

A Pragmatic Study of Directives' Forms and Functions in Surat Al-Baqarah: Focus on Commands, Prayers, and Permissions

دراسة تداولية لأشكال ووظائف التوجيهات في سورة البقرة: التركيز على الأوامر، الصلوات والأذونات

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Abstract

In line with the pragmatic analysis of the Holy Quran, the present study aimed to examine the use of directives to express three illocutionary acts: Commands, prayers, and permissions in Surat Al-Baqarah. To be exact, it attempted to show how dissimilar directive utterances could be depending on the context and, more precisely, the nature of the interlocutors. Austin and Searle's speech act theories were used as theoretical frameworks. The descriptive interpretative qualitative method was opted for. Additionally, the circumstances of revelation and interpretations of the Quran were employed to identify the speech acts in focus. The contextual factors of power and distance were taken into consideration in data analysis. Findings show that one structure such as imperatives can serve different direct and/or indirect functions depending on the context. These findings are discussed with pedagogical implications for teaching English as a foreign language.

Key words: Commands; prayers; permissions; Surat Al-Baqarah; speech act theory

الملخص:

تماشياً مع التحليل التداولي للقرآن الكريم، تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تفصي كيفية تجلي التوجيهات في سورة البقرة في صورة ثلاثة أنواع من أفعال الكلام: الأوامر، الصلوات، والأذونات. بتعبير أدق، تحاول الدراسة إظهار كيف يمكن لمعاني هاته التوجيهات أن تختلف تبعاً لسياق الكلام وبشكل أكثر دقة تبعاً لطبيعة المحاورين. تم استخدام نظريتي أوستين وسيرل لأفعال الكلام كأطر نظرية للدراسة وتم اختيار الطريقة الوصفية التفسيرية النوعية كمنهج للبحث. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تم استخدام ظروف الوحي وتفسيرات القرآن لتحديد أفعال الكلام محل الدراسة كما تم أخذ إثنين من العوامل السياقية: القوة والمسافة الاجتماعية بعين الاعتبار في تحليل البيانات. أظهرت النتائج أن صيغة واحدة مثل أفعال الأمر يمكن أن تعبر عن معاني مباشرة و/أو غير مباشرة مختلفة اعتماداً على السياق. تمت مناقشة هذه النتائج مع الآثار والتوصيات التربوية لتدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: أوامر؛ صلوات؛ أذونات؛ سورة البقرة؛ نظرية فعل الكلام

Introduction

In daily life, people often use directive utterances to communicate with others to get them to do or not to do something. These directives can carry different meanings. They may request, order, suggest, advice, forbid, etc. The speaker's intention can be seen directly or indirectly. Quran, the holy book of Muslims, contains many kinds of directive utterances from Allah addressed to human beings. They are used to get people to perform good acts and refrain from performing bad ones. For example, Allah commands people to fulfill their duties as Muslims, such as praying to Him, fasting in Ramadan, giving charity to the poor, pilgrimage, etc. On the other hand, they pray to Him for guidance and protection. In addition to commands and prayers, Quran consists of directives, which appear in many forms and serve different illocutionary acts.

Literature Review

The Holy Quran

Quran is the central religious text of Islam, which Muslims believe to be a revelation from God (Allah). It is considered to be the sacred book for more than one and a half billion Muslims in the world. It is God's teachings, laws, and creeds, which were revealed to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) by the archangel Gabriel (*Jibril*) over 23 years (Lambert, 2013). Muslims think that it is not simply divinely inspired, but the literal word of God (Carrol, 2019). They regard it as Muhammad's most important miracle, a proof of his prophethood, and the culmination of a series of divine messages starting with those revealed to Adam, including the *Tawrah*, the *Zabur* and the *Injil*, and ending with Muhammad's revelation (Peters, 2003).

Quran is composed of 114 chapters (Arabic: *sūrah*, plural: *suwar*), 30 parts */juz'*, 60 sections */hizb/*, and 6300 verses */āyah/*. Many of Muhammad's companions served as scribes and recorded the revelations (Donner, 2006). Shortly after his death, the companions, who had written down or memorized parts of it (Campo, 2009), compiled Quran. The codices showed differences that motivated Caliph Uthman Ibn Affan to establish a standard version, now known as Uthman's codex, which is generally considered the archetype of the Quran known today. There are, however, variant readings, with mostly minor differences in meaning (Abdelhaleem, 2005).

Previous Studies on Directives in Quran

There are some studies on directive utterances in Quran, which are mentioned below chronologically. Badrul (2019) analyses directive speech acts used in the English translation of Surat Luqman. Using a descriptive qualitative design, the study aimed at finding out the most frequent kinds of directives employed in the *surah* based on Jucker's theory. *Tafsir Jalalain* was used to interpret the analyzed verses. Results show that Surat Luqman consists of 42 directive utterances distributed among six

kinds of directives, which are commanding, ordering, suggesting, prohibiting, question, and apprise. Moreover, the dominant directive in the translation examined is apprise uttered by Luqman to his son.

In addition to Badrul (2019), Dar Issa (2015) investigates the translation of requests, another form of directives, in Quran. The researcher provides a descriptive, comparative, and analytical study of requests as imperatives by analyzing their functions in two versions of Quran: The Arabic version and the English one. He concludes that despite the fact that Arabic and English are linguistically different, translators of Quran strive to provide the same style, form, and pragmatic function by using certain strategies such as addition, substitution and explanation. They succeed sometimes and fail at other times, and, consequently, part of the Quranic meaning is lost.

Al Farisi (2018) examines directive utterances used in the English translation of Surat Ali Imran by Abdel Haleem. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, the study sought to find out the types and functions of directives used. Results showed that there is a total of 61 directive utterances in the analyzed surah distributed between six types of directives, which are request, question, requirement, prohibition, permission, and advice. Request is the most frequently used type. For the functions, directives are employed to invite, command, ask, forbid, warn, and permit.

In the same context, Al-Saaidi, Al-Shaibani, and Al-Husseini (2013) attempt to investigate the act of prohibition in some selected Biblical and Quranic Verses. The researchers analyzed the act of prohibition syntactically, semantically, and pragmatically. The main findings of their study are that prohibition in English is most commonly realized by negative imperative "do not do". However, in Arabic, it is heavily used explicitly and implicitly.

Last but not least, Muliawan (2012) studies warnings, one form of directives, in the English translation of Surat Al-Mulk's interpretation (*Tafsir*) by Ibn Kathir. This descriptive qualitative study aimed at describing the reconstructed syntactical forms and identifying the meanings of warning utterances. Results showed four types of meanings, which are warning by threat, warning by information, warning by motivation, and warning by reflection.

With all this in mind, it seems obvious that all the above-mentioned studies have mainly dealt with directives in the some suwar (chapters) of the Holy Quran from translational, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic perspective. However, they slightly touched upon the pragmatic functions of directives accurately taking into consideration the context of the analyzed verses such as the nature of the participants and the relationship between them. In response to this gap, the present study attempts to find out the forms and functions of directive utterances in the English version of Surat Al-Baqarah. In doing so, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How are directives in the English translations of Surat Al-Baqarah used to express three different illocutionary acts: commands, prayers, and permissions?
2. How do the contextual factors of power and distance affect the use and vary the meanings of the directive illocutionary acts in focus?

Theoretical Backgrounds

The Speech Act Theory

An important area of investigation in pragmatics is speech acts. Verschueren (1999) states that in reaction to logical positivism in which the utterance is assessed as being true or false, John L. Austin inspired a speech acts theory in which language is perceived as being a tool by which people can do things. He introduced his notions on this theory in lectures in 1955. Then, they were published in 1962 under the title “How to Do Things with Words”. A speech act refers to “an utterance that serves a function in communication” (Glaser, 2014, p. 571). This means that we perform speech acts in everyday life by greeting, requesting, complaining, apologizing, etc.

