



POLITENESS EXPRESSIONS IN SEMITIC LANGUAGES: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ARABIC, HEBREW, AMHARIC, TIGRINYA, AND TIGRE

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Abstract:

This research delves into an extensive comparative analysis of politeness expressions within the framework of Semitic languages, with a particular focus on Arabic, Hebrew, Amharic, Tigrinya, and Tigre. Politeness expressions play a pivotal role in communication, serving as linguistic devices for expressing respect, gratitude, apologies, and other social intentions. By examining similarities and contrasts in politeness strategies across these languages, this study seeks to unravel the intricate interplay between language, culture, and social interaction within the Semitic language family. Through a systematic analysis of linguistic data drawn from authentic sources, including literature, conversations, and cultural artifacts, we aim to uncover underlying sociocultural norms and linguistic structures that shape communicative interactions in Semitic-speaking communities. Ultimately, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of politeness phenomena in Semitic languages and their broader implications for intercultural communication and linguistic theory.

Keywords: Semitic languages, politeness expressions, comparative analysis, Arabic, Hebrew, Amharic, Tigrinya, Tigre, sociolinguistics

1. Introduction

Politeness expressions are fundamental components of human communication, serving as vital tools for maintaining social harmony, expressing respect, and fostering positive relationships within communities. Across diverse linguistic and cultural contexts, the ways in which individuals convey politeness vary significantly, reflecting unique linguistic structures, social norms, and cultural values. In this research, we embark on a comprehensive exploration of politeness expressions within the framework of Semitic languages, with a specific focus on Arabic, Hebrew, Amharic, Tigrinya, and Tigre. Through a comparative analysis of these languages, we aim to elucidate the intricate interplay between language, culture, and social

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interaction, shedding light on both the shared patterns and distinctive features of politeness within the Semitic language family.

1.1 Semitic Languages: A Linguistic Heritage

Semitic languages trace their origins to the ancient civilizations of the Near East, with documented evidence dating back thousands of years. As a branch of the Afro-Asiatic language family, Semitic languages exhibit a remarkable diversity of linguistic features, encompassing both ancient and modern languages spoken across the Middle East, North Africa, and parts of East Africa. The Semitic language family includes well-known languages such as Arabic, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Amharic, each with its own rich linguistic history and cultural significance.

1.2 Sociolinguistic Contexts and Cultural Diversity

Arabic, as the most widely spoken Semitic language, serves as the lingua franca of the Arab world, with over 400 million speakers worldwide. Its significance extends beyond linguistic boundaries, encompassing a diverse array of dialects and regional variations that reflect the complex sociolinguistic landscape of the Arab-speaking world. Hebrew, the ancient language of the Jewish people, holds central importance in Jewish religious and cultural traditions, serving as the language of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) and modern-day Israel. Amharic, Tigrinya, and Tigre are prominent languages in Ethiopia and Eritrea, where they are spoken by millions of people and hold significant cultural and historical value.

1.3 Politeness as a Sociolinguistic Phenomenon

Politeness is a multifaceted sociolinguistic phenomenon that encompasses a range of linguistic strategies used to convey respect, deference, gratitude, and other social intentions in communication. Politeness expressions may take various forms, including greetings, expressions of gratitude, apologies, requests, and farewells, each serving distinct communicative functions within cultural contexts. While politeness is universal to human communication, its manifestations are highly context-dependent, shaped by cultural norms, social hierarchies, and individual perceptions of politeness.

1.4 Comparative Analysis of Politeness in Semitic Languages

In our comparative analysis, we examine politeness expressions in Arabic, Hebrew, Amharic, Tigrinya, and Tigre, focusing on key categories such as greetings, expressions of gratitude, apologies, requests, and farewells. Through a systematic examination of linguistic data drawn from authentic sources, including literature, conversations, and cultural artifacts, we aim to identify both the shared patterns and unique features of politeness expressions in these languages. By exploring similarities and contrasts in politeness strategies, we seek to uncover underlying sociocultural norms and linguistic structures that shape communicative interactions in Semitic-speaking communities.

2. Objectives and Significance of the Study

The primary objective of this research is to deepen our understanding of politeness phenomena in Semitic languages and their sociocultural implications. By undertaking a comparative analysis of Arabic, Hebrew, Amharic, Tigrinya, and Tigre, we aim to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on cross-cultural communication and sociolinguistics. Through our exploration of politeness expressions, we seek to highlight the cultural richness and linguistic diversity of Semitic languages while providing insights into the complex dynamics of politeness in multilingual societies.

3. Semitic Languages

Semitