

A Semantic and Pragmatic Study of the Meanings of “In Sha Allah”

Ali Jamal Arafeh¹, Zahra Zohoorian^{1,2*}, Sobhi Yousef Abuhattab¹, Mohammed Sloum Alghafri¹

¹Department of Foreign Languages, University of Nizwa, Nizwa, Oman

²Department of Teaching Foreign Languages, Ma.C., Islamic Azad University, Mashhad, Iran

Email: *zahra.zohoorian.elt@gmail.com

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Abstract

The expression in sha Allah/inshaAllah is one of the most common expressions used in daily life in Arabic. This paper discusses the semantic and pragmatic meanings of the term In Sha Allah in Arabic. The high usage of the expression in various Arab, Islamic and not Islamic countries gave the expression various meanings that reflect in many occasions the cultural aspects, habits and customs in each country. Approximately 30 naturally occurring instances were collected from a variety of resources, online interviews, and informal conversations among speakers of Omani, and Gulf Arabic as well as Jordanian/Palestinian. The data was analyzed using principles from Speech Act Theory, Politeness Theory, Pragmatic meaning and context, and Arabic sociopragmatics. These meanings can be understood from the context and the settings. Due to the hyperbole and exaggerated usage of the term, many new meanings emerged; some of them are positive and some others are neutral. The paper introduces the semantic meaning and the pragmatic meanings within their social and cultural contexts. It also sheds light on the common mistakes in using this expression in Arabic. These mistakes are related to the way of writing the expression and the even the way of understanding it. Orthographic variations in the spelling of In Sha Allah may suggest a diminished engagement with the term's profound linguistic and theological foundations.

Keywords

Arabic Language, Semantic, Pragmatic, Theological Foundations

1. Introduction

Speakers of a language express various functions through some structural expressions (AL-Hawi, 2018; Nelson et al., 1996). This includes many religious and so-

cial language expressions such as “MashaAllah”, “Bismillah”, “Ala Barkati Allah”, etc. (Alqahtani, 2023). The expression “In Sha Allah” is one of the most (if not the most) common expression in people’s daily talk in the Arab world. An Arabic Islamic expression associates one’s plans with the wish of Allah or desire. It means in English “God willing” or “If God is willing” (Amin et al., 2017). This is the semantic meaning; there is another meaning associated with the expression which is the pragmatic meaning, and this is decided by the setting (Azi, 2018). It is also decided by the context (Mobar, 2018; Moutaouakil, 2014).

In Sha Allah is mentioned in the Holy Quran as a discourse marker and it is commonly used in the Islamic societies (Böhles & Qirshi, 2018). It is, for example, common in the Islamic Persian society (Moghaddam et al., 2014). It is used in most kinds of formal and informal contexts. It is used by parents, children, educated, non-educated people, academics, teachers, professors, sales people, journals, magazines, politicizations, teenagers, etc... (Kiefer et al., 2018). Even foreigners who visit or live in the Arab world start using this expression once they have Arab friends or once they start learning Arabic. The expression is also common in the European and the non-European languages that were influenced by the Arabic and Islamic culture such as Spansish (ojalá), Portuguese (oxalá), Maltese (jekk Alla jrid) and Serbo-Croatian (Pawlak, 2020). Susanto (2006) indicates that it is used in code-switching in many other non-Arabic languages such as the languages of Indonesia and South Africa. Pishghadam and Kermanshahi (2012) conducted research on the functions of “In Sha Allah” in the Iranian community and they found that it is associated with speech acts and is used to serve various functions and meanings in Persian (Al Salem et al., 2025).

An important aspect that is involved here in this context is the speech act that this expression includes and this is represented by the action that is expected from the participants in dialogue (Al Kayed & Al-Ghoweri, 2019). It is taken as a polite discourse marker in some social contexts and this is a factor that makes the dialogue friendly (Al-Khatib, 2012). This discourse marker can even heal and add relaxation to the participants during a talk or discussion (Heine & Assion, 2005). That is why it is considered as a bridge among cultures (Husseini, 2022). Moreover, as a discourse marker, it arranges the turns of the participants in a dialogue or discussion over a particular topic or theme (Almosa, 2023; Ghali, 2003).

