Request Constructions in Classical Arabic versus Modern Arabic: A Corpus-based Study

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Abstract: The present study aims to investigate the various request constructions used in Classical Arabic and Modern Arabic language by identifying the differences in their usage in these two different genres. Also, the study attempts to trace the cases of felicitous and infelicitous requests in the Arabic language. Methodologically, the current study employs a web-based corpus tool (Sketch Engine) to analyze different corpora: the first one is Classical Arabic, represented by King Saud University Corpus of Classical Arabic, while the second is The Arabic Web Corpus "arTenTen" representing Modern Arabic. To do so, the study relies on felicity conditions to qualitatively interpret the quantitative data, i.e., following a mixed mode method. The findings of the present study show that request constructions vary in terms of occurrence between Classical Arabic and Modern Arabic. In Classical Arabic, (/laa/ لا) of prohibition is the most frequent construction, which is rarely used in the Web corpus where the command in the form of (/lam/لام + verb) is the most commonly emerging one, which is, in turn, seldom employed in the former corpus. The vocative (/ya/ يا) is the second most frequent construction in Classical Arabic, whilst the interrogative (/hel/ هل) emerged in the other genre. The third most common request construction is the interrogative (/hel/ هل) in Classical Arabic, but the vocative (/ya/ يا) is used in Modern Arabic. Nonetheless, some of these constructions fail to accomplish two or more conditions and hence are regarded as infelicitous requests. Such infelicitous constructions serve other functions than requests, such as negation, exclamation, and sarcasm.
Keywords: classical Arabic, corpus studies, modern Arabic, requests.

Requests are one of the communicative acts that people repeatedly and regularly produce in everyday life. They are speech acts that can be performed either implicitly or explicitly depending on several strategies and constructions and the speakers' choice and intention. However, such strategies and constructions are almost common in all languages. In contrast, others are not, an aim that plenty of linguistic studies focus on, such as research comparing Arabic and English request constructions. For instance, in English, the linguistic

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forms of requests involve imperative, interrogative, and declarative (Mohamed, 2019), whereas, in Arabic, requests include these three constructions in addition to the other three ones: negative imperative, wish, and vocative. Nonetheless, the Arabic language has two linguistic varieties used under different circumstances, a situation labeled as diglossia, and these two are Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic (Yule, 2010).

Requests denote that the producer wants the receiver to do a certain act, which is not vivid what the hearer is going to do in the ordinary course of circumstances (Trosborg, 1995). For a request to be felicitous, there are four conditions that need to be fulfilled for the request to be appropriate. For Austin, all participants in the interaction must recognize some elements, such as context and their roles, the action must completely be performed, and speakers must have true intentions (Novanti, 2016). The current study sets itself the task of investigating:

1. The requests most frequently used in Classical Arabic versus Modern (web) Arabic.
2. The cases of felicitous and infelicitous requests in the Arabic language.

Research Questions

This study is intended to provide answers to the following two questions:

1. What are the requests most frequently used in Classical Arabic and Web (Modern) languages?
2. What are the cases in which requests are considered felicitous or infelicitous in Classical Arabic and Modern languages?

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study lies in its contribution to the linguistic bulk of studies that expose the various request structures in the Arabic language as being used in Classical versus Modern mode, besides the employment of the linguistic concepts of the English language into the Arabic language allows new areas to be discovered, hence, enrich the Arabic literature. Therefore, the study of requests has attracted for so long the attention of many linguists (Aubed, 2012). Several works have been conducted on a comparative level of requests from English to Arabic. To the best of the researchers' knowledge, no study compared the use of requests between Classical and Modern Arabic, besides using the corpus for analyzing the data.

Literature Review

Speech Act of Requests

The speech act theory was initiated for the first time by Austin in 1962 and later on, it was further developed by Searle in 1969. This theory states the means to transfer messages in communication are utterances, and these can also carry out actions, for example, making requests, suggestions, orders, invitations, mentioning but a few. They assume that such speech acts are processed either directly or indirectly. Direct speech acts are cases where speakers say something and mean exactly and literally what they mean, whereas indirect speech acts are cases where the meaning of the speakers' utterances and the equivalent sentence structures are not the same (Aldhulaee, 2011). In social interaction, "speakers often perform acts which may be said to 'threaten' the face wants of both speakers and hearers and such acts are called face threatening acts (hence FTAs)" (Abbas, 2013, p.186).

Requests are among the speech acts that have received much attention in the literature (Rose, 2000). They fall under the directive category, considering that the requester, as Trosborg (1995) states, demands the hearer to perform an action. This action is intended to be beneficial for the latter. Requests denote that the producer wants the receiver to do a certain act, which is not vivid what the hearer is going to do in the ordinary course of circumstances. According to Leech (1983), requests are speech events that allow the addressee to make a decision whether to bring about an act or not, more than denoting the control that a requester cast over the hearer. In the English language, the linguistic forms of requests involve imperative, interrogative, and declarative (Mohamed, 2019). Requests, due to being the concern of the present study, constitute a category of speech acts that can be performed directly or indirectly.

Felicity Conditions

Austin (1962) proposes the aspect of felicity conditions. This aspect refers to an utterance as a means of not merely saying something, but also doing things, known as speech acts. Austin elaborates that 'utterances' cannot be assumed to be 'true or false.' Despite this, they can be evaluated to meet a number of conditions to be felicitous (Hadiati, 2019). Cutting (2002) states that, for Austin, all participants in the interaction must recognize elements such as context and their roles, the action must completely be performed, and speakers must have true intentions (Novanti, 2016). Austin's conditions were further developed by Searle in 1970, who suggests that participants must be able to receive and understand each other's language, and they must not be acting or pretending (Novanti, 2016).

Searle presents four conditions for felicitous utterances, namely, preparatory, proposition content, sincerity, and essential conditions. The first one remarks on the speaker's ability to perform utterances and that they are not under the power of others. According to Schiffrin (1989), for felicitous requests, the receiver is said to be able to perform the action, and the producer believes in that. Also, it is vivid for both the speaker and the hearer if the latter is going to do the action (Issa & Abuarrah, 2015). The second one denotes the production of an utterance in certain circumstances, i.e., when being uttered, it will be obvious whether the utterance is felicitous or not. For requests, based on Schiffrin (1989), an action is expected to be performed on the part of the hearer. The third condition indicates the speaker's sincerity in committing their utterance. In requests, the producer wants the receiver to do the action (Issa & Abuarrah, 2015). The fourth one states the speaker's intention and capability to perform the act. In requests, the request, as Schiffrin (1989) declares, can be counted as an attempt by the producer to make the receiver perform a certain act (Issa & Abuarrah, 2015). However, no one can regard an utterance to be true or false by only declaring that it fits the world or not, but rather by checking if it fulfills these four conditions (Hadiati, 2019).

Requests in Arabic

Based on the definition provided by Arab rhetoricians, performative utterances are utterances that are not recognized with reference to truth and falsity. Yet, it demands performing the act, for example, asking, requesting, apologizing, promising, and so on (Issa & Abuarrah, 2015). Requests are classified into two major types, solicit, requestive performatives, and non-requestive performatives. The first type, which is the focus of the present study, is defined, according to Fayyood (1992), as "what requires an action that does not exist at the time of speaking" (p. 214). Other scholars, such as Ateeq (1985), identify requestive performatives meaning as not happening in the meantime of producing them. They fall into five sub-categories, that is, imperative, negative imperative, interrogative, wish, and vocation (Issa & Abuarrah, 2015). They are explained in some detail below:

- **Imperative (command)**

It refers to requests made by superiors to inferiors (I. S. Ali, 2001; Ateeq, 1985; Ateyya, 2004).

The following is an example from Surat Al-Baqarah (43)

And be steadfast in prayer: Give Zakat, and bow down your heads with those who bow down (in worship) (Y. A. Ali, 1989, p.19).

قال تعالى: " وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَارْكَعُوا مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ".

- **Negative Imperative (Prohibition)**

It remarks requests to terminate doing a specific act, and it is directed from superiors to inferiors as a kind of obligation (I. S. Ali, 2001; Ateyya, 2004; Ba-Taher, 2008).

An example from Surat Al-Baqarah (283) is the following:

And do not conceal the testimony (Arberry, 1955, p.17).

قال تعالى: "وَلَا تَكْتُمُوا الشَّهَادَةَ ".

- **Interrogative**

It denotes requests for a certain piece of information regarding unknown matters and things (Abu Musa, 1988; Ba-Taher, 2008). To accomplish that, a number of particles are employed, for instance, "من ، أي ، كيف ،كم ، اين ، متى ، هل ، ايان" who, which, how, how much, how many, where, when, would, is, are, will." This type of interrogative, similar to all the others, possesses subsidiary functions such as disaffirmation, exclamation, negation, order, wish, and affirmation (Issa & Abuarrah, 2015).

- **Wish**

It is, based on Atftazani's definition, "the request for the existence of the desired thing" (Ateeq, 1985, p. 111). Ateyya (1985) defines a wish as a request for the favor of things that are unfeasible and implausible to occur. The primary particle used in a wish is "laita" or "would that", "la'ala" or "perchance," "Lau" or "Could/ If," and "hal" or "have, has, is, are" (Issa & Abuarrah, 2015).

An example to show this case is the following:

Would I had died ere this, and become a thing forgotten! (Surat Maryam, 23) (Arberry, 1955, p. 332).

قال تعالى: "يَا لَيْتَنِي مِتُّ قَبْلَ هَٰذَا وَكُنْتُ نَسْيًا مَنْسِيًّا".

- **Vocative**

It is a request made by the speaker calling for the attention of the hearer utilizing one of its particles. These vocative particles are الهمزة، أي، يا، أيا، هيا، آ، آيAlhamza, ay, ya, haya, aa, aay (Ad-Darawish & Al-Hayazi, 2005; Fayyood, 1992). It also serves a number of secondary functions, for instance, exclamation, regret, and specificity (Issa & Abuarrah, 2015).

An example for this case is the following:

O ye people! Worship your Guardian Lord, Who created you (Al-Baqarah, 21) (Y. A. Ali, 1989, p.11).

قال تعالى: "يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ".

Classical Arabic versus Modern Arabic

Classical Arabic refers to the Qur'an language and the poetic language of pre-Islamic Arabic till that of Abbasid Caliphate. It is not necessarily similar to the dialects and registers of nowadays. Many Arab linguists differentiated between Classical Arabic and Modern Arabic, stating that the latter sprung from the former (Khrisat & Al-Harthy, 2015). Modern Arabic is a variety of the Arabic language that is utilized in current publications and registered speech on special occasions. Thus, several attempts by Arab intellectualists to implement the classical version of the language in academic settings see that it is becoming irrelevant to the real circumstance (Khrisat & Al-Harthy, 2015). Fischer (1997) holds the opinion that classical and modern Arabic have roughly identical morphology and syntax over the years. Habash (2010) declares that the official language in the Arab World is "Modern Arabic." The syntactic structures, morphology, and phonology of this official language are derived from "Classical Arabic." However, modern Arabic, as cited in Khrisat and Al-Harthy (2015, p. 256) was associated with "dialect mixing in the camps of the conquerors, the influence of the languages and dialects of the conquered, and the formation of regional vernaculars" which in turn lead to either put in, omit, record or create different rules of structure (Khrisat & Al-Harthy, 2015).

Previous Studies

Request is a widely studied topic in the literature of linguistics. Some researchers tackled the most frequent forms of requests used by Indonesian speakers (Nugroho & Rekha, 2020), Pakistani speakers (Alam *et al*., 2021), Saudi learners (Al Khasawneh, 2021), Swedish learners (Haddad & Sert, 2017), Iraqi learners (Muslah & Abbas, 2023; Rasheed, 2020), Yemeni learners (Al-Marrani & Sazalie, 2010), Turkish (Kiliçkaya, 2010), etc. Other studies compared requests in the English language versus other languages, such as Macedonian (Daskalovska *et al*., 2016), Jordanian Arabic (Tarawneh & Hussein, 2019), Persian (Ghasempour & Farnia, 2016; Yazdanfar & Bonyadi, 2016), Norwegian (Salvesen, 2015), and several others. Some other studies tackled felicity conditions in relation to requests, such studies were Hadiati (2019) and Novanti (2016). However, most of the mentioned studies about requests and felicity conditions tend to use the Discourse Completion Tasks or case studies, such as movies, dramas, novels, etc., to collect suitable data about requests. Few studies use the corpus, for example Wang (2011), as a basis for studying the data. The following is a display of some of these studies most relevant to the present research.

Mohamed (2019) in his study tackled the use of requests and their directness level by comparing Moroccan Arabic versus American English. He also examined the effect of the most important socio-pragmatic factors, namely, social power, distance, and imposition. The Discourse Completion Task (DCT) was used for the data collection. The study was based on a question addressed to a number of participants. The results of the study showed a statistically significant difference in the use of requests among the Moroccan and American participants, particularly in indirect strategies. The study showed a preference by the Moroccan, who tended to be more hearer-oriented, to use direct request strategies. This is on one hand, on the other hand, the Americans, who were found to be more speaker-oriented, favored the indirect ones. In regard to socio-pragmatic factors, they showed a strong association with the request level of directness among the Moroccans rather than the Americans.

Al-Hellu (2020) conducted a study that tackled requests from a grammatical perspective in certain parents of the Holy Quran seeking to figure out its essential characteristics. He also investigated the various request styles represented in the Holy Quran and their sub-functions. He concluded that request constructions served to fulfill functions in a language other than requests. Besides, the imperative and vocative constructions of requests are the most common ones in the Holy Quranic verses.

Aubed (2012) conducted a study where he compared between polite requests in both English and Arabic. The study was intended to specify some patterns of requests in English and their equivalence in Arabic for the sake of translation. The data used in the study were taken from Blum-Kulka *et al*. (1989) and were analyzed on the basis of the requests' constructions in Arabic and English language. The findings demonstrated that the Arabic language has more markers that make requests sound polite than English. Another study by Aldhulaee (2011) investigated the mitigating devices used to lessen the request used by Australian speakers and Iraqi speakers on daily basis. The data were collected from both Australian and Iraqi speakers by conducting interviews. The results displayed that, unlike Iraqi speakers, Australian speakers exploited more internal devices; however, both groups used external devices which can be explained on the ground of volubility as a strategy of politeness.

Hadiati (2019) described the felicity conditions as they are found in various speech acts in the daily interaction of the Banyumasan. The data were qualitatively analyzed in selected extracts. Study findings revealed that the Banyumasan discourse illustrates, through employing the felicity conditions, different realizations, such as declarations, directives, expressive, representative, and commissives. Novanti (2016) investigated the felicity conditions in "The Hunger Games" movie and applied the felicity conditions to improve the speaking skill of high school seniors. Data, which were some dialogues of the movie script, were described qualitatively. The results of the study indicated that most movie scripts contained a sincerity condition, followed by the essential condition, content condition, then the general condition, and lastly preparatory condition.

In a study conducted by Brown and Stvan (2015), they examined the different forms of requests as well as the conditions of context associated with them as being used by Americans. The data were mainly collected from a corpus of spoken English. The findings of the study concluded that request forms are sensitive to contextual variables, such as the speaker-hearer cooperation on events, initiating moves, maximizing unexpected cooperation, an activity interruption, and several others. The study also demonstrated that a static display of context is not sufficient for explaining the variation in request forms used by Americans. Wang (2011) examined strategies of request speech act in regard to power and distance variables in 3970 clips of Chinese teledramas using a contemporary corpus. Study findings showed a strong association between request strategies and social distance and power which is a reflection of Chines culture. They tended to put so much effort to make requests successful and reduce conflicts, frustration, and dismay. Also, the social distance variable, in particular, played a key role in expressing requests in the Chines setting.

Methodology

Research Design

The most important issue in regard to corpus-based studies is how to go beyond quantitative patterns so as to be able to suggest or propose functional interpretations and explanations about why these patterns exist. So, the efforts in these types of studies are devoted to explaining and exemplifying quantitative patterns. As a result, corpus studies are regarded as

a combination of two types of analysis methods, namely, quantitative and qualitative. They usually start with quantitative findings and work toward qualitative ones.

The relation between linguistics theories and corpus work is often expressed in two ways: corpus-based or corpus-driven. Mahlberg (2005) states that in corpus-based studies "a theory or assumption is presented, and the corpus data can confirm or refute it; so, the corpus data are used to modify or adjust a theory by presenting authentic quantitative evidence" (p. 18). McEnery and Hardie (2012) add that corpus-based studies use their data to discover a theory or hypothesis, and this kind of study usually regards the corpus approach as a method that helps to achieve the aims of the study.

The present study is intended to be comparative with the aim of comparing the usage of request constructions in the classical Arabic and Arabic web Languages. Based on the fact that a corpus usually and mainly focuses on a specific type of language used by a large number of people and in a wide range of contexts and social relationships, corpus-based research aims to show and provide evidence of recurrent patterns in language use. According to Mohammed (2020), imperative request construction is the most regularly used in daily situations, thus, the current study aims to confirm or refute it.

Data Collection and Criteria of Data Selection

It is stated that one of the main challenges researchers face when conducting a study is choosing a suitable rich work containing a large amount of examples so as to apply the suggested model (Mohammed & Abbas, 2016). In this regard, two types of corpora are involved in the present study. The first one is the King Saud University Corpus of Classical Arabic (KSUCCA), and the second one is the Corpus of the Arabic Web arTen Ten. The former is a language corpus that consists of Classical Arabic texts representing the period between the late 7th and early 11th centuries. This corpus, which comprises 46 million words, was built by a Ph.D. candidate called Maha Alrabiah. It contained a large number of texts collected from a large number of genres, including Sociology, Literature, Linguistics, Religion, Science, Biography, and other texts. Such genres were subdivided into a number of subgenres.

The other type of corpus, i.e., Corpus of the Arabic Web arTenTen, consisted of texts collected from the Internet. This corpus is considered as part of the TenTen corpus family, which is mainly a set of web corpora created by using the same method with a target size of 10+ billion words. Each of these two corpora is to be considered a representative of its kind. The first one is representative of the Classical Arabic Language, while the second is representative of the web language used by Arabic people on the Web.

Ethical and Legal Considerations

The two corpora used are available online and free to use. Sketch Engine (the corpus tool used in this study) currently provides access to the two types of corpora, already explained in the previous section.

Corpus Tool (instrument)

To carry out a quantitative analysis, the current study employed a web-based corpus tool (Sketch Engine) to analyze two different corpora. Sketch Engine helps the researcher to perform a different analytical process on the data; it focuses on the three essential tools that both WordSmith and Antconc are presenting, which are Concordance, Wordlist, and Keywords, but rather unlike the previously mentioned software, it gives the researcher access to 500 different corpora in different types and languages to compare his/her data with. Besides, it provides the

researcher with storage space to add his/her own corpus to the already existing ones to perform many other analytical processes.

Procedures

To do the quantitative analysis, this study relies on Sketch Engine, a web-based corpus tool, to analyze the two different corpora and the felicity conditions to qualitatively interpret the results obtained from the quantitative data. To achieve the quantitative and qualitative analysis of this study, the researchers adopted the following steps:

1. Examining the different types of request constructions in each corpus.
2. Calculating the number of hits for each type in both corpora.
3. Identifying the types most frequently used in each corpus.
4. Analyzing these results using the felicity conditions.

Findings

The present section introduces the findings of the study since the data were analyzed to find out the request constructions most frequently used in Classical Arabic and those in Modern Standard Arabic. The request constructions were analyzed on the basis of felicity conditions to find the ones that are felicitous and those that are not. The findings are illustrated as answers to the two research questions, which are stated below:

1. What are the requests most frequently used in Classical Arabic and Web (Modern) languages?

The study demonstrated requests in different forms and constructions. However, these forms vary between the Classical and web Arabic language as illustrated in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1
Frequency of Request Constructions in Classical and Web (Modern) Arabic Language
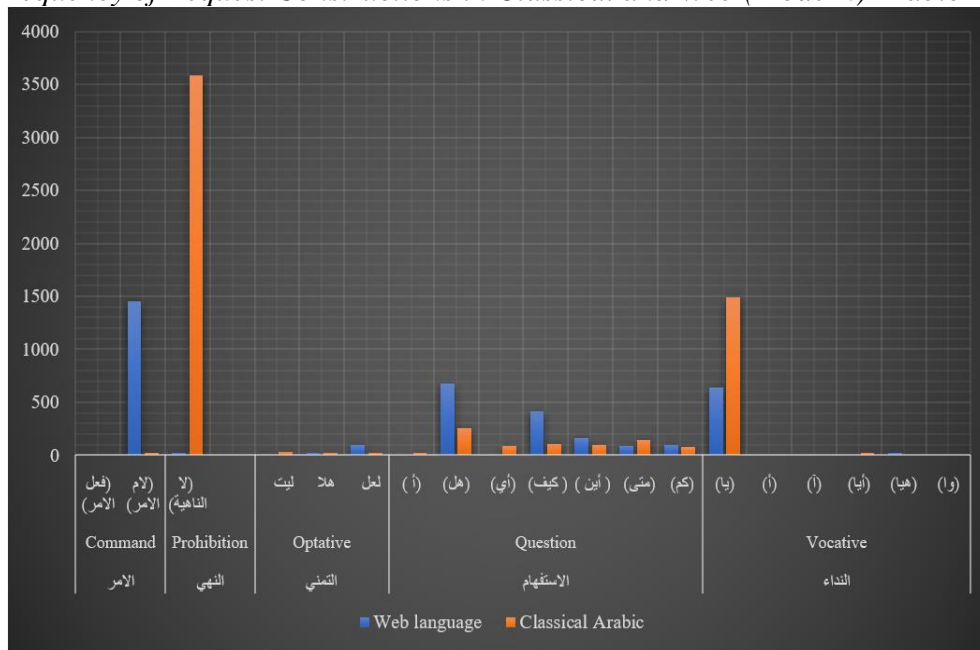
As illustrated in figure 1 above, the most frequent request construction used in Classical Arabic was (prohibition /laa/) لا الناهية, followed by (vocative /yaa/) يا النداء, then (interrogative /hal/) هل الاستفهامية, then (interrogative /mata/) متى الاستفهامية, next (interrogative /kaif/, /ay/ and /ayen/) كيف واي و اين الاستفهامية, then (interrogative /kam/) كم الاستفهامية, and other requests forms to lesser extents. As for the Modern (Web) language, the most frequent request form is (command /lam/) لام الامر, followed by (vocative /yaa/) يا النداء, then (interrogative /hal/) هل الاستفهامية, next (interrogative /kaif/) كيف الاستفهامية, then (optative /laal/) لعل للتمني, then (interrogative /mata/ and /kam/) متى و كم الاستفهاميتين, (interrogative /ayen/) اين الاستفهامية. The frequencies and hits of the different types of classical and modern Arabic requests are displayed in more detail in Table 1 and Table 2 (see Appendix).

2. What are the cases in which requests are considered felicitous or infelicitous in Classical Arabic and Modern languages?

Most of the constructions of request function as a demand to fulfill something from the hearer, considering that they achieve the four conditions of requests to be felicitous. For instance, in "هلا تركتموه لعله يتوب", the English equivalence is "would you leave him alone, perhaps he might have repented," the optative device of making a request in the form of "هلا+ verb" fulfills the four felicity conditions. Prophet Mohammed, the speaker, in the cited hadith above, tells people, the hearer, to give a space for those who want to repent so that future action is accomplished here. The preparatory condition is achieved considering that people are capable of doing the act of accommodating others. The sincerity condition is fulfilled as Prophet Mohammed believes that being patient with others to give them an appropriate shot at repentance is an act that benefits Muslims in their life. The essential condition is achieved assuming that the prophet wants people to embrace good personal traits as right Muslims. In the web language, a statement such as "لنعش ايها الاحبة لحظات مع احداث هذه المعركة", the four felicity conditions are accomplished to form a request through the Command /lam/ لام الامر. The speaker, in the example above, tells the hearer, to live the moment of a battle, so the future action is accomplished here. The preparatory condition is achieved considering that the audience is able to do the act of feeling what the speaker is saying. The sincerity condition is fulfilled as the speaker believes that living the battle gives the audience a chance to experience how soldiers feel on the battlefield, an act considered virtuous. The essential condition is achieved assuming that the speaker wants people to sympathize with those in battles so as to support them morally.

However, some of these request constructions were used for functions other than making requests, seeing that they fail to accomplish or flout one or two of the felicity conditions. In an example such as the following "قل هل يستوي الذين يعلمون والذين لا يعلمون", the English equivalence is "say: are those who know and those who do not know equal?", the interrogative /hal/ fails to fulfill some of the felicity conditions, and thus serves a function other than making a request. The preparatory condition and the sincerity condition are present as the speaker has the power to ask his listeners, and they share the same thoughts.

The content condition in this example is violated due to the lack of mutuality that should exist between the linguistic choice represented by /hal/ and the expressed requests. There is another violation related to the essential condition in that the primary issue in having such a structure is not the mere intention to ask the hearer to do a certain action. Instead, it represents a rhetorical statement conveyed by the use of the interrogative /hal/ to express negation, that is, using a rhetorical question with the answer 'No.'

The interrogative /kaif/, on the other hand, serves an exclamatory function rather than a request. In "كيف تَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَكُنتُمْ أَمْوَاتًا فَأَحْيَاكُمْ", two of the felicity conditions have been violated, the essential condition as it expresses no request, conveys an exclamatory statement of "how people dare abjuring" formulated in using an interrogative /hal/. Furthermore, the interrogative

كمبجودٍ مقرفٍ نال العلى وشريفٍ " /kam/ is used to give a sarcastic meaning rather than a request in
بخله قد وضعه". This is due to violating the preparatory, the sincerity, the content, and the essential
conditions. There is no actual question, listener, or correspondence in using the construction,
and the meaning it conveys is a sarcastic, exclamatory, as well, statement of "how the good can
be humiliated by stinginess!" formulated in using an interrogative /kam/.

Discussion

After analyzing the data, the findings make it clear that there are real differences in the
request constructions that are most frequently used in Classical Arabic and in Web Arabic. The
most frequent request form used in Classical Arabic is (prohibition /laa/) لا الناهية by (3.588.57)
per million, followed by (vocative /ya/) يا النداء by (1.494.59) per million, then (interrogative
/hel/) هل الاستفهامية by (259.54) per million. Such findings go in line with that of Al-Hellu (2020),
which confirms that the imperative and vocative constructions of request are the most common
ones in the Holy Quran verses. The findings also confirm Ateyya (2004) that the vocative
particle is the one most regularly used in all vocative situations in the Holy Quran, which is
"Oh" or "ya." As for the Web language, the most frequent request form is (command with the
particle /li/) لام الامر by (1450.62) per million, followed by (vocative /ya/) يا النداء by (676.71) per
million, then (interrogative /hel/) هل الاستفهامية by (637.18) per million. In his study, Mohamed
(2019) affirms that the imperative request construction is the most regularly used in daily
situations. Other constructions of requests occur in both types of corpora but to a lesser extent.

Based on the felicity conditions analysis, it is clear that most of the requests are shown
to fulfill the four felicity conditions in making an appropriate form and meaning of requesting
act. Some constructions fail to achieve one or more conditions, including the optative (/law/ لو),
vocative (/aya/ ايا), command (/laa/ لا of prohibition) and (/li/ لام of command), and some
interrogatives such as (/man/ من , /a/ أ ,hel/ هل ,/kaif/ كيف ,/kam/ كم , and /ma/ ما . Some of these
request constructions are used for functions other than making requests, including negation,
exclamation, sarcasm, and emphasis. In the study of Al-Hellu (2020), he came up with similar
results that request constructions serve to fulfill functions in a language other than requests.

Conclusion

The present study concluded that request constructions differ in terms of the most
frequently used ones in Classical Arabic versus Web Arabic. Considering the felicity
conditions, most of the requests could achieve the four felicity conditions in formulating valid
requests. Some of them fail to achieve one or more conditions, thus, they are employed for
making negation, exclamation, sarcasm, and emphasis. The major limitation of this study is that
not all types of request constrictions are re-searchable using the corpus tool. For example, the
first type, which is the 'command,' is divided into three main types (the imperative /li/ لام الامر),
(the verb of command فعل الامر), and (the noun of the command verb اسم فعل الامر), and this study
employs only one of these three types; the ones that can be searched using the corpus tool (the
imperative /li/ لام الامر). The same applies to the four other types, the researchers employ the
ones that can be searched using particular grammatical structure, for example, searching about
(the interrogative /a/ الاستفهام (أ)), the researchers used [Word="أ" & tag="part_interrog.?" [tag="
verb.?"], which means 'to find (/a/ أ) when its interrogative is followed by a second word which
is the 'verb' only and this leads to precise results, but some constituents such as, (the verb of
command فعل الامر, a base verb representing commands المصدر النائب عن فعل الامر, the noun of
command verb اسم فعل الامر, etc.), which have no precise grammatical structure, could not be
searched using the currently tagged corpora and the web-based software used. This study is
limited to the examination of the request speech act in Classical and Modern Arabic and the

cases in which it is considered felicitous or infelicitous. As such, it is recommended that request constructions in the Arabic language need further investigation, in regard to Classical versus Modern Arabic language using different corpora. Besides, using corpus is a useful tool in detecting this type of research, yet researchers may need to find corpora that provide more options in regard to grammatical tags. Lastly, the Modern Arabic language on the web is a great space to examine the syntactic constructions borrowed from other languages. Researchers are highly encouraged to come up with more studies that are corpus-assisted so as to reach more generalizable findings. To achieve this point, MA professors are advised to incorporate corpus linguistics in teaching their courses.

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Appendix

Table 1

The Frequency of Each Type of Request Structure in Classical Arabic Language Corpus

Type of directive act		Number of hits	Freq. per Million
Command	The verb of command فعل الامر	—	—
	The imperfect form beginning with لام الامر	243	3.92
Prohibition	/laa/ of prohibition لا الناهية	214.213	3588.57
Optative	would that ليت	1.610	26.97
	wish هلا	998	16.72
	perhaps لعل	1.463	24.51
Question	أ /a/	18	0.3
	هل /hel/	15.493	259.54
	أي which	5.066	84.87
	كيف how	6.460	108.22
	where أين	5.736	96.09
	when متى	8,417	141
	how many كم	4.765	79.67
Vocative	يا /ya/	89.217	1494.59
	أ /a/	Not used	
	آ /a/	Not used	
	أيا /aya/	61	1.02
	هيا /haya/	Not used	
	وا /wa/	Not used	

Table 2

The Frequency of Each Type of Request Structure in Modern Arabic Language Corpus

Type of directive act		Number of hits	Freq. per Million
Command	The verb of command فعل الامر	—	—
	The imperfect form beginning with لام الامر	12,072,194	1450.62
Prohibition	/laa/ of prohibition لا الناهية	11,767	1.41
Optative	would that ليت	14	Less than 0.01
	wish هلا	35,885	4.31
	perhaps لعل	782,060	93.97
Question	أ /a/	Not used	
	هل /hel/	5,302,635	637.18
	Which اي	Not used	
	كيفhow	3,428,799	412.01
	where أين	1,319,949	158.61
	when متى	719,045	86.4
	how many كم	761,774	91.54
Vocative	يا/ya/	5,631,623	676.71
	أ /a/	Not used	
	آ /a/	Not used	
	أيا/aya/	Not used	
	هيا/haya/	17,245	2.07
	وا /wa/	Not used	