Insertion Sequences in English and Arabic Religious Texts: A Contrastive Study

Asst .Instructer . Jenan Atiya Muftin
College of Education/University of Al - Qadisiya

Abstract

The paper deals with the structure of insertion sequences in conversation in both English and Arabic languages. Insertion sequence can be described as turns working in a conversation to indicate certain purposes. They are found between the adjacency pairs. They can be identified throughout the breaking up of the adjacency pairs. The paper focuses on the differences and similarities in English and Arabic in using insertion sequence turns ,in particular , in religious texts which are taken from the Holly Bible(the book of Exodus) and from the Glorious Quran (Al - Baqra Sura) .

1-Introduction

Conversation is more than words used to express ideas and wants. The oral communication is structured in order to help us process information. Spoken language helps the hearer recover the intended meaning s/he tries to express. Spoken language can be considered as spontaneous ,i.e., there is no conscious plan to build a conversation . However, speakers with similar knowledge work together at structuring and building the various types of conversations that we use daily.

Verhagen (2005:156) argues that conversation analysis derives from sociology and ethno methodology . Conversation Analysis (CA) argues that conversation has its own dynamic structure and rules .Parker (1992:31) admits that conversation analylists look at the methods used by speakers to structure a conversation efficiently. CA studies the organization of conversation which is out of sequences.

Capell (2006:180) assures that conversation is organized in sequences, a sequence is a unit that consists of two or more and adjacent functionally related turns . A turn is time during which a single participant speaks within a typical, orderly arrangement in which participants speak with minimal overlap and gap between them.

By the same token, conversation can be defined as a phonological unit just like with phoneme or the morpheme or the sentence. There are two ways in dealing with this unit, either in the shape of phoneme or in the shape of morpheme as the smallest unit which could not be divided into smaller units, or as a sentence as a dividable unite consisting of small elements having their specific rules which are responsible for its structure (khitabb 2008 . blogspot . com .) .

Conversational encounters can be described in terms of an overall organization ,that is, a schematic description of the types and order of conversation turns and sequences (Capell,2006:183).

2- How Insertion Sequences Work?

The structure of adjacency pairs and preference systems have been linear , one pair followed by another, there are also cases of embedding ,of one pair accruing inside another . Fairclough (2003:163) calls these embedded pairs "insertion sequence", in which one speaker produces not a second pair part but another first pair part(Coulthard,1985:73).

Capell (2006:75)gives a simple definition for "insertion sequence" saying that it is a sequence of turns that intervenes between the first and the second parts of an adjacency pairs.

A: Shall I wear the blue shoes?
B: You've got the black ones.
A: They 're not comfortable.
B: Yeah, they're the best then, wear the blue ones.

The first turn here is a question ;accordingly,it should be followed by an acceptance or a refusal;instead it is followed by an assessment +a justification.

The topic of the insertion sequence is related to that of the main sequence in which it occurs and the question from the main sequence is retuned to and answered after the insertion.

Yule(1996:77) explains how insertion sequences work that not all first parts immediately receive their second parts, however, it often happens that a question-answer sequence will be delayed while another question-answer sequence comes between them .An insertion sequence is one adjacency pair within another . Although the expressions used may be question-answer sequence, other forms of social actions are also accomplished within this pattern.

Renkema (1993:113) assures that the designation "adjacency pair" is not totally correct. The parts of a pair are often not adjacent. For example, the opening question and the answer to this question are separated by another question-and answer pair.

A: Can you tell me how to get to the mall?
B: Do you see that big neon sign?
A: Yes
B: You have to make a left turn there.

The adjacency pair is an important building blocking in conversation. Besides, the adjacency pair, a three part sequence also often occurs.

Blommaert (2005:233) believes that the suggestion is " if you answer this one, I will answer yours"

A: I don't know where the address is.   (Q)
B: Well, where to-which part of town do you live?   (Q1)
A: I live four ten East Lowden.
B: Well, you don't live very far from me.

One question which immediately arises is in what sense is the pair Q1A inserted into the pair QA ; surely this treating conversation is an accomplished production rather than a developing process, because A may never occur .Macaulay (2005:139) argues that Q utterance makes and an A utterance conditionally relevant. The action the Q does (here, direction asking) makes some other action sequentially relevant (here, giving direction) by answering the Q. Which is to say, after the Q the next speaker has that action specifically, chosen for him to do and can show attention, and grasp of the preceding utterance by doing the chosen action then and there, if he dosen't ,that will be a noteable assertion.

Brown and Yule(1983:130) illustrate the nature of insertion sequences that adjacency pairs can be distributed by an insertion sequence which delays the answer-part to one question part of a pair until another answer to a different question has been provided. This is intuitively reasonable, but the immediate question which springs to mind is "how does the analyst determine when an interrogative form counts as a question in an adjacency pair, or as part of an insertion sequence, or even, as an answer".

The insertion sequence phenomena focus on the characterization: (i)adjacent and (iv)the kinds of expectable second parts .First , strict adjacency is actually too strong a requirement: there frequently occurs the insertion sequence like the following in which one

question-answer pair is embedded within another (where Q1 labels the first question ,A1 is its answer and so on).

A: May I have a bottle of mich?   Q1
B: Are you twenty one?   Q2
A: No   A2
B: No   A1

(Levinson, 1983:304)

But the main point is that we need to replace the strict criteria of adjacency with the notion of conditional relevance, namely the criteria of adjacency pairs, that a given part of a pair ,a second part is immediately relevant and expectable. If such a second fails to occur, it is noticeably absent and if some other first parts occur in its place then that will be heard where possible as some preliminary to the doing of the second part, the relevance of which is not lifted until it is either directly attended to or aborted by the announced failure to provide some preliminary action. The conditional relevance makes clear is that what binds the parts of adjacency pairs together is not a formation rule of the sort that would specify that question must receive an answer if it is to count as a well _ formed discourse, but the setting up of specific expectations have to be attended (ibid.:306).

3-Types of Insertion Sequences

Conversation is not a structural product in the same way that a sentence is; it is rather the outcome of the interaction of two or more independent , goal-direct individuals, with often divergent interests. Moving from the study of sentences to the study of conversations is like moving from physics to biology. This case is applicable to the components of conversation as a whole, especially the insertion sequences which are affected by the nature of the participants themselves.

The classification of the insertion sequences depends on the types of the adjacency pairs. The following are the most common ones:-

3.1. Question-Question-Answer (Q1 (Q2 (Q3 (Q4   A4) A3 A2 *A1)*

This type can be considered as the most outstanding one that it is strictly a local system , operating over just two turns narrowly the adjacency pairs- can by means of the accumulation of the first parts project a large sequence of expectable seconds, as illustrated in the following example:-

A: May I have a bottle of mich?   (Q1)
B: are you twenty one?   (Q2)
A: No   (A2)
B: No   (A1)

In this example, one question-answer pair is embedded within another (where Q1 labels the first question, A1 is its answer and so on (Levinson, 1983:304).

The criteria of focus on question/attorneys over answer/witness, and a concern with verbal resources instead of an integration of verbal or multimodal communication practices . Sometimes ,these non - verbal practices (gaze , facial expression , body alignment , and realignment) can be considered-somehow-as inserted sequences when they are used to convey something   throughout the conversation(Matoesian,2008:3).

3.2.Request-Question-Answer-Acceptance

An insertion is one adjacency pair within another .Although the expressions may be question-answer sequences ,other forms of social action are also accomplished within this pattern .As shown in the following example ,there is a pair which consists of making a request – accepting the request (Q1-A1),with an insertion sequence of a question – answer pair (Q2-A2)which seems to function as a condition on the acceptance (A1) being provided(Parker,1992:3-22):-

      Jean: Could you mail this letter for me? (Q1=request)
      Fred: Does it have a stamp on it?   (Q2)
      Jean: Yeah   (A2)
      Fred: Okay   (A1=acceptance)

Another example of this type can be illustrated as follows:-

      A: I wanted to order some more paint.   (request)
      B: Yes,how many tubes would you like sir?   (Q1)
      A: Um,what's the price tax?   (Q2)
      B: Er,I'll just work that out for you.   (Hold)
      A: Thanks.   (Acceptance)
      B: Three nineteen a tube,sir.   (Answer 2)
      A: I'll have five,then.   (Answer 1)
      B: Here you go   (Acceptance)

(Capell,2006:122)

In this example , there are only two participants(A and B).It begins with a request , instead of accepting it , it is followed by a question ;in turn the question is followed by another question . In the middle of the conversation , there is a hold followed by its acceptance ,then the answer of the second question ,then the answer of the first question ,at last ,followed by the acceptance of the starting request.
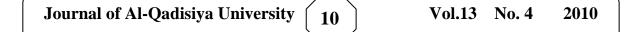
3.3. Repair

Repair is one of the most frequent instances of insertion in which there are cases where such instances is not maintained; the resulting overlapping, however, does not damage conversational coherence. In an insertion sequence, the general flow of conversation is not stopped; conversationalists behave as if they were aware that the 'turn' in their talk are operating at different levels, and thus the main stream of conversation may continue its course, even though of it is shunted off in order to let the conversationalists attend to actual or possible upcoming difficulties. After the obstacles have been removed, conversation continues as before; the turn-taking counters have not been affected by the insertion sequence. In the middle of the conversational exchange, one may be presented with a greeting, or a request for information, or in order, none of these having anything to do with the topic of the exchange (Mey , 1993:223).

Sequences may be interrupted, or even stopped altogether. Whenever normal sequencing is not observed, the phenomenon may be of sufficient interest to the interlocutors for a repair sequence to be initiated. Repairs are often stragtic devices: correcting oneself, in particular, can be a way of gaining time to think ,or a means to prevent somebody else from jumping in the conversation at an upcoming transitional repair(ibid:226).

      K: 'E likes that waiter over there,
      A: Wait-er?
      K: Waiteress,sorry,
      A: 'Ats better,   (Levinson, 1983:342)

3.4. Delay

Insertion sequences can be a kind of delay. A delay is an item used to put off a dispreffered second part. A disprefferred second part is a second part of an adjacency pair that consists of responses to the first part is generally to be avoided or not expected.

-A refusal in response to a request, offer, or invitation
-A disagreement in response to an assessment.
-An unexpected answer in response to a question.
-An admission in response to blame.

The following exchange contains delays as a repair initiation in the second turn;

A: Can you do it?
B: What?
A: Can you take care of it?
B: Now?   (Capell.2006:34)

Delay in response symbolically marks potential unavailability of the immediate , i . e . ; normally automatic expected answer . Delay represents distance between what is expected and what is provided . Delay is always interrupted as meaningful(Yule,1996:37).

4-Insertion Sequence and Social Status

The progress of a conversation depends, to a great extent, on the status of its participants, in simple words, if the participants are of different social status, superior to inferior . However , it is obvious that when there is a conversation between two different participants, there should be some sort of knowledge about their status and the relationship between them. That is to say, for instance, if it is a conversation between two close friends, there may be a great number of insertion sequences depending on the topic of the conversation. On the other hand, if the participants of the conversation are of different social classes like a boss and an officers ;a teacher and his pupils; a father and his sons; and so forth, the number of the insertion sequences decreases according to the topic itself(Maculay,2005:240).

5- Analysis

The practical part is concerned with analyzing certain religious texts taken from the Holly Bible and the Glorious Quran .The English texts are taken from the Holy Bible - the book of Exodus; while the Arabic ones are taken from the Glorious Quran (Al-Baqra Sura)

English Texts Analysis

He asked the one in the wrong ,
"why are you hitting your fellow
Hebrew ? " the man said, "who
made you ruler and judge over us?
Are you thinking of killing me as
You killed the Egyptian? "

(Exodus 1:20:50)

This two-participant conversation takes place when Moses(PBUH) had grown up and had gone to where his own people .When he had seen an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, he denied this act and he blamed him in the from of a question :

-Why are you hitting your fellow Hebrew?
Moses(PBUH) was waiting for an answer from the Egyptian , instead he answered
Him with a question too, saying :

> Who made you ruler over us? Are you
> thinking of killing me as you killed
> The Egyptian ?

Accordingly , it is an insertion sequence that is a question followed by another question, it takes the form (Q1-Q2)

Text -2-

> But Moses said to God "who am I
> that I should go to Pharaoh and
> bring the Israelites out of Egypt?"
> and God said," I will be with
> you and this will be the sign to you
> that it is I who have sent you.

(Exodus 4:7:51)

God sent Moses to Pharaoh to bring the Israelites to worship God. But Moses was amazed that he is weak enough to go to Pharaoh and face him,; thus , he said:-

> Who am I should go to Pharoah and bring
> The Israelites out of Egypt?

This turn takes the form of a question, it is expected to be answered positively, but instead God replied in another form supporting Moses and made him calm saying:-

> I will be with you. And this will
> be the sign to you that it is I
> who have sent you.

It takes the form of assessment, so, it is an insertion sequence of question /Assessment/ answer (Q/As/A,).

Text -3-

> Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh
> and said" this is what the Lord, the
> God of Israel, says, "Let me people go,
> so that they may hold as a festival to
> me in the desert."
> Pharaoh said , " who is the Lord ,
> that I should obey him and let
> Israel go ? I do not know the Lord
> and I will not let Israel go."

(Exodus 4:8:52)

When Moses and Aaron(PBUT) went to Pharaoh and asked him to let Israel go with him in a form of an order from the Lord- the God of Israel- , they expected Pharaoh to do their request or refuse it, but instead he asked them a question about who is he and he will not let Israel go with them and he denied the Lord saying:

> I do not know the Lord and I will not
> let Isreal go.

These turns takes the form Order/ Question / Non Acceptance. (O / Q /non-acc.)

Text -4-

> Then the Lord said to Moses "
> go, tell Pharaoh king of
> Egypt to let the
> Israelites go out of this country. But
> moses said to the Lord, " If the
> Israelites will not listen to me, why
> would Pharaoh listen to me , since I
> speak with faltering lips?"
>   (Exodus 6:15:53)

In these turns, the Lord begins the conversation with an order " Go, tell …" expecting Moses to do that order, but Moses answered in another way, that is in the form of a condition followed by a conclusion:-

> Why would Pharaoh listen to me, since
> I speak with faltering lips

This can be described as order /question/ acceptance.

Text -5-

> Pharaoh officials said to him " How
> long this can be a share to us ? Let the
> people go, so that they may worship
> the Lord their God. Do you not yet
> realize that Egypt is ruined?"
> Then Moses and Aaron were brought
> back to Pharaoh " he said ." But just who will
> be going?"
>   (Exodus 10:15:57)

This conversation represents the meeting between Moses and his people (the Israelites) . In that conversation , Moses ordered Pharaoh to: " Go and worship the Lord …" but he answered negatively, i. e. instead of (accepting or refusing their order , he answered him with a question:

> " but who will be going?"

to make inserted turns containing Order /Question/ Refusing.

Text -6-

> They camped at Rephimim but there
> was no water for the people to drink,
> so they quarreled with Moses and said:
> "Give us water to drink." Moses replied
> "Why do you quarrel with me ? why
> do you put Lord to the test?"
>   (Exodus 16:24:64)

When the Israelites suffered from thirst, they ordered Moses to bring them water, but instead of bringing water to them , he asked them to say this request to their Lord and putting them to the test. As a result, it is an insertion sequence of Order /Question/ Acceptance, this is so to indicate the lack of confidence between Moses and his followers and their trust in their God.

Arabic Texts Analysis

Text -1-

وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ فَقَالَ أَنْبِئُونِي
بِأَسْمَاءِ هَؤُلَاءِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ (٣١) قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ
لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ (٣٢)

(البقرة ٣١-٣٢)

And he taught Adam the names
of all things; then he placed them
before the angels, and said, : "Tell me
the names of these if you are right"
They said ," Glory to thee : of knowledge
We have none , save what Thou
Hast taught us : in truth it is Thou
Who art perfect in knowledge and wisdom."

(Ali, 24, 5)

These lines represent a conversation between Allah (الله جــل جلالــه) and the angels (الملــــــائكة) when he ordered them to tell Him the names of things. Names of things mean the inner nature and qualities of things and things here would include feelings. These things they could only know from the outside, but they had faith or belief in the unseen. And they knew that Allah (الله جــل جلالــه) saw all-what others see, what others do not see. As a response to that order, the angels(الملائكة) could not replay to that order, but saying their non-knowledge in a form of a negative sentence:-

سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا

So, this can be translated as a form of an insertion-sequence of order /assessment/ non-acceptance which is represented by the lack of knowledge by the angels (الملائكــة) (the second participant).

Text -2-

وإذ قلتم يا موسى لن نصبر على طعام واحد فأدع لنا ربك
وَإِذْ قُلْتُمْ يَا مُوسَى لَنْ نَصْبِرَ عَلَى طَعَامٍ وَاحِدٍ فَادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ
يُخْرِجْ لَنَا مِمَّا تُنْبِتُ الْأَرْضُ مِنْ بَقْلِهَا وَقِثَّائِهَا وَفُومِهَا
وَعَدَسِهَا وَبَصَلِهَا قَالَ أَتَسْتَبْدِلُونَ الَّذِي هُوَ أَدْنَى
بِالَّذِي هُوَ خَيْرٌ اهْبِطُوا مِصْرًا فَإِنَّ لَكُمْ مَا سَأَلْتُمْ وَضُرِبَتْ
عَلَيْهِمُ الذِّلَّةُ وَالْمَسْكَنَةُ وَبَاءُوا بِغَضَبٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ
ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَيَقْتُلُونَ
النَّبِيِّينَ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ ذَلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوْا وَكَانُوا يَعْتَدُونَ (٦١)

(البقرة ٦١)

And remember ye said:
"O Moses ! we cannot endure
One kind of food (always):
So beseech the Lord for us
To produce for us of what the earth

Growth-its pot-herbs, and cucumbers,
Its garlic, lentils, and onions."
He said : "will ye exchange
The better for the worse?
Go ye down to any town.
And ye shall find what ye want ! "
They were covered with humiliation
And misery : they drew
On themselves they wrath of Allah.
This because they went on
Rejecting the signs of Allah
And slaying his messengers
Without just cause.
This because they rebelled
And went on transgressing

(Ali, 32-3)

When Moses took the Israelites away of Egypt , they stayed eating one kind of food, and they murmured the sameness of food they got in the desert. They were evidently hankering after the delicacies of the Egypt they had left. Moses' reproach to them contains twofolds : (1) such variety of food you can get in any town : but for their sake, sell your freedom . Is not freedom better than foods ? : (2) in front of the rich promised land, which you are reluctant to march to : behind is Egypt which is the better would you exchange the better for the worse ?

The conversation begins by the children of Israel (بـــني إســـرائيل) asking Moses to bring them other kinds of food by beseeching his Lord:

<div dir="rtl">ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ</div>

So , it is a request and they are waiting for an acceptance or non-acceptance, but instead Moses (موسى عليه السلام) (the second participant) did not accept their request and replied it in a form of a rhetoric question :

<div dir="rtl">أَتَسْتَبْدِلُونَ الَّذِي هُوَ أَدْنَى بِالَّذِي هُوَ خَيْرٌ</div>

Accordingly, it is an insertion sequence in the form of request /question/ acceptance.
Text -3-

<div dir="rtl">وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَذْبَحُوا بَقَرَةً
قَالُوا أَتَتَّخِذُنَا هُزُوًا قَالَ أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ (٦٧)</div>

<div dir="rtl">(البقرة ٦٧)</div>

And remember Moses said
to his people : Allah commands
That ye sacrifice a heifer
They said : " Makest thou
A laughing-stock of us?
He said : " Allah save me
from being an ignorant (fool)! "

(Ali , 35)

Again, it is a conversation between Moses (موسـى عليـه السـلام) and his people in which Moses said to his people to kill a heifer as a sacrifice to Allah, they put off on one pretext,

asking a number of questions which they could have answered themselves if they had listened to Moses' direction. Their questions were carping criticism rather than the result of a desire for information. It was a more thin pretence that they were genuinely seeking for guidance. When at last they were driven into a corner , they made the sacrifice, but the will was wanting , which would have made the sacrifice efficacious for purification from sin. Moses asked them to kill the heifer in the form of an order, but they answered him negatively in a form of a rhetoric question , it is used ironically to indicate non-acceptance but indirectly, at last, Moses ended the conversation by an assessement which represents his knowledge of their non-acceptance According to this , these lines can be interepted as inserted sequences

taking the form of order /question/ non-acceptance.

