

Forbidden expressions in Arabic from the perspective of some Shari'a scholars: A sociolinguistic analysis



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Abstract This article seeks to reanalyze a selection of common expressions in modern standard Arabic and its dialects, which some Shari'a scholars see as *bid'a* بِدْعَةٌ "innovative" and which may lead to religious sin. Therefore, they have classified them under the so-called "Forbidden Expressions", in the context of their intention aimed at safeguarding religious belief. This article depends on analyzing these expressions using an approach that combines linguistic semantics, soliciting the opinions of Shari'a scholars and societal intent. Although Shari'a scholars put forward their opinions based on good intentions and legal-religious considerations to preserve religious beliefs, their warning against using these expressions is exaggerated, and their interpretations conflict with the dynamic nature of language, and the semantic changes driven more by context than by the literal meanings of words. The article points out that rigidity in the interpretation of texts may constitute an ideological basis for extremist groups to justify their violent practices, which is a direct threat to societal peace, one of the main pillars of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). That's why this article calls for adopting a flexible, balanced approach that takes into consideration the constants of religion from one side and the adaptive changing characteristics of language and its continuous reaction with the cultural and social variables. This will enhance organizing interrelationships among the language, religion and society. The article concludes that the use of these expressions in everyday social contexts is typically unintentional and lacks any deliberate intent to commit acts considered sinful under Shari'a.

Keywords: Arabic, sociolinguistics, religion, forbidden expressions, extremism

1. Introduction

Human language is one of the key traits that distinguish humans from other living beings (Younes, 2021). It serves not only to convey ideas but also as a powerful tool for influence, persuasion, and communication (Smith, 2016), playing a vital role in strengthening social bonds and facilitating interaction within societies (Balcarras, 2023). In this sense, it is essentially a social phenomenon that cannot be separated from its speakers, as it is shaped and developed through their experiences and perspectives within the social environment in which they live (Vendryes, 1996).

In this context, "forbidden expressions" emerge as a vivid example of how language interacts with society. These expressions constitute ready-made utterances or semi-idioms used by Arabic speakers in their daily communication. They often begin as individual innovations, but through frequent use, they are adopted and standardized within the linguistic community. Serving a communicative purpose, they help convey meaning and, over time, attain the status of proverbs in terms of their spread and usage, even though they may not strictly meet the criteria for proverbs.

The strong interplay between language, context, and social perception becomes particularly apparent when certain expressions are analyzed in contemporary Arabic. In recent years, various expressions have attracted the attention of both linguists and Shari'a scholars. Some of these scholars have identified specific emerging linguistic forms as "forbidden expressions," issuing caution regarding their usage on social media platforms and in formal publications.

Analyzing these expressions pragmatically—beyond lexical meanings to include social context and speaker intent—is essential since language reflects collective behaviors and social realities (Papafragou, 2018). Some scholars' rigid linguistic jurisprudence may conflict with the flexible nature and diverse uses of language.

Such excessive scrutiny can lead to misinterpretations exploited by extremist groups, who treat these expressions as fixed religious rulings.

As a social and human achievement, language cannot be fully understood or analyzed apart from its communicative function. Words lack meaning in isolation and gain significance only within dynamic interactions between speakers and recipients (Goodman & Frank, 2016; Kasper & Rose, 2001). Effective communication relies on understanding that goes beyond literal meanings to encompass speakers' intentions and contextual connotations (Weiland et al., 2014). Therefore, language



extends beyond symbols and sounds; it is shaped by community goals and social norms that legitimize or reject certain structures, introducing pragmatic layers to how it is used.

Moreover, understanding these social nuances cannot rely solely on strict adherence to grammatical rules. Language also evolves through repeated use, leading to innovations that gain meaning through shared societal awareness (Bowie & Popova, 2019).

This deep relationship between language and society is evident in our everyday situations, in which numerous expressions transform their direct meanings into figurative uses, according to the social context. For example, a common expression *ṣabāḥ alkhayr* صَبَاحُ الْخَيْرِ “good morning” might change its meaning in some Arabic social contexts from a friendly greeting into an expression of sarcasm and irony depending on the social hierarchy and contextual circumstances. Therefore, language is not merely a collection of sounds and gestures; it gains meaning through human experience and is enriched by context and social interaction (Jin, 2023).

This study therefore examines selected “forbidden expressions” in contemporary Arabic—classical and dialectal—from a pragmatic perspective, focusing on context, intention, and real-life use. The goal is to provide a balanced understanding that upholds the sanctity of religious texts while appreciating language as a flexible and evolving social practice.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Literature Review

In recent decades, religious discourse has attracted significant attention in linguistic research (Zhyla, 2021), especially within frameworks that highlight speaker intention and discourse analysis as essential tools for understanding religious communication.

“Forbidden expressions” form integral parts of religious discourse across numerous texts and traditions, playing a significant role in shaping moral and ethical frameworks. Religious discourse is frequently employed as a means of guiding behavior, preserving societal values, discouraging harmful or inappropriate language, and promoting social cohesion.

However, regarding “forbidden expressions” in contemporary Arabic and its dialects from the perspective of Shari’a scholars, there is a noticeable lack of studies that examine this phenomenon as a standalone topic, particularly from a sociolinguistic viewpoint.

Saeed (2022) aimed to pragmatically analyze certain “forbidden expressions”, focusing specifically on “forbidden names” only. He revealed that a large range of “forbidden names” do not necessarily warrant forbidden names, emphasizing the importance of considering the speaker’s intent rather than focusing solely on the literal meaning of words and expressions.

Alsabbagh (2023) examines taboo language in Bahraini Arabic and finds that religious and social factors contribute to labeling expressions as taboo. The study highlights that animal-related terms are the most common taboo expressions and that young adults predominantly use such language in private settings.

This study differs from previous studies by analyzing types of “forbidden expressions” that hold social significance for Arabic speakers—that is, expressions commonly used in everyday language. The analysis aims to offer a framework for addressing certain interpretations by Islamic Shari’a scholars, who tend to exaggerate prohibitions and overlook the social context and communal intentions. Additionally, the study highlights how excessive linguistic restrictions can open avenues for radical ideologies, which are frequently co-opt and misuse religious scholars’ statements, either intentionally or unintentionally.

2.2. Term “Forbidden Expressions”

The term “forbidden” generally indicates prohibition. Its exact meaning varies depending on the context in which it appears—be it legal, ethical, environmental (Saputri, 2023), social, linguistic (Brahimaj, 2024), or related to advertising (Simões & Freitas, 2008). In the context of contemporary Arabic, the term “forbidden” (*mamnū* مَمْنُون/ *maḥẓūr* مَحْظُور) is often applied to linguistic expressions that are perceived as religiously, socially, or structurally inappropriate. Understanding its usage requires a multidisciplinary approach grounded in pragmatic analysis.

2.2.1. Sociological Perspective

From a sociological perspective, “forbidden expressions” are closely linked to social values that regulate individual interactions within a community (Allan & Burridge, 2006; Buşu, 2023; Guzzetti, 2023). These expressions mark the boundaries imposed by society to maintain social order and stability. They also function as tools to define acceptable and unacceptable behaviors within specific social or cultural contexts. In this sense, forbidden expressions are often referred to as “taboo”. Consequently, speakers tend to replace them with softened alternatives (Issah et al., 2023).

2.2.2. Linguistic Perspective

Within the Arabic linguistic context, “Forbidden Expressions” encompass words or phrases that violate morphological (Na’ja & El-Malkh, 2013) or syntactic rules (El-Malekh, 2013) and may also include expressions considered pragmatically inappropriate or semantically misleading owing to shifts in meaning, register, or usage. Such expressions often emerge from colloquial practices or linguistic innovation and, despite their communicative effectiveness, may clash with prescriptive norms that prioritize structural correctness over functional utility.

2.2.3. Religious Perspective

When considered from a religious viewpoint, prohibitions overlap with expressions that distinguish permissible from forbidden actions according to Islamic creed (*Al-‘Aqīda* العقيدة), practices, and sacred texts. Some scholars argue that using certain vocabulary may deviate from religious principles, even if the speaker does not intend to do so. Thus, in this context, “Forbidden Expressions” refer to words or phrases, whether spoken or written, that potentially contravene Sharia rules and therefore require cautious use.

2.2.4. Intersection of Domains and Scholarly Attention

“Forbidden expressions” lie at the intersection of social, linguistic, and religious domains. This complexity calls for a thorough study that considers these dimensions alongside individuals’ language use in various contexts. In Arabic scholarship, especially in modern times, this topic has received considerable attention. Numerous authors have compiled lists of words, phrases, and syntactic structures deemed religiously impermissible. These collections are often published as dedicated monographs or separate volumes.

This interdisciplinary nature reinforces the value of pragmatic analysis, which seeks to interpret meaning on the basis of speaker intent, contextual factors, and communicative goals—thus offering a more nuanced evaluation of what constitutes a “forbidden expression”.

