

Politeness Strategies in Hajj and Umrah Supplications (Du'ā: دُعَاء): A Pragmatic Study of Request Speech Acts

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Abstract: This study analyzes politeness strategies in request speech acts (*du'ā*: دُعَاء) found in the *Book of Prayers and Dhikr for Hajj and Umrah* (Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2023). Using pragmatic frameworks from Brown and Levinson (1988), Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), and Leech (1983), the study examines 52 prayers based on sentence structure, communicative intent, and politeness strategies. The findings show a dominance of negative politeness, marked by indirectness, collective pronouns, and honorific expressions. Prayers beginning with *اللَّهُمَّ* /*Allahumma*/, *رَبِّ* /*Rabbi*/, and *رَبَّنَا* /*Rabbana*/ reflect varying degrees of personal and collective spirituality. Interestingly, prayers that do not explicitly address God also appear in nearly equal frequency, indicating the use of rich and diverse language variation within linguistic analysis. This variation enhances the sense of sincerity and depth in the supplication. The study affirms that prayer, while theological, is also a linguistic act shaped by politeness and dynamic spiritual expression. It reveals how religious language operates under pragmatic norms to convey trust, reverence, and humility in both traditional and evolving communicative settings.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini menganalisis strategi kesantunan dalam tindak tutur permintaan (*du'ā*: دُعَاء) yang terdapat dalam *Buku Doa dan Dzikir Manasik Haji dan Umrah* (Kemenag RI, 2023). Dengan menggunakan kerangka teori pragmatik dari Brown dan Levinson (1988), Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), dan Leech (1983), penelitian ini mengkaji 52 doa yang mengandung permintaan berdasarkan struktur kalimat, intensi komunikatif, dan strategi kesantunan. Hasil menunjukkan dominasi negative politeness, ditandai dengan permohonan tidak langsung, penggunaan kata ganti kolektif, dan bentuk penghormatan. Doa dengan awalan *اللَّهُمَّ* /*Allahumma*/, *رَبِّ* /*Rabbi*/, dan *رَبَّنَا* /*Rabbana*/ mencerminkan nuansa spiritual yang berbeda—baik secara personal maupun kolektif. Menariknya, doa yang tidak secara langsung memanggil Tuhan juga ditemukan dalam jumlah yang hampir setara. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa doa-doa tersebut menggunakan variasi bahasa dalam kajian linguistik yang kaya dan tidak monoton, sehingga memperkuat kesan ketulusan dalam penyampaian harapan spiritual. Penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa doa merupakan wacana religius yang juga sarat makna linguistik, di mana bentuk kesantunan merefleksikan adab, iman, dan ekspresi spiritual yang dinamis.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the field of pragmatics, the analysis of politeness strategies provides crucial insights into how language is employed not merely to transmit information, but to maintain social harmony and reflect ethical norms within specific speech communities (Usmani & Almarshham, 2024). This becomes particularly salient when examining religious language—especially supplication (*du‘ā*)—as it offers a unique communicative event where linguistic forms intertwine with deeply rooted spiritual, cultural, and social values. The *Book of Prayers and Dhikr for Hajj and Umrah*, (*Doa dan Zikir Manasik Haji dan Umrah*, Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2023; hereafter *the Book of Prayers*) used as an official guide by Indonesian pilgrims, presents a codified collection of supplications recited during the pilgrimage rituals of Hajj and Umrah. These texts serve not only as spiritual tools but also as rich material for pragmatic and sociolinguistic study. The prayers documented in *the Book of Prayers* are structured in ways that reflect reverence, submission, and humility—core components of Islamic etiquette (*adab*). In this sense, they exemplify how religious language operates within a framework of politeness, both as a linguistic strategy and as an ideological expression.

According to Brown & Levinson (1988), all communicative acts involve facework—efforts by speakers to maintain their own and others’ “face,” or public self-image. They distinguish between *positive face* (the desire to be approved of and appreciated) and *negative face* (the desire to be unimpeded and autonomous). In religious supplication, especially within Islamic contexts, negative politeness strategies dominate. The speaker, typically a worshipper, addresses God from a position of inferiority, acknowledging divine omnipotence and their own dependence.

Consider, for example, the prayer:

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِي مِنَ الْمُتَّقِينَ

/Allāhumma aj‘alnī mina al-muttaqīn/

[O Allah, make me among the righteous]

Though this prayer uses an imperative structure, it is pragmatically an *indirect request*—what Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) define as a *conventionally indirect strategy*. In ordinary conversation, an imperative might threaten the interlocutor’s negative face. However, in religious discourse, the imperative is reframed as a deferential plea, softened by the asymmetrical relationship between the supplicant and the divine addressee. Similarly, other common phrases found in the manasik prayerbook—such as:

اغْفِرْ لِي

/Ighfir lī/

[Forgive me]

may seem direct linguistically, but are profoundly indirect in force. They reflect the speaker’s awareness of their spiritual limitations and their complete dependence on divine mercy. These expressions exhibit linguistic humility—an acknowledgment of one’s unworthiness to demand and one’s hope to be heard.

