

# A Socio-Pragmatic Analysis of the Speech Act of Advice in Selected Qur'anic Verses

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**Abstract**—This study investigates selected Qur'anic verses in terms of advice speech act. It answers the questions: what is the most common strategy used to perform the speech act of advice in the Holy Qur'an?, what is the most common type of sentence used to perform advice in the Holy Qur'an? and what is the impact of the social variables of distance and power on the choice of advice strategy? The study adopts Hinkel's (1994) classification of advice into direct, indirect, and hedged as its main theoretical framework. However, the study revealed that the interlocutors in the Holy Qur'an opted for significantly more indirect advice, and that the imperative was the most frequent sentence type used to perform the speech act of advice. Also, the study showed that the choice of advice strategy was greatly impacted by social distance and power between the speaker and the hearer. However, context was also a determining factor in many cases.

**Index Terms**—Speech Act Theory, advice, social distance, social power, the Holy Qur'an

## I. INTRODUCTION

Advice-giving is defined as "telling you what is best for you" (Searle, 1969, p. 7). In pragmatic terms and in line with Searle's (1979) taxonomy of speech acts, advice belongs to the directive category of speech acts. As a directive speech act, the speaker would like the hearer to act in a certain way. To this effect, the speech act of advice is like suggestion, recommendation, and request. Yet, while a request is beneficial to the speaker, advice is beneficial to the hearer. Advice, however, is among the most important speech acts that are included in the Holy Qur'an - the noble Book of Allah revealed to Muslims by Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him (PBUH). In fact, advice has played a key role in the spread of Islam, changing people's wrong beliefs, and improving morals, among other roles. However, the Qur'anic teachings take the form of religious discourse, which is produced in Classical Arabic and is characterized by using uncontested, elaborate, stylistic features and rhetorical devices.

### A. Speech Act Theory

The Speech Act Theory, introduced by Austin (1962), is one of the most important theories of linguistics, particularly pragmatics. According to Austin (1962), the Speech Act Theory examines "the role of utterance in relation to the behavior of the speaker and hearer in interpersonal communication" (p. 61). In his remarkable work *How to Do Things with Words*, Austin (1962) explained that speech acts refer to how interlocutors use language to perform actions. Searle (1969, 1975, 1976, 1979), however, took further steps in developing the theory of speech acts. In this regard, Searle (1969) asserted that "all linguistic communication involves linguistic acts" (p. 42). This way, people intentionally carry out actions with certain functions when they produce utterances, or when they communicate with each other. These actions usually include several functions, such as inviting, offering, thanking, advising, threatening, and requesting, to name some. Such speech acts are defined by Searle (1969) as "the basic or minimal units of linguistic communication" (p. 42). Obviously, Austin and Searle agreed that a language is not only a tool for conveying information but also for doing things.

However, decoding the meaning of an utterance is not enough for understanding its content. Equally important, it is necessary to identify what speech act is performed by that utterance. In this regard, Yule (2016) highlighted that identifying speech acts requires to know how interlocutors use language to convey messages as the said words and phrases need to achieve specific functions that go beyond the words themselves. Interestingly, Austin (1962) pointed out that speech acts involve three levels, namely the locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary. The essential literal meaning of the speaker represents the locutionary act. Thus, a locutionary act refers to any utterance that produces meaning. According to Austin (1962), the illocutionary act refers to the communicative intention or force of an utterance. To perform any illocutionary act, the uttered utterances must have intended meanings that the hearers need to comprehend. To this effect, knowing illocutionary acts of utterances is essential as through which people can get insights into understanding intentions of the speakers. In this regard, Van Dijk (2006) asserted that meanings and intentions are significant issues as they imply social and cultural roles. The illocutionary force suggested by Austin (1962) implies that the speaker may perform the illocutionary act to make a threat, promise, assertion, etc. Also, Austin

(1962) highlighted the link between the locutionary and illocutionary acts when he argued that “it has, of course, been admitted that to perform an illocutionary act is necessarily to perform a locutionary act” (p. 113). Finally, the perlocutionary act refers to the impact of meaningful, intentional utterances on the hearer. Levinson (1983) explained that the perlocutionary act is “the bringing about of effects on the audience by means of uttering the sentence” (p. 236). In summary, an utterance starts with the locutionary act, having the utterance’s basic meaning, moves to the illocutionary act, with the utterance’s communicative intention, and ends up with the perlocutionary act, having the utterance’s impact on the hearer.

#### *B. Social Variables of Distance and Power*

The social variables of distance and power are regarded as the main sociolinguistic variables that determine how the speakers interact. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), people’s perception of these variables is culturally specific. Also, Spencer-Oatey (2011) emphasized the need to include perceptions for the social variables of distance and power in studying speech acts because different societies may have different norms and perceptions regarding these variables. However, the role of social power in communication, for Brown and Levinson (1987), would involve the interlocutors’ ability to recognize each other’s social position. Therefore, correctly recognizing the hearer’s social power is essential for the speaker to be able to produce the most appropriate and suitable utterances, while interacting with others who belong to different cultural backgrounds. To this effect, the social variables of distance and power of the advisors can both impact on language use and determine what specific words or phrases are to be used as well. Also, the context of speech can give important information about the relationship between the interlocutors, that is, how familiar or close they are to each other, and how high or low their power in society is. In this regard, key resources of social power in society can include “age, sex, money, physical strength, and metaphysical power” (Nemani & Rasekh, 2013, p. 307). To look less offensive, people of low social power, for example, prefer to use indirect forms to give advice. In contrast, people of high social power are in favor of direct forms. According to Fairclough (2013), indirect forms of some functions, including advice, are employed to reduce the force of the face threatening act. Also, indirect forms of language are preferred by people who give advice to whom they do not know very well.

#### *C. Aims and Questions of the Study*

The basic aim of the current study was to investigate the speech act of advice with reference to selected verses of the Holy Qur’an. In particular, the study focused on the strategies that were used to perform the act of advice and the effect of the social variables of distance and power on the strategy choice. Following Searle’s (1979) taxonomy of speech acts and Hinkel’s (1994) model of advice, the researchers conducted a socio-pragmatic analysis of a sample of Qur’anic verses that included the speech act of advice. Through the analysis, the study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the most common strategy used to perform advice speech act in the Holy Qur’an?
2. What is the most common type of sentence used to perform advice in the Holy Qur’an?
3. What is the impact of the social variables of distance and power on the choice of advice strategy?

#### *D. Significance of the Study*

The study has two major significances, that is, practical and theoretical. Practically, the study is expected to help learners of Arabic improve their communicative and pragmatic competence with regards to effectively performing the speech act of advice. Theoretically, the current study is hoped to provide some useful insights into how advice is performed in the Holy Qur’an. The study also contributes to theoretical pragmatics as it sheds light on the universal principles, which govern the production of speech acts. Furthermore, the study helps bridge the gap identified in literature on the topic of the speech act of advice in the Holy Qur’an.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section aims at placing available research in the context of existing knowledge concerning some socio-pragmatic notions, with focus on research related to the speech act of advice.

Complex speech acts, including advice, have received the attention of many researchers, including Brown and Levinson (1987), Hinkel (1994), and Goldsmith and Fitch (1997). For instance, Goldsmith and Fitch (1997) stressed that giving advice in the American culture is a complex, dynamic speech act that presents various linguistic challenges for interlocutors. In fact, advice-giving in some English-speaking societies is perceived and interpreted as an act of intrusion into one’s own private affairs. In contrast, advice is perceived differently in other cultures, including the Arab culture, which view advice-giving as a tool for showing warmth, solidarity and support to each other. Brown and Levinson (1987) suggested a set of social factors, which are said to have impact on advice-giving. These included social distance, relative power, and politeness strategies considered proper in a particular culture. In fact, these social variables greatly affect and determine the speaker’s choice of advice strategies. In the same vein, Holmes (1992) argued that both variables of relative power and social distance considerably affect the speaker’s use of politeness strategies. Likewise, Locher and Hoffman (2006) put emphasis on the cultural context of advice and linked it to the notion of face. To this effect, they highlighted that advice-giving is viewed as a face-threatening act in Western cultures as it usually stirs doubts among people on the advisee’s capability. In contrast, giving advice in some Eastern cultures is helpful and is

considered an effective tool or a means for building rapport. Accordingly, Locher and Hoffman (2006) suggested that giving advice is a process that needs to involve “mitigation rather than a straightforward realization” (p. 71). Similarly, Brown and Levinson (1987) as well as Hinkel (1994) stressed the connection between advice-giving, culture specificity, and face-threatening act. This way, the culture of society becomes the controlling factor in deciding whether advice is a face threatening act or not. However, the act of giving advice has its own advantages. For example, Hinkel (1994) stressed that the Chinese tended to recognize advice as a sign of warmth, sociability, and support. Also, Masuda (1989) suggested that the Japanese think positively of advice as they believe that offering advice “shows warm interest in the other’s well-being” (p. 42). He, therefore, underlined the assumption existing among the Japanese: “what concerns one of us, concerns all of us” (p. 42). However, Vanderveken (1990) explained that “to advise is like to warn, except that the additional presupposition is to the effect that what is advised is good for the hearer” (p. 174).

A seminal study was conducted by Hinkel (1994), who investigated the speech act of advice in English native speakers and non-native speakers. The study examined the existence of a correlation between appropriate situations of advice-giving and their appropriate forms. The study intended to reveal how both groups of speakers of English can judge situations in which it is appropriate to give advice, and what forms can be used to give this advice. The study findings indicated that both groups had similar perceptions of the social distance. However, they differed significantly with regards to their choice of the best forms of advice. To this effect, non-native speakers chose to frequently advise superiors and peers and on topics that would not be considered appropriate in the American culture. The study also showed that both groups had different communicative goals concerning advice-giving. In addition, non-native speakers participating in the study appropriately benefited from their knowledge of politeness rules in their first language to compensate for lack of access to appropriate communicative strategies in English. Although advice-giving was viewed as an inherently face threatening act in the American culture, both groups of participants thought about the appropriateness of giving advice differently. Furthermore, the study findings revealed that both groups of speakers similarly identified the difference in social distance between peers and superiors. Yet, in both contexts, non-native speakers of English chose substantially more direct and hedged advice than did native speakers of English. In conclusion, Hinkel’s (1994) study established that non-native speakers of English opted to give direct and hedged advice to peers and superiors, and on topics considered inappropriate in the American culture. Also, social distance between the interlocutors was effectively recognized in interactions by both groups of speakers. The study concluded that while giving advice may be perceived as an expression of warmth, friendliness and interest in many cultures, it was considered inappropriate in some English-speaking cultures.

Goldsmith and Fitch (1997) examined the complex and dynamic speech act of advice in English in the USA. In their study, they relied on notes and interviews to identify challenges that the American society encountered in the process of giving, receiving, and requesting advice. In this regard, the study findings revealed that in advice there was a need to establish balance with regards to three dilemmas, that is, between being supportive and being honest, being helpful and being intrusive, and showing gratitude and retaining the right to make individual decisions. The study also found that in the American society both advisors and advisees were presented with various linguistic challenges because of the nature and complexity of advice speech act. In the terms of Brown and Levinson (1987), the speakers must avoid being intrusive to prevent threatening the hearers’ negative face, that is, their freedom to be independent and unimpeded by others. Concurrently, they did not want to be too honest with the hearers to avoid threatening their positive face, that is, the desire to be well liked by others. In fact, Goldsmith and Fitch’s (1997) work contributed to our knowledge regarding the figurative and stylistic dimensions of the speech act of advice. It also showed how advice can be employed to create communicative patterns of social support.

Strategies of advice-giving in Javanese and American culture were the focus of a cross cultural pragmatic study conducted by Yuli et al., (2017). The study findings showed that while advice-giving in Javanese culture tended to be direct, American culture largely employed indirect strategies. In this regard, the study suggested that Americans believe that indirect strategies reduce burdens on the hearers, and that these strategies are in line with the politeness principles. Also, the study revealed that advice in American culture mostly included common facts, a matter that helped to strengthen the illocutionary force of the speech act. In contrast, it was not essential for advice in Javanese culture to include facts. Accordingly, the benefit of advice in both cultures was different as advice-giving in Javanese culture was meant to comfort the hearers, whereas in American culture it was a tool for helping the hearers to solve their problems. In addition, the study classified advice in both cultures into the forms of support, suggestions, and prohibition. To this effect, Javanese speakers tended to choose the indirect strategy to perform advice which contained support, whereas the direct strategy was selected by American speakers. Regarding advice in the forms of suggestion and prohibition, it was mostly delivered directly in Javanese culture, whereas it was delivered by using the indirect strategy by American speakers. Moreover, the study findings revealed that advice in the form of support in Javanese culture was phatic, that is, language used for general purposes of social interaction. In fact, phatic utterances are usually used to show solidarity and support to others, but they do not contribute to the problem solving. However, though phatic advice was used in American culture, it was accompanied by problem solving.

Jenetto and Hanafi (2019) investigated the speech act of advice and its relation to three social variables, namely social distance, power, and rate of imposition. The study effectively identified advice forms, politeness strategies, as well as social factors that impacted the choice of form and strategy. The study found that the investigated social

variables greatly influenced advice-giving in terms of the forms and strategies selected to perform the act. The study also indicated that social distance was the most influential factor in the advice-giving process, followed by social power. In this regard, social closeness (or lack thereof) correlated with directness in advice-giving. That is, with close (or low) social distance between interlocutors, the advisor chose the direct form and direct politeness strategy. However, when both the speaker and the hearer had a far (or high) social distance, a more indirect form and indirect politeness strategy were selected, regardless of the hearer's power status. Finally, the study findings showed that the most dominant type of advice used by the study participants was hedging, and the positive politeness strategy was the dominant strategy.

As far as the researchers could investigate, studying the speech act of advice in the Holy Qur'an has not been studied before or is under-investigated, and thus it remains a gap in literature. Accordingly, the dearth of literature in this regard had been the impetus for the current study. Particularly, the present study investigated the application of the speech act theory to the Qur'anic discourse as revealed by Allah the Almighty, and thus it attempted to bridge the gap through answering the research questions. Finally, the researchers believed that further research on advice speech act was necessary, especially because advice interactions are very pervasive in everyday interactions.

### III. METHODOLOGY

This section explains the adopted research design and analysis method, data source, data collection and sampling, framework of the study, and data verification and classification.

#### A. Research Design and Analysis Method

The present study adopted the explanatory sequential mixed methods research approach, a quantitative research method that includes the use of some statistical analysis, supported with a qualitative research method (Creswell, 2014). In fact, this method was more suitable as the researchers needed to diagnose the problem from two different angles. The first, quantitatively addressed, included three sequential steps: first, identifying and calculating the number of the speech acts of advice in the data; second, classifying and calculating the number and percentage of the strategy types used to perform these speech acts; and finally, identifying and calculating the number and percentage of sentence forms used in this regard. The second dimension, qualitatively performed, focused on investigating the impact of the social variables of distance and power on the strategy choice. In this way, examining advice speech acts in the data, their strategy types, and the sentence forms performing them in terms of number and percentage helped to answer the first two study questions. Also, building on the quantitative data results, the qualitative method was employed to explain in more detail the results with regards to how the strategy selection was impacted by the social variables of distance and power. In such manner, the researchers answered the third study question.

#### B. Data Source

As a matter of fact, the only source of data used in the analysis of the present study was the Holy Qur'an. This decision can be justified as the study mainly investigated the speech act of advice and its strategies in the Holy Qur'an.

#### C. Data Collection and Sampling

To answer the research questions, the researchers selected for analysis the first ten Qur'anic sections, equal to one third of the Holy Qur'an, which consists of 30 sections. The number of pages in each section typically ranges from 20 to 22 A4 pages. The researchers thought that the selected sample was adequate for achieving the aims of the study and for answering the research questions. In addition, the researchers consulted the valuable works of established commentators, such as Ibn-Kathir in *Tafsir Al Qur'an Al Atheem* (2009) and Al-Sabuni in *Safwat Al-Tafasir* (1997), to understand the meaning of Qur'anic utterances and to identify advice speech acts in the data. Also, the English translations of Qur'anic utterances were derived from Shakir (1974).

#### D. Framework of the Study

The study relied on Searle's classification of speech acts (1979) and the theoretical framework established by Hinkel (1994), in which advice was classified as a directive speech act performed via three strategy types: direct, indirect, and hedged. According to Hinkel (1994), direct speech act refers to the situation where the utterance includes a performative verb that directly reveals the kind of the speech act performed in the utterance, whereas indirect speech act refers to the situation where the utterance does not include such a performative verb, and thus the meaning is indirectly understood. However, hedged speech act refers to the situation where softeners or hedging devices are used.

#### E. Verification of Data and Classification

The study sample was thoroughly examined to identify all examples of advice speech acts. Initially, the number of examples before validation was 93. Based on Hinkel's (1994) model, the identified examples were then classified into three strategy types: direct, indirect, and hedged. To verify the validity of the material and its classification, the data were reviewed with two experts, specialized in the Arabic language and Qur'anic Interpretation '*tafsir*'. The feedback was twofold: first, to reclassify some examples in terms of the strategy type; and secondly, to exclude some other examples as they were considered not relevant. Therefore, the material was revisited and amended in line with the received feedback. The final list of advice speech acts that occurred in the data included 58 examples. However, this

final validated list was then reviewed with the experts, who confirmed that all these were true examples, and that their classification was true.

#### IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section is intended to analyze some examples of advice speech acts identified in the data. The analysis works along four dimensions; first, identifying the speech acts of advice used in the data; second, exploring the advice strategy used to perform each speech act; third, identifying the sentence form used in performing each speech act of advice; and finally, investigating the impact of the social variables of distance and power on the strategy choice.

In this regard, a sum of 58 examples of advice identified in the data were classified into direct, indirect, and hedged advice. Table (1) highlights the number and percentage of these advice strategies in light of Hinkel's (1994) classification.