2.3. “Forbidden expressions” in modern standard Arabic between linguistic use and social connotations

The tendency of Arabic speakers to employ quotations and fixed expressions is neither accidental nor a recent innovation. Instead, it is an extension of an ancient Arab tradition—similar to that of speakers of other languages—of embellishing speech with excerpts or ready-made phrases. Some scientific studies suggest that much of the daily human language is built on quotations and fixed expressions. The lexical view emphasizes that most spoken sentences are not entirely new but rather consist of multiword units that function as memorized patterns that make up a large part of everyday speech (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). This conclusion is supported by a study that revealed that the use of ready-made constructions accounts for 58% of spoken language and 52% of written language (Erman & Warren, 2000).

Some “forbidden expressions,” in their current established forms as used by speakers, provide rich sites for interdisciplinary inquiry. Such discussions may involve perspectives from religion, linguistics, and sociology. This calls for addressing Forbidden expressions from multiple perspectives rather than from a single perspective while ensuring adherence to clear religious texts, as independent reasoning has no place where explicit textual evidence exists.

Some Shari scholars classify certain commonly used expressions and phrases as “forbidden expressions”. Their rationale for discouraging such usage is grounded in evidence from religious texts, which are employed to warn against engaging in what is deemed religiously impermissible and to caution against the inadvertent dissemination of expressions that may corrupt religious beliefs.

Correcting linguistic errors and verbal innovations is a commendable practice advocated by Islamic teachings, provided that such corrections are not arbitrary or are based solely on literal interpretations of expressions. Instead, attention must be given to the linguistic context and the speaker's intent when determining whether to prohibit or permit a given expression.

Studying “forbidden expressions” from the perspective of Islamic Shari’a does not preclude revisiting them through other lenses. These expressions can also be analyzed from the perspective of sociolinguistics, a field that investigates the interaction between language and society (Emike et al., 2022; Holmes & Wilson, 2022). Sociolinguistics focuses on changes in language structure that arise in response to various social functions (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015).

Linguistic texts must be analyzed within their context and in light of the interaction between speaker and listener. These texts should be examined on the basis of the circumstances of their use as intended by the speaker and as interpreted by the listener because individuals, socially, cannot detach themselves from the social and interactive contexts in which they live (Marwick et al., 2022). Intentions in communication are fundamental for understanding and determining meaning in human interactions (Haugh, 2008); otherwise, the analysis becomes detached from the linguistic reality, and its results fail to align with the intended meaning of social usage.

Arabic speakers use what is referred to as “forbidden expressions” to express their thoughts. The primary goal of such expressions is communication: delivering a message from the sender to the receiver. As long as the message is successfully conveyed, understood, and well received, this constitutes success, even if the message deviates from prescriptive linguistic norms.

The discourse surrounding "forbidden expressions" appears to be divided among scholars of Islamic Shari'a into two camps: one focused on intent and meaning, and the other preoccupied with wording and structure. This situation is reminiscent of the differing opinions of the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad when he instructed them not to perform the Asr prayer until they reached the territory of Banū Qurayza *بَنُو قُرَيْظَةَ*. When the prayer arrived, some prayed on time, whereas others delayed the prayer until they reached their destination. When the incident was relayed to the Prophet, he refrained from reprimanding either group. This indicates that those who prayed on time adhered to the intent, whereas those who delayed their prayer adhered to the wording.

Despite this, certain "forbidden expressions" remain in use among Arabic speakers and have become entrenched in the language's sociolinguistic fabric. These expressions are not employed to endorse linguistic inaccuracies or to engage in acts that are religiously prohibited. Rather, they serve the purpose of conveying meanings that are widely understood within the speech community, albeit occasionally diverging from linguistic norms owing to ignorance or inadvertence. Frequently, linguistic analyses reveal that speakers tacitly possess a deeper understanding than what is explicitly expressed (Abu-Elrob et al., 2025), suggesting that such expressions may reflect culturally or contextually shared knowledge, irrespective of prescriptive linguistic standards.

Evidence of this lies in surveying the opinions of those who use such "forbidden expressions" in modern standard Arabic. If asked about their intent, they would unequivocally deny any intention of engaging in religiously prohibited behavior through their usage. This suggests that the arguments presented by some Islamic scholars against certain "forbidden expressions" are unconvincing when they are evaluated through the lens of language and speaker intent. Expressions and constructions must be analyzed in their context of use; otherwise, language becomes meaningless.

2.4. The Potential for Misinterpretation of Texts in Radical Discourse

Throughout history, the misinterpretation of linguistic texts—whether religious, philosophical, or legal—has provided fertile ground for ideological exploitation worldwide. This phenomenon has contributed to the destabilization of development in all its forms (Carvalho, 2024). This phenomenon is particularly evident among religiously motivated radical groups (Brakoniecka, 2024). These groups often use religious texts as fundamental tools for justifying their practices and expanding their influence (Hassan, 2022).