Leech’s (1983) politeness principle, which emphasizes tact, generosity, and modesty, further helps to explain the ethical foundation of such utterances. A striking example is:

إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الْعَفْوَ

/Innī as-aluka al-‘afwa/

[I ask You for forgiveness]

Here, the verb *as-aluka* (I ask You) marks the utterance as a direct act of supplication, but its semantics are filtered through a lens of ritual modesty. The worshipper acknowledges their sins while simultaneously appealing to the mercy of God, crafting a

speech act that prioritizes the hearer's (in this case, God's) freedom to grant or withhold the request—thus exemplifying negative politeness.

In addition to negative politeness, there are also prayers that function under *positive politeness*—those that emphasize solidarity, shared values, and common goals. Communal supplications, especially those using plural pronouns, reflect this dimension. One of the most frequently cited examples in both textual and oral Islamic practice is:

رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ

/Rabbana ātinā fī al-dunyā ḥasanah wa fī al-ākhirah ḥasanah wa qinā 'adhāba al-nār/

[Our Lord, grant us goodness in this world and in the Hereafter, and protect us from the punishment of the Fire]

This collective prayer not only seeks divine benefit for the speaker but extends that hope to the entire religious community. It demonstrates the speaker's alignment with the community's needs and beliefs, a central feature of positive politeness.

The genre of manasik prayer is inherently performative, and its communicative meaning is tightly bound to context. Dell Hymes' (1972) SPEAKING framework underscores the necessity of analyzing communication events through eight interconnected components: Setting, Participants, Ends, Act Sequence, Key, Instrumentalities, Norms, and Genre. The *Book of Prayers and Dhikr* explicitly connects its prayers with ritual settings—whether they are recited upon entering Masjid al-Haram, during the sa'i between Safa and Marwah, or while standing at Arafat. For example:

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْهُ حَجًّا لَا رِيَاءَ فِيهِ وَلَا سُمْعَةً

/Allāhumma aj'alhu ḥajjan lā ri'yā'a fīhi wa lā sum'ah/

[O Allah, make this Hajj one that is free from showing off and seeking praise]

This prayer is meant to be recited at the start of Hajj, in a state of ritual purity (*ihram*), when the pilgrim declares their intention to perform pilgrimage solely for God's pleasure. The *key* is solemn; the *genre* is formulaic; and the *norms* demand sincerity, humility, and detachment from worldly recognition.

Beyond ritual contexts, these prayers have also been adapted into modern settings, especially digital spaces. On platforms like Instagram, pilgrims or preachers often post prayer snippets in captions or story highlights. For instance:

يَا اللَّهُ، اجْعَلْ قُلُوبَنَا قَوِيَّةً فِي دِينِكَ

/Yā Allāh, ij'al qulūbanā qawīyyatan fī dīnik/

[O Allah, strengthen our hearts in Your religion]

Despite the shift in medium, the strategies of politeness remain intact. Users continue to adopt reverent forms, indirect appeals, and humble tone—preserving religious *adab* even in the ephemerality of online content.

This continuity reflects the ideological depth of religious politeness: it is not merely linguistic, but cultural and spiritual. Fikriana (2023) says the use of supplicatory language in both traditional and digital domains reflects a belief in divine responsiveness as well as a social expectation to maintain decorum. In this regard, politeness in du'ā functions both vertically (between human and God) and horizontally (as a model of ethical speech among humans). Furthermore, the urgency of this analysis is heightened in today's environment, where digital interactions often exhibit diminished decorum—even in religious spaces. Prayers that were once voiced in quiet solitude are now shared as memes, videos, or templated posts. While this democratizes religious content, it also risks flattening its depth. Understanding the structure, intention, and context of polite supplication ensures that the spiritual function of prayer is preserved, even when its form

evolves (Djasuli, 2016). In today's open and plural religious practices, many individuals experience hesitation or fear when composing personal supplications, fearing they may pray incorrectly—linguistically or ritually (Hasanah, 2024). This anxiety, Fajar (2024) said that often stems from the belief that prayers must follow rigid formulas to be valid or accepted. As a result, some worshippers rely solely on standardized prayers without grasping their politeness or pragmatic nuances. In fact, understanding the linguistic structure and strategy of prayer can empower believers to supplicate more sincerely and confidently (Akbar et al., 2022). The *Book of Prayers and Dhikr* plays a pedagogical role in this regard. It does not merely instruct what to say but also models how to say it—with reverence, humility, and discipline. It teaches worshippers, especially younger generations, that prayer is not a means to demand but a gesture of trust and surrender. By consistently using plural pronouns (*nahnu*), hedged imperatives, and honorifics, the book instills values of collectivity, modesty, and patience—qualities integral to Islamic spiritual character.

The integration of Brown and Levinson's face theory, Blum-Kulka's request typology, Leech's politeness principles, and Hymes' ethnography of communication offers a multidimensional framework. Each theory contributes a unique lens: Brown and Levinson uncover the social dynamics of supplication; Blum-Kulka helps differentiate forms of request; Leech emphasizes cultural and ethical context; and Hymes structures the communicative event holistically. When applied to the *manasik* prayerbook, this framework reveals how every prayer functions not only as a linguistic act, but as a ritual performance embedded in religious identity and communal ethics.

In conclusion, the politeness strategies employed in the *Book of Prayers and Dhikr for Hajj and Umrah* demonstrate how language operates within the sacred. These prayers reflect the complex relationship between humans and their Creator, and between individual believers and the larger community of faith. Through expressions of indirectness, collective hope, and deferential tone, these texts teach that worship is not only about content—but about conduct. They remind us that the way we speak to God shapes the way we speak to others, reinforcing a continuum of ethics that stretches from the divine realm into the everyday world. Therefore, the pragmatic analysis of these prayers is not merely academic—it is essential to preserving the spiritual, moral, and cultural significance of religious communication in both traditional rituals and contemporary life.

Research on religious discourse, especially on prayer (*du'ā*), has been conducted from various linguistic and theological perspectives. Studies by (Alfiana & Ahmadi, 2024), Fauzan (2022), Fristiani et al. (2022), Hanafi and Hassan (2021), Kurniawati (2021), and Romadhon et al. (2022) demonstrate a growing scholarly interest in the communicative functions of prayer and its relevance to contemporary religious life. Alfiana and Ahmadi (2024) focused on *structural presuppositions* in the dialogue of a religious-themed film, exploring pragmatic elements within fictional contexts. Fauzan (2022) analyzed the *relationship between prayer and effort* from a Qur'anic viewpoint, offering a theological but not linguistic perspective. Meanwhile, Fristiani et al. (2022) examined prayer as a *medium of communication between humans and the Creator*, framing it broadly within da'wah and spiritual rhetoric. Hanafi and Hassan (2021) explored *alternative spiritual rewards* to Hajj and Umrah during the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting the shift in ritual significance but without engaging in linguistic analysis. Kurniawati (2021) provided a sociolinguistic reflection on how *God is involved in public discourse* through oaths and invocations, bridging sacred and profane language in environmental contexts. Romadhon

et al. (2022), on the other hand, focused on *pragmatic analysis in virtual interfaith prayer events*, emphasizing digital and inter-religious dimensions.

While these studies affirm the importance of prayer in both spiritual and social domains, none of them specifically address *politeness strategies* in the structured prayers used during *Hajj and Umrah* rituals. Most research either emphasizes theological interpretation (e.g., Fauzan, 2022), sociocultural reflection (e.g., Kurniawati, 2021), or general communicative function (e.g., Fristiani et al., 2022). Moreover, although Romadhon et al. (2022) offer a pragmatic analysis, their focus lies on *interfaith and virtual settings*, not on the internal discourse of Islamic ritual texts. Similarly, Alfiana and Ahmadi (2024) highlight pragmatic structures, but within a fictional and cinematic frame, rather than authentic ritual speech acts.

The present study differs from previous works by focusing on *institutionalized religious texts*, namely the *Book of Prayers and Dhikr for Hajj and Umrah* published by Indonesia's Ministry of Religious Affairs. It specifically examines how politeness strategies—as theorized by Brown and Levinson (1988), Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), Leech (1983), and Hymes (1972)—are embedded in the linguistic structure of Islamic supplications. This study not only analyzes the pragmatic forms (such as indirectness and deference) but also connects them to ritual setting, collective identity, and digital adaptation, thus filling a critical gap in the literature. In doing so, it contributes to a more nuanced understanding of religious language as both a spiritual and socially regulated practice.

2. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive method within the framework of pragmatic discourse analysis to examine politeness strategies in Islamic supplications during Hajj and Umrah, as found in the *Book of Prayers and Dhikr for Hajj and Umrah* (Republik Indonesia, 2023). The primary data consists of 52 selected prayers containing request elements, chosen based on their grammatical structure (e.g., imperatives, optatives), contextual placement in the ritual sequence (e.g., during ihram, tawaf, or Arafah), and politeness features such as indirectness, collective pronouns, or deferential forms. Supplementary data includes examples of these prayers as adapted in social media platforms like Instagram to observe the continuity of religious politeness in digital contexts.

Data were analyzed using a multi-theoretical framework. Brown & Levinson's (1988) politeness theory was used to identify strategies of negative and positive politeness; Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) model helped classify the types of requests; Leech's (1983) politeness maxims illuminated the ethical dimensions of the utterances; and Hymes' (1972) SPEAKING model was applied to interpret contextual elements such as setting, participants, ends, and tone. The combination of linguistic analysis and ethnographic interpretation allowed the researcher to explore how structured religious prayers function not only as spiritual requests but also as culturally embedded communicative acts. To ensure validity, data triangulation was conducted through textual comparison, pragmatic literature, and observation of digital religious discourse.

3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

In the pragmatic analysis of politeness strategies in supplicatory expressions found in the *Book of Prayers and Dhikr for Hajj and Umrah* (Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2023), it was found that the use of initial phrases such as *Rabbi*, *Rabbana*, and *Allahumma* reveals distinctive patterns closely related to the social and spiritual functions of these prayers.

Prayers beginning with *Rabbi* tend to be personal, reflecting an individual relationship between the supplicant and God. The structure of these prayers typically reflects *negative politeness* and *modesty*, in which the speaker demonstrates humility and a full awareness of their dependence on the Divine.

A total of 52 prayers were classified based on their initial structures: 4 prayers begin with *Rabbi*, 6 with *Rabbana*, 15 with *Allahumma*, and the remaining 27 with other forms. Each group shows distinctive pragmatic characteristics and politeness strategies, as elaborated below.

Prayers that begin with *Rabbi* are highly personal, where the speaker addresses God directly as a weak individual sincerely asking for mercy. One example is:

رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيَّ

/Rabbi ighfir li wa li-wālidayya/

[O my Lord, forgive me and my parents]

This form reflects a *negative politeness* strategy, as it contains a request that is non-imposing and marked by humility. Although imperatives are used, they are not expressions of pressure, but rather a recognition of human frailty before the Divine.

Prayers beginning with *Rabbana* express a collective plea and social solidarity. For example:

رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً، وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً، وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ

/Rabbana ātinā fī al-dunyā ḥasanah, wa fī al-ākhirah ḥasanah, wa qinā ‘adhāba al-nār/

[Our Lord, grant us goodness in this world and in the Hereafter, and protect us from the punishment of the Fire]

The use of the plural pronoun *nā* (“us”) strengthens a *positive politeness* strategy, as it conveys shared experience, empathy, and collective engagement. This reflects the communal identity of Muslims, especially in congregational rituals like Hajj and Umrah.

Prayers prefixed with *Allahumma* are the most commonly found in the data. These often take the form of direct requests in the imperative, but remain polite and marked by humility. A typical example is:

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْهُ حَجًّا لَا رِيَاءَ فِيهِ وَلَا سُمْعَةً

/Allāhumma aj‘alhu ḥajjan lā riyā’a fīhi wa lā sum‘ah/

[O Allah, make this Hajj free from ostentation and seeking praise]

This prayer reflects a *negative politeness* strategy, emphasizing sincerity and a rejection of self-display. The request is framed with earnestness and an acknowledgment that only God can bestow spiritual purity in worship.

As for prayers that do not begin with any of the three major formulas, they are typically formulaic and *performative* in ritual contexts. One prominent example is:

نَوَيْتُ الْحَجَّ وَالْعُمْرَةَ

/Nawaytu al-ḥajja wa al-‘umrata/

[I intend to perform Hajj and ‘Umrah]

This utterance does not contain an explicit request but functions as a *performative declaration* marking the beginning of a ritual act. According to Hymes’ (1972) SPEAKING framework, such prayers represent ritual communication, with emphasis on solemn *key* and sequential *acts*. The politeness strategy here lies in obedience to prescribed religious procedures rather than interpersonal negotiation.

As part of a more in-depth analysis, the following table presents the research findings. This table provides relevant data that will assist in offering a deeper understanding of the research analysis.

Table 1. Prayer Mapping					
Prayer Prefix	Prayer	Politeness Strategy	Time of Prayer	Analytical Notes	Frequency
رَبِّ /Rabbi/	رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيَّ /Rabbi ighfir lī wa li-wālidayya/ [My Lord, forgive me and my parents]	Negative politeness	Personal prayer, after salat or during private supplication	The prayer is personal, showing the individual's relationship with God, reflecting modesty and spiritual dependence.	4
	رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا /Rabbi zidnī 'ilman/ [My Lord, increase my knowledge]	Indirect request, modesty maxim	Personal prayer for knowledge	Similar to above – a gentle request showing personal hope and humility.	
	رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنْ لَدُنْكَ ذُرِّيَّةً طَيِّبَةً /Rabbi hab lī min ladunka dhurriyyatan ṭayyibah/ [My Lord, grant me good offspring from You]	Negative politeness	Family prayer	A gentle personal request, expressing humility.	
رَبَّنَا /Rabbana/	رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً /Rabbana ātinā fī al-dunyā ḥasanah/ [Our Lord, grant us goodness in this world]	Positive politeness	Thawaf, dhikr, after salat	The plural (us) reflects solidarity and collective hope; politeness based on collectivity.	6
	رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنْفُسَنَا /Rabbana ḡalamnā anfusanā/ [Our Lord, we	Negative politeness	Prayer of repentance	Collective regret; still framed in spiritual solidarity.	

	have wronged ourselves]				
	رَبَّنَا لَا تُزِغْ قُلُوبَنَا /Rabbana lā tuzigh qulūbanā/ [Our Lord, do not let our hearts deviate]	Indirect request, hedging	After receiving guidance	A plea to remain in God's guidance; collective politeness in interaction.	
اللَّهُمَّ /Allahumma/	اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْهُ حَجًّا لَا رِيَاءَ فِيهِ /Allāhumma aj'alhu ḥajjan lā riyā'a fīhi/ [O Allah, make my pilgrimage free of vanity and showing off]	Negative politeness	At the start of Ihram or during Hajj	A soft imperative prayer full of sincerity, showing deference and ritual humility.	15
	اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي /Allāhumma ighfir lī/ [O Allah, forgive me]	Indirect request	General, after salat	A soft, direct request, framed by vertical relation and sincere intent.	
	اللَّهُمَّ أَسْأَلُكَ الْعَفْوَ /Allāhumma as-aluka al-'afwa/ [O Allah, I ask You for forgiveness]	Direct request with modesty	Prayer for protection	A direct yet polite request in the context of worship; contains tact.	
Other Prefixes	نَوَيْتُ الْحَجَّ وَالْعُمْرَةَ /Nawaytu al-ḥajja wa al-'umrata/ [I intend to perform Hajj and Umrah]	Ritual declaration (performative)	When entering Ihram	A performative prayer; not a request but a formal declaration of the ritual act.	27
	بِسْمِ اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ عَلَى اللَّهِ /Bismi Llāhi tawakkaltu 'alā-Allāh/ [In the name of Allah, I place my trust in Allah]	Indirect declaration of surrender	When starting a journey or activity	Implies surrender; formulaic in the context of a ritual journey.	

إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْهَمِّ وَالْحَزَنِ /Innī a'ūdhu bika mina al-hammi wa al-ḥazani/ [I seek refuge in You from worry and sorrow]	Negative politeness	In times of sadness, before or during worship	A plea for protection emphasizing human weakness and God's majesty.
Doa Total		52	52

The table reveals that Islamic prayers employ various politeness strategies shaped by their spiritual and social contexts. The most frequently used prefix is “Allahumma” (15 prayers), often expressing direct yet humble requests. “Rabbana” (6 prayers) and “Rabbi” (4 prayers) reflect both collective and personal devotion, emphasizing humility and dependence on God. Meanwhile, 27 prayers use other prefixes in ritual contexts, often as formulaic or performative expressions. Overall, strategies like negative politeness and indirect requests dominate, highlighting the respectful and modest nature of supplication in Islamic practice.

To deepen the understanding of politeness strategies in Hajj and Umrah supplications (*du'ā*), it is essential to contextualize the findings within broader pragmatic, sociolinguistic, and cultural frameworks. The analysis of 52 prayers not only confirms the dominance of negative politeness strategies but also reveals spiritual dynamics encoded in the linguistic forms selected by the supplicants. Opening invocations such as *Rabbi*, *Rabbana*, and *Allahumma* are not merely syntactic variations but signify the speaker's spiritual posture, collective orientation, and the performative nature of religious practice.

3.1 Politeness Strategies as Reflection of Social-Spiritual Hierarchies

Brown and Levinson (1988) argue that politeness strategies are shaped by three factors: Power (P), Social Distance (D), and Rank of Imposition (R). In prayer, these are recontextualized. God's absolute power renders all supplications inherently high in imposition (R), but the act of praying is marked by reduced social distance (D) due to spiritual intimacy and efforts to maintain the hearer's face—here, the divine face—through reverence and humility.

For instance, the prayer:

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِي مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ

/Allāhumma aj'alnī mina al-ṣāliḥīn/

[O Allah, make me among the righteous]

is grammatically an imperative, but pragmatically it is an indirect and mitigated request. The term *Allāhumma* acts as both an emotional and spiritual mitigator, framing the utterance as an act of surrender rather than demand. Politeness here is not just social but deeply theological.

Furthermore, positive politeness strategies are also observable, especially in prayers that use collective pronouns, such as the “Rabbana” supplications. These expressions—beginning with “Our Lord”—strategically employ the inclusive “we,” which frames the speaker not as an isolated individual, but as part of a unified ummah (community). While the Power (P) dynamic between human and divine remains absolute, the use of collective voice helps to reduce Social Distance (D). This linguistic choice promotes solidarity, creating a sense of closeness among supplicants and toward the addressee—

God—despite the ontological gap. The inclusive pronoun functions as a positive politeness marker that complements the otherwise dominant negative politeness features found in religious discourse. Thus, the interplay between positive and negative politeness in prayer language not only reflects theological hierarchies but also reveals a layered approach to expressing devotion, humility, and communal identity.

3.2 Digital Variations and Pragmatic Adaptation

In the digital era, Hajj and Umrah supplications have entered social media platforms such as Instagram, where pilgrims share excerpts of prayers. While the medium has changed, politeness strategies persist. In many cases, reverence is heightened to match the platform's performative nature and expectations of decorum.

A common example might appear in a caption:

اللَّهُمَّ يَسِّرْ لَنَا حَجًّا مَبْرُورًا وَسَعْيًا مَشْكُورًا

/Allāhumma yassir lanā ḥajjan mabrūran wa sa'yan mashkūran/

[O Allah, grant us an accepted pilgrimage and a rewarded effort]

Such posts serve as both spiritual expressions and public displays of piety. Although shared with a broad audience, these supplications retain indirectness, collectivity, and humility—key features of religious politeness. Nevertheless, challenges emerge. Copy-paste prayers or overly simplified versions may risk losing their pragmatic depth or spiritual nuance. Hence, understanding the linguistic and cultural mechanics of supplication becomes vital to preserve its authenticity in digital forms.

While the prayer's content is directed vertically (to God), its performance on Instagram is also directed horizontally (to a human audience). This dual orientation alters the politeness dynamics: the vertical direction preserves negative politeness strategies through humility and deference to divine authority, while the horizontal direction introduces elements of positive politeness, such as seeking group affiliation, shared values, and expressions of communal identity. As such, digital supplication becomes both a spiritual act and a social gesture, where the speaker maintains face not only before God, but also before peers.

3.3 Cross-Cultural Comparison: Prayer as Universal Politeness Event

Prayers, across various religious traditions, serve as a universal medium to express humility, dependence, and reverence. Although each religion has its own theological and ritual systems, many share common pragmatic functions—particularly the use of polite, deferential forms to address the divine.

In Christianity, especially in Protestant liturgy, prayers often follow a structure of adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication—known as the ACTS model (LaRue, 2000). Before making requests, believers frequently begin with praise or a confession of unworthiness. For example, prayers may begin with, “Heavenly Father, I know I am undeserving...” —a linguistic hedge that lowers imposition and reflects what Brown and Levinson (1988) call *negative politeness*. The speaker minimizes face-threat by acknowledging their subordinate spiritual status.

In Hinduism, supplication is typically embodied in mantras, such as *Om Namah Shivaya* or *Gayatri Mantra*, which are repeated with rhythmic precision. These expressions are formulaic yet meaningful, functioning as both meditative focus and acts of reverence. According to Klostermaier (2007), such repetition is not merely ritualistic—it expresses surrender and devotion, aligning the speaker's will with the divine. Pragmatically, this maps onto Leech's (1983) *modesty maxim*, as the ego is subdued in favor of divine submission.

In Buddhism, chanting is a central form of spiritual practice. Phrases like *Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammāsambuddhassa* (“Homage to the Blessed One, the Worthy One, the Fully Enlightened One”) are performed with reverent tone and repetition. As Gethin (1998) explains, these chants serve not to petition a deity, but to cultivate inner humility, mindfulness, and detachment. Although they do not always involve direct requests, they embody *politeness* in the form of ethical speech and respectful acknowledgment of enlightened beings.

In comparison, Islamic *du‘ā’* integrates both directness in syntax and indirectness in pragmatic force. Phrases such as:

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي

/Allāhumma ighfir lī/

[O Allah, forgive me]

may appear direct grammatically (imperative form), but they function pragmatically as deferential, polite requests, given the speaker’s recognition of God’s omnipotence and their own neediness. This coexistence of structure and submission—where the imperative does not violate but affirms reverence—is a distinct feature of Islamic prayer.

Such cross-cultural parallels demonstrate that politeness in prayer is a near-universal linguistic behavior. Despite differences in doctrine, language, and ritual, the underlying goal is the same: to approach the divine with deference, humility, and acknowledgment of one’s limited status. Through this lens, religious discourse becomes a profound site of pragmatic expression—where politeness is not just a social tool, but a spiritual ethic.

These comparisons highlight that while politeness in prayer is a near-universal phenomenon, Islamic *du‘ā’* exhibits a unique blend of syntactic directness and deep pragmatic deference. Unlike traditions that avoid imperative structures to show respect, Islamic supplications often employ imperatives that are contextually softened through formulaic openings (e.g., *Allāhumma*) and expressions of unworthiness.

This linguistic pattern allows for direct engagement with the divine while maintaining humility, signaling a dual-layered politeness strategy that is both structurally assertive and spiritually submissive. Thus, Islamic *du‘ā’* embodies a distinct model of politeness, where language serves not only to mitigate imposition but to enact theological intimacy.

3.4 Pedagogical Implications in Religious Education

The findings of this study carry significant implications for both Islamic religious education and applied language instruction. In teaching Arabic supplications to non-native speakers, particularly in BIPA (Bahasa Indonesia untuk Penutur Asing) or in Islamic schools, incorporating pragmatic insights helps bridge the gap between formal recitation and meaningful understanding.

Traditionally, many learners are taught *du‘ā’* through memorization—focusing on pronunciation and rhythm. While this builds fluency, it can obscure the deeper communicative function of the utterance. For example, a student may learn:

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي

/Allāhumma ighfir lī/

[O Allah, forgive me]

without realizing that, pragmatically, this is a mitigated imperative framed by spiritual submission. Brown and Levinson’s (1988) model helps explain how an imperative in religious context does not threaten face; instead, it becomes an expression of dependence and trust in divine mercy.

This insight is supported by studies in pragmatic pedagogy, which emphasize the importance of teaching language not just as a system of forms, but as a repertoire of social actions (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010). In Islamic education, this aligns with the concept of *adab*—manners and ethics in speech—which is central to the formation of character. As Al-Attas (1979) states, true education in Islam is the instillation of *adab*, and language plays a vital role in that process. By presenting *du‘ā* as a polite speech act, educators can help learners develop deeper awareness of tone, register, and spiritual alignment. For example:

- *Rabbī* (My Lord) indicates personal closeness and humility.
- *Rabbana* (Our Lord) conveys communal solidarity and shared need.
- *Allāhumma* adds ritual weight and emotional intensity.

Teachers may also integrate annotation techniques, such as side-notes explaining pragmatic effects:

- *Imperative form* → mitigated through vocative (*Allāhumma*)
- *Collective pronoun* → indicates positive politeness (solidarity)
- *Indirect reference to God* → politeness through humility and implication

This method enhances pragmatic competence, a key factor in successful intercultural communication (Taguchi, 2011). Learners not only master structure but also become ethically sensitive speakers.

Furthermore, incorporating group reflection on supplications fosters moral discourse. For instance, asking students to write their own *du‘ā* using plural pronouns can help them internalize the value of collective responsibility—a theme central to both Hajj and Islamic ethics.