TABLE 1  
NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF ADVICE STRATEGIES

Strategy	Number	Percentage
Direct	6	10.3%
Indirect	48	82.7%
Hedged	4	7%
Total	58	100%

Table (1) shows that the indirect advice strategy had the highest number of occurrences, with 48 occurrences, accounting for a percentage of nearly 82.7% of the total. The second advice strategy was the direct, with 6 occurrences and a percentage of about 10.3%, whereas the hedged advice strategy had the lowest number of occurrences, with 4 occurrences, accounting for a percentage of about 7%.

However, advice in Arabic can be realized through different structures, including the imperative, declarative, interrogative, and conditional sentence forms. Table (2) shows the number and percentage of the different sentence types that were used to perform advice speech acts in the data.

TABLE 2  
TYPE, NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF SENTENCE FORMS PERFORMING ADVICE SPEECH ACT

Strategy	Sentence Type	Number	Percentage
Direct (6)	Imperative	0	0%
	Interrogative	0	0%
	Declarative	6	10.3%
	Conditional	0	0%
Indirect (48)	Imperative	33	56.9%
	Interrogative	2	3.5%
	Declarative	5	8.6%
	Conditional	8	13.7%
Hedged (4)	Imperative	2	3.5%
	Interrogative	0	0%
	Declarative	2	3.5%
	Conditional	0	0%
Total		58	100%

It can be seen from Table (2) that the six examples of the direct advice strategy identified in the data were realized by the declarative sentence type, accounting for nearly 10.3%. In contrast, the imperative was the most frequent sentence type used in giving indirect advice in the data, followed by the conditional. In this regard, the imperative form was used 33 times to perform indirect advice, constituting nearly 56.9%. Also, eight occurrences of the conditional sentence type were found to be employed in performing indirect advice, constituting about 13.7%. The declarative came third, with a percentage of about 8.6%, whereas the least frequent sentence type used in giving indirect advice was the interrogative, constituting a percentage of about 3.5%. However, giving advice through using hedging devices was the least frequent strategy in the data, with four occurrences, two of which were realized by the imperative form, whereas the other two were performed by the declarative form, each of which represented about 3.5%.

The following is a presentation and discussion of some examples of the three advice strategies that occurred in the data. The examples were discussed in detail, with focus on addressing the research questions presented earlier. However, it is worth mentioning that the discussed examples could be used as a means for understanding the unexplained ones that appeared in the data.

##### A. Direct Advice

In Arabic, the verb نصح /nas'aha/ 'advised', or any of its derivations, which have the same semantic meaning, can be used to perform direct advice speech acts. Examples (1) and (2) below illustrate this strategy further.

*Example 1:*

The Prophet Saleh, in the following Qur'anic verse, gave some direct advice to his people, who refused Allah's message to them. Saleh advised them to accept the message and to follow the right path of Allah. In this regard, the declarative sentence form was used to perform the function of advice. Also, the prophet used the past tense verb نصحت /nas'ahu/ 'advised' and the plural noun النَّاصِحِينَ /anna:s'ihiiin/ 'advisors' to show his people that he had good intentions towards them, and that he had been a true advisor to them, though he said that they did not like advisors. However, the prophet made it clear to his people that what made him advise and guide them was fear and pity for them. Therefore, the benefit of this advice would go to the hearers. The relative power of the speaker, Saleh, as a messenger of Allah, was greater than that of the hearers, the non-believers. The advisor in this case was more powerful, a prophet who was supported by Allah with miracles. However, social distance between the interlocutors was low as both the speaker and the hearers were related to the same tribe, and Saleh was a member of that tribe. Obviously, social distance between the interlocutors was not the decisive factor in determining the choice of strategy in this context. Hence, the selection of direct advice strategy is justified, being based on the supposition that people with high power or authority tend to give advice directly.

Source Text	English Translation
"فَتَوَلَّى عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يَا قَوْمِ لَقَدْ أَبْلَغْتُكُمْ رَسُولَ رَبِّي وَنَصَحْتُ لَكُمْ، وَلَكِنْ لَا تُحِبُّونَ النَّاصِحِينَ". (الأعراف: 79)	"Then he turned away from them and said: O my people I did certainly deliver to you the message of my Lord, and I gave you good advice, but you do not love those who give good advice". (Al-Araf:79, Shakir translation)

*Example 2:*

We have been informed in the following Qur'anic verse of the famous temptation story of Adam and Satan. In this regard, Allah the Almighty requested Adam to dwell with his wife in Heaven, and to eat thereof as they both wished, but not to approach a certain tree. Pretending that he was a true advisor, Satan incited Adam and his wife to eat from the Forbidden Tree. The declarative sentence form was used to perform the speech act of advice in this regard. In truth, Satan's advice was no more than an act of temptation and disobedience to Allah's instruction. To justify his direct advice, Satan claimed that Allah had ordered the couple not to approach the Forbidden Tree in order not to become two angels or become immortal. Satan stressed that his advice would bring benefit to Adam and his wife as they would attain immortality if they followed his advice. He even swore to them that he was a sincere advisor to them as he was in Heaven before them, and thus he had better knowledge of this place. In this regard, the direct advice strategy was employed though the advisor had less power than the advisee, who was supported by Allah. Also, social distance between the interlocutors was high as the speech of Satan was addressed to a social superior rather than to a peer acquaintance. Therefore, social distance between the interlocutors was not the decisive factor in determining the selection of the direct advice strategy in this context. However, the choice of the direct advice strategy can be justified, being based on the pretense of Satan that he had knowledge of the secret of the Forbidden Tree, which the hearer did not have. Knowledge in this sense is a source of power in society, and the advisor had knowledge, though it was false. This lends support to the notion that people with high power or authority tend to use the direct strategy in giving advice.

Source Text	English Translation
"فَوَسْوَسَ لَهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ لِيُبْدِيَ لَهُمَا مَا وُورِيَ عَنْهُمَا مِنْ سَوْءَاتِهِمَا وَقَالَ مَا نَهَاكُمَا رَبُّكُمَا عَنْ هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةِ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَا مَلَكَتَيْنِ أَوْ تَكُونَا مِنَ الْخَالِدِينَ. وَقَاسَمَهُمَا إِنِّي لَكُمَا لَمِنَ النَّاصِحِينَ". (الأعراف: 20-21)	"But the Shaitan made an evil suggestion to them that he might make manifest to them what had been hidden from them of their evil inclinations, and he said: Your Lord has not forbidden you this tree except that you may not both become two angels or that you may (not) become of the immortals. And he swore to them both: Most surely, I am a sincere adviser to you". (Al-Araf:20-21, Shakir translation)

*B. Indirect Advice*

Unlike direct advice, indirect advice in Arabic can be performed without including the verb نصح /nas'aha/ 'advised', or any of its derivations, that have the same semantic meaning. In addition, indirect advice usually suggests a situation where the sentence form mismatches its discourse function. Examples (3) and (4) illustrate this advice strategy further.

*Example 3:*

Giving some advice and guidance to his people, the Prophet Shuaib in the following Qur'anic verse used four positive and negative (prohibitive) imperative verbs. In this regard, the imperative can be used in Arabic to advise the hearers to do something for their own benefit, and at the same time, they are not forced to follow the advice. Here, the prophet's use of the imperatives was intended to give guidance and indirect advice with regards to worshipping Allah, giving just measure and weight, not withholding from people the things that are their due, and finally doing no harm on the earth. However, the relative power of the speaker, as a messenger of Allah, was greater than that of the hearers, the non-believers. Also, social distance between the interlocutors was not high, as both relate to the same tribe, and Shuaib was a member of that tribe. Describing the relationship between the Prophet Shuaib and his people, Allah the Almighty

said that He sent them one of their own brothers. Referring to Shuaib as a brother to his people suggests a close and intimate relationship between the interlocutors. Interestingly, the advice of the Prophet Shuaib was beneficial not only to his people but also to all mankind. In this regard, this universal advice took into consideration some important economic issues. One of these was preserving the economic rights of all people, including the right not to be deceived in any purchasing transactions. The universality of advice in this Qur'anic verse accounts for the use of the indirect strategy in this context. The prophet's advice was very beneficial as it addressed some important financial and commercial transactions, and any breach of which would result in economic crises in the community. In addition, the use of the indirect advice strategy by the prophet is also justified, being based on the belief that indirectness implies optionality. To this effect, the indirect advice strategy was employed to reduce its force and to increase the hearer's optionality. This also lends support to the fact that in Islam mankind is distinguished from all other creatures by their free will.

Source Text	English Translation
"وَالِى مَدْيَنَ أَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بَيِّنَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَأَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ وَالْمِيزَانَ وَلَا تَبْخَسُوا النَّاسَ أَشْيَاءَهُمْ وَلَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلَاحِهَا ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ". (الأعراف:85)	"And to Madyan (We sent) their brother Shu'aib. He said: O my people! serve Allah, you have no god other than Him; clear proof indeed has come to you from your Lord, therefore give full measure and weight and do not diminish to men their things, and do not make mischief in the land after its reform; this is better for you if you are believers". (Al-Araf:85, Shakir translation.)

#### Example 4:

The following Qur'anic verse, called the 'debt' verse, included four imperatives that were used to advise and guide the believers rather than to command them. In fact, the imperative can be used in Arabic to advise the hearers to do or to refrain from doing something for their own benefit. To this effect, the believers were requested in this verse to write debt contracts, which need to have witnesses present in order to avoid any unnecessary disputes in future. What proves that the imperatives were used to advise and guide, but not to command the believers, is that Allah the Almighty mentioned the benefits of writing debt contracts and having witnesses present. He stated in this regard that this act would help avoid questioning about the honesty of the parties involved in the debt process. In this regard, Allah advises and guides people to do what benefits them, but at the same time, He does not punish them for not following His advice. Therefore, there are some exceptional circumstances, where debt contracts are allowed not to be written. For example, dealers can choose not to write a contract, when they are on a journey and can find no one to write it down. As a matter of fact, power of the speaker, Allah the Almighty, was obviously greater than that of the hearers, and social distance between them was also high. Allah has power over people, and the advice here is meant to benefit all people with regards to worldly matters. However, the selection of the indirect advice strategy can be accounted for on the basis that indirectness is related to the idea of optionality, where the hearer's freedom of choice is increased and the force of advice is reduced. Again, this explanation lends support to the notion that in Islam mankind is distinguished from all other creatures by their free will.

Source Text	English Translation
"يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا تَدَانَيْتُمْ بِدَيْنٍ إِلَى أَجَلٍ مُسَمًّى فَاكْتُبُوهُ وَلْيَكُنْ بَيْنَكُمْ كَاتِبٌ بِالْعَدْلِ... اسْتَشْهِدُوا شَهِيدَيْنِ مِنْ رِجَالِكُمْ... وَاشْهَدُوا إِذَا تَبَايَعْتُمْ وَلَا يُضَارَ كَاتِبٌ وَلَا شَهِيدٌ..." (البقرة:282)	"O you who believe! when you deal with each other in contracting a debt for a fixed time, then write it down; and let a scribe write it down between you with fairness, ...and have witnesses when you barter with one another, and let no harm be done to the scribe or to the witness..." (Al-Baqara:282, Shakir translation)

#### C. Hedged Advice

Finally, the speech act of advice can be performed by using hedging devices, which, according to Hinkel (1994), indicate the speaker's hesitation and uncertainty. Hedging devices in Arabic include words, such as عسى /ʔsa:/ 'perhaps', أخاف /ʔxa:f/ 'I fear', لعل /lʔʔʔlʔ/ 'maybe', أظن /ʔʔʔun/ 'I doubt', يبدو /jʔbduu/ 'it seems', and لكن /la:kin/ 'but'. Examples (5) and (6) illustrate this advice strategy further.

#### Example 5:

The speech act of advice was performed in the following verse by using the imperative sentence type and the hedging device عسى /ʔsa:/ 'perhaps'. Here, Allah the Almighty advised and guided husbands to live with their wives honorably and to treat them kindly. He also advised that if husbands dislike their wives, it may be that they dislike a thing and Allah the Almighty brings through it a great deal of good. The benefit of this advice would go to all men who have patience with their wives. The rule that people may dislike something, though it is good for them, may be applicable to many other things. Indeed, goodness is sometimes achieved in what one dislikes. However, power and status of the speaker, Allah the Almighty, were obviously high compared to those of the hearers, whose knowledge and power were very limited. Social distance between the interlocutors was also high. Yet, though social distance and power of the

speaker were higher than the hearers, the hedged advice strategy was used. The choice of the hedging strategy implies that the thought that people may dislike a thing, while Allah has placed abundant good in it, is not always applicable to all situations. There are some exceptions, which require the use of hedging devices, such as *عسى* /ʔsa:/ ‘perhaps’ in this context, a matter that implies the free will of people in Islam regarding the things they may like or dislike.

Source Text	English Translation
<p>”يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَرِثُوا النِّسَاءَ كَرِهًا وَلَا تَعْضُلُوهُنَّ لِتَذْهَبُوا بِبَعْضِ مَا آتَيْنَهُنَّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُبَيَّنَةٍ وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ فَإِنْ كَرِهْتُمُوهُنَّ فَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا.“ (النساء: 19)</p>	<p>“O you who believe! it is not lawful for you that you should take women as heritage against (their) will, and do not straiten them in order that you may take part of what you have given them, unless they are guilty of manifest indecency, and treat them kindly; then if you hate them, it may be that you dislike a thing while Allah has placed abundant good in it.” (An-Nisa:19, Shakir translation)</p>

