

## WISHING AND IMPLORING EXPRESSIONS IN ENGLISH AND ARABIC: A SEMANTIC STUDY

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**ABSTRACT**

*Both English and Arabic include different expressions which are combinations of different structures that are constructed to express the functions in the use of language. Wishing and imploring expressions are considered one of these expressions, they are requested expressions which are used for asking purposes to reflect the psychological state of personal attitudes and desires of the speaker.*

*At the same time, this study is a contrastive one which aims at finding out how these expressions can be constructed at the levels of, semantics and pragmatics.*

*The study aims at:*

1. *presenting theoretical material about the syntactic constructions of wishing and imploring expressions in addition to the semantic functions of these expressions.*
2. *Showing how these constructions are realized in Arabic.*
3. *Showing the points of similarities and differences of wishing and imploring expressions in English and Arabic.*
4. *Clarifying and clarifying the case of wishing and imploring expressions syntactically and semantically.*

*The paper is presented in two main sections, an introduction and conclusions. The first section discusses the wishing and imploring expressions in English with their major types. The second section deals with wishing and imploring expressions in Arabic, giving sufficient examples from the glorious Qur'an and shedding light on the rhetorical purposes behind such uses. At the end of the paper, there are the major findings that the researcher has reached at.*

**الخلاصة**

تتضمن اللغة الانكليزية واللغة العربية تعابير مختلفة عبارة عن مجموعات مؤلفة ذات تراكيب مختلفة تركب للتعبير عن الوظيفة . إن تعابير التمني والدعاء هي تعابير التماس . إن هذه الدراسة هي دراسة مقارنة تهدف الى تركيب التعابير على مستوى علم الدلالة وعلم التداول . إن هذه الدراسة هي دراسة مقارنة تهدف الى معرفة كيفية بناء هذه التعابير على مستوى علم الدلالة وعلم التداول . ان البحث يقدم مادة نظرية حول التراكيب النحوية لتعابير التمني والدعاء إضافة الى الوظائف الدلالية لهذه التعابير . تبين هذه الدراسة كيفية تحقق هذه التعابير في اللغة العربية ووجه التشابه والاختلاف بين اللغتين العربية والانكليزية فيما يخص هذه التعابير إضافة الى توضيح حالة التمني والدعاء من الناحيتين النحوية والدلالية .

**1 Introduction**

For a communication to be successful, a speaker of a language in addition to his linguistic knowledge (i.e. rules of grammar and words images), must acquire extra-linguistic or non-linguistic knowledge about the world, as it plays a significant role in the production and understanding of a certain utterance (Bach, 1994: 19).

There was a time when philosophy of language was concerned with language and its use rather than with meaning and structure. But in the history of the twentieth century, there was a split between linguistics and philosophy. However, what gives an affinity between these two fields is the development of Halliday's systemic grammar on syntax and Austin's linguistic aspects of speech acts on semantics and pragmatics which explain the development of language and linguistics in different levels of investigation (Song, 2005, 29).

In this respect, wishing and imploring expressions as a linguistic phenomenon are structured and organized syntactically and semantically characterized with special features of language appropriate for special asking purposes and other uses of language.

## 2. Wishing and Imploring in English

English language is a means of giving and receiving information because it expresses the emotions and attitudes of the speaker who in turn uses it to influence the attitudes and behaviour of the hearer (Leech and Svartvik, 1994: 152).

In this respect, language is defined "as a system of communication." The creative aspect is the basic property of this system which enables a speaker's ability to combine the basic linguistic constructions to form an infinite set of well-formed meaningful grammatical sentences to understand the speaker's attitudes and feelings (Fromkin et al, 2003: 8-10)

Wishing and imploring are English expressions used to express those emotions and attitudes of the speaker to other people to maintain communication. Since the present study deals with the formal and functional aspects of wishing and imploring expressions in English and Arabic, an introductory description and analysis of the syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic issues of these expressions will be presented in the following sections. The pragmatic issue is introduced here just to describe the semantic issue to show which construction (i.e. in English and Arabic) functions as wishing or imploring.