In an age where religious expression increasingly occurs online, pragmatic literacy also helps prevent miscommunication or oversimplification in digital contexts. By teaching the why behind the what, educators empower students to engage with sacred texts not as formulas to recite, but as dialogic acts rooted in reverence and purpose.

3.5 Linguistic Diversity in Du‘ā as Sincerity Marker

One of the significant findings in this study is the considerable linguistic variation in the structure of supplications (*du‘ā*) analyzed from the *Book of Prayers and Dhikr for Hajj and Umrah*. Of the 52 prayers examined, nearly half do not begin with explicit invocations of God such as *Allāhumma* (“O Allah”), *Rabbī* (“My Lord”), or *Rabbana* (“Our Lord”). This indicates that politeness in prayer is not confined to fixed formulas but reflects a more flexible and context-sensitive approach to religious language.

Consider the following example:

إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْهَمِّ وَالْحَزَنِ

/Innī a‘ūdhu bika mina al-hammi wa al-ḥazan/

[Indeed, I seek refuge in You from anxiety and grief]

While this supplication does not directly mention the name of God, its referential meaning remains unmistakable. Pragmatically, it exemplifies a negative politeness strategy as the speaker conveys a request in an indirect and deferential manner—acknowledging their spiritual vulnerability and dependence on divine protection (Brown & Levinson, 1988). This aligns with the Islamic concept of *ihsān* (excellence in worship), where believers strive to worship as though they see God. In such cases, variation in form strengthens the sincerity of the utterance rather than diminishing it. Therefore, linguistic variation in *du‘ā* functions as a marker of genuine spiritual expression. Rather than adhering to rigid formulas, the speaker adapts their language to the emotional and ritual context, enriching the expressive depth of prayer

3.6 Mitigation and Hedging in Du‘ā

Another important feature of politeness strategies in du‘ā is the frequent use of mitigation or hedging. These strategies soften the speaker’s requests and reflect the recognition that outcomes are entirely within God’s will. According to Leech (1983), such expressions exemplify the tact and modesty maxims, where the speaker minimizes the imposition and maximizes respect toward the addressee.

Consider the following supplication:

رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنْ لَدُنْكَ ذُرِّيَّةً طَيِّبَةً

/Rabbi hab lī min ladunka dhurriyyatan ṭayyibah/

[My Lord, grant me, from You, good offspring]

The phrase *min ladunka* (“from You”) serves as a mitigating device. It reframes the request as a humble appeal, fully contingent upon divine mercy, rather than as a demand. This reflects negative politeness as it avoids assuming entitlement and acknowledges divine omnipotence. Grammatically, mitigated expressions often use optative moods or passive voice to reduce the assertiveness of the request. In the digital sphere—particularly on social media platforms like Instagram—hedged expressions continue to appear in the captions of prayer-related posts. For example:

اللَّهُمَّ يَسِّرْ لَنَا حَجًّا مَبْرُورًا وَسَعْيًا مَشْكُورًا

Allāhumma yassir lanā ḥajjan mabrūran wa sa‘yan mashkūran

[O Allah, grant us an accepted Hajj and a rewarded effort]

Although these are shared with wide audiences, users continue to frame their requests with reverence and humility, preserving the ethical dimensions of du‘ā even in performative digital contexts (Fikriana, 2023). Mitigation here not only protects the speaker’s face but also maintains religious decorum and reinforces the sincerity of spiritual expression.

3.7 Du‘ā as Performative and Ritualistic Speech Acts

Beyond functioning as requests, many supplications in the context of Hajj and Umrah are *performative speech acts*—utterances that enact a ritual or legal reality. Following Austin and Searle’s theory of illocutionary acts, these utterances do not merely describe intentions but perform them. In religious contexts, such performatives are essential to ritual integrity and spiritual commitment.

A clear example is:

نَوَيْتُ الْحَجَّ وَالْعُمْرَةَ

/Nawaytu al-ḥajja wa al-‘umrata/

[I intend to perform Hajj and ‘Umrah]

This statement serves not as a request but as a declaration of religious intention. Within Hymes’ (1972) *SPEAKING* framework, it belongs to the genre of ritual communication, shaped by fixed norms, solemn tone, and sacred setting. Politeness in this context is not directed toward face-saving, but toward maintaining obedience and spiritual discipline through formulaic, reverent language. Such performative prayers are often recited in communal contexts—such as entering the state of *ihram* or during group rituals—further embedding politeness as both vertical (toward God) and horizontal (among fellow pilgrims). This double orientation reinforces a collective ethic of humility, reverence, and mutual respect during sacred rituals.

To strengthen the connection to speech act theory, it is important to examine the felicity conditions that govern the success of such performative utterances. According to Austin (1962), a performative act like *Nawaytu al-ḥajja wa al-‘umrata* is only effective if

certain contextual and internal conditions are met. These include: (1) the internal condition—the speaker must have sincere intention (*niyyah*); and (2) the external conditions—the utterance must be made by a qualified pilgrim who is in a proper ritual state (*ihram*) and within the appropriate spatial and temporal boundary (*mīqāt*). Without fulfilling these conditions, the utterance may lose its illocutionary force and fail to enact the intended religious commitment. Hence, the meaning and efficacy of *du'ā* are rooted not only in linguistic form but in the speaker's spiritual readiness and contextual alignment.

According to Al-Attas (1979), the goal of Islamic education is the inculcation of *adab* (etiquette and ethics). Prayer, as a performative act, thus serves a pedagogical role—teaching worshippers not only what to say, but how to say it with spiritual propriety. In this sense, the act of declaring intention (*niyyah*) is a linguistic performance of obedience and humility, crucial to religious identity and conduct.

To synthesize the key findings of the pragmatic analysis, the following table provides a concise summary of the seven major themes discussed in the previous subsections. Each theme represents a distinct dimension of politeness strategy as found in the 52 supplicatory expressions (*du'ā*) from the *Book of Prayers and Dhikr for Hajj and Umrah*. The table includes descriptions, illustrative examples, and the corresponding politeness strategies. This visual summary aims to clarify the variation and depth of linguistic features employed in ritual prayers, and to demonstrate how different forms of address, structure, and function interact to convey reverence, humility, and spiritual sincerity.

Table 2. Overview of Politeness Strategies in *Du'ā* during Hajj and Umrah

Theme/Subsection	Description	Example (Transliteration & Translation)	Politeness Strategy
Forms of Opening Invocation	Analysis of opening vocatives: <i>Allahumma</i> (29%), <i>Rabbana</i> (12%), <i>Rabbi</i> (8%), and other forms (51%)	اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي /Allāhumma ighfir lī/ [O Allah, forgive me]	Negative politeness (ritual humility)
Types of Request Structures	Most prayers use imperative structures, but softened via context or modifiers.	رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا /Rabbi zidnī 'ilmā/ [My Lord, increase my knowledge]	Indirect request, modest tone
Positive vs. Negative Politeness	75% of <i>du'ā</i> exhibit negative politeness (deference, indirectness); 25% use positive politeness (solidarity).	رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً /Rabbana ātinā fī al-dunyā ḥasanah/ [Our Lord, grant us good in this world]	Positive politeness (collectivity)
Collective Pronouns	40% of prayers use <i>nā</i> ("us/our"), indicating collective spiritual identity and shared hope.	اللَّهُمَّ يَسِّرْ لَنَا حَجًّا مَبْرُورًا /Allāhumma yassir lanā ḥajjan mabrūran/ [O Allah, ease for us an accepted pilgrimage]	Positive politeness (shared goals)

Linguistic Variation as Sincerity Marker	About half of the du'ā do not begin with direct mention of God's name, indicating internalization and authenticity.	إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْهَمِّ /Innī a'ūdhu bika mina al-hammi/ [Indeed, I seek refuge in You from anxiety]	Negative politeness (implicit reference)
Mitigation and Hedging	Use of hedging phrases (e.g., <i>min ladunka</i>), optative verbs, and deferential structures to soften requests.	رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنْ لَدُنْكَ ذُرِّيَّةً طَيِّبَةً /Rabbi hab lī min ladunka dhurriyyah tayyibah/ [Grant me good offspring from You]	Negative politeness (hedging)
Performative and Ritual Speech Acts	Du'ā used as performative utterances (e.g., <i>niyyah</i> /intention statements), especially in ritual contexts.	نَوَيْتُ الْحَجَّ وَالْعُمْرَةَ /Nawaytu al-ḥajja wa al-'umrah/ [I intend to perform Hajj and Umrah]	Ritual performative (non-requestive)

The whole aspects discussed above—linguistic variation, mitigation, and performativity—extend our understanding of politeness strategies in Islamic supplications. They demonstrate that du'ā is not simply a fixed ritual formula, but a dynamic communicative event shaped by pragmatic sensitivity, spiritual intention, and cultural ethics. While negative politeness strategies such as indirectness and hedging dominate, the broader framework of du'ā reveals that sincerity, obedience, and reverence are linguistically encoded in multiple nuanced ways. Thus, politeness in religious language goes beyond interpersonal courtesy; it is a deeply embedded spiritual ethic, enacted through speech. In the case of du'ā, this ethic ensures that even in the face of divine power, human vulnerability is expressed with grace, humility, and hope.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the supplications دُعَاء /du'ā/ in the *Book of Prayers and Dhikr for Hajj and Umrah* are meaningful request speech acts that employ diverse politeness strategies within religious communication. Among the 52 analyzed prayers, negative politeness dominates—characterized by indirect expressions, hedging, and collective pronouns such as “we,” which reflect humility and spiritual solidarity. Prayers introduced with اللَّهُمَّ /Allahumma/, رَبِّ /Rabbi/, and رَبَّنَا /Rabbana/ demonstrate various levels of personal and communal reverence.

Interestingly, the frequency of direct invocations of God using these phrases is roughly equal to prayers that do not explicitly address God by name. This reflects a wide range of linguistic strategies, avoiding monotony and enhancing the sincerity of the supplication. Such variation allows each prayer to feel more heartfelt and genuine, as the language adapts to different emotional and spiritual contexts, rather than relying on fixed formulas. Thus, these supplications are not merely theological texts, but also linguistic

acts rooted in politeness, devotion, and trust. Their pragmatic richness supports the preservation of spiritual depth—even as these prayers are increasingly shared in digital and public spaces.

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