

## **Speech Act of Prohibition in English and Arabic: A Contrastive Study on Selected Biblical and Quranic Verses**

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### **Abstract**

Speech act theory has played an interesting role in the philosophy of language recently and has drawn great interest among pragmaticists, anthropologists, philosophers, linguists, and semanticists. Therefore, this paper is an attempt to investigate the speech act of prohibition as one of the most essential communicative uses of language. It is defined as a desire or a wish to forbid someone from doing something. The researchers attempt to show how the speech act of prohibition can be used in both English and Arabic at various levels of analysis. Specifically, a three-level analytical framework, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic, is suggested for textual analysis through a set of linguistic devices. This means that in performing a linguistic act, we often do further things. The data of this paper consists of a number of verses from the Glorious Quran and the Holy Bible. The main findings of this paper indicate that prohibition in English is most commonly realized by using a syntactic device, namely declarative sentences. Whilst prohibition in Arabic is expressed by the negative imperative “do not do”. In addition, prohibition can be expressed explicitly and implicitly in both languages. However, it was found that Arabic is distinguished from English by its heavy use of explicit and implicit devices expressing the speech act of prohibition.

*Keywords:* pragmatics, prohibition, semantics, speech act theory, syntax.

## 1. Introduction

Language serves different functions. One of these functions, termed “conative” by Jakobson (1980), is to persuade and influence others through commands, entreaties, and prohibitions. Allan (1986) stated that prohibition is a speech act whereby a speaker forbids someone from doing something. Prohibition has been listed under different categories by many scholars such as Austin (1962), Searle (1975), Bach & Harnish (1979) and Allan (1986) from different perspectives. Searle (1975) and Allan (1986), for example, classified prohibition under the category of directives which are defined as attempts to get the hearer to do something, therefore they show world-to-word fit, and expressed speaker’s wish or desire that a hearer does an act. Thus, a prohibitive sentence is classified as one of the chief varieties of sentence generally accepted as belonging to the class of request. Therefore, speech acts including prohibition “manifest the speaker’s intention (desire, wish) that his utterance or the attitude it expresses be taken as a reason for the hearer to act” (Bach & Harnish, 1979, p.47).

However, Austin (1962) and Sbisà (1984) listed prohibition within the “exercitive” speech acts which are “the exercising of powers, rights, or influence in the giving of decisions or in the advocacy of decisions in favour of or against a certain course of action” (Austin, 1962, p. 153). In line with Austin’s view, Haverkate (1979, p.39) contended that prohibition is an impositive speech act performed in order to prevent a certain state of affairs from being brought about. However, based on the literature reviewed, the researchers have found that there is a dearth in the study of prohibition. Furthermore, a comparative analysis of prohibition in English and Arabic in religious texts is scarcely studied.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Prohibition in English

#### 2.1.1 Prohibition at the Syntactic Level

According to the syntactic point of view, there are various ways in which prohibition can be achieved. These ways are as follows:

##### 2.1.1.1 Imperative Sentence

Syntactically, prohibition could be expressed by a number of devices, the most common of which is the imperative. Allan (1986) asserted that imperatives frame prohibition as in the following example:

**Example 1:** *Keep out.* [Prohibition]

The imperative can be used to forbid an action. It is simply a negative command, viz. “do not” that is used before the imperative to turn the command into a prohibition. According to Jawad (2012), the basic difference between a ‘command’ and a ‘prohibition’ is that the former indicates instructing the addressee to do something whereas the latter indicates instructing the addressee NOT [author’s emphasis] to do a given thing. Thus, it could be claimed that a ‘prohibition’ is a kind of a negative ‘command’. This view is supported by some scholars such as Zandvoort (1962); Geiring, Graustein, Hoffman and Kristen (1987) and Swan (2000), who denoted that prohibitive sentence is a negative imperative sentence usually with initial “do not” followed by an infinitive without “to”. It is used when we tell somebody not to do something and in accordance with the speaker’s intent underlying requests. For example,

**Example 2:** *Don’t be such a nuisance.*

##### 2.1.1.3 Declarative Sentence

Allan (1986) confirmed that a declarative sentence can be used in performing any subcategory of speech act including prohibition to denote an actualization of the illocutionary act. This is done

either through clauses containing a performative verb, or through the meaning of the predicates in such sentences as the followings:

**Example 3:** *I forbid you to speak to him.* [Clause containing a performative verb]

**Example 4:** *Adam must not be allowed out on the balcony.* [Predicate]

#### 2.1.1.3 Negative verb *be with to + infinitive*

Thomson and Martinet (1980) stated that prohibition can be carried out through another common construction which is the negative verb *be with to infinitive*.

**Example 5:** *You are not to come into my room without knocking.*

#### 2.1.1.4 Block Language

Prohibition can be expressed by another construction that is of a block language. Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, and Svartvik, (1985) discussed that block language appears in functions as labels, titles, (some) newspaper headlines, headings, notices, and advertisements. Hence, prohibitions often take the form of nominal phrases introduced by “no” and the understanding of the message is furnished by the context.

**Example 6:** *No entry.*

Quirk et al. (1985) and Swan (2000) agreed that a gerund is used with an ordinary determiner especially “no” in public notices against activities expressing prohibition.

**Example 7:** *No playing loud music!*

**Example 8:** *No smoking is allowed in school.*

### 2.1.2 Prohibition at the Semantic Level

#### 2.1.2.1 Modality

Semantically, modality is one of the most important features of English; a great variety of meanings and attitudes may be conveyed through modalising and thus making the semantic truth value of a given sentence more flexible. Modality is the way in which a speaker can express his/her attitude towards a situation in interpersonal communication. Perkins (1983) confirmed that prohibition belongs to deontic modality which can be defined in terms of social or institutional laws. However, modality is exclusively concerned with the syntactic class of modal auxiliary verbs which constitutes the only formally coherent class of modal expressions in English (Perkins, 1983). The auxiliary verbs are called so because they cannot be used alone, but rather with other verbs in order to convey a particular sense or ‘mode’ such as permission, obligation, and prohibition. There are negative modal auxiliaries which can be used with prohibitive sentences such as (must not, may not, cannot, shall not, and have not got to). For example:

**Example 9:** *Students must not use dictionaries in the examination.*

**Example 10:** *You cannot go abroad without a passport.*

**Example 11:** *You shall not ignore my wishes.*

### 2.1.3 Prohibition at the Pragmatic Level

#### 2.1.3.1 Prohibitive Performative Verbs

The most important constituent of an explicitly performative clause is the performative verb. On this line, Perkins (1983) affirmed that many verbs could be subsumed under the heading “performative verbs”, i.e. verbs that can be used to perform an act rather than merely describing or stating an act. Consequently, Allan (1986) argued that the verb spells out the illocutionary force of the performative clause effectively because the meaning of the performative verb presents the essence of the illocution, e.g. *I promise, I forbid, and I prohibit*.

To Haverkate (1979), the only specific verb that can be used in the explicit prohibitive performative sentences is the verb *prohibit*. According to Fraser (1975, p.192), the prohibitive performative verbs such as *forbid* and *prohibit* belong to the act of requesting, i.e. verbs expressing “the speaker’s desire for the hearer to bring about the state of affairs expressed in the proposition” and to the act of exercising authority which indicates “the speaker’s proposal to create a new state of affairs by exercising certain rights or powers”.

### 2.1.3.2 Hedges

Following Fraser (1980), some illocutionary acts can be effectively performed by a type of sentence which is called “hedged performative”. For example, to utter

**Example 12:** *I must forbid* you from saying anything

may count as an act of forbidding, though the literal interpretation of this is only a report of obligation.

Additionally, Fraser (1975) pointed out that the hedged performative sentence differs from the corresponding performative sentence in that it involves a modal or a semi-modal.

**Example 13:** *I must forbid* you from going out.

Fraser (1975) also said that ‘must’ is a strong performative modal that occurs most often with the largest number of verbs.

### 2.1.3.3 Prohibition and Illocutionary forces

Having believed that the act specified by the proposition is in the interest of the hearer, the speaker may attempt to diminish the degree of imposition. He/she can use the strategic device of presenting his/her own interest as being advantageous to the hearer. Nevertheless, prohibition speech act may be used to express various impositive illocutionary forces such as warning, forbidding, and threatening.

## 2.2 Prohibition in Arabic

### 2.2.1 Prohibition at the Syntactic Level

#### 2.2.1.1 Imperative Sentence

Prohibition is considered as the demand of abstention from an act, hence it is a negative command (Syyibwiyah, n.d ; Ibn Manthoor, 1956). Accordingly, prohibition is “prevention from carrying out an act by a particular speech from a position of superiority” (Ibn al- shajeri, n.d , p. 271). Its form is “do not do” (لا تفعل) and “Let him not do” (لا يفعل). He mentioned that prohibition can be included in the field of command as in the following examples:

**Example 14:** Do not eat *لا تأكل*

which is equivalent to the imperative

**Example 15:** Stop eating *توقف عن الأكل*

However, al- Subki (n.d, p.324) and al- Jurjani (1986, p. 135) agreed that prohibition is the opposite of command at which the superior says to the inferior “do not do” (لا تفعل). Generally, prohibition can be realized by the imperfect verb (in the jussive mood) beginning with the particle of prohibition (لا الناهية). There is agreement among grammarians and rhetoricians such as Syyibwiyah (1980, p.8-9), (al-Sakkaki, 1983, p.320) and al- Jurjani (1986, p.357) that prohibition has only one particle which is (لا) in the form of “do not do” (لا تفعل). The prohibitive particle لا (الناهيّة) is used for the third person as well as the second person (al- Muberd, n.d). For al- Sueeti (n.d ) and Syyibwiyah (1980), this prohibitive particle is mostly used for the addressee and slightly with the first person such as “لا اريتك ههنا” *I don't want to see you here.*

#### 2.2.1.2 Declarative Sentence

Scholars such as Ibn al-Shajeri (n.d), al- Qurtubi (1967), al- Maaini (1985) asserted that declarative sentences can be used to ask an addressee not to do a particular action.

**Example 16:** (2) (النكاثِر/1-2) *أَلِهَاتِكُمُ النَّكَاثِرُ (1) حَتَّى زُرْتُمُ الْمَقَابِرَ (2)*

*Abundance diverts you, until you come to the graves.* (Ali, 195, p.1204)

This example shows an implicit prohibition suggesting an indirect form of warning to the people (Muslims and non-Muslims) who indulge in worldly life neglecting good deeds that approach them to Allah then time flies to find themselves facing death where no more activities. However, prohibition in its implicit form which is expressed by the declarative form is more effective than an explicit prohibition expressed by the form of (لا تفعل) *do not do it* and (لا يفعل) *let him not do it*.

### 2.2.1.3 Interrogative Sentence

Haruun (1979) mentioned that prohibition can be expressed by using an interrogative sentence. According to him, the questioner asks the listener to provide him with some information, to make him know a certain thing.

**Example 17:** (116/المائدة) *أَأَنْتَ قُلْتَ لِلنَّاسِ اتَّخِذُونِي وَأُمِّي إِلَهَيْنِ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ*

*didst thou say to men, take me and my mother for two gods besides Allah?* (Ali, 1951, p. 275)

A closer examination of this verse unveils an implicit prohibition indicating an indirect form of forbidding to Christians in the allegation of their worship of Jesus and his mother Mary. This verse shows that the notion of Trinity is an offence against the concept of the oneness of God (Allah) (Amer, 2010). In terms of heavenly religions, Islam is the last religion and the Holy Quran is the last Godly Book directed to all human beings and this universality is reflected in this extract.

### 2.2.1.4 Cognate Object المفعول المطلق

Prohibition can be carried out by the cognate object (henceforth CO). Ibn Aqeel (1964, p.557) defined CO as “the verbal noun in the accusative case, emphasize its regent or showing its type, or number.” المصدر المنتصب توكيداً لعامله أو بياناً لنوعه أو عدده

According to Hassan (1974), two conditions must be met for the explicit cognate verbal noun to be omitted. First, it should have the same lexeme as its regent. Second, there must be a word that substitutes the deleted verbal noun.

(129/النساء) *وَلَنْ تَسْتَطِيعُوا أَنْ تَعْدِلُوا بَيْنَ النِّسَاءِ وَلَوْ حَرَصْتُمْ فَلَا تَمِيلُوا كُلَّ الْمَيْلِ فَتَذَرُوهَا كَالْمُعَلَّقَةِ وَإِنْ تُصْلِحُوا*

**Example 18:**

*وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا .*

And you cannot do justice between wives, even though you wish (it), *but be not disinclined (from one) with total disinclination*, so that you leave her in suspense. And if you are reconciled and keep your duty, surely Allah is ever Forgiving, Merciful (Ali, 1951, p.225).

In this example “كُلَّ الْمَيْلِ” *total disinclination* is substituted for the deleted مفعول مطلق (cognate object), viz. ميلاً. However, this verse illustrates that there is a direct prohibition for men who are legally permissible to have more than one wife (up to four) because they are responsible for the sustenance of their wives, they have to provide a separate living accommodation for each wife, and they have to support and treat them all equally.

### 2.2.2 Prohibition at the Semantic Level

Semantically, there are a number of devices that can be used to express prohibition. They are as follows:

#### 2.2.2.1 Would not ما كان and Ought not to ما ينبغي

Prohibition can implicitly be expressed by the use of *would not* and *ought not to*. However, the use of ما كان “would not” may have the idiomatic meaning “must not” as in the following Quranic verse:



**Example 19:** (92/النساء) وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ أَنْ يَقْتُلَ مُؤْمِنًا إِلَّا خَطَاً

And a believer *would not* kill a believer except by mistake (Ali, 1951, p. 216)

This verse shows that life is absolutely sacred in the Islamic Brotherhood. Accordingly, the killing of some Muslims by Muslims is forbidden; however mistakes sometimes happen. This is apparently elucidated by the implicit prohibition in this verse indicating that when there is no intention for killing, there is no murder; however there is a punitive measure for such killing to ensure justice.

**Example 20:** (Ya Seen, 69) وَمَا عَلَّمْنَا الشُّعْرَ وَمَا يَنْبَغِي لَهُ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ وَقُرْآنٌ مُبِينٌ

We have not instructed the (Prophet) in Poetry, *nor is it meet* for him: this is no less than a Message and a Qur'an making things clear (Ali, 1971\1951, p.810).

This Quranic verse is a rejoinder to the disbelievers, who slighted the Prophet and his message by branding him a poet when he preached and talked about the Hereafter, Hell and Heaven. This verse explains that the only thing taught to the Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him and his family) by Almighty Allah is the message he was to deliver, that is the Quran. Thus, This Quran that he has brought is not poetry, rather, it is a remembrance, an admonition to clarify and manifest God's (Allah's) rulings (al-Mahali & al- Sueetti, n.d). Thus, the Prophet was not allowed to become an independent source of guidance, but merely to transmit guidance from Allah to the people. Thus, this verse expresses an implicit speech act of prohibition because the Prophet was only Allah's messenger and the Glorious Quran represents the words of Allah, the Creator.

#### 2.2.2.2 The Use of the act coupled with Threat of Punishment (ذِكْرُ الْفَعْلِ مَقْرُونًا بِوَعِيدٍ)

This is one way of expressing prohibition. It is meant to threaten with penalty those who disobey (al-Zalami, 1991).

(1-3/المطففين) وَيْلٌ لِّلْمُطَفِّفِينَ (1) الَّذِينَ إِذَا اكْتَالُوا عَلَى النَّاسِ يَسْتَوْفُونَ (2) وَإِذَا كَالُوهُمْ أَوْ وَزَنُوهُمْ يُخْسِرُونَ

**Example 21:** (3)

*Woe to the defaulters* Who, when they take the measure (of their dues) from men, take it fully. But when they measure out to others or weight out for them, they are deficient (Ali, 1951, p. 1155).

This verse elucidates that some merchants and retailers in Al- Medinah (where the Prophet Muhammed peace be upon him and his family settled) defrauded customers when selling in measurement (i.e. tricking them). First, Allah revealed وَيْلٌ لِّلْمُطَفِّفِينَ *woe to the defaulters*, however, the word وَيْلٌ *woe* is associated with the threat of punishment (Shuper, 1965). This threat was directed to الْمُطَفِّفِينَ defaulters who are defined by the following verses الَّذِينَ إِذَا اكْتَالُوا عَلَى (1) الَّذِينَ إِذَا كَالُوهُمْ أَوْ وَزَنُوهُمْ يُخْسِرُونَ (2) النَّاسِ يَسْتَوْفُونَ (3) *when they take the measure (of their dues) from men, take it fully. But when they measure out to others or weight out for them, they are deficient.* The word اكْتَالُوا *they take the measure* means that they buy right measure without deficiency and the word كَالُوهُمْ *they measure out to others* which means those who sell food less than the due. Those *defaulters* tended to be stingy with measurement and weight, either by increasing it if it is due from the others, or decreasing it if it is a debt. However, they fulfil their right to full, and detract right to others; thus, they accumulated between stinginess and miserliness. This Quranic verse indicates that there is an implicit prohibition of making short measure or short weight. It also implies a person or group may seek respect and honour from people, but they are not willing to do the same for the others in similar circumstances.