'Wish' is used to "express a tentative or polite attitude in questions and requests" (Palmer, 1965: 71), as in:

1. I wish to ask you about that.

'Wish' does not state a condition, "it refers to the unreal, the contrary to fact and to wish for things and events which cannot happen" consider the following sentence (Praninskas, 1975: 399).

2. Jack wishes he had a car.

In this sentence Jack's wish of having a car cannot happen because he is poor.

Shepherd et al (1984: 108) state that 'wish' may refer to probability which is related to prediction about the speaker's view of the future, or express an opinion based on some evidence in the past.

Consider:

3.3 John may come from London next week.

This sentence expresses the speaker's future prediction about the coming of John next week.

4. Layla might have fallen in her examination.

While this sentence reflects an opinion about Layla's falling in her examination which is based on past evidence (ibid).

According to Leech (1989: 545) "wish is to want what is not happening; or what did not happen."

Also, Leech mentions that wishing verbs are private verbs because these verbs refer to states or activities that the speaker alone is aware of, and which refer to mental activities, such as:

5. I hope it's true. (ibid: 96).

Leech and Svartvik (1994: 152) assert that the verbs (desire, wish, want, love, like, hope) are used to refer to state of mind or feeling.

Another definition is made by Swan (2005) (cited in Al-Munji, 2005: 8) who says that wish is "wanting something that is impossible or that does not seem probable, or being sorry that things are not different."

On the other hand, House (2006) considers wish as a special force which is related to psychological attitude and it is part of human social behaviour, with reference to its motivation (ibid).

Wish may have many meanings, as the Merriam-Webster's Colligate Dictionary (2005: 1437) defines wish as having two meanings: as 'a verb meaning', which means:

(1) to have a desire for something unattainable, as in:

6 He wished he could live his life over.

(2) to give an expression to as a wish; a bid

7 I wish them good night.

(3) to give form to a wish; to express a wish for; to request in the form of a wish: order; to desire a person or thing to be as specified, as in:

8 I wish our problems away.

(4) to confer something unwanted on someone: foist.

The second meaning of wish as it has 'a noun meaning'; which means: (1) an act or instance of wishing or desire: want:

9 I wish to travel.

(2) an object of desire: goal;

(3) an expressed will or desire: mandate.

(4) a request or command couched as a wish.

(5) an invocation of good or evil fortune on someone (ibid).

Wish is also used to express a non-factual or doubtful condition (Al-Dabbagh, 2006: 72), as in:

10 I wish he were able to type faster.

## 2.1 Types of Wishing

Curme (1947) and Bing (1984) (cited in Al-Munji, 2005: 8) show that there are two types of wishing fulfilled and unfulfilled.

### 2.1.1 Fulfilled wishing

Fulfilled wishing shows that the speaker expects the wish to be realizable which is conveyed by time reference and tense used. This is indicated by the use of simple present with reference to the future and it is called 'an immediate wish' (Alexander, 1988: 225), as in:

11. I hope he is on time.

12. I hope he won't be late.

The auxiliary verbs would and could after wish may function like a polite imperative and the wish can be fulfilled:

13. I wish you would be quiet.

14. I wish I could have been with you. (ibid)

Leech (1989: 546) asserts that the use of simple present with its future reference may make the wish to come 'true':

15. We wish you a happy new year.

16. I hope to see him tomorrow. (See Palmer, 1965: 160)

Leech and Svartvik (1994: 161) point out that the verb 'want' conveys fulfilled wishes:

17. I want you to read this newspaper report.

18. She wants to learn French (See Seidle, 1981: 120).

### 2.1.2 Unfulfilled Wishing

The past (simple, perfect, or progressive) can be used with the verbs (hope, wish, want) to describe unfulfilled hopes and wishes which did not happen (Alexander, 1988: 175), as in:

