two-sample rank-sum test (Table 1) to decide the impact of each variable at 0.05 significance level.

Results and Discussion

The data gathered from the study subjects showed that the speakers of CND use a rich repertoire of verbal greetings. Using the criteria elaborated by Duranti (67), the study classified the verbal greetings into five types that are termed as: the Islamic greetings, phatic questions, welcoming greetings, temporal greetings, and expressions of longing. It shows that the greetings are inflected according to the number of addressees i.e. singular and plural greetings. Moreover, it demonstrated that some greeting formulas are made with reference to absent person(s) as they take the inflections of second and third person singular and plural pronouns. In addition to that, the study shows that some greetings take the present and past tense markers. The subjects opt to use positive politeness strategies when choosing different types of greetings. This finding is in line with that of Bentahila and Davies and Al-Harahsheh and Boucif who claim that Arab cultures tend to use positive politeness strategies. Also, the results of Mann-Whitney U Test (Table 1) showed that the age, social status, social distance,

period of absence, and formality of a situation had impact on the subjects' choice of greetings.

The following is a discussion of the different types of greetings. The examples are transliterated using the Deutsches Institut für Normung (DIN) standard for the transliteration of the Arabic alphabet (DIN 31635). The examples are translated literally whenever the meaning of the greetings is intelligible, and free translation was resorted to when literal translations fail to convey the meaning. Followed by the classification of politeness strategies and the impact of the contextual factors on greeting choice:

The Islamic Greeting

In Islam, exchanging greetings with other Muslims is a religious obligation that contributes to enhancing solidarity and cohesiveness in a society. Performing the greeting is considered as carrying out a religious obligation (Caton, "Salam tahiyah"). The Islamic greeting formula is *as-salāmu 'alaykum* and is referred to as 'salam' (peace). With regard to its structure, there are two variations of the formula i.e. short and extended forms (examples 1.a and 1.b). The study shows that the Saudis adhere to the Islamic etiquette of issuing and responding to greetings. They stick to the use of the Islamic formula and observe its protocols. The subjects of the study used the two types of the Islamic greeting. They consider the short form as appropriate for all occasions and times and they also used it as an opener that is followed by other types of greetings.

1.a *a-slamu 'lai-kum*

DEF-peace upon-2 PL

'Peace be upon you'

In Saudi society, the Islamic greeting is used to draw the attention of others and to announce the arrival of an individual. The social distance between interactants determine the way the greeting is used. When used with acquaintances, it functions as an opener to a cascade of greetings that consist mainly of phatic questions. As with strangers, it is considered an adequate greeting by itself. The extended form is used as a formal greeting that is appropriate for public gatherings, religious ceremonies, and social occasions.

1.b *a-slamu 'laik-um wa rahmat Allāh t'ala wa brakat-ub*

DEF-peace upon-2 PL COM mercy Allāh superior COM blessings

'May the peace, mercy, and blessings of Allāh, the superior, be upon you?'

The two forms can be used to address an individual or a group. When addressing an individual the second singular pronoun inflection /-ik/ replaces the plural inflection /-kum/ but the latter is used more than the former.

Phatic Questions

Using Hofstede et al. (“Cultures and Organizations” 90) terms, Saudi society can be classified as having a collectivist culture. A collectivist culture has a tight social structure in which the interests of the group prevails over those of its individual members. It is part of the local tradition to show interest in the wellbeing of other members of society. This concern is manifested in a large number of phatic questions that focus on the wellbeing, news, health, and life of interlocutors as well as their families’. This sort of greetings is the most elaborate one and has numerous structures. It demonstrates the extent to which interactants care about each other, warmth and closeness of their social relation, and the courteous affections participants have for each other. It is a politeness strategy that addresses the positive face of the listener. The positive face is the desire to be liked, approved of, respected, and appreciated by the others (Brown and Levinson, “Politeness” 66). This type of greetings takes the form of adjacent pairs that consist of questions and responses. The parties involved tend to exchange consecutive patterned inquiries and replies sometimes without paying attention to each other’s responses.