Text -4-

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ أَرِني كَيْفَ تُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى قَالَ أَوَلَمْ تُؤْمِنْ قَالَ بَلَى
وَلَكِنْ لِيَطْمَئِنَّ قَلْبِي قَالَ فَخُذْ أَرْبَعَةً مِنَ الطَّيْرِ فَصُرْهُنَّ إِلَيْكَ ثُمَّ
اجْعَلْ عَلَى كُلِّ جَبَلٍ مِنْهُنَّ جُزْءًا ثُمَّ ادْعُهُنَّ يَأْتِينَكَ سَعْيًا
وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

(البقرة (٦٠))

Behold ! Abraham said !
" My lord ! Show me how
Thou givest life to the dead "
He said : " Dost thou not
Then believe? He said :
" Yea ! but to satisfy
My own understanding. "
He said " Take four birds ;
Tame them to turn to thee;
Put a portion of them
On every hill and call to them ;
They will came to thee,
(Flying) with speed.
Then know that Allah
Is exalted in power , wise."

(Ali, 109)

It is a conversation between Allah (الله جل جلالـه) and Abraham (إبـراهيم عليـه السـلام) . Abraham had a complete faith in Allah's power, but he wanted, with Allah's permission, to give an explanation of that faith and his own heart and mind. This explains why Abraham asked Allah to show him how he turned the dead back to life:-

رَبِّ أَرِني كَيْفَ تُحْيِي

It is a request from the inferior (إبراهيم) to the superior (الله جل جلالـه). As an answer, Allah answered his request by a question :-

أَوَلَمْ تُؤْمِنْ

Abraham answered Allah's question positively with a justification saying:

قَالَ بَلَى وَلَكِنْ لِيَطْمَئِنَّ قَلْبِي

At the end of the conversation , Allah accepted Abraham's request positively and ordered him to take four birds and cut them for pieces and then call them , they will come back again. Thus, these turns can be classified as Request /Question/Answer/Acceptance.

Conclusions

This paper has arrived at the following findings:-

There is a clear difference between English and Arabic in using insertion sequence.

If the participants were from different social status , in our case, religious ones- for example, Lord and Prophet, and common people and so forth, the use of insertion sequences should be decreased as possible. However , if the participants were from the same social status, like people, among prophet , and so on there could be a range and great possibility in using these turns.

Most the insertion sequence are of the type order /Question/Answer/Acceptance when the participants are superior and inferior.

In analyzing these texts, there is a decrease in the use of the insertion sequences because of the particular nature of the religious texts in both English and Arabic.

The lack of insertion sequence in a conversation indicates the formal relationship between the participants, in contrast, the increase in using them indicates the close and informal relationship between the participants.

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الخلاصة:

التعاقب في العربية والانكليزية بالإشارة الى النصوص الدينية / دراسة تناقضية

يتناول البحث الأدوار المتعاقبة في الحوار في كلتا اللغتين: الانكليزية و العربية ، ويمكـن أن نجـدها بــين الأزواج المتقابلة وتشخيصها من خلال تعاقب الأزواج المتقابلة. يركز البحث على الاختلاف و التشابه بين اللغتين فــي استخدام هذه التعاقبات و بالخصوص في النصوص الدينية والتي أخذت من الإنجيل – الكتــاب المقـدس – (كتـاب الاكدوس) ومن القرآن الكريم (سورة البقرة) . يتمنى الباحث أن يجد المتعلمون في هذا البحث مصــدراً لجانــب مــن جوانب الاختلاف و التشابه بين اللغتين وبالأخص الجانب الديني.