“God’s will” (or “if God wills”) appears in Brahms’ Lullaby (originally titled Wiegenlied) because the lyrics were taken from a traditional collection of German folk poems where such religious references were common. Thus, “In Sha Allah” is also common in other cultures such as in German literature.

Guten Abend, gute Nacht Lullaby	Good Evening, Good Night Lullaby
Guten Abend, gute Nacht,	Good evening, good night,
mit Rosen bedacht,	Bedecked with roses,
mit Näglein besteckt,	Adorned with carnations*,

Continued

schlupf unter die Deck:	Slip under the covers.
Morgen früh, wenn Gott will, wirst du wieder geweckt,	Tomorrow morn, if God wills, You'll awake once again.
morgen früh, wenn Gott will, wirst du wieder geweckt.	Tomorrow morn, if God wills, You'll awake once again.

(Mama Lisa's World, n.d.).

To tackle the semantic and pragmatic meanings of the term In Sha Allah in Arabic, this paper addresses two questions:

- 1) Which pragmatic functions are covered in the connotational and contextual usage of the term "In Sha Allah"?
- 2) What situational and contextual determinants facilitate the emergence of these pragmatic functions?

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Expression "In Sha Allah" in the Holy Qur'an

This expression is used literally for six times in the Holy Qur'an. Three translation of the meanings of the Holy Quran are reviewed: Asad, Picktall and Ghali. In order to understand the meaning, one has to read the context and the various parts of the setting (Amin et al., 2017).

2.1.1. Surat Al Baqarah, Verse 70

Translation of the Meaning	Transliteration	Verse in Arabic
- Said' they: "Pray on our behalf unto thy Sustainer that He make clear to us what she is to be like, for to us all cows resemble one another; and then, if God so wills , we shall truly be guided aright!" (Asad)	Qaloo odAAu lana rabbaka yubayyin lana ma hiya inna albaqara tashabaha AAalayna wa-inna in shaa Allahu lamuhtadoona	قَالُوا ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّنْ لَنَا مَا هِيَ إِنَّ الْبَقَرَ تَشَابَهَ عَلَيْنَا وَإِنَّا لَمُهْتَدُونَ إِذْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ
- They said: Pray for us unto thy Lord that He make clear to us what (cow) she is. Lo! cows are much alike to us; and Lo! if Allah wills , we may be led aright. (Picktall)		
- They said, "Invoke your Lord for us that He make evident to us what she is; surely the cows to us are similar to each other; and surely in case Allah so decides , we will indeed be rightly-guided." (Ghali)		

2.1.2. Surat Yousuf, Verse 99

Translation of the Meaning	Transliteration	Verse in Arabic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enter Egypt! If God so wills, you shall be secure (Asad) - Come into Egypt safe, if Allah will! (Picktall) - Enter into Misr, (Egypt) in case Allah (so) decides, secure. (Ghali) 	<p>Falamma dakhloo AAala yoosufa awa ilayhi abawayhi waqala odkhuloo misra in shaa Allahu amineena</p>	<p>فَلَمَّا دَخَلُوا عَلَى يُوسُفَ أَوَى إِلَيْهِ أَبَوَيْهِ وَقَالَ ادْخُلُوا مِصْرَ إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ آمِنِينَ</p>

2.1.3. Surat Al Khaf 69

Translation of the Meaning	Transliteration	Verse in Arabic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Replied [Moses]: “Thou wilt find me patient, if God so wills” (Asad) - He said: Allah willing, thou shalt find me patient (Picktall) - He said, “You will find me, in case Allah (so) decides, patient” 	<p>Qala satajidunee in shaa Allahu sabiran</p>	<p>قَالَ سَتَجِدُنِي إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ صَابِرًا</p>

2.1.4. Surat Al Qasas 27

Translation of the Meaning	Transliteration	Verse in Arabic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thou wilt find me, if God so wills, righteous in all my dealings. (Asad) - Allah willing, thou wilt find me of the righteous. (Picktall) - You will soon find me, if Allah decides, one of the righteous. (Ghali) 	<p>satajidunee in shaa Allahu mina alssaliheena</p>	<p>سَتَجِدُنِي إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ</p>

2.1.5. Surat Al Qasas 27

Translation of the Meaning	Transliteration	Verse in Arabic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thou wilt find me, if God so wills, among those who are patient in adversity! (Asad) 	<p>satajidunee in shaa Allahu mina alssabireena</p>	<p>سَتَجِدُنِي إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الصَّابِرِينَ</p>

Continued

- **Allah willing**, thou shalt find me of the steadfast. (Picktall)
- you will soon find me, **in case Allah (so) decides**, among the patient. (Ghali)

2.1.6. Surat Al-Fath 27

Translation of the Meaning	Transliteration	Verse in Arabic
- Most certainly shall you enter the Inviolable House of Worship, if God so wills , in full security (Asad)		
- Ye shall indeed enter the Inviolable Place of Worship, if Allah will , secure (Picktall)	latadkhulunna almasjida alharama in shaa Allahu amineena	لَتَدْخُلَنَّ الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ آمِنِينَ
- Indeed you will definitely enter the Inviolable Mosque, in case Allah (so) decides , secure		

As can be seen, the expression is used several times in the Holy Quran. The meaning in all the situations mentioned above is God Willing; it is the basic positive meaning that the plan will go ahead with the help of Allah. Although, sometimes interpretations of the Holy Quran give various semantic connotational meanings of the expression, but this time the expression has this meaning as can be seen in the various interpretations of Asad, Ghali and Picktall (Qub'a, et al., 2025).

Even in the expression of other functions, one can see various interpretations such as the function of greetings (Bhatti et al., 2021). Three translations are used to compare if there are any differences in the translation of the meaning. One translation is by Mohammed Asad (The Message of the Qur'an); one by Picktall (The Holy Qur'an) and one by Ghali (Towards Understanding the Ever-Glorious Qur'an). The expression is translated in all of the six situations by the three translators as "If Allah will" or "Allah willing" or "in case Allah (so) decides" (Abulhasan, 2011).

2.2. Transitional Sequence of Topics/Initiating the Closing of a Topic

Clift and Hilani (2010) conducted a study "In Sha Allah" within the context of

discourse conversational analysis. The study was limited to the Levantine discourse; especially Syrian conversational talk. The corpus of the study consisted of twelve hours of naturally occurring Levantine Arabic telephone conversations. The study showed that “In Sha Allah” is used for transition from one topic to another. It is used for closing a topic and initiating a new topic within a conversation. This transition might be on the part of the speaker or the recipient (Zaki, 2011).

The following functional example focuses Polite Refusal, which provides a sharp semantic–pragmatic contrast to the “Topic Closing” function. For example, a friend or a colleague is inviting a guest to a future event like a wedding, and the guest is unable or unwilling to commit by replying “In Sha Allah” that may be interpreted as acceptance or not.

2.3. Expression of Hope and Supplication

Clift and Hilani (2010) concluded that the expression is also used for hope. In the conversation between two friends; one is pregnant and the other one is asking for the time of delivery. Then, the friend says “*In Sha Allah Qareeban*” which means, “hoping to be soon” (Khazaleh et al., 2023).

An another instance can be shown as follows:

Speaker 1: *Hal sataqaddim al-muqtarah al-bahthi ghadan?*

“Will you submit the research proposal tomorrow?”

Speaker 2: *In Sha Allah, sa' ursiluhu qabl al-zuhr.*

“In Sha Allah, I will send it before noon.”

In this example, *In Sha Allah* functions as a marker of hopeful commitment rather than absolute certainty. Although the speaker intends to send the proposal, the phrase alleviates the strong point of the promise and reflects a culturally embedded recognition that outcomes ultimately depend on divine will. In Arabic discourse, such uses serve important religious, politeness, and pragmatic functions, and balance intention with humility and uncertainty (Farghal, 1995; Migdadi et al., 2010).

2.4. Irony

Recently it is found among informal conversations that irony is meant when some people use the expression “In Sha Allah”. Issa Mehawesh and Ahmad Jaradat (2015) remark that this meaning is understood in the following situation:

Mother cooked spinach instead of Mansaf. The son asked the mother is spinach the alternative for Mansaf and the mother replies ironically “*If Allah please, I'll cook it right now!*” Recently the expression has been used according to the Washington Post by the Biden in a sarcastic manner in response to president Trump. “*Midway through Tuesday night's chaotic presidential debate, as President Trump vowed to release his still-private tax returns, Joe Biden shot back at his opponent with a particularly sarcastic jab.*”

“*When?*” the Democratic presidential nominee interjected. “*In Sha Allah?*” (Armus, 2020).