#### Example 6:

The speech act of advice, in the following Qur’anic verse, was performed by using the declarative sentence type, which included the hedging device *عسى* /ʔsa:/ ‘perhaps’, repeated twice. Allah the Almighty advised and encouraged the believers to fight in Jihad against their enemy, who transgressed against them and their religion. Though the believers disliked fighting because of its hardship, Allah guided them that it may be the case that they may dislike a thing which is good for them, and that they may like a thing which is bad for them. Allah then said that He knows, but the believers do not know whether things in general are good or bad for them. Indeed, Allah the Omniscient has knowledge of all things that can benefit or harm people. The benefit of this advice goes to all those who follow Allah’s guidance. Apparently, power and status of the speaker were high compared to those of the hearers, whose knowledge and power were very limited. Also, social distance between the interlocutors was also high. However, the employment of hedging devices in this Qur’anic verse is justified, being based on the belief that conditions of true fighting were determined by Allah, who encouraged the believers to fight for the good they obtain from fighting if they fulfill its conditions. To this effect, not all fighters are entitled to the reward of fighting as fighting must be in the way of Allah, and within His prescribed limits. The rule that the believers may dislike fighting though it is good for them may apply to many other things in life. Surprisingly, goodness is sometimes achieved in what people dislike. However, always there are some exceptions to this rule, which require the use of hedging devices, such as *عسى* /ʔsa:/ ‘perhaps’, in this context. Also, the use of hedged advice implies the free will of people in Islam regarding the things they may like or dislike.

Source Text	English Translation
<p>”كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ وَهُوَ كَرْهٌ لَكُمْ وَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ وَعَسَى أَنْ تُحِبُّوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ.“ (البقرة: 216)</p>	<p>“Fighting is enjoined on you, and it is an object of dislike to you; and it may be that you dislike a thing while it is good for you, and it may be that you love a thing while it is evil for you, and Allah knows, while you do not know.” (Al-Baqara:216, Shakir translation)</p>

#### D. Summary of Findings

In summary, the analysis of the data revealed that the indirect strategy was the most frequent strategy used to perform the speech act of advice in the Holy Qur’an, compared to the other advice strategies. In addition, the analysis revealed that the hedged strategy was the least frequent advice strategy used in the data. These results suggest that the interlocutors in the Holy Qur’an opted for substantially more indirect advice. This can be well accounted for based on the notion that indirectness is related to the degree of optionality, as argued by Leech (1983). In this regard, the indirect illocution of advice in the Holy Qur’an was used to reduce its force and to increase the hearer’s optionality. This conclusion, however, lends support to the premise that in Islam mankind is distinguished from all other creatures by their free will, an essential faith in Islam. Also, the scarcity of the use of hedged advice strategy in the data is justified, being based on the idea that hedging devices prevent direct communication, and religious discourse, including Qur’anic verses, usually tends to be very clear and intelligible to all mankind. The study findings also showed that indirect advice was mainly realized by the imperative sentence type, followed by the conditional. However, the least frequent sentence type used in giving indirect advice was the interrogative. In addition, the study revealed that direct advice was realized only by the declarative, and that none of the identified examples in this regard was of the imperative sentence form. This finding may suggest that there is a tendency in the Holy Qur’an to avoid using the imperative to perform the illocutionary act of advice, though the use of the imperative is believed to be the normal practice that is followed in giving direct advice. Moreover, the analysis revealed that two of the four identified examples of the hedged advice were realized by the imperative, and the other two were realized by the declarative sentence type. Furthermore, the study findings showed that the choice of strategy was greatly impacted by the social variables of distance and relative power between the speaker and the hearer, though context was a determining factor in some cases. Finally, the study indicated that advice given to a social inferior was substantially more frequent than that given to a social superior or a peer, and that relative power and social distance between the social superior, the inferior, and the peer acquaintance were all recognized by the speakers. Nevertheless, advice acts in the data differed from one context to another, depending on



power of the speaker and the hearer. In fact, advice speech acts occurred between people who had different position and power, usually the speaker of the advice had more power than the hearer of it.

## V. CONCLUSION

This study provides a socio-pragmatic analysis of the speech act of advice in the Holy Qur'an. The analysis is based on Searle's (1979) classification of speech acts, and Hinkel's (1994) model of advice. The analysis revealed the following findings: the indirect strategy was the most common type of advice strategies used in the Holy Qur'an, the imperative form was the most frequent sentence type used to give indirect advice in the Holy Qur'an, the choice of strategy to perform advice speech acts was greatly impacted by the social variables of distance and power, and context of Qur'anic verses was a decisive factor for determining this impact in many cases.

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