The study found that these formulas can be divided into three categories that concern itself with the addressee’s news, health, or family. In the first type, the greeter asks about the addressee’s news and affairs as shown in the following examples:

- 2- *wiš al-‘ulūm?*
 what DEF-news-Q
 ‘what is the news’
 3- *wiš al-ahbar?*
 what DEF-news-Q
 ‘what is the news’

The formula can be used with second person singular and plural pronouns such as in the following examples:

- 4- *wiš ‘ulūm-ak?*
 what news-2SG-Q
 ‘what is your news?’
 5- *wiš ‘ulūm-akum?*
 what are-news-2PL-Q
 ‘what is your news?’

The responses to such questions, include such examples:

- 6- *tsir-ak al-‘ulūm*
 please- PRS-2SG DEF-news
 ‘the news will please you’
 7- *iasur-ak al-ḥal*
 please-PRS-2SG DEF-state of affairs

‘our state of affairs will please you’

These two responses are other-oriented statements although the expected responses are direct answers to the questions. It is to be noted that the two examples are structured in the present tense.

Other examples of phatic questions focus on the quality of the respondent’s news such as:

8-*al-‘ulūm zīnah?*

DEF-news beautiful-Q

‘the news beautiful?’

9-*al-‘ulūm sarah?*

DEF-news happy-Q

‘the news happy?’

This variety is used in quick social encounters and lightly touches on the issue as it only seeks a quick affirmation.

When using such exchanges, the initiator is expressing his concern about the affairs of the other party. The move is considered as a positive politeness tactic as it shows that the hearer is liked and respected by the greeter (Brown and Levinson, “Politeness” 66) The respondent appreciates the interest of the inquirer in his personal affairs and responds in a way that is intended to make the greeter feel comfortable which is considered as another type of positive politeness. Responses to questions in greetings may consist of false statements that are socially justified regardless of their contradiction to reality (Sacks, “Everyone Has to Lie”). In some cases, when an interlocutor wants to protect himself or his family from ‘envy,’ his reply may be a faulty assertion that is socially justified but may have social and religious consequences. In Saudi society envy refers to the “malicious envy” (Wierzbicka, “Emotions Across Cultures” 98). For instance, as a reply to the greeting:

10- *wīš al-ġadīd?*

what DEF-new-Q

‘what is new?’

The listener may not want to provide specific information as a protection from envy. They may respond with:

11- *ma min ġadīd*

NEG-from new

‘there is nothing new’

Such utterance is a violation to Grice’s maxim of quality by providing false information (Grice, “Logic and Conversation.”). In such a case, the speaker also violates the Islamic teachings that prohibit lying. The individual conforms to what Sacks (“Everyone Has to Lie”) has termed as a “right to lie” but in a sense that has less serious social and more religious consequences. Another example of this category is the other oriented formula is the imperative:

12- *baššir-na ‘an-ak*
 tell-1PL-IMP about-2 SG
 ‘tell us good news about you’

The phrase expresses the concern about the wellbeing of the inquired and the greeter’s eagerness to hear good news about the greetee. In a similar vein, the Saudis respond with the self-oriented expression:

13- *a-bašir-ak bi-hēr wa ni‘mah*
 tell-2SG 1SG-good COM grace
 ‘I tell you the good news that I am well and blessed with Allāh’s grace’

Both utterances serve as positive politeness strategies that aim at making the other feel comfortable. The second type of phatic greetings concerns itself with the health of the addressee. Questions about the health of the greetee are numerous but the most widely used ones are:

14- *wiš laīn-ak?*
 what color-2SG-Q
 ‘what is your color?’

15- *wiš laīn saḥat-ak?*
 what color health-2SG-Q
 ‘what is the color of your health?’

Alharbi and Alajami (“Greet with the Same”) claim that this greeting returns back to ancient times when there was a plague outbreak that resulted in a change of the color of the skin of the infected. During that period, people began to start their conversations with questions about each other’s color. Historically, the symptoms of many plagues resulted in change of the color of skin including the infamous Black Death in the 14th century.