19. She wished to send him a present to congratulate him on his success, but did not manage it.

Leech (1989: 493) demonstrates that (had + past participle or simple past) reflects unfulfilled wish, which is called an 'an imaginary wish';

20. If you had driven more carefully, you would have avoided this accident.

21. Mike wishes he had a job: at the moment he is unemployed.

The hypothetical subjunctive 'were' is also used to express unfulfilled wish and to express something which is not true at the present, as in:

22. I wish I were a millionaire. (ibid: 545)

Azar (1992: 384) agrees that the past perfect is used to express unrealizable wishes"

23. I wish (that) I had studied for the test.  
 24. I wish (that) the new government had told us the truth.

## 2.2 Imploring in English

Gradet (1965) (cited in Al-Jazrawi, 2004: 65) shows that 'imploring' semantically means "an appeal, invocation (addressed to God) either on behalf of another or for oneself or against someone. Invocation and calling are either for blessing or for imprecation and cursing."

'Imploring' is "to ask humbly; it is supplication to God, to request Him that everyone can implore God only and ask help from Him" (Al-Dabbagh, 2006: 37), as in:

25. Our Lord! Forgive us.

Oxford Word Power (382) states that "the verb implore means to ask somebody to do something, especially when the situation is very serious and desperate," as in:

26. He implored his mother not to leave him alone. The verb implore is similar in meaning to beg which is used to ask for something strongly, or with greater emotion.  
 27. He begged God for forgiveness.  
 28. Can I beg a favour of you?

Syntactically speaking, imploring can be expressed by using the 'vocative' form. Quirk and Greenbaum (1973: 182-3) say that 'vocative' "is a nominal element added to a sentence or a clause optionally, denoting one or more people to whom it addresses."

Semantically, The verbs beg, entreat, beseech, implore, supplicate, adjure and importune mean to ask urgently (Wikipedia, 2005: 1). According to Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (2005: 624) the verb beg suggests earnestness or insistence especially in asking for a favour.

29. Children are beginning to stay up late.

The verb entreat implies an effort to persuade or to overcome resistance.

30. I entreated him to change his mind.

The verb beseech implies great eagerness or anxiety.

31. I beseech you to have mercy.

While the verb implore adds to beseech a suggestion of greater urgency or anguished appeal.

32. I implored her not to leave him.

On the other hand, the verb supplicate suggests a posture of humility.

33. With bowed heads they supplicated their Lord.

The verb request expresses the meaning of imploring, as Answell (2000) (cited in Al-Dabbagh, 2006: 75) adds that imploring means "the formal request and demand, a polite request for God."

The simple present subjunctive is used in that clause to express formal commands or request as in the construction (request + present subjunctive)

34. They requested that she arrive early. (ibid)

'Wishing' and 'Imploring' expressions can be reflected by using the social and expressive functions of language, as Halliday (1970: 143) mentions that the speaker can express his emotions and attitudes by using these functions. Brown (1985) (cited in Lyons, 1977: 51) defines expressive meaning as "that aspect of meaning which covaries with characteristics of the speaker." While social meaning is defined "to be that aspect which serves to establish and maintain social relations. Halliday (1970: 143) gives the term 'interpersonal' for these aspects.

From a pragmatic point of view, Austin (1962: 159) considers 'wishing' and 'imploring' as behabitives which express certain feelings and attitudes to someone past conduct or imminent conduct.

Wishing and imploring verbs are considered 'performative' not 'cons-tative' verbs because these are doing not saying verbs which take the imperative mood (ibid: 54).

Austin (1962: 103) and Searle (1979: 4-5) state that 'wishing' and 'imploring' expressions indicate illocutionary force by which the speaker can relieve his feelings.

According to Searle (1979: viii, 5) 'wishing' and 'imploring' are classified 'illocutionary acts' which are based on expressed psychological states and these expressions are considered as 'directives' to get the hearer to something.