### 2.2.2.3 The Negation of the Act (نفي الفعل)

This structure is used in the Glorious Quran to express a strong prohibition ordering abstention and inhibition. Hence, the following Quranic verse may express prohibition implicitly (al-Esfehani, n.d)

(البقرة/197) فَمَنْ فَرَضَ فِيهِنَّ الْحَجَّ فَلَا رَفَثَ وَلَا فُسُوقَ وَلَا جِدَالَ فِي

**Example 22:** الْحَجَّ

So whoever determines the performance of the pilgrimage there in, there shall be then *no foul speech nor abusing nor disputing* in the pilgrimage (Ali, 1951, p.84)

As this verse prohibits the commitment of *رَفَثَ foul speech*, *فُسُوقَ abusing (insulting) and جِدَالَ disputing* during pilgrimage, it is recommended that pilgrims should come with provisions. However, this verse contains

(لا النافية) *not* of negation which is used to express prohibition indirectly.

2.2.2.4 *It is not +Noun expressing a Good or a Bad Trait+المصدر المؤول (i.e. نفي البر عن الفعل) (نفي البر عن الفعل)*

Prohibition may be expressed by the implicit form as in the following example

189 \البقرة) وَأَيُّسَ الْبُرِّ بَأْنَ تَأْتُوا الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهَا وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مِنْ أَيْمَنِ الْبُيُوتِ مِنْ

**Example 23:** أَبْوَابِهَا

and *it is not righteousness that you should enter the houses at their backs, but righteousness is this that one should guard (against evil); and go into the houses by their doors* (Ali,1917-1951, p.86).

This verse prohibits the practice prevalent among the Arabs in the pre- Islamic period to come home from the back after performing the pilgrimage. This act violates the right course of life, while entering the house from the door is legally considered as acceptable and right. This verse expresses an implicit speech act of prohibition using the structural form of the negation of the good of bad acts.

**Example 24:** لَيْسَ الْكُفْرُ أَنْ تَشْرَبَ الْخَمْرَ لَكِنِ الْكُفْرُ أَنْ تَحَلَّلَ شَرِبَ الْخَمْرَ

*It is not the disbelief to drink alcohol, but also to allow drinking it.* (The researchers' translation)

According to the Islamic approach to health, anything that is mostly harmful is forbidden. Therefore, alcohol is undoubtedly harmful and adversely affects the mind and the body, causing diseases, wasting money, and spoiling the individual's social life. Thus, Muslims would know that alcohol is prohibited in Islam. Thus, Allah indeed dislikes those who would still deny the prohibition of alcohol or allow the others to do such a prohibited act.

## 2.2.3 Prohibition at the Pragmatic Level

### 2.2.3.1 Prohibitive Performative verbs

There are a number of performative verbs that are in the form of imperative denoting prohibition; they are as follows: *اجْتَنِبْ* (avoid), *كُفْ* (withhold), *دُرْ* (relinquish), and *إِنَّهْ* (prohibit). Al-Shwkani (n.d), al-Maliki (n.d), and al- Maaini (1985) argued that performative sentences containing one of these performative verbs are used as a metaphorical formula expressing prohibition.

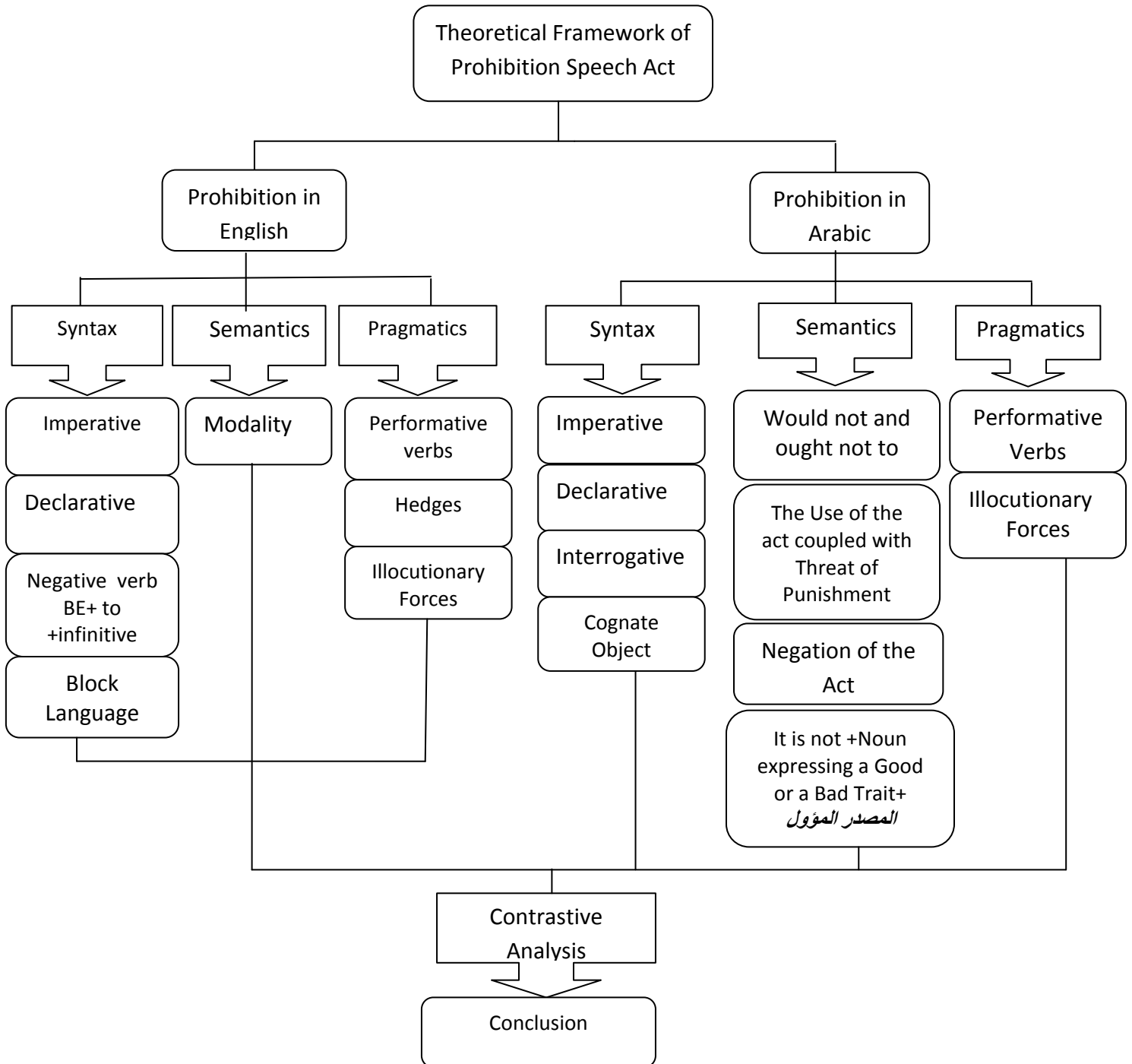
### 2.2.3.1 Prohibition and Illocutionary Forces

It is not always easy to make precise distinctions between the illocutionary acts of certain utterances because these acts depend on the relative authority of the speaker and hearer. Nevertheless, situational contexts are helpful and appear to determine the illocutionary forces of certain utterances. According to some Muslim scholars such as al- Sueti ( n.d ) , al- Subki( n.d), Syyibwiyah( n.d), al-Sakkaki (1983) and al-Zalami(1991), the researchers found out that the

illocutionary forces can be التحريم (forbidding) 2. الكراهية (abstention) 3. الدعاء (prayer) 4. الالتماس (request) 5. التشجيع (encouragement) 6. بيان العاقبة (expressing consequence) 7. التحقير (contempt) 8. الإرشاد والنصح (counselling) 9. الوفاء والتعاون (gratitude and cooperation) 10. التوبيخ (reprimanding).

**3. Theoretical Framework**

The researcher adopted Allan (1986) and Al-Awsei (1988)s’ models of speech act of prohibition in English and Arabic respectively.





### Figure 3.1: The Proposed theoretical framework of prohibition speech act in English and Arabic

As shown in the above figure, there are three levels of analysis of the speech act of prohibition in English and Arabic. The first to start with is the syntactic level, then semantic level, and finally the pragmatic level. With each level, there are sub-categories that are slightly different due to different structures in both languages.

#### 4. Methodology

With the aim of providing a contrastive investigation that may serve the purpose of analyzing the speech act of prohibition in English and Arabic, the Holy Bible and the Glorious Quran receive due attention. The verses have been chosen from the *Book of Exodus*, namely (20) and the sura (Chapter) entitled *Al-Baqarah* (The Cow) respectively to obtain adequate data of the speech act of prohibition. To achieve this aim, the researchers adopted Allan (1986) and Al-Awsei (1988) s' models of speech act of prohibition in English and Arabic respectively as mentioned in Figure (3.1) as proposed by the researchers which also highlights the procedures of analysis. This means that syntax, semantics and then pragmatics are analysed respectively in both languages, starting with the English text sampled and then followed by the Arabic one to see if there are any dominant patterns in the sampling.

#### 5. Data Analysis

The data will be analysed according to the proposed theoretical framework (see Figure 3.1). The section is divided into English texts analysis and Arabic texts analysis.

##### 5.1 English Texts

**Text1:** I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. *You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them;* for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments. *You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name* (Ex. 20:3-7).

In these verses, Allah talked to Moses giving him the Ten Commandments (Decalogue). The Decalogue is the core of the Mosaic Law; as instruction and deterrent it is valid in the New Law. The first commandment *you shall have no other gods before me* indicates that Allah to be the only true God, and to worship and glorify Him accordingly. Syntactically, the determiner *no* is used here to replace *not* with the modal auxiliary *shall* to express the emphatic prohibition. The expression *before me*, at the semantic level, has three possible interpretations *in front of me*, *in addition to me*, and *over against*. The meaning *over against*, the usual meaning of the phrase, is perfectly appropriate here as it suggests that all false gods are opposed to the true God, i.e. Allah. The worship of them is incompatible with the worship of Allah.

Moreover, these biblical verses prohibit the false swearing including the idea of profane or vain swearing i.e., the irreverent use of the name of Allah. Thus, all oaths are forbidden (Davies, 1971). Thus, these verses deal directly with modes of worship, i.e. the shaping of images to be worshipped and adored; it forbids the making of idols either in heaven above or on earth beneath (Walsh, 1966, p. 51). At the syntactic level, these verses have the structural form of *shall not + verb* to express an explicit prohibition. Pragmatically, this command intentionally conveys the illocutionary force of warning to express a speech act of prohibition. Hence, this verse involves

more than simply a prohibition of swearing; it also prohibits the misappropriation of religious language to commit a crime or to blaspheme against places or people that are holy to Allah.

**Text 2:** *Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.* Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns (Ex. 20:8-10).

In this verse *remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy*, the imperative *remember* is used for the commandment for the Sabbath day (Saturday). The imperative here functions in place of the emphatic negative imperative *do not forget* to stress the basic verbal idea of the root-remembering of the Sabbath day to make it distinct from the other week days. This form shows that it was not now first given but was known by the people before. Consequently, the verb *remember* implies a mental process which involves recalling and pondering as well as the consequent actions for such remembering.

**Text 3:** *You shall not murder.* (Ex. 20:13)

**Text 4:** *You shall not commit adultery.* (Ex. 20:14)

**Text 5:** *You shall not steal.* (Ex. 20:15)

**Text 6:** *You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.* (Ex. 20:16-17)

The commandments *you shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal and you shall not bear false witness against your neighbor* forbid suicide, murder, committing adultery, stealing and false testimony respectively. The syntactic form of these speech acts of prohibition is the modal auxiliary *shall* with the negative particle *not* resulting in the form of *shall not +bare infinitive*. This verse forbids the taking of life of a fellow man as Allah is the creator and owner of every life, and only He has the authority over it. Consequently, the commandment forbids unnecessary bodily mutilation (Walsh, 1966, p. 63). At the semantic level, the infinitive *murder* refers to the premeditated or accidental taking of the life of another human being; it includes any unauthorized killing (Yoder, 1980, p.394).

Just as human life is sacred and is not to be violated by killing, so is marriage which is considered as sacred and is not to be violated by infidelity. The verse *you shall not commit adultery* prohibits infidelity within the marriage relationship which is considered a very serious offense because Allah instituted marriage and blessed it as a means of proliferation on the earth. Expansion of this idea prohibits “not only the act of adultery, but fornication and impurity of any kind whether in an act, word, or thought” (Davies, 1971, p. 208). Thus, this verse conveys the illocutionary force of forbidding.

Similarly, the law of *you shall not steal* forbids Israelites from theft and the deliberate desires or plans to steal others' property. Accurately defined, stealing is the appropriation of something belonging to another against the owner's wish (Stahl, 2000:3). This law is followed by another command that *you shall not bear false witness against your neighbour* which has to do with giving testimony in a legal setting. It is directed primarily toward guarding the basic right of the covenant member against the threat of false accusation. The original commandment is, therefore, not a general prohibition of lying, but forbids lying which directly affects one's fellow (Childs, 1974, p. 424).

The commandment *you shall not covet your neighbour's house; you shall not covet your neighbour's wife* governs private thoughts. It is, in fact, supplementary to the eighth commandment, for covetousness is the root from which theft grows. This commandment is a reminder that Allah looks at the heart while man merely looks at the outward appearance. This commandment is a staunch prohibition against taking something from a neighbour and/or thinking of having this neighbour's wife as someone's wife. Semantically speaking, the verb *covet* focuses not only on an external act but also on an internal mental activity behind the act, the intention of doing an act. This prohibition aims at curtailing the greedy desire for trying or thinking to possess something or the wife that belongs to a neighbor, and the repetition of the structure, *you shall not*, is to underline the prohibition.

**Text 7:** They stayed at a distance and said to Moses, "Speak with us yourself, and we will listen; but *don't let God speak with us*, lest we die. Moses said to the people, "*Don't be afraid*, for God has come to test you, and that his fear may be before you, that you won't sin." (Ex. 20: 19-20)

The verse *speak with us yourself, and we will listen; but don't let God speak with us, lest we die* represents the people's reaction towards what Allah has spoken to Moses giving him the Ten Commandments. At the pragmatic level, the context of this verse employs that it has more of the sense of a request than a negative command. The independent personal pronoun "you" emphasizes the subject who is Moses and forms the contrast with Allah's speech. This illocutionary force of request can be realized in this verse by the negative imperative *do not +let* which reflects a direct device of describing a speech act of prohibition.

## 5.2 Arabic Texts

The sura entitled "Al-Baqarah" (The Cow) is the longest sura in the Glorious Quran. Some of the verses of prohibition that are included in it will be discussed as they exemplify kinds of prohibition and its various implicit and explicit forms.

الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ فِرَاشًا وَالسَّمَاءَ بِنَاءً وَأَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجَ بِهِ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ رِزْقًا لَكُمْ فَلَا تَجْعَلُوا لِلَّهِ أَنْدَادًا

**Text 1:** وَأَنْتُمْ

تَعْلَمُونَ (22/البقرة)

Who made the earth a resting place for you and the heaven a structure, and (Who) sends down rain from the cloud then brings forth with its subsistence for you of the fruits, therefore *do not set up rivals to Allah* while you know (Ali,1917-1951,p.19).

This verse has different interpretations, one of which is that it is related to the command *do not set up rivals to Allah*. This is valid due to the fact that adoration is the act of the highest and humblest reverence and worship. When one gets into that relationship with Allah, Who is the Creator, his/her faith results in righteous deeds and this in turn leads to creating a real human being who benefits a society. Further evidence of Allah's goodness to human beings is given in this verse. Hence, the whole life, physical and spiritual, depends upon Him. Accordingly, this verse conveys the illocutionary force of forbidding and expresses a prohibition by using the explicit form of negative imperative to emphasize the worship of Allah alone because there are no other rivals to Him in worship (Al-Zamkhshari, n.d).

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ (190) وَأَقْتُلُوا هُمْ حَيْثُ نَفَقْتُمُوهُمْ وَأَخْرِجُوهُمْ مِنْ

**Text 2:**

حَيْثُ

أَخْرَجُوكُمْ وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَشَدُّ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ وَلَا تُقَاتِلُوهُمْ عِنْدَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ حَتَّى يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِيهِ فَإِنْ قَاتَلُوكُمْ فَاقْتُلُوهُمْ كَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ (191) فَإِنْ انْتَهَوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ (192) وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ لِلَّهِ فَإِنْ انْتَهَوْا فَلَا عُدْوَانَ إِلَّا عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ (193) الشَّهْرُ الْحَرَامُ بِالشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ وَالْحُرُمَاتُ فِصَاصٌ فَمَنْ اعْتَدَى عَلَيْكُمْ فَاعْتَدُوا عَلَيْهِ بِمِثْلِ مَا اعْتَدَى عَلَيْكُمْ وَانفُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ (194) (البقرة/190-194)

And fight in the way of Allah with those who fight with you, and *do not exceed* the limits; surely Allah does not love those who exceed the limits (190). And kill them wherever you find them, and drive them out from whence they drove you out and persecution is severer than slaughter; and *do not fight with them* at the sacred Mosque until they fight with you in it, but if they do fight you, then slay them; such is the recompense of the unbelievers(191). But *if they desist*, then surely Allah is Forgiving Merciful (192). And fight with them until there is no persecution and religion should be only for Allah; *but if they desist*, then there should be no hostility except against the oppressors (193). *The sacred month for the sacred month* and all sacred things are (under the law of) retaliation; whoever then acts aggressively against you, inflict injury on him according to the injury he has inflicted on you and be careful (of your duty) to Allah, and know that Allah is with those who guard (against evil)(194) (Ali, 1951, p.86-90).

Although these five verses have different structures dealing with the subject of fighting an enemy, they express a speech act of prohibition. Verses (190) and (191) prohibit Muslims from fighting except against those who first take up the sword. Here and in the subsequent verses, the subject of fighting is clearly connected with that of pilgrimage. Muslims are forbidden to violate the sacredness of Mecca and make it a territory of fighting. This can be explicitly expressed by the form of negative command *do not + bare infinitive*. At the pragmatic level, verse (191) conveys the illocutionary force of forbidding. Whereas verses (190) and (191) denote the explicit prohibition, the form of the imperative expressing abstention in verses (192) and (193) expresses implicit speech act of prohibition. In these verses, Muslims are prohibited to fight and they should abide to Godly rules if the enemy desisted from fighting and also if the disbelievers declare their repentance during the fight (Al- Tussei, n.d). Verse (194) is similar to what is said in verse (191). This legal provision declares a permission to fight in the sacred months. If the opponents violated the sacred months by attacking the Muslims first, then the Muslims are permitted to fight against them in these months. Unlike verse (191), this verse is expressed by the declarative sentence which is more expressive than the explicit form of *do not do*. This verse is used here to fulfill the illocutionary force of threatening by saying *sacred month for the sacred month*. This entails that fighting is prohibited in these sacred months but it is permissible only to defend religion and uphold its rituals.

**Text 3:** (البقرة/195) وَأَنْفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تُلْقُوا بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ

And spend in the way of Allah and *cast not yourselves* to perdition with your own hands (Ali, 1917-1951, p. 90).

**Text** (البقرة/196) وَأَتِمُّوا الْحَجَّ وَالْعُمْرَةَ لِلَّهِ فَإِنْ أُحْصِرْتُمْ فَمَا اسْتَيْسَرَ مِنَ الْهَدْيِ وَلَا تَحْلِقُوا رُءُوسَكُمْ حَتَّى يَبْلُغَ الْهَدْيُ مَحَلَّهُ

**4:**

And accomplish the pilgrimage and the visit for Allah, but if you are prevented, (send) whatever offering is easy to obtain, and *do not shave your heads* until the offering reaches its destination (Ali, 1917-1951, p.90).

**Text 5:** (البقرة/197) الْحَجُّ أَشْهُرٌ مَعْلُومَاتٌ فَمَنْ فَرَضَ فِيهِنَّ الْحَجَّ فَلَا رَفْتٌ وَلَا فُسُوقٌ وَلَا جِدَالَ فِي الْحَجِّ

The pilgrimage is (performed in) the well-known months; so whoever determines the performance of the pilgrimage therein, there shall be then *no foul speech nor abusing nor disputing* in the pilgrimage (Ali, 1917-1951, p.91).

Verse (195) commands Muslims to listen to what Almighty Allah forbids. Pragmatically, this verse conveys the illocutionary force of warning; it is a prohibition about something harming Muslims rather than forbidding. However, this verse commands Muslims not to hug their wealth because this will help in their own self destruction. Rather, their wealth should be spent in the Cause of Allah and for the good of their brethren because such good pleases Allah. This speech act of prohibition is explicitly expressed by the form of negative imperative *do not + verb i.e. do not put yourself in trouble* *ولا تلقوا*.

Pilgrimage is also a sacred month in which the chief rites are done during the first ten days of the month of Dhu al Hajja. In these sacred days, the male pilgrims put on a simple garment of unsewn cloth in two pieces and female pilgrims wear their garment with a scarf to cover their head hair when they are some distance yet from Makkah. Putting on the pilgrim garb (ihram) is symbolic of renouncing the vanities of life. After this and until the end of the pilgrimage he/she must not wear other clothes, or ornaments, anoint his/her hair, use perfumes, hunt, or do other prohibited acts. The completion of the pilgrimage is symbolized by shaving the head for men, and for women cutting off a few locks of the hair of the head, putting off of the ihram and the resumption of the ordinary garment when they come back home. This legal prohibition has the structure of consisting of a verb preceded by *not* resulting in *do not shave* to express a direct speech act of prohibition. Verse (196) prohibits Muslims who are performing the pilgrimage to shave their hair until the offering reaches its destination (al-Qurtubi, 1967).

According to verse (197), the commitment of adultery and indecency during pilgrimage is prohibited. Pilgrimage represents the peak of spiritual progress, and hence the pilgrim is enjoined not to speak words which should be a source of annoyance to anybody. Syntactically, this verse involves (لا النافية) *not of negation* which negates the verbs of the verse and hence the whole verse. In other words, it is an implicit speech act of prohibition using the implicit form of *the negation of an act* *نفي الفعل* which is deeper than the explicit form of *do not do*.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْفِقُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَمِمَّا أَخْرَجْنَا لَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَلَا تَيَمَّمُوا الْخَبِيثَ مِنْهُ (267/البقرة)

**Text 6:** *تُنْفِقُونَ*

O you who believe! spend (benevolently) of the good things that you earn and of what We have brought forth for you out of the earth, and *do not aim at what is bad that you may spend (in alms) of it* (Ali, 1917-1951: 128).

**Text 7:** *لَيْسَ عَلَيْكَ هُدَاهُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلَأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَمَا تُنْفِقُونَ إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ اللَّهِ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ*

*يُؤَفِّفُ إِلَيْكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تُظْلَمُونَ* (272/البقرة)

To make them walk in the right not incumbent in you, but Allah guides a right whom He pleases; and *whatever good thing you spend; it is not your own good; and you do not spend but to seek Allah's pleasure; and whatever good thing you spend shall be paid back to you in full, and you shall not be wronged* (Ali, 1917-195, p. 129).

Charity has a value only if something good and valuable is given which has been honorably earned or gained by the giver. Using the form of an explicit (direct) speech act of prohibition *do not aim at*, the verse (267) prohibits the Muslims from spending bad things which signify the charity in the cause of Allah. This verse has an especial occasion when Prophet Muhammad prohibits Muslims from spending bad kinds of date in the name of Allah (al-Qurtubi, 1967). In connection with charity, this means that we must alleviate those really in need with valuable things. Meanwhile, the prohibition of *spending* in verse (272) can be realized by using a declarative sentence, though, the phrase *do not spend* is paraphrased according to the context as this verse conveys the illocutionary force of consultation



to express an indirect speech act of prohibition.

**Text** لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا إِنْ نَسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَا إَصْرًا

**8:**

كَمَا حَمَلْتُهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحَمِّلْنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِ وَاعْفُ عَنَّا وَارْحَمْنَا أَنْتَ مَوْلَانَا فَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ (البقرة/286)

Allah does not impose upon any soul a duty but to the extent of its ability; for it is (the benefit of) what it has earned, and upon it (the evil of) what it has wrought. Our Lord! *Do not punish us if we forget or make a mistake; our Lord! do not lay on us a burden as Thou didst lay on those before us; our Lord! do not impose upon us that which we have not the strength to bear; and pardon us and grant us protection and have mercy on us*, Thou art our Patron, so help us against the unbelieving people (Ali, 1917-1951,p.135-136).

This is the last verse in the chapter of Al-Baqarah which expresses Prayer for Divine help. In this verse, the form of the negative imperative such as *do not punish us a burden, do not lay on us*, and *do not impose upon us* is used to express an indirect speech act of prohibition. In this verse, the burden is the spiritual duty in this context. Assured by Allah that He will accept from each soul such duty as it has the ability to offer, we pray further for the fulfillment of that promise. We must not be arrogant, and think that because Allah has granted us His favor and mercy we have no need to exert ourselves, or that we are superior to those before us. On the contrary, knowing how much they failed, we pray that our burdens should be lessened and we confess our realization that we have all the greater need for Allah's mercy and forgiveness.

## 6. Conclusion

Speech acts confirm the essential roles in which the intention of the requester, his/her utterance, and superficial form and function are interwoven within a context of situation, and all together can be successfully conveyed in any text. Thus, the conclusions will be drawn according to the three levels of analysis such as syntax, semantics and pragmatics respectively. At the syntactic level, the researchers have found that the Arabic texts under analysis reveal that syntactic markers which give the utterances the force of prohibition are more than those in English. To elaborate, the syntactic structure in the verses of Al-Baqarah including the themes of worshipping Allah, pilgrimage and charity have the forms of negative imperative and declarative. Meanwhile, analyzing the Ten Commandments in the Book of Exodus validates that the most typical strategy used to encode speech acts of prohibition is the declarative sentence.

At the semantic level, the researchers found that the implicit forms expressing prohibition are appropriately used in the Arabic verses under analysis, whilst the explicit forms are heavily used in expressing the Ten Commandments. In Arabic, there are five semantic forms can implicitly be used to express prohibition such as *would not, ought not to, the use of the act coupled with threat of punishment, negation of the act, and it is not +noun expressing a good or a bad Trait+ المصدر المؤول (i.e. +present tense form with subject)*. This is possibly due to the sophistication of the Arabic language which is further intensified through the language of the Holy Quran. Therefore, the prominent semantic form used to express prohibition in some Quranic verses under analysis is *the negation of the act*. It is implicitly employed to deepen the act of prohibition. This is clearly shown in the verses of the prohibition of the commitment of adultery and indecency during pilgrimage. Meanwhile, the direct form of the modal *shall* with *not* can frequently be used to express prohibition relating to the fundamental rules in the Bible such as the worshipping of God (Allah), committing adultery, murdering, and stealing.



At the pragmatic level, the researchers have also discovered that the Quranic verses are used not only to prohibit someone from doing something forbidden but also to convey different illocutionary forces such as forbidding, warning, consultation, threatening and request which can be understood from their contexts in accordance with the semantic level. Thus, expressing prohibitions in the Bible and the Quran are not identical. This is manifested by the use of explicit and implicit devices in both texts. Therefore, prohibition fulfils the communicative function of a language through an interaction between syntax, semantics and pragmatics. Such a finding may be a contribution to the field of comparative studies with regard to the speech acts of prohibition in the English Bible and Arabic Quran as the researchers have not found yet a similar study in this respect. However, we cannot generalize these results because the data is not sizable enough due to space constraints.

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