Other types of questions about the greetee’s health are:

16- *‘asa-k ṭayyib*
 may-2SG good-Q
 ‘I hope that you are in good health’

Another greeting with the same effect is:

17- *‘asa-k bi-hēr?*
 may-2SG well-Q
 ‘I hope that you are well’

These greetings have other forms that are used when addressing a group in which the second person singular ending /-ak/ is replaced by the second person plural inflection /-kum/. The last two greetings (no.16 and 17) have shortened forms which are:

18- *ṭayyib?*
 good-2SG-Q
 ‘are you in good health?’

19- *bi-hēr ant?*

well 2SG-Q

‘are you well?’

There is another generalised form that inquires about the listener’s health, which is:

20- *kef hal-ak?*

how state-2SG-Q

‘how is your state?’

The third group of greetings focuses on the greete’s family. The interlocutor asks about the news and health of the addressee’s family members. He asks about the parents, offspring, and siblings of the other party as in these examples:

21- *kef al-ʿiyal wa al-ahwān?*

how DEF-children COM-brothers-Q

‘how are your children and brothers?’

22- *wiš laūn al-abal wa al-ǧamaʿa?*

what color DEF-relatives COM-group-Q

‘what is the color of your relatives and group?’

23- *wiš laūn šiban-kūm?*

what color grey-haired-2PL-Q

‘what is the color of your grey-haired ones [your elders]?’

24- *š-u-ḥbar al-ūalid?*

what-news DEF-father

‘what is the news of the father?’.

Saudi men avoid asking about women other than their first-degree relatives as it is considered a social taboo. For example, one avoids asking about the other party’s wife and daughter(s) except when they are his close relatives or known to be very sick. When asking about a woman, the greeter uses a metonymy instead of her name. The addresser may ask about a woman’s health and utter a prayer for her as in examples no. 25 and 26:

25- *wiš laūn abl-ak?*

what color kin-2SG-Q

‘what is the color of your relatives?’

26- *ma yar-ūn bās*

NEG see-3PL illness

‘I pray to Allāh they will not see an illness’.

The metonymy *ablak* that means ‘your relatives’ is used along with others like *albeit* ‘the house’, *alʿaylah* ‘the family’, *alʿiyal* ‘the offspring’, *alǧamaʿa* ‘the group’ and *alawlad* ‘the boys’ to refer to female members of the addressee’s family in such type of greetings. The pious nature of community is reflected in the responses to such questions. Praises and gratitude to Allāh for His blessings and grace are popular responses to such greetings. Instead of thanking the initiator

for his concern, the respondents express their gratitude to Allāh. For instance, they reply with expressions such as:

27- *al-ḥamadu li-llāh*

DEF-praise Allāh

‘praise be to Allāh’

28- *al-ḥamadu li-llāh bi-ḥēr wa ni‘mah*

DEF-praise Allāh good COM bounty

‘praise be to Allāh we are in good health and bestowed with His bounty’,

29- *al-ḥamadu li-llāh isūr-ak al-ḥal*

DEF-praise Allāh please-2SG DEF-state

‘praise be to Allāh our state of affairs makes you happy’

30- *al-ḥamadu li-llāh bi-aḥsan ma iakūn*

DEF-praise Allāh best DISTR-state

‘praise be to Allāh we are at our best’.

Although the three types of phatic questions may be considered by outsiders as encroachment on others’ privacy, Saudis use it to express concern and care about other members of their society. Failure to make such inquiries may be considered by locals as rude, lack of interest in the social relation, or mark a disagreement with the interactant(s). These phatic questions could be classified as positive politeness markers as they express the speaker’s liking and interest in the hearer and his affairs and family. Avoidance of naming the female members of the hearer’s family is a negative politeness strategy that shows respect for the greetee’s privacy.