Wishing and imploring expressions are also related to expressive speech acts to reflect the state of affairs, feelings, and emotions of the speaker (ibid).

Negative wishes, such as, curses are regarded as acknowledgments which may have the effect of belief of Constative speech acts (ibid).

### 3. Wishing and Imploring in Arabic

Speech is defined by the grammarians as a composite syllable which is used in a certain situation and it can have intended meaning. The meaning should associate with any talk that happens at any time. Speech must have a reference concerning something either happens or does not happen. The matter of completing, stopping, and enquiring the talk is up to the speaker (Haroon, 1979: 23-24).

Styles of declarative and non-declarative are related closely to Arabic Rhetorics. These styles may have technical and imperfect constitutions which is concerned with the psychological functions of the speaker. These functions may be able to have wishes, requests, wills and certain objectives. Thus, the Arabic rhetorics come to be consistent with the requirements of the talk and the essence of the Arabic language (Matloob, 1986: 121).

According to this, the Arab linguists stress on the function of elocution, especially the study of the declarative and non-declarative to be as styles of criticism. This function concerns the objectives, nature, and context of the language (Jumáa, 2004: 110).

Speech is divided into two parts: the declarative and non-declarative and that's the main division of the linguists, while others see that speech consists of declarative, non-declarative, and request.

Haroon (1979: 24) suggests that the following example can explain request and the non-declarative when working together, as in:

35. أدع الله

Implore God.

The example above refers to the firm relation between meaning and pronunciation; each one does not separate from the other since pronunciation can include the meaning of request (reference of meaning and the pronunciation itself cannot be separated at all and the expression of them can concern the request potentially).

Al-Qizwini (1983: 13) mentions that it is possible to say briefly that speech may refer to the **declarative** and **non-declarative**. The nomination for these two terms has come depending upon consistency. So, the first is called **the declarative** and the second called **non-declarative**.

Tamanni 'wishing' and Duáa 'imploring' are dealt as the declarative or non-declarative.

Ibin-Faris (1964: 58) states that Tamanni and the declarative can have two incompatible views, the latter does not associate with (Layta), as in:

36. وَدَدْتُكَ عِنْدَنَا

- I wish you were with us.

which refers to the declarative and that can have a connection with:

37. لَيْتَ لِي مَالاً

- I wish I have money.

This means that I do not have money, so it cannot be accepted as true or false. Thus, Al-Tamanni is not related to the declarative which indicates the meaning of the negative (See As-Samarriy, 2007: 175).

Hassan (1974: 371) remarks that Al-Tamanni is considered to be as one type of request since there is a requirement between (طلب مجيئاً) and (أتمنى الشيء) and each one can make the other possible, consider the following:

38. ليت محمد يأتي فيحدثني .

- I wish that Mohammed comes and talks to me.

) , but it is regarded as indirect image and this means that Al-تمني مستحيل This sentence includes ( Tamani is one type of non-declarative since it happened at the time of talking.

On the other hand, Al-Duáa is regarded as a type of direct request from low to high, as in:

39. رَحِمَ اللهُ أركانَ .

- God be mercy upon Arkan.

Which refers to asking for mercy that is up to God and it is direct and frank request (ibid).

Haroon (1979: 16) states that imploring 'Al-Duáa' is a part of the declarative since it can have intention which is useful for the addressee, like,

40. أنتَ المنصورُ .

- You are the victorious.

which indicates Duáa for victory and it is understood from the context.

The second image of imploring 'Al- Duáa' can be clear in:

41. تَكَتَّهُ أُمُّهُ .

- His mother bereaved him.

which belongs to imploring 'Al-Duáa' for a certain person and it can be understood from the context also (See As-Suyooti, 1988: 320).

Al-Awsi (1982: 518) illustrates that Al-Tamanni and Al-Tarajji are considered to have the same ) since they can be concept of the declarative since both belong to ( إضمار الفعل على المنصوب instead of having the pronunciation with the verb.

Al-Faraá (1973: 276) and Al-Awsi (1982: 518) observe that Al-Tamanni in past may be useful to include the meaning of the negative, as in:

{ وَلَئِنْ أَصَابَكُمْ فَضْلٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ لَيَقُولَنَّ كَأَن لَّمْ تَكُن بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُ مَوَدَّةٌ يَا لَيْتَنِي كُنْتُ مَعَهُمْ فَأَفُوزَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا } (النساء: ٧٣)

42.

[But if a bounty comes to you from Allah, he would surely say-as if there had never been ties of affection between you and him- "Oh! I wish I had been with them; then I would have achieved a great success." ] (Al-Hilâli and Khân, 1996: 120).

). Thus, Al-Tamanni does not mean the لم أكن معهم The above verse can refer to the meaning of ( declarative which indicates the meaning of the negative, but it is a part of the non-declarative of request and so as imploring 'Al-Duáa' is considered to be from the non-declarative of request.

### 3.1 Wishing in Arabic 'Al-Tamani and Al-Tarajji'

The scholars who are concerned with the elocution suggest that Al-Tamanni and Al-Tarajji can be expressed differently, the first may refer to the desire that cannot be happened, while the second can refer to the probability to be happened or achieved (Al-Hashimi, 1960; 80; Haroon, 1979: 17 & Matloob, 1986: 354), as in:

43. يا ليت أيام الصِّبَا رَوَّاجِعَا .

- O would that the days of prime youth could return!

This sentence is used to express the unachievable wish to happen (Al-Tamanni).

While the sentence:

44. عَسَى اللهُ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ لِي .

- Perhaps Allah forgive me.

is used to express the desirable and achievable things to happen (Tarajji).

The meaning of Al-Tamanni may be illustrated by concentrating on the following points:

1. expecting the good thing that is impossible to happen, as in:

45

{ فَأَجَاءَهَا الْمَخَاضُ إِلَى جِذْعِ النَّخْلَةِ قَالَتْ يَا لَيْتَنِي مِتُّ قَبْلَ هَذَا وَكُنْتُ نَسِيًّا مَّنْسِيًّا } (النساء: ٧٣)

[ And the pain of the childbirth drove her to the trunk of a date-palm. She said: "Would that I had died before this, and had been forgotten and out of sign." ] (Al-Hilâli and Khân, 1996: 404)

2. expecting the desired thing that it will not be fulfilled at all, as in:

{ فَخَرَجَ عَلَى قَوْمِهِ فِي زِينَتِهِ قَالَ الَّذِينَ يُرِيدُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا يَا لَيْتَ لَنَا مِثْلَ مَا أُوتِيَ قَارُونُ إِنَّهُ لَأُوْحَضُّ عَظِيمٌ } (القصص: ٧٩)  
46

[So he went forth before his people in pomp. Those who were desirous of the life of the world, Said: "Ah, would that we had the like of what Qarun has been given! Verily he is the owner of a great fortune." ]

(Khân and Al-Hilâli, 1996: 526)

As for the former Al-Tamanni and Al-Tarajji, means to hope something that may not be realized/may not come true, as in:

47. لَيْتَ لِي دَارًا.

- I wish I had a house.

) as a device of Al-Tarajji and it is used instead of (Layta), as in: لعلّ The word (

48. لعلّ لي دار.

- I would I have a house.

Which means that the requirements for having a house are available; therefore, it is expected to have one and that is the main difference between Al-Tamanni and Al-Tarajji (Al-Hashimi, 1960: 80; Al-Qizwini, 1983: 52; Matloob, 1983: 321; 1986: 303; Al-Feel, 1991: 197; Al-Sa'idi, 1995: 43; Al-Taftazani, 2004: 404).

Hassan (1974: 370) and Haroon (1979: 17) show that Al-Tamanni indicates an unexpected thing, as in:

49. لَيْتَ الشَّبَابَ يَعُودُ.

- I wish that youth had returned.

Whether the youth age is impossible to be attained.

The Arab linguists are not in conformity with respect to Al-Tamanni whether it belongs to what is literally said by the tongue or to the mind and heart. Thus, Al-Zamakhshari (297-298) states that Al-Tamanni concerns the hidden desires of the man and it refers to what is actually said and pronounced by the tongue, as in:

50. لَيْتَ لِي مَالًا.

- I wish I had money.

Al-Awsi (1982: 494) believes that Al-Tamanni is the notion of having a desire for a thing to be achieved, a matter of like and dislike, and to be a kind of request. But both Al-Tamanni and request may differ, the latter belongs to what is said and pronounced by the tongue, while the former concerns the hidden secret in the mind and heart.

Some scholars believe that Al-Tamanni is a part of the declarative which refers to the meaning of negation. Al-Zamakhshari does not believe that Al-Tamanni is declarative saying that there is only one case where it is true as in the following verse:

51. { وَلَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذْ وَقَفُوا عَلَى النَّارِ فَقَالُوا يَا لَيْتَنَا نُرَدُّ وَلَا نُكَذِّبُ بآيَاتِ رَبِّنَا وَنَكُونُ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ } (الأنعام: ٢٧)

[If you could but see when they will be held over the Fire! They will say "Would that we were but sent back! Then we would not deny the Ayat of our Lord, and we would of the believers!" ] (Al-Hilâli and Khân, 1996: 173)

The above verse cannot be accepted just for the true since it is regarded as words of God. Other scholars say that Al-Tamanni and the lying are not closely related at all; it is impossible to link Al- ( ) when the speech happens (Al-Qizwini, 1982: Tamanni with lying which can be associated with ( 131 & As-Suyooti, 1988: 337)



- can be expressed by using certain particles that can be used metaphorically for wishing purposes (عسى , لو , لعلى , La'alla such as (Hal, وددت و , etc.). Also in Arabic the main verbs (عسى , لو , لعلى , La'alla such as (Hal, أحبُّ) are used implicitly and explicitly to denote the meaning of wishing.
4. Explicit and implicit imploring are the same in both English and Arabic by using the expressions (يا الله، اللهم، ربي، imperative, interrogative, prohibitive and vocative) implicitly or by using the constructions of the (imperative, ربي، اللهم، يا الله, O Allah, my Lord, interrogative, prohibitive and vocative) implicitly.
5. In English either the volitional subjunctive mood is used as in texts or the formulaic subjunctive mood as in texts. In Arabic there are no such types of mood.
6. Imploring expressions can be understood from the context .
7. In English the semantic study of wishing covers the meaning of possibility and impossibility, whereas in Arabic Al-Tamani covers the meaning of impossibility and Al-Tarajji covers the meaning of possibility.
8. The semantic study of imploring in English may be expressed by mentioning the name of God only (i.e. in the vocative), while in Arabic may be expressed by using the (imperative, interrogative, prohibition and vocative).
9. In Arabic only the name of God can be used for imploring but in English there are other names used for imploring .
10. Wishing in English covers the term 'wishing' only. Whereas in Arabic, wishing covers the two terms of 'Al-Tamani' and 'Al-Tarajji'. While in English imploring covers the term 'imploring' whereas in Arabic imploring covers the term 'Al-Duáa'.
11. Imploring expressions in English and Arabic may carry the same meaning and expressions. However, in English other expressions can be used for imploring such as (Heaven & Hail Mary) and that is unexpected in Arabic since imploring is to God only.
12. Wishing and imploring expressions in English have only two types (wishing and imploring). In Arabic wishing expressions have two types (Al-Tamani and Al-Tarajji), and imploring expressions have one (Al-Duáa).

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