In the medieval period, the acquisition relied on rigid interpretations of legal and religious texts to suppress intellectual, religious, and linguistic minorities and to conduct ethnic cleansing (Lourenço, 2023). Any deviation from the prevailing doctrine was portrayed as a direct threat to ecclesiastical authority; this led to widespread campaigns of torture and executions. The impact of these behaviors can be long-lasting; a study has shown that regions that experienced such inquisitions still suffer from economic, educational, and other effects to date (Drelichman et al., 2021).

In the modern era, nationalist extremist movements, such as Nazism, distorted the philosophical and scientific works of Friedrich Nietzsche to legitimize policies of racial superiority and genocide (Whyte, 2008). His concepts were stripped of their original intellectual depth and reappropriated to fuel one of the most destructive human tragedies of the twentieth century, even to the extent of associating Nietzsche with Nazism (Filho & De, 2015).

Similarly, groups such as ISIS have adopted radical interpretations of religious texts to justify political and sectarian violence. While the group used Islamic terms such as jihad *جِهَاد* (Tulga, 2024) and caliphate *خِلَافَة* to advance its ideological goals, it also manipulated the interpretation of Hadiths to legitimize its actions (Faisal, 2018), such as beheadings, mass killings, burning, and other horrific acts (Gerges, 2014).

Ultimately, the danger lies not in the texts themselves but in how they are interpreted and employed to serve ideological agendas. The exaggeration of interpretations and expressions can have negative consequences for society. This highlights the urgent need to read both written and spoken language in the correct context to reduce the risks of rigid, traditional interpretations.

3. An Analysis of Selected Examples from "Forbidden Expressions"

3.1. "The First of the Two Qiblas, the Second of the Two Mosques, and the Third of the Two Sacred Sites" (*'Ūlā al-Qiblatayn, wa thānī al-Masjidayn, wa thālith al-Ḥaramayn* *أولى القِبْلَتَيْنِ، وَثَانِي الْمَسْجِدَيْنِ، وَثَالِث الْحَرَمَيْنِ*)

This phrase, commonly used in contemporary Arabic, originates as a fixed linguistic expression derived from the sermon known as *khuṭbat al-tahrīr* *خُطْبَة التَّحْرِير* "The Liberation Sermon". This sermon was first described by Muhyi Al-Din Ibn Zaki following Salah Al-Din Al-Ayyubi's liberation of the Al-Aqsa Mosque (see the sermon: Al-Maqdisi, 1999)

The Al-Aqsa Mosque holds profound religious, historical, and spiritual significance for Muslims. Given its esteemed status, it is no surprise that Arabic speakers often invoke this phrase to highlight its virtue and importance. Consequently, citing this expression in spoken and written language is considered a noble intention.

However, some scholars concerned with Islamic Shari'a have critiqued the usage of this phrase. They have issued warnings on internet forums, online platforms, and scholarly works (see, for example, Abu Zayd, 1996; Al-Kharashi, 2006; Al-Rajhi, 2018). Their objections, driven by well-meaning religious motivations, aim to prevent potential misconceptions that

might compromise Islamic beliefs. They argue that the phrase constitutes an innovation, or a modern expression not historically established.

If one is to wonder, it is at the claim by some that this phrase is a modern invention, given that it was articulated by Ibn Zaki Al-Din in his sermon in (1187) over eight centuries ago. Moreover, it was echoed by writers and scholars contemporary with Ibn Zaki Al-Din, such as *Al-Sakhāwī* السَّخَاوِي, *Al-Nuwayrī* النُّوَيْرِي, and others.

The object of this phrase stems from the meaning implied by its structure. The concern arises from attributing the qualities of primacy and sanctuary (*haram*) to the Al-Aqsa Mosque, which became a basis for disapproval. This is because the phrase could mislead Muslims into believing that Al-Aqsa Mosque serves as a second Qibla akin to Al-Masjid al-Haram or that it shares the sacred designation of *haram* with Al-Masjid al-Haram and Al-Masjid Al-Nabawi. The term *haram* has been specifically applied to the latter two mosques because it is prohibited (*haram*) to engage in fighting, shed blood, hunt, cut trees, or take unclaimed property within their precincts.