Welcoming Greetings

Generosity and hospitality are important values that shape many features of Bedouin culture. The welcoming greetings serve to make a guest feel that he is being accepted as a member of his host’s group and that his arrival is a source of pleasure and an occasion to be celebrated by him. The welcoming greetings can be classified into five types. These greetings consist mainly of two types of modified Classic Arabic expressions of welcoming, benedictions made to Allāh to bestow His grace on the addressee, and two types of metaphorical compliments. The first group consists of shortened and modified forms of the Classical Arabic greeting: *ḥalal-tum ablan wa naḥal-tum sablan*’ which means that the greetee has arrived among his kinfolks and his stay will be a comfortable one as he stays in a plain and not in a craggy area. The reference in this greeting is made to the past nomadic life that is characterised by migrations from one place to another. Examples of this type are:

31- *ablan wa sablan*

welcome COM plain

‘you are welcome and in a plain’,

32- *bala wa allāb*

welcome COM God

‘I swear to Allāh that you are welcome’

The responses to such kind of greetings are varied and some examples that were provided by the subjects are:

33- *bala bi-k zūd*

welcome you more

‘you are more than welcome’

34- *al-mihali ma īwali*

DEF-welcomer NEG leave

‘may Allāh preserve the life of the one who welcomes us’

The second group are forms of the Classical Arabic greeting *marḥban bik* ‘you are welcomed’ which includes formulas such as:

35- *marḥban malain*

welcome millions

‘you are welcomed millions of times’

36- *īa marḥba bi-li lafa*

ART welcome arrival

‘welcome to the one who arrived’

The third type of the welcoming greetings consist of benedictions made to Allāh to greet and give the guest a long life. For example:

37- *ḥai allāb min ḡā*

greet-PST-2SG God who arrived

‘may Allāh greet the one who arrived’

Moreover, an ancient Arab greeting is also used:

38- *ḥai-ak rab-i wa bi-ak*

greet-PST-2SG God COM place-PST-2SG

‘may Allāh greets you and give you a distinguished place in paradise’.

39- *īa allāb ḥai-b*

DEF God greet-IMP-3SG

‘I pray to you God to greet him’

40- *īa allāb ḥai-hum*

DEF God greet-IMP-3PL

‘I pray to God to greet them’

The examples no. 39 and 40 resemble a unique formula of greetings in which the greetees is/are not addressed directly but referred to using third person singular and plural pronouns. In addition to that, the greetings in examples no. 37 and 38 take past tense markers. The religious discourse dominates this type of greeting exchanges. It reflects the pious nature of Bedouin society and the influence of Islam on their culture. The fourth group consists of metaphors that are intended as compliments addressed to the guest. In some of them, the arrival

of the guest is likened to the appearance of a light that dissipates the darkness and brings the threats of wild animals and bandits' raids to an end. The light is used as a symbol of safety and assurance. Other greetings allude to the image of the coming of the long-awaited rain that quench the Bedouin's thirst and grow pasture for their animals. The importance of rain for the Bedouins of the area is discussed in details by Ingham. For example:

41- *taū ma nāūar al-makan*
 now COND light-PST DEF-place
 'only now the light filled the place'

42- *anūar-at wa amṭar-at*
 light-PST COM rain-PST
 'the light has shone, and the rain fell'.

43- *taraḥiab al-maṭar*
 welcomes DEF-rain
 'the welcoming of rain'

The last two examples are understood if one considers the context of a desert where the value of the rain is immeasurable. Moreover, greetings no. 41 and 42 are in the past tense.

Replies to this type include phrases such as:

44- *al-nūr nūr-ak*
 DEF-light light-2SG
 'the light is yours'

45- *nūar-at bi-ūiḡūd-ak*
 light-PST presence-2SG
 'it lightened because of your presence'

The welcoming greetings are part of the positive politeness strategies repertoire of the locals. The fifth type is made of metaphorical expressions that allude to the migrations of nomads in the past. In this type the greeter assumes that the guest's status is the same as that of his. For example:

46- *al-maḥal maḥal-kum*
 DEF-place place-2PL
 'the place is yours'

47- *al-makan makan-kum*
 DEF-place place-2PL
 'the place is yours'

The responses to this type of greetings include:

48- *al-makan 'amir fik-um*
 DEF-place flourish-PRS-2PL
 'your presence is what makes the place flourish'

All these types can be classified as positive politeness strategies that seek to boost the in-group relations.

Temporal Greetings

The data collected by the study show that the Bedouin observe only two types of temporal greetings out of the nine periods of the day i.e. morning and evening. The same phenomenon was recognised by Davies (“A contrastive Approach” 84) when he noted that such greetings cover a wider time span than those of the English language. The subjects use morning greetings from the beginning of the day up to midday and use evening greetings starting from the afternoon. The subjects used the Pan-Arabic greeting:

49-*ṣabah al-ḥēr*
 morning DEF-good
 ‘good morning’

As well as other culture specific forms that are made of prayers such as:

50-*ṣabah-ak allāh bi-l-ḥair*
 morning-PST-2SG Allah good
 ‘May Allāh fill your morning with goodness’

51-*as‘ad allāh ṣabahak*
 bring-PST happiness Allah morning-2PL
 ‘May Allāh fill your morning with happiness’

Examples no. 50 and 51 have other forms that are used when addressing a group in which the second person singular ending /-ak/ is replaced by the second person plural inflection /-kum/. Also, the two expressions are in the past tense. Responses to those greetings utilise the same structures and replace the word *alḥair* with the word *alnūr* which means ‘light’. The same structures are also used in the evening greetings with the replacement of the word *ṣabah* ‘morning’ with *masā* ‘evening’. In others, the addressee prays to Allāh to fill the morning or evening of the greeter with light.

The absence of other temporal greetings could be attributed to the teachings of Islam that prohibits visits and socialisation during three periods of the day i.e. before dawn, during midday and after evening (Sūrat An-Nur, verse 58). For instance, in the past, midday was not considered a time for socialisation or work. By 12 p.m., life used to come to a halt after children come back from schools, the majority return to their dwellings, and markets are closed. The Bedouins used to enculturate their children to observe the midday nap using different techniques that include encouragement, reward, and intimidation. Children were rewarded with money, confectionary, and other small gifts so as not to go out during midday. If they failed to obey elders’ orders to take a siesta they were discouraged and intimidated to stay by narration of stories about monsters that roam the streets during midday waiting to abduct children and eat

them. The temporal greetings are manifestations of positive politeness strategies as they express the speaker's interest in the wellbeing of the hearer.

Expressions of Longing

Expressions of longing are an integral part of the Bedouin conversational routines that frequently occur at the first phase of encounters. The parties involved express their longing for and delight at the meeting of each other. Such expressions are not usually classified as greetings. However, their positions, functions, and close links to the pragmatic feature made the researcher categorise them as such. The assertion of this sort of expressions is that it is "a courteous indication of recognition" (Searle and Vanderveken 1985: 216). Such expressions serve to reestablish "bonds between two people after a period of separation" (Ebsworth et. Al, "Cross-cultural realization" 94). Moreover, Firth ("Verbal and bodily rituals" 1) adds that greeting formulas are "symbolic devices" that do not solely denote the recognition of another but convey emotional messages. Commonly, interactants express their pleasure at seeing each other by using expressions like:

52- *īštǧ-na-lak*

1PL-miss-1PL-2SG

'we missed you'

53- *sar-tana šaufi-ak*

glad-PST-2SG see-PST-2SG

'we are glad to see you'

54- *aš min šaf-ak*

live-PST who see-2SG

'long live the one who saw you'

These greetings have other forms that are used when addressing a group in which the second person singular ending /-ak/ is changed to the second person plural inflection /-kum/. In addition to that, the greetings in the two examples take the markers of the past tense.