Irony refers to a pragmatic phenomenon in which the speaker conveys a meaning that contrasts with. In everyday Gulf Arabic discourse, *In Sha Allah* (إن شاء الله) can be used ironically to imply doubt, skepticism, or mild criticism rather than genuine hope. For example, in an informal conversation among university students in Oman, one student may ask, “Will Ali submit the assignment today?” and another may respond simply, “*In Sha Allah.*” Although the literal meaning is “if God wills,” the intended meaning may signal that the speaker actually doubts that Ahmed will complete the task, especially when the response is accompanied by a particular tone or shared background knowledge about Ahmed’s habits. In such contexts, the phrase functions pragmatically as an indirect way of expressing disbelief while maintaining politeness and avoiding direct criticism. This illustrates how religious expressions can shift from their literal semantic meaning to context-dependent pragmatic meanings shaped by social relations and discourse context (Farghal, 1995; Migdadi et al., 2010).

2.5. Threat

One of the pragmatic meanings of “*In Sha Allah*” is threat. Issa Mehawesh and Ahmad Jaradat (2015) indicate that this meaning is common in Jordanian conversation. The following example illustrates this meaning of threat:

A father to his son: “Some people told me that you were driving my car.” I warn you not to drive the car before you get your driving license. *In Sha Allah* I see you again driving the car before getting the driving license and you will see what I will do.

In this example, the father use “*In Sha Allah*” with the aim to threaten the son that if he drives the car before getting the driving license, there will be a punishment. Of course the father does not wish this to happen and the use of the expression here in this context is not the wish or hope of the father or the son. Issa Mehawesh and Ahmad Jaradat (2015) give a separate meaning for “*In Sha Allah*” which is for “prohibition”, but the meaning of threat can be merged with this meaning as threat include preventing someone from doing or not doing an action.

A good example of pragmatic Function: *In Sha Allah* as a Marker of Threat. The following example cited from a discourse analysis of a short dialogue between Omani parent and his child.

- *In Sha Allah* - “if God wills”
- law kasarta al-zujaj - “if you break the glass”
- sa’uqibuk - “I will punish you”

In this context, *In Sha Allah* functions as a discursive intensifier within a threat. The literal meaning (“if God wills”) emphasizes the certainty and legitimacy of the punishment.

Pragmatically, the uses of *In Sha Allah* demonstrate how religious expressions

can shift from their literal semantic meaning to context-dependent pragmatic functions, including threat (Miguel, 2016; Migdadi et al., 2010).

2.6. Meaning of “Yes/Yes, Sir”

Issa Mehawesh and Ahmad Jaradat (2015) mention that the expression “In Sha Allah” can also be used for the meaning of “Yes” or “Ok”. In Jordan, it is common to ask a person for something and her answers the request by saying “In Sha Allah”. In this context, the answer is “Ok, I will do it” (Rapanta, 2014). In the Gulf region, this meaning of “Yes” is strong and common as it aims to give a very polite answer to one’s request. It is similar to saying “Yes, sir”. Hence, the “Yes” in this context is more emphasized than the “Yes” used in Jordan. The following example illustrates this meaning in the Gulf:

A teacher in a class in UAE was asking a late student not come late next time to class. The student answers, “In Sha Allah” (Rizk-Antonious, 2019).

2.7. Offering Help

This is one of the most interesting meanings of “In Sha Allah” that is used in Egyptian Non-standard Arabic (Gregory & Wehba, 1986). It is not common in other dialect. The meaning is shown through the following example:

A is asking B about his name
 What is your name?
 In Sha Allah Muhammed.

In this example, the first person is asking the other about his name. The other answers by using the expression “In Sha Allah” without a need of wish or wonder or plan in the future. The aim of using the expression in this context is to say to the other person that my name is Muhammed and I “offer you help” or “how can I help you?”

Another example of pragmatic Function: In Sha Allah as a Marker of Offering help. The following example cited from a discourse analysis of a short dialogue between a lecturer and colleague.

Lecturer:

“Indi mushkila fi tanzīm al-shara” ih lil-muḥāḍarah.

“I have a problem organizing the presentation slides.”

Colleague:

In Sha Allah, asa’dak ba’d al-ijtimā’.

“if God wills, I will help you after the meeting”

In this context, In Sha Allah functions as a discursive intensifier within a threat. The literal meaning (“if God wills”) emphasizes the certainty and legitimacy of the punishment. Pragmatically, the uses of In Sha Allah demonstrate how religious expressions can shift from their literal semantic meaning to context-dependent pragmatic functions, including threat (Farghal, 1995; Migdadi et al., 2010; Miguel,

2016).

2.8. Procrastination and Rejection

Susanto (2006) indicates that the meaning of “In Sha Allah” was intended “to represent a total submission to God and as a greater sense of politeness”. However, meaning has been corrupted from its religious and polite meaning in some contexts. Instead of having the meaning of relying on God in fulfilling one’s plan, it is used in some contexts and by some people “when the users do not want to make a commitment” (Susanto, 2006, P. 5). The reason for using the expression in this sense might be in order not to offend the speaker and show indirect way of rejection. Pishghadam and Kermanshahi (2012) and Nazzal (2001) emphasized the fact that this meaning of the expression is common in Persian and in Iranian community “Passing the responsibility and its burden to God sometimes happens in Persian language through uttering the word In Sha Allah. In other words, Persian speakers postpone their answer when they cannot provide a definite one”.

3. Methodology

This research presents an original qualitative analysis grounded in the everyday linguistic practices of Arabic speakers in various cultural settings. The data collected from 30 participants in different Arabic contexts like Gulf and Omani uses, Jordan/Palestinian contextual uses. To accurately categorize an utterance within a specific pragmatic category—such as irony, threat, or procrastination—one must account for the interplay between the physical setting and various contextual determinants. This study embraces a qualitative corpus-based design to explore the semantic and pragmatic meanings of In Sha Allah in the Arabic language discourse. This is a qualitative study that uses and compares the different contexts and settings in which the expression “In Sha Allah” is used and the semantic, pragmatic and connotational meanings that are expressed in each context. One of the most expressions used in Arabic is the expression “In Sha Allah”. Although it had all the positive semantic meanings, the expression as a speech act is getting more and more pragmatic meanings that are in some contexts neutral or even negative (Bijad Alharbi, 2018). Actually, understanding the expression requires competency in Arabic (Thomas, 2014). Furthermore, the expression is in many cases written wrongly regarding spelling by the native Arabic speakers. Thus, even among the native speakers the positive meaning is in many cases intermixed with the negative pragmatic meaning; the wrong spelling reflects this reality (Abdalha-keem, 2022; Pasaribu, et al., 2022).

It is sometimes used an expression that intends to derive some actions from the recipient, so it is an illocutionary speech act expression (Al-Rawafi & Gunawan, 2019). The study also investigates the intonations of the term which add other connotational meanings that are understood by the participants (Al-Jarf, 2024). The pragmatic analysis method is used, and it is based on the following assumptions:

- How do people usually communicate more than what the words or phrases their utterances might mean by themselves.
- The perception of the participants in the discourse and what circumstances affect the process of producing and interpreting the language (Zegarac & Spencer-Oatey, 2002).

The comparison method is used to seek the various meanings that determine the intended one. The analysis of the various texts in which the expression is used is based on the knowing the context, setting, participants and their relations, place, time, culture, etc (Rizk-Antoniou, 2019). This includes the social discourse that reflects the society and the meanings in context that are understood by that particular society (Alharbi, 2015). As a reference also to the analysis, the paper also sheds light on the various situations where the expression is used in the Holy Quran and the meanings associated with these situations (Taha, 2013). It utilizes Grice's maxim of quality, quantity, relevance and manner; especially, the fourth rule related to manner (Issa Mehawesh & Ahmad Jaradat 2015). Grice's Maxims function as a baseline for rational communication, and they indicate connotations and functions not by being followed, but primarily through their flouting (intentional violation). Connotations (implied meanings) arise when a maxim is overtly ignored to prompt the listener to look for a non-literal interpretation. When a speaker appears to break a maxim, the listener assumes the speaker is still being cooperative and looks for a hidden meaning—this is what Grice calls a Conversational Implicature.

Table 1 highlights the pragmatic coding framework including pragmatic category, definition and diagnostic cues.

Table 1. Pragmatic coding framework.

Pragmatic Category	Definition (First Use)	Diagnostic Cue (Reproducible Marker)
Irony	A communicative act where the intended meaning is the opposite of the literal meaning, often used for humor or critique.	Semantic Clash: The use of an overtly positive descriptor for a clearly negative situation (e.g., saying "What a beautiful day!" during a sandstorm).
Threat	An utterance expressing an intent to inflict harm, loss, or punishment on the listener if a certain condition is not met.	Conditional If-Then: The presence of a "peremptory condition" where a future negative action is tied to the listener's immediate behavior.
Hope	A speech act expressing a desire for a favorable future outcome that is currently uncertain or beyond the speaker's control.	Optative Particles/Phrases: In Arabic, the use of formulaic religious or secular markers like "In Sha Allah" (God willing) or "Ya rabb" (Oh Lord) specifically directed toward a desired goal.
Procrastination	A pragmatic strategy used to delay an action, commitment, or response while maintaining social rapport.	Indefinite Temporal Markers: The use of vague time-frames (e.g., "Later," "When I have time") in response to a direct request for a deadline.

(Miguel, 2016).

4. Data Collection & Analysis

Approximately 30 naturally occurring instances were collected from a variety of resources, online interviews, and informal conversations among speakers of Omani and Gulf, Arab as well as Jordanian/Palestinian. Some examples that occur within a clear communicative context was included. Additionally, the data was analyzed using principles from Speech Act Theory (Searle, 1969) and Politeness Theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987), Pragmatic meaning and context (Yule, 1996) and Arabic sociopragmatics (Al-Zumor, 2011) to identify the different pragmatic functions of the expression, such as expressing hope, softening commitment, indicating uncertainty, or signaling indirect refusal. Each instance was coded according to its speech act type and contextual meaning to determine how the phrase functions beyond its literal religious sense (Yule, 1996).

4.1. Grammar and Orthography of “In Sha Allah”

This part deals with the way that this expression should be written and the common mistakes that native speakers make in this regards. It also presents analyses of the syntactic and parsing elements of the expression (Najjar, 2020). As a discourse marker, the expression “In Sha Allah” is intended to give a positive response from the side of the speaker in a dialogue or talk (Al-Sudani & ALAbbad, 2024).

As far as orthography is concerned, the expression of “In Sha Allah” is written in various ways. Sometimes it is written as one compound word or as three different words that are separated by a space among them. The Oxford Living Dictionary writes the expression as “In Sha Allah” or “In Sha Allah” or “In Sha Allah” (<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/inshallah>). However, the first orthography “In Sha Allah” seems to be less punctual as there is a word in Arabic that is pronounced “insha” and it means “composition” and there is a common mistake of writing the expression even in Arabic as “إنشاء الله” and this is wrong as a new word is created with a different meaning (composition). Hence, the orthography of the expression as “In Sha Allah” might match the common mistake of writing the expression in Arabic. The other two ways of writing the expression might be clear and less ambiguous. Unlike Oxford, Webster’s dictionary writes the expression in just one way which is “In Sha Allah” and this does not represent clearly the three different words in Arabic.

The transliteration of the Holy Qur’an by Muhammed Marmaduke Picktall writes the expression as “In Sha Allah”. Therefore, it is clear that the expression consists of three separate words in Arabic and there is no place for vagueness or ambiguity in this transliteration.

4.2. Structural Analysis of “In Sha Allah”

This expression consists in Arabic from three words: “In”, “sha” and “Allah”. According to the Arabic International Online Forum (مجمع اللغة العربية على الشبكة العالمية), the first word “In إن” is a conditional tool that requires two verbs. One verb is first part of the condition, and the other verb should be the second part of the condi-

tion. An example is saying in Arabic “*In tadrus tanjah*” (إن تدرُسْ تُنَجِّحْ) (*If you study, you will pass*). The word “In” in this sentence requires two verbs: the first conditional verb is “tadrus”, and the second conditional verb is “*tanjah*”.

The second word of the expression “In Sha Allah” is the word “sha شاء” or it is sometimes written as “shaa”. This is a verb in Arabic that means “wanted” or “desired” or “decided”. It is used in the past form in the expression, but its implication is for the future or present. It is the first verb of the conditional tool “In”.

The third word of the expression is “Allah”. This word is used in Arabic to refer to God. The word “Allah” is the agent/subject of the verb “sha”. In other words, it is the subject/doer/agent of the sentence or expression “In Sha Allah”. The second verb of the condition is usually not mentioned explicitly in the expression, as it is understood from the context. Therefore, the second verb differs as per the context. (Ahlalhdeth.com, n.d.)

As far as parsing of “In Sha Allah” is concerned, this expression is parsed as follows:

“If: a conditional particle that makes two verbs in the subjunctive mood, the first of which is called the conditional verb and the second of which is its response. It is built on *sukoon*, and the conditional verb clause has no syntactic position. Willd: a past-tense verb built on apparent *fat-ha*, and it is in the subjunctive position of the conditional verb. The Holy Name (Allah): a subject raised by the apparent *damma* at the end of it. The response to the condition is omitted and can be estimated according to what suits the context. If we want a fixed estimate, then let it be: the response to the condition, its estimate: what you say will happen or be. If Allah wills, what you say will happen.”

“إن: حرف شرط جازم (يجزم فعلين مضارعين يُسمَّى الأول مبني على السكون، وجملة فعل الشرط والثاني جوابه) شاء: فعلٌ ماضٍ مبني على الشرط لا محل لها من الإعراب لفظ الجلالة. الفتح الظاهر، وهو في محل جزم فعل الشرط وجواب (الله): فاعل مرفوع بالضممة الظاهرة على آخره وإن أردنا تقديرًا الشرط محذوف ويُقَرَّر بما يُناسب السِّيَاق فعل جواب الشرط تقديره: يحدث أو يكون ما: ثابتًا فليكن ” تقول. إن شاء الله يكون ما تقول ”

(M-A-Arabia.com, n.d.).

5. Discussion and Conclusion

As can be seen, contexts show various semantic and pragmatic meanings of the expression. This part introduces an analysis of the various contexts which imply the different semantic and pragmatic meanings that can be derived for “In Sha Allah” (Sorour et al., 2023). The basic or original meaning of “In Sha Allah” is the one that is used in the Holy Qur’an, and it is the one that most people use. It means “God willing” “If Allah wills” or “In case Allah (so) decides” or any other similar meaning. So, the expression is used to say that all future events will happen as per the wish, desire, or decision of Allah. It also means that Allah will supersede all human will. Therefore, to be polite with Allah, one should use it for future events.

(سورة الكهف 23-24) لا تَقُولَنَّ لِشَيْءٍ إِنِّي فَاعِلٌ ذَلِكَ غَدًا (23) إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ...

Linguistically the overuse of a word or expression sometimes weakens the word or expression and makes it have other Pragmatic Meanings of “In Sha Allah”. Weakening the word and the meaning is done in specific cases including the following:

Semantic Bleaching: The process where the specific, powerful meaning of a word becomes diluted or “faded” over time due to repetition.

Grammaticalization: When a word loses its status as a full-content word and starts functioning primarily as an intensifier or grammatical marker.

Desensitization (Pragmatic): Specifically, for emotional or religious terms (common in Arabic daily use), frequent use can lead to a loss of the original “affective force” or “awe”.

Using the expression “In Sha Allah” extensively in written and spoken discourse made it take various meanings that depend on the context and the setting. On the one hand, using any word in a language weakens it and makes it lose its main meaning; this made the expression “In Sha Allah” take other negative meanings such as those mentioned in this article. On the other hand, this expression is becoming more and more common and widespread that it can be seen and used in one of the most important events in the world; namely, the American elections. As a result, there might emerge other pragmatic meanings that are not covered in this study. Such emerging meanings can be understood when the discourse itself is analyzed.

To respond to the research questions, the expression In Sha Allah (literally “if God will”) displays a range of pragmatic functions that extend beyond its literal religious and Islamic meaning. In discourse, it may express hope or supplication, signal a polite commitment to a future action, or serve as a mitigating device to avoid a firm commitment. The specific interpretation of the expression is determined by contextual and situational factors, including the communicative intent of the speaker, the relationship between interlocutors, and the sociocultural norms governing interaction. Thus, the pragmatic value of In Sha Allah is dynamically shaped by its connotational and contextual use within discourse, reflecting broader patterns studied in Pragmatics and Sociolinguistics.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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