In this theory, Austin distinguished between two types of utterances: constatives and performatives. The former are utterances that are assessed according to whether they are true or false, whereas the latter are utterances that are assessed according to whether they are felicitous or infelicitous (Levinson, 1983). The following examples explain the difference between the two:

(1) We went down to Como (Verschueren, 1999, p. 22).

This sentence is constative if it is said as a statement that can be assessed as true or false.

(2) I give and bequeath my watch to my brother (Austin, 1962, p. 5).

Since there is an action of bequeathing, this sentence is performative.

Later, Austin rejected the constatives-performatives distinction because he found that some performatives can also be verified as true or false and some constatives also have problems related with felicity or infelicity. He favored a general theory of speech acts in which both performatives and constatives are considered special sub-cases. In this respect, he concludes that both constatives and performatives are subject to felicity conditions and sometimes constatives and performatives cannot be distinguished even in terms of truth or falsity (Huang, 2006).

To realize any speech act, three elements must be available:

a. Locutionary act: It is “The utterance of grammatical constituents” (Archer & Grundy, 2011, p. 12). In other words, it is the words that are uttered or written.

b. Illocutionary act: It is the speaker’s intention and attempt to achieve certain communicative purposes such as promising, warning, greeting, reminding, warning, commanding, prohibiting, etc. (Nemani & Rasekh, 2013). Despite the fact that one illocutionary act can be expressed through different linguistic patterns, Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, and Svartvik (1984) assert that laypeople associate certain speech acts with particular structures. They gave the example of commands and requests, which are often bounded to imperatives. Consequently, Levinson (1983) suggests that we should distinguish between the three types of sentences: imperatives, interrogatives, and declaratives and the illocutions of commands, questions, orders, requests, assertions, etc.

c. Perlocutionary act: It is the effect that, the speaker intends to have on the hearer’s actions, thoughts, and feelings (Nemani & Rasekh, 2013). The speaker can therefore delight, embarrass, persuade, puzzle, or entertain the hearer (Vanderveken &

Kubo, 2002). The difference between the illocutionary act and the perlocutionary act is that while the former can be discovered directly from the utterance and the way it is realized, the latter depends on the surrounding conditions of the utterance realization (Levinson, 1983).

Searle's Taxonomy of Speech Acts

Since Austin's classification of speech acts is not faultless, many attempts have been made to develop it. One of these them is Searle's (1979) taxonomy. The criteria he relied on to construct his classification of speech acts are: illocutionary point, direct of fit between words and world, expressed psychological state and propositional content (Huang, 2012). Searle (1979) classifies speech acts as follows:

1. Representatives: They contain a certain statement about the world e.g. describing, claiming, concluding ...

2. Directives: They direct the hearer towards doing something e.g. ordering, asking, requesting, advising ...

3. Commissives: Speaker commits himself to doing something e.g. promising, threatening, offering ...

4. Expressive: They express how the speaker feels about a certain situation e.g. thanking, apologizing, welcoming ...

5. Declarations: The point of which is to bring something about in the world e.g. christening, marrying, firing ...

Directive Speech Acts

As already said, directives are a set of illocutionary acts by which the speaker prompts the hearer to perform an action. They are face-threatening acts, which need to be mitigated. Moreover, they are associated with commissives since the speaker needs something to be done in both types of speech acts. However, a slight difference exists between them. As Jucker and Taavitsainen (2008) explain, "directives oblige the hearer to do something, but in commissives, the speaker obliges himself or herself to do something" (p. 27). According to Searle (1969), there are eight kinds of directive illocutionary acts. They are listed as follows:

1. Commanding: Commands are directive speech acts by which the speaker gets the hearer to act in a certain way. To have a felicitous command, the speaker should have more power than the hearer (Kreidler, 1998). Therefore, the superiority of the speaker is required to call a particular speech act a command. The traditional view of commands suggests that the performance of them should be "rewarded" and the refusal of them should be "punished" (Kasher, 1998).

2. Requesting: Requests are directive speech acts that are seen as refusable commands, so the approval of the hearer is crucial to achieve a successful request (Zufferey, 2015). They are face-threatening acts because they are beneficial to the speaker instead of the hearer whose freedom is hindered (Trosborg, 1995).