Examples of other manifestations of the longing expressions are:

55- *hadhi abrak al-sa'at*

DEM blessed DEF- hour-PL

'this is the most blessed hour'

56- *šufat-kum 'aīd*

see-PST-2PL festival

'seeing you is a festival'

The subjects provided the following responses to the above greetings:

57- *ašat aīam-ak*

Live-PST-F days-2SG

'may Allāh gives life to your days'

58- *‘aš ḥabīb-ak*

Live-PST beloved-2SG

‘may Allāh gives a long life to your beloved one’

It is noted that the examples no. 56-58 are in the past tense form.

The expressions of longing can be classified as positive politeness strategies that seek to boost the in-group ties and solidarity and to show interest in the other.

The Impact of Contextual Factors on Greetings’ Choice

The results of Mann-Whitney U Test (Table 1) showed that the factors of age, social status, social distance, period of absence, and formality of a situation influenced the subjects’ choice of greetings.

Table 1: The Results of Mann-Whitney U Test of the Different Social Factors

No.	Variable	Results	
1	Age	Mann-Whitney U	320.000
		Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.044
2	Social Status	Mann-Whitney U	311.000
		Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.032
3	Social Distance	Mann-Whitney U	120.000
		Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
4	Period of Absence	Mann-Whitney U	308.000
		Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.028
5	Formality of Situation	Mann-Whitney U	166.500
		Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000

The analysis of the test results shows that the age factor has an impact on the subjects’ choice of greetings. The calculated value of the variable was 320 at 0.044 level of significance which is less than the designated 0.05 level of significance. It also demonstrates that the social status has influenced the choice of greetings in the data collected by the DCT. The calculated value of the factor was 311 at 0.032 level of significance which is less than 0.05. Moreover, it reflected that there is a relation between the social distance and the subjects’ choice of greetings. The Mann-Whitney U result for this variable was 120 with significance value of 0.00 which is less than 0.05 level of significance. With regard to the period of absence, the results of the test showed that it has an impact on the subjects’ choice of greetings. It has found that the coefficient is calculated at 308 with significance value at 0.028 which is less than the 0.05 level of significance. The test results showed that the formality of situation had an impact on the subjects’ choice of

greeting routines. It demonstrated that the Mann-Whitney U coefficient was 166.5 with significance value of 0.00 which is less than 0.05 level of significance.

Conclusion

This study investigated the greetings of the Bedouin speakers of the CND in Afif. It studied the formulas the subjects use, the impact of some social and contextual factors on their choice, and the type of politeness strategies they resort to. The study shows that the subjects use five types of greetings. They use the Islamic greeting, phatic questions, welcoming greetings, temporal greetings, and expressions of longing. Depending on the context, the subjects resorted to the short and extended forms of the Islamic routine. They employed phatic questions to ask about the state, health, and family of the greetee(s). They utilised modified versions of Classical Arabic welcoming phrases and metaphorical expressions. The subjects adhere to two temporal greetings that divide the day into morning and evening only. In addition to that they used longing expressions.

The study has also showed that there are different greetings that are addressed to individuals and groups. The greetings used are inflected for the second singular and plural pronouns. Moreover, it demonstrated that some greetings are not addressed directly to the listener(s) as they are expressions that refer to third singular and plural person(s). Also, it showed that the subjects use greetings that take the present and past tense markers. Moreover, the study shows that the subjects, like other speakers of Arabic dialects, resorted to the utilisation of positive politeness routines. They used positive politeness strategies to express their interest in the other(s), boost their in-group relations, attend to the greetees' interests, and make them feel comfortable by providing good news. The subjects used negative politeness strategies sparsely in phatic questions about the greetee's female relatives.

To provide a comprehensive picture of the field, other speech acts used in the area need to be studied. In societies where there is sex segregation, studies that cater for the linguistic differences are vital. The greetings used by female speakers of CND could also be studied and compared with the production of that of the males. Also, comparative studies of Classical Arabic and CND greetings are important to investigate the links between the two vernaculars and to draw a diachronic portrait of the latter's development. The roles religion and culture play in the formulation of the different speech acts and selection of politeness strategies are a fertile area that needs to be studied.

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