Ibn Uthaymeen (1998) commented on this phrase, explaining that the Al-Aqsa Mosque is not a sacred sanctuary (*haram* حَرَم); rather, it is a revered mosque to which journeys are undertaken. Regarding the first of the two Qiblas, the listener might infer that both Qiblas remain, with the first one being the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Historically, the Prophet Muhammad initially prayed facing the Al-Aqsa Mosque for 16 or 17 months—depending on the narration—before receiving the divine command while praying at the Mosque of Banu Salimah (now known as the Mosque of the Two Qiblas) to redirect the Qibla to the Kaaba in Mecca. Since that time, Kaaba has remained the permanent Qibla for Muslims. Thus, the orientation toward the Al-Aqsa Mosque was superseded and was no longer valid.

Ibn Zaki Al-Din's phrase "First of the two Qiblas" seems to describe the historical reality that the Al-Aqsa Mosque was once a legitimate Qibla, although it is not the current one. This is a descriptive expression intended to emphasize the mosque's historical and religious significance rather than to imply a dual Qibla status.

The mere suggestion of potential ambiguity arising from the use of the phrase "First of the two Qiblas" is arguably an overstatement. Such concerns neither contribute to Muslims' theoretical understanding nor alter the practical course of their religious rituals, as Muslims have consistently prayed toward the Kaaba since the Qibla changed. It is unlikely that any rational person would redirect their Qibla upon hearing this phrase. Indeed, throughout history, no account has suggested that a Muslim ever changed their Qibla due to this expression or doubted the singularity of the Qibla, nor has anyone ever considered prioritizing one Qibla over another.

It is also self-evident among the majority of Muslims that the term *Haram* as an Islamic legal term exclusively applies to Al-Masjid Al-Haram (Sacred Mosque in Mecca) and Al-Masjid Al-Nabawi (Prophet's Mosque in Medina). This designation has become synonymous with these sites. When Ibn Zaki Al-Din sought to linguistically unify the three mosques in an additional phrase, he omitted the noun and replaced it with the adjective, preceded by "third." This represents a well-known and common type of ellipsis in Arabic, in which the noun being described (the referent) is omitted and the adjective takes its place, whereas the intended meaning remains clear to the speech community. A classical example of this is the use of the adjective *Sābighāt* سَابِغَات "ample" to refer to the typically omitted noun *Durū'* دُرُوع "coats of mail".

Thus, users of this phrase do not intend to equate the Al-Aqsa Mosque with the two Harams in sanctity but rather aim to establish a numerical sequence associated with the Prophet Muhammad's directive to undertake journeys to the three mosques. The grouping does not imply equal legal status or confer the designation of *Haram* حَرَم. The association arises from the Prophet's Hadith and is likely intended for linguistic adjacency or the strong conceptual linkage of the three mosques, which has rendered them almost inseparable in mention. This treatment as a unified entity is metaphorical rather than literal.

Arabic rhetoric supports such expressions. For example, Arabs would say:

- Al-qalam aḥad al-lisānayn القَلَمُ أَحَدُ اللِّسَانَيْنِ "The pen is one of the two tongues".
- Al-'amm thānī al-'abawyn العَمُّ ثَانِي الأَبَوَيْنِ "The paternal uncle is the second of the two fathers".
- Al-sadiq al-ṣadūq thānī al-nafs wa thālith al-'aynayn الصَّادِقُ الصَّدُوقُ ثَانِي النَّفْسِ وَثَالِثُ العَيْنَيْنِ "The sincere friend is the second self and the third eye".

While these expressions are not literal (a pen is not a tongue, an uncle is not a biological parent, and a friend is not literally another self or a third eye), they became established through frequent use. Therefore, the meaning of metaphor is neither explicit nor direct but rather implicit (Ebidenyefa, 2024).

The language of Ibn Zaki al-Din's sermon is shaped by three main elements:

- The first is psychological, as the sermon is a reaction to the liberation of the Al-Aqsa Mosque.
- The second is doctrinal, which aims to clarify the religious significance and reward of worship at Al-Aqsa.
- The third is rhetorical, as Ibn Zaki al-Din emulates the eloquent style of Arabic speech, influenced by the prevalent use of rhetorical figures in the Mamluk era (Bauer, 2005; Rizzo, 2018). This influence is evident throughout the sermon.

It is likely that he intended to create a rhetorical effect by employing a numerical sequence or linguistic structure composed of paired words, beginning with "First," followed by "Second," and concluding with "Third," each paired with "the two Qiblas," "the two Mosques," and "the two Sanctuaries," respectively. This arrangement draws attention to the hierarchical significance of these terms and the impact of the parallel, rhythmic structure of the sentences.

By applying “semantic feature theory”, a framework within the field of semantics, we can deduce the essential attributes of this linguistic construction. These insights guide us toward the following conclusions:

- The Sacred Mosque in Mecca: The first mosque constructed for humanity, a site to which people travel for worship, possessing sanctity, exclusive sacredness, and serving as the eternal Qibla of Muslims.
- The Prophet's Mosque in Medina: The third mosque built, a site to which people travel for worship, possessing sanctity and exclusive sacredness, but not serving as a Qibla for Muslims.
- Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem: The second mosque built, a site to which people travel for worship, possessing sanctity but without exclusive sacredness, and the first Qibla for Muslims before it was changed to Al-Masjid al-Haram.

In conclusion, the language is broad enough to encompass numerous metaphors that facilitate expression in various contexts, as in the case of phrases such as *alḥaram aljāmiʿī* الحرم الجامعي “university campus”. Additionally, the societal intent behind using this phrase avoids any ambiguity or confusion.

3.2. “The Remaining Is in Your Life” (*al-baqiyya fī ḥayātik* البَقِيَّةُ فِي حَيَاتِكَ)

According to Austin (1962), expressions of condolence and solace are classified as performative speech acts. Their purpose is to convey a sincere psychological stance rather than aligning the utterance with external reality or adjusting reality to match the words. The only requirement is sincerity in expressing sentiment. This category includes acts such as thanking, congratulating, apologizing, consoling, and welcoming (Searle, 1976).

Islam does not prescribe specific phrases for offering condolences. This view is supported by several prominent scholars of early Islamic jurisprudence, including Al-Shafi'i, who stated, "There is no specific phrase for condolence that must be used to the exclusion of others" (Al-Shafi'i, 2001).

However, some scholars and practitioners of Islamic Shari oppose the use of the contemporary phrase "al-baqiyyah fi hayatak" in condolences, considering it an innovation. They argue that the phrase carries connotations associated with superstitions, such as the belief that when a person dies, they leave a portion of their lifespan to their surviving relatives (Qatqat, 2006). Nasser (2012) further asserts that the phrase contradicts Islamic teachings. As a result, some critics recommend avoiding this phrase and suggest replacing it with alternatives such as *al-baqā' lillāh* البقاء لله “Eternity Belongs to God” or other acceptable expressions of condolence.

This phrase continues to be widely used within Arabic-speaking communities, especially in informal settings, where it is commonly expressed during condolence occasions to convey solidarity with the bereaved, share in their grief, and offer comfort. It also expresses a prayerful wish for divine solace upon the hearts of the mourners. Given its widespread usage, critics of the phrase should exercise caution before it is labeled as contrary to Islamic teachings. Hastily, making such judgments could unfairly stigmatize the majority of those who use the phrase, suggesting that they are violating Islamic principles.

While the intent behind criticizing this phrase for religious reasons is commendable, such condemnation—however nobly—arises from a one-sided perspective that emphasizes negative interpretations while disregarding potential positive interpretations. This approach risks distorting the speaker's intended meaning and overlooking the linguistic context. Recognizing the speaker's intention is crucial to the linguistic process, as meaning emerges not only from the literal dictionary definition but also through the interactive relationship between speaker and listener, leading to mutual understanding.

This phrase can be analyzed from two perspectives: linguistic and social. From the linguistic context, the phrase cannot convey a complete meaning if considered solely on the basis of the sum of its individual words, particularly given the unrestricted use of the term *baqiyya* بَقِيَّةٌ "remainder" and the omission that follows it. The word *baqiyya* inherently requires a verbal complement. Hence, an interpretation must be employed to fill this gap in a way that aligns with the speaker's intended meaning and the situational context. This interpretation should also preserve any positive connotation while avoiding the imposition of a negative reading that conflicts with the speaker's intention, as such an approach would strip the phrase of its spontaneity.

Ellipsis in language relies on an implicit agreement within the linguistic community. When a speaker omits part of an expression, they do so with the confidence that the listener will intuitively understand what is left unsaid. Otherwise, their speech devolves into riddles or puzzles.

On the basis of this principle, the phrase can be interpreted contextually as follows:

- "The remainder of happy days in your life": Given that the phrase is used in a sorrowful context where the bereaved need comfort, it may be understood as a wish for future happiness.
- "The remainder of goodness and virtue in your life" or "the remainder of righteous deeds and obedience to God in your life". In this sense, the speaker uses the occasion of death as an opportunity to encourage the deceased's loved ones toward acts of piety and virtue.

When these interpretations are considered, both the speaker and the listener are likely to accept them favorably. Such interpretations resonate linguistically, pragmatically, and logically. Resorting to the method of interpreting omissions within linguistic contexts is a valid approach. The aforementioned interpretations, along with others that may be plausible, illustrate the richness and expansiveness of language.

Since the phrase is employed in a social context and has a social function, it can also be examined from the perspective of the social context. Some ready-made expressions in social interactions lose their original linguistic meanings, such as common greetings or formulaic phrases used to open or close administrative communications. These expressions have lost their original meanings and no longer convey what they originally signed. Their primary purpose is to express friendliness toward others, serving either as an introduction to a specific conversation or as a conclusion to a particular topic.

This type of phrase is called "phatic communion", meaning that it is not intended to understand, convey ideas, seek information, or express wishes and desires but rather merely a means of courtesy and creating a sense of social interaction (Malinowski, 1923). These statements cause the interlocutors to engage in social activity because of an inevitable social duty. They are therefore secondary from the point of view of the functions of language because their function is limited to social courtesy and often appears in greetings, apologies, etc. (Lyons, 1981).

Building on this view, the phrase in question can be regarded as one of those routine expressions whose original semantic meaning has lost. It has become a fixed and formulaic utterance that is resistant to modifications in its linguistic structure. The speaker does not intend for any specific meaning from the phrase in its linguistic context but uses it within the framework of a condolence situation as a means of expressing sympathy, solidarity, and emotional support to the bereaved. This is comparable to a shopkeeper saying "Welcome"! to a customer entering their store, aiming to foster a sense of warmth and security.

On the basis of the preceding analysis, condolence as a practice is realized through the personal presence of the consoler. The phrase itself acts as a prelude or introduction to this presence. It would not be an overstatement to conclude that this interpretation aligns with the likely responses of many individuals if their opinions on the meaning of this phrase were solicited.

3.3. "He has Moved to His Final Resting Place" (*Intaqala ilā mathwāh al-'akhīr* اُنْتَقَلَ إِلَى مَثْوَاهِ الْآخِرِ)

This phrase is a customary preamble commonly used in written communication to announce the passing of a deceased person, specify the location of the funeral prayer, and indicate the burial site.

However, some scholars of Islamic Shari'a are strict about the use of this phrase, deeming it erroneous and, in some cases, even prohibiting its utterance. They argue that, according to Islamic belief, the grave is not the final resting place for a human being; the ultimate abode will be either paradise or hell on the day of judgment. From their perspective, using this phrase implies a denial of the resurrection (Ibn Uthaymeen, 1998; Qatqat, 2006).

When examined within the context of language and society, this expression is found to be a contemporary idiomatic term. Like many other widespread idiomatic expressions, it does not aim to convey the literal meaning of each individual word; instead, it serves as a euphemism for "graving," which is used to soften the tone and avoid the explicit mention of death or the grave. This interpretation is supported by modern standard Arabic linguistic dictionaries and idiomatic expression references (Dawood, 2003; Omar, 2008; Mohammad, 2010).

It is clear that those who use the phrase do not intend for the exaggerated meaning suggested by some critics of its usage. Belief in the Day of Judgment is an uncontested matter among Muslims and does not require further emphasis. In fact, some critics of this phrase acknowledge this truth, as noted by Ibn Uthaymeen (1998): "It is well known among all Muslims that the grave is not the final resting place, except among those who deny belief in the Hereafter." Can it then be assumed that every person who uses this phrase denies belief in the Hereafter? If so, hypothetically, what would be the point of performing prayers, pilgrimage, fasting, charity, and other religious practices in Islam?

The usage of this phrase is similar to other expressions commonly used in the same social context related to death, such as *almarḥūm* المَرْحُوم "the late", *almaghfūr lahu* الْمَغْفُورُ لَهُ "forgiven by God", and *dufina bijiwār rabbih* دُفِنَ بِجَوَارِ رَبِّهِ "buried near his Lord". Is it possible to assert with certainty that the deceased has already been forgiven, has received mercy or is close to God Almighty? The speaker intends to address the deceased indirectly, aiming to preserve the continuity of relationships within society. This is supported by Alshraah et al. (2024), who reported that Bedouin workers in eastern Jordan typically use 81.25% of death-related terms in a euphemistic manner. This percentage reflects the broader trend in Jordanian society, as evidenced by the near absence of direct obituaries in Jordanian newspapers (Al-Kharabsheh, 2011).

Therefore, the intended meaning of such expressions should not be distorted or misinterpreted, nor should the speaker be accused of committing a religious violation. Why not adopt the most likely interpretation that aligns with the intention of most users of the phrase? One possible meaning of the phrase is to refer to the grave as the final resting place in this worldly life. This is what Ibn Baz (1999) alluded to when he was asked about the expression, stating: "I see no objection to this; it is the final resting place concerning worldly life, and it is a colloquial expression. The true final resting place, however, is paradise for the righteous and hell for the disbelievers".

3.4. "God's Blessings Be Upon Muhammad" (*Allāhumma ṣalli 'alā Muḥammad* اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلٰى مُحَمَّدٍ)

This phrase is a fixed religious expression tied to acts of worship and faith, expressed through verbal invocation. It is frequently used by Muslims as a response to divine commands in the Qur'an.

Some Shari scholars, however, show particular sensitivity to the widespread use of this phrase in its common written form. Their objection stems from a grammatical mistake, where the imperative verb *Ṣalli* صَلَّى "Pray" is written with a terminal (*ya* "ي") when addressing Allah. This contradicts the standard Arabic rule, which dictates that the final vowel should be removed when an imperative verb for a singular masculine subject ends in a weak letter (*alif* "ا", *waw* "و", or *ya* "ي").

Arabic linguists recognize the widespread occurrence of this grammatical error, which has become so deeply ingrained in general usage that it no longer attracts attention. The prevalence of this phenomenon contrasts with the linguistic process known as haplogy, where speech forms are typically shortened (Al-Mousa, 2015).

Linguists recognize that this error has become a conventional writing practice among Arabic speakers, even those aware of the correct grammatical rule. This is in line with the saying: "A widely accepted error is better than a neglected correctness".

Although grammatical inaccuracy may cause discomfort, it is mitigated by the intention of the speaker, who seeks rewards without concern for linguistic precision. This perspective is further supported by the fact that people articulate the verb *ṣalli* صَلَّى correctly in spoken discourse, saying, *Ṣalli 'alā alnabi' alnabi' صَلَّى عَلَى النَّبِيِّ النَّبِيِّ* "Pray for the Prophet", without adding the final (*ya* "ي"). Thus, the spoken form adheres to the grammatical rule, even if the written form does not. This discrepancy is natural, as written language is not always an accurate reflection of spoken language (Vendryes, 1996). Moreover, forming conclusions about a spoken language on the basis solely of its written representation can lead to misconceptions.

It is unreasonable to assume that all speakers of any language possess an equal command of grammatical rules (Dąbrowska, 2012), as proficiency varies from one individual to another depending on factors such as education level and cultural background. Arabic speakers do not strictly adhere to grammatical rules in daily conversation or spontaneous dialogs, as they do in formal settings such as official speeches, press conferences, or political addresses, which require the use of Modern Standard Arabic (Omar & Aldawsari, 2022). Instead, in many cases, a third form emerges that blends both levels of language: formal Arabic and dialects (Belnap & Bishop, 2003).

The perspective of a regular speaker differs from that of a linguist or religious scholar. While the speaker views language as a tool for social communication, the researcher sees it as a means to analyze societal phenomena. The speaker is concerned with practical language use, while the linguist focuses on grammatical rules, and the jurist emphasizes doctrinal accuracy. Thus, the linguist seeks grammatical correctness, the religious scholar seeks doctrinal correctness, and the regular speaker is interested in natural and familiar expression.

4. Conclusions

This study analyzes certain phrases in contemporary Arabic that some Shari scholars consider heretical and potentially lead to religious violations. The study uses an interdisciplinary approach combining Shari'a, sociolinguistics, and Arabic language studies to understand how these phrases align with linguistic norms and societal intentions. The findings reveal that many of these "forbidden expressions" do not violate religious or moral values and that their interpretations are rigid and detached from the social-linguistic context. This can create a gap between traditional understandings of texts and social interactions, which can be exploited by extremist groups to justify violence.

In light of these findings, the study recommends the following measures:

- Expanding the study: It is advisable to extend the study to include a larger number of examples of "forbidden expressions" across different languages and cultures, providing a broader understanding of how various societies interpret these expressions over time and in different contexts.
- Incorporating contemporary linguistic methods: It is important to introduce modern methods from linguistics, particularly those focused on the analysis of everyday language practices and social interactions, so the analysis remains relevant to contemporary realities.
- Addressing the dangers of extreme interpretations: The overuse of "forbidden expressions" reinforces extremist ideologies that exploit extreme interpretations of religious texts to justify violence, as evidenced in the case of the ISIS. This undermines societal peace and impedes sustainable development in countries.

5. Limitations

This study is limited to the analysis of a select number of "forbidden expressions," with a focus on examining these examples from religious, linguistic, and social perspectives. The aim is to highlight how certain scholars of Islamic Shari analyze the language of people on the basis of stereotypes. The study does not provide a comprehensive analysis of all "forbidden expressions" across various contexts or dialects, nor does it encompass all interpretations from the different schools of thought within Islamic jurisprudence. Additionally, the research is confined to a specific cultural and social context, which may limit the generalizability of the findings.

Ethical considerations

Not applicable.

Conflict of interest

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