3. Suggesting: Previous literature addressing directives has already distinguished requests and suggestions based on the benefit of the action (Martínez-Flor, 2005). As Rintell (1979) states, "In a suggestion, the speaker asks the hearer to take some action which the speaker believes will benefit the hearer, even one that the

speaker should desire” (p. 99). However, although suggestions are made in the best interest of the hearer, according to Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness theory, this speech act is regarded as a face-threatening act since the speaker is in some way intruding into the hearer’s world by performing an act that concerns what the latter should do.

4. Forbidding: It is usually used to ask or order someone not to do something (Erlar, 2010).

5. Questioning: This illocutionary function is expressed by the speaker in order to get a reply, answer, or information from the listener.

6. Permitting: Permit is the opposite of *forbid*, *prohibit*, and *refuse*. The performatives include: *permit*, *agree to*, *allow*, *authorize*, *license*, *consent to*, *dismiss*, *excuse*, *exempt*, *release*, etc... (Allan, 1986).

7. Encouraging: The speaker gives the listener support or courage to do something.

8. Wishing: The speaker hopes something good to happen in the future.

Direct and Indirect Speech Acts

Sometimes, when performing a speech act, what is meant is more than what is said and, in this case, an indirect speech act occurs. Searle (1969) describes, “In indirect speech acts, the speaker communicates to the hearer more than he actually says by way of relying on their mutually shared background information, both linguistic and non-linguistic, together with the general powers of rationality and inference on the part of the hearer” (p. 31). From this description, we can understand that an indirect utterance has two illocutionary acts, and the interpretation of indirect speech acts requires mutually shared background information about the conversation as well as hearers’ rationality and linguistic convention. Moreover, Searle introduced the notions of “primary” and “secondary” illocutionary acts. The primary illocutionary act is the indirect one. It is not literally performed. The secondary illocutionary act is the direct one. It is performed in the literal utterance of the sentence (Searle, 1979). We can explain these two terminologies with the following example:

(1) Speaker X: “Let’s go to concert tonight.”

(2) Speaker Y: “I have to take care of my little brother.”

Here, the primary illocutionary act is Y’s rejection of X’s suggestion, and the secondary illocutionary act is Y’s statement that she has to take care of her little brother.

Methodology

This study goes through three stages: data collection, data analysis, and presentation of analysis results. Before explaining each of these, the choice of the method needs to be accounted for.

Choice of the method

The major purpose of this study is to examine the use of directives in Surat Al-Baqarah to deliver several illocutionary acts. It also attempts to show how dissimilar these directives can be depending on nature of the speaker(s) and addressee(s). In the

other words, it aims to describe situations and events as best as possible according to how things unfold and not to understand causal relationships. Therefore, the descriptive interpretative qualitative method is used in this paper instead of the experimental method. This study is qualitative since it is mainly based on text analysis of the data collected, which are descriptively examined.

Source of the data

In this study, data are collected from Surat Al-Baqarah. Illocutionary acts are gathered from the verses that contain directives only. These verses are directly taken from three of the most popular translations of Quran, namely: Ghali (2008), Khalidi (2009), and Khan (2009). The sample for the analysis is composed of 139 directives.

Procedures of data collection and analysis

In the first stage, Surat Al-Baqarah was carefully read many times. In the second stage, only the verses, which contain directive speech acts, were selected and the rest were eliminated—a notetaking technique was employed here. As a starting point, the circumstances of revelation and interpretations of Quran were relied on to understand the meaning of the verses. The circumstances of revelation (*Asbāb al-nuzūl*) mean the historical context in which quranic verses were revealed. In the present study, they were mainly taken from *Al-kashf* by Al-Zamakhshari (n.d) and *the circumstances of revelation* by Al-Hamidani (1999). Interpretations of the Quran (*Tafsīr*), on the other hand, attempt to provide elucidation, explanation, interpretation, context or commentary for clear understanding and conviction of God's will (Mir, 1995).

There is a number of quranic interpretations. In this study, Al-Tabari (2001) was chosen as the major resource for interpreting the target verses for the following reasons. First, although this *mufassir* (author of tafsir) has interpreted the whole Quran in details, he did not focus on vague interpretations of events. Rather, the moral lessons of Quran stories were given much more attention. In other words, Al-Tabari relates the stories and legislations mentioned in the Quran to people and the contemporary challenges they face. Likewise, the speech act theory deals with active contexts where the speaker and the hearer are involved. Second, Al-Tabari's wide knowledge of the Arabic language has helped him to interpret the Holy Quran aesthetically and pragmatically.

The procedure of data analysis does not only bring the context and interpretations of directives into the light but also takes the two contextual variables of *power* and *distance* into consideration.

Results and Discussion

After collecting the data, the illocutionary acts in focus (commands, prayers, and permissions) were identified. Under each one, imperatives were re-classified according to the speakers. Then, these sub-classes were divided again into sub-sections based on the hearers. The examples below show this in details.

1. Commands:

God's commands

In Surat Al-Baqarah, God commends prophets, angels, believers as well as non-believers, Jews, hypocrites, and all people. However, the performative verbs used and the way of mitigating the command differs from one group to another. Table 1 provides some selected examples from the present study's sample in which God commands using imperatives. Verses are accompanied with their circumstances of revelation and/or brief explanation.

Table 1: Selected examples of Allah's commands from Surat Al-Baqarah

	Examples (Quranic verses)	Circumstances of revelation and/or explanation
<i>Allah's commands to prophets</i>	1. "...[T]urn then Thy face in the direction of the sacred Mosque ..." (Quran 2: 144, Ghali, trans., 2008). "And from where you go out, then turn your face towards the inviolable Mosque..." (Quran 2: 149, Ghali, trans., 2008). "So from any place you may be, turn your face towards the Sacred Mosque..." (Quran 2: 150, Khalidi, trans., 2009)	Jews thought that their religion is the right one as they preceded Muslims in praying towards Al-Aqsa Mosque. After Muslims had changed their direction of prayers (Qibla) into Kaaba (a building at the center of the Sacred Mosque in Mecca), Jews deemed Muslims astray and their previous prayers towards Jerusalem unaccepted by Allah (Al-Zamakhshari, n.d).
	2. "God said, Take four birds and train them to come back to you. Then place them separately on each hilltop, and call them. They will come flying to you..." (Quran 2: 260, Khan, trans., 2009).	Allah answers Abraham's (PBUH) request, which is to see how He brings dead bodies back to life, by calling the prophet to carry out several commands (Al-Zamakhshari, n.d).
<i>Allah's commands to angels</i>	3. "And behold, We said to the angels: Bow down to Adam..." (Quran 2: 34, Khan, trans., 2009).	Allah calls angels to prostrate to Adam (PBUH) who has been chosen as the Caliph of earth.
		Some pilgrimages used to speak

<i>Allah's commands to believers</i>	4. "When ye have accomplished your holy rites, celebrate the praises of Allah, as ye used to celebrate the praises of your fathers..." (Quran 2:200, Khan, trans., 2009).	proudly of the generosity and good deeds of their fathers in Mecca before Islam. In doing so, they had the habit of mentioning that their fathers provided other pilgrimages with food, drink, and guidance (Al-Zamakhshari, n.d).
	5. "O ye who believe! Give of the good things which ye have (honourably) earned, and of the fruits of the earth which We have produced for you..." (Quran 2: 267, Ghali, trans., 2008).	Some Muslims from Al-Madina used to bring spoiled dates to mosques for poor people to eat. Thus, Allah prohibits them from giving the worst of what they have because if they do so, they will not be rewarded in the afterlife (Al- Hamidan, 1999).
<i>Allah's commands to non-believers</i>	6. When it is said to them: " Follow what Allah hath revealed:" They say: "Nay! We shall follow the ways of our fathers..." Quran 2:170, Khan, trans., 2009).	Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) invited Jews and Christians to Islam and warned them of Allah's punishment. Yet, two men of them, Rafi Ibn Kharejah and Malek Ibn Awf, replied that they would rather follow the religion of their fathers (Al- Hamidan, 1999).
<i>Allah's commands to Jews</i>	7. "And remember We said: enter this town..." Quran 2: 58, Ghali, trans., 2008).	Allah commands Jews in Egypt to enter the Holy Land where Prophet Jacob (PBUH) had settled in. When they first refused to enter the Holy Land (Palestine), Allah punished them by letting them wander for 40 years in the desert (Al-Zamakhshari, n.d).
<i>Allah's commands to hypocrites</i>	8. "When it is said to them: Believe as the others believe, they say: shall we believe as the fools believe..." (Quran 2: 13, Khan, trans., 2009).	Abduallah Ibn Salul was one of the well-known men in Yathreb. Although he entered Islam, he was still called "the leader of hypocrites". He used to compliment the companions of the prophet in front of them and make fun of them secretly with other hypocrites (Al-Zamakhshari, n.d).
<i>Allah's commands to all people</i>	9. O people! Worship your Lord who created you..." (Quran 2: 21, Khalidi, trans., 2009).	Allah orders people to worship Him as the one and only creator.

In Example 1, God uses the imperative “turn your face” to command Prophet Muhammad (along with all Muslims) to change their direction of prayers to Mecca. This imperative is categorized as a command because the power of the speaker (the Almighty Allah) is greater than that of the addressees (Muhammad PBUH and all Muslims). Moreover, the action of facing the right *Qibla* is an essential condition of valid prayers in addition to intention, purity, and covering the body. Unfulfilling this command would result in invalid prayer, and hence God’s anger.

Example 2 is also a command. It is identified so because of the following reasons: First, the power of the God is greater than that of all creatures—even prophets. So, Abraham still has to obey His instructions. However, because the prophet’s request was answered by God without mediation, we can say that the four imperatives serve the function of *honoring*.

The Almighty God does not command prophets only as Examples 1 and 2 show but angels too as Example 3 illustrate. The imperative verb “bow down” is a command because Allah is

Superior over angels. Furthermore, they have no choice except complying with his orders as non-complying leads to His wrath like what happened to Satan. The command is not redressed; it is uttered directly without any risk. However, Allah honors angels by making them closer to Him and this can be seen through His use of the conversational style.

In addition to prophets and angels, Allah commands believers too. As Example 4 makes clear, He calls the pilgrimages to stop boasting about the generosity of their fathers and be much more grateful to Him. The illocutionary act of this imperative is command because the speaker (Allah) has more power than the hearer (some pilgrimages). Nonetheless, as Al-Tabari (2001) mentions, the clause “As ye used to celebrate the praises of your fathers” does not carry out the literal meaning but it is used to condemn or criticize Muslims’ negligence of praising Allah in pilgrimage. Therefore, another possible illocutionary act of this imperative can be reproaching.

As all the previous examples, Example 5 is also a command. Allah asks the believers to spend out of the best things they own. Obviously, if they do the opposite, they will not be rewarded. However, this imperative can serve as an encouragement and gratitude. In other words, in addition to encouraging Muslims to spend out of what they love the most, Allah reminds them of His blessings and asks them to be grateful.

In addition to believers, Allah the omnipotent commands the non-believers. However, the style of address is different. While Allah uses the vocative case to address believers (Example 5: “O ye who believe!”), He does not use it with disbelievers as they do not believe in Him. Vocatives soften imperatives.

The imperative “enter” in Example 7 conveys a command illocutionary act because when the addressees (Jews) did not obey God’s orders, they were punished. This means that carrying out the action is not optional. Nonetheless, this imperative may also serve as honoring speech act. In other words, Allah honored Jews by letting

them reside in the land of their fathers. Here, the speech act of honoring implies that Jews were not grateful to Allah in spite of His numerous blessings.

The imperative “believe” in Example 8 conveys a command because of the following reasons: First, non-believing in God implies punishment. Second, the power of the speaker (Allah the creator) is higher than that of the hearer (the hypocrites).

In Example 9, the imperative verb *worship* serves as a command because in Islam, worshipping Allah is a must. Maintaining it implies reward from Him and ignoring it entails severe punishment. Here, the vocative style is used to create distance between the speaker (Allah) and the hearer (all people).

Prophets' commands

Surat Al-Baqarah includes only one example of prophets' commands. It appears in Table 2.

Table 2: Prophets' commands

Example (Quranic verse)	Circumstances of revelation
<p>10. “When Moses said to his people: O my people! You have indeed wronged yourselves by your worshipping the calf; <i>turn</i> in repentance to your creator, and <i>slay</i> the culprits among you...” (Quran 2: 54, Khan, trans., 2009).</p>	<p>Prophet Moses (PBUH) spent 40 days in a mountain in the Sinai Peninsula of Egypt called Mount Sinai learning the Ten Commandments. After he returned, he found out that some of his people had started worshipping the golden calf that Samiri had created (Ibn Kathir, n.d).</p>

As the verse in Table 2 above shows, Moses (PBUH) commands his people to stop worshipping the golden calf and return to their God. The imperative verbs “turn” and “slay” serve as commands for the following reasons: First, the power of the speaker (Moses) is higher than that of the hearer (his people) especially that he has a metaphysical power as a prophet. Second, Allah’s forgiveness was conditioned by returning to worship Him and killing those who disobeyed Him and worshipped the calf.

2. Prayers

Prayer is a solemn request for help or expression of thanks addressed to God or another deity. In it, the speaker always has less power than the hearer. Surat Al-Baqarah includes examples of praying as a directive illocutionary act carried out by both prophets and believers. Table 3 displays some of them.

Table 3: Selected examples of prophets’ and believers’ prayers to Allah from Surat Al-Baqarah

	Examples (Quranic Verses)	Circumstances of revelation/explanation
Prophets’ prayers to Allah	11. “When Abraham said: "My Lord! <i>Show</i> me how you revive the dead...” (Quran, 2: 260, Khan, trans., 2009).	Abraham (PBUH) asks the Almighty Allah to show him how He revives the dead. Allah responds to his request by providing him with several instructions.
	12. “Our Lord! <i>Make</i> us surrender us to you And from our descendants a nation, which surrenders itself to you. <i>Show</i> us our holy rituals, And <i>forgive</i> us” (Quran 2: 128, Khalidi, trans., 2009).	Prophets Abraham and Ishmael (PBUT) pray to God to save their faith as well as that of their descendants, guide them, and forgive their mistakes.
Believers’ prayers to Allah	13. “And there are men who say: "Our Lord! <i>Give</i> us good in this world and good in the Hereafter, and <i>defend (protect)</i> us from the torment of the Fire!” (Quran 2: 201, Khan, trans., 2009).	Some believers used to pray to Allah to fulfill their earthly needs only such as heavy rain, fertility of lands, and good crops. In the preceding verse of this surah (Verse 200), He blames them for this.

In Example 11 above, the imperative verb “show” serves as a prayer and not a request because the speaker (Prophet Abraham PBUH) is lower than the addressee (Allah) in rank and power. In requests, interlocutors are in the same level. This imperative is softened by the address term “My Lord!”.

As in Example 11, prophets Abraham and Ishmael (PBUT) use imperatives to politely ask Allah to answer their prayers. To mitigate these imperatives, they use “Our Lord”.

Example 13 consists of imperatives, which serve as prayers because the speaker (pilgrimages) is lower than the Almighty Allah in power and social rank. The risk of praying is not high because these believers do not only care about early needs but also ask for guidance, forgiveness, and protection from hell.

3. Permissions

In addition to commands and prayers, directives appear in the form of permissions in the analyzed surah. Permissions and commands are different in the sense that the former do not oblige the hearer to do a particular action whereas the latter force him/her to carry out certain actions. Put differently, in permissions, the hearer is allowed to do something, but s/he is free not to do it. In commands, however, if s/he does not do the action, s/he might face bad consequences. Table 4 shows some examples of Allah’s permissions from the sample of the study.

Table 4: Selected examples of Allah's permissions from Surat Al-Baqarah

	Examples (Quranic verses)	Circumstances of revelation/explanation
<i>Allah's permissions to prophets</i>	14. "... And <i>eat</i> freely from it anywhere you may wish, yet do not approach this tree..." (Quran 2:35, Khan, trans., 2009).	Both Adam (PBUH) and Hawwa lived in Paradise enjoying the blessings of Allah, living a life any human would have envied. However, Allah told them that they may eat freely of its fruits as they wish except one tree. Shaytaan (Devil) did manage to tempt both of them to eat the fruit of the forbidden tree. After eating it, they noticed they had become naked. Realizing they had been tricked by Shaytaan, they desperately tried to cover their nakedness with leaves from the trees.
<i>Allah's permissions to believers</i>	15. "If then any one transgresses the prohibition against you, <i>Transgress</i> ye likewise against him..." (Quran 2:194, Khalidi, trans., 2009).	Polytheists prohibited Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his companions to do Umrah, a kind of pilgrimage to Mecca, in the eleventh month of the Islamic calendar (A.D. 6). Therefore, he (PBUH) made an agreement with them to come back in the same month of the next year to do it with his companions without having weapons (Al-Hamidani, 1999).
<i>Allah's permissions to all people</i>	16. "O ye people! <i>Eat</i> of what is on earth, Lawful and good..." (Quran 2:168, Khan, trans., 2009).	Three Muslims (Thaqif, Khuzaa, and Amer Ibn Sa'isah) deprived themselves of eating meat.

In Example 14, The Almighty Allah uses the imperative verb "eat" to permit the addressees and not to command them. Adam (PBUH) and Eve had the choice to eat anything they wished except the fruits of one tree. In other words, Allah did not order them to eat and did not impose a particular type of fruit on them. If they did not eat from the allowed fruits, they would not be punished.

In a similar vein, Allah utilizes the imperative verb "transgress" in Example 15 to express permission. In Islam, fighting is prohibited in certain months. Besides, in many verses of the Holy Quran, Allah orders believers not to attack Christians, peaceful Jews, and disbelievers. In this verse, however, He allows Muslims to attack the polytheists back if they attack them first. This illocutionary act is a permission and not a command because if Muslims do not defend themselves and forgive the polytheists, they will not be punished.

In Example 16, the Almighty Allah uses the imperative "eat" to give permission to people to eat all His grants. This is a permission and not a command because not eating does not entail punishment. Moreover, people have different tastes.

Conclusion and Pedagogical Implications

Using the speech act theory and relying on the circumstances of revelation as well as books of Quran interpretation, the present study attempts to identify the forms and functions of directive illocutionary acts in Surat Al-Baqarah. This study is not comprehensive in the sense that only three types of directives were examined, namely: commands, prayers, and permissions. Many other speech acts exist in analyzed surah such as guidance, threatening, challenge, etc. but they are beyond the scope of this study. Findings show that one structure such as imperative verbs can serve different direct and/or indirect functions depending on the context, the interlocutors, their nature as well as power, and the distance between them.

To conclude, it is worth mentioning that different translations of the surah might yield different meanings and therefore different forms and functions of directives. Some Quran translators tend to translate it literally instead of focusing on the meaning of verses. Thus, researchers are called to look for the most accurate translations when conducting pragmatic studies. Furthermore, different researchers might understand the same translation differently and therefore identify speech acts differently. No task is more risky and difficult than investigating the pragmatic meanings of Quran. Yet, efforts have to be always done in order to discover the beauty of its style and the depth of its meanings.

The present study clearly proves that mere knowledge of grammar does not enable us to successfully uncover the relationship between the structure of directives and their functions. Here, context plays a major role. Based on these findings, English as foreign language teachers are recommended to:

- Draw their learners' attention to the importance of pragmatics in learning English
- Encourage them to infer the functions from the context instead of relying heavily on dictionaries
- Show their learners explicitly how different contextual factors yield distinct meanings

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A Pragmatic Study of Directives' Forms and Functions in Surat Al-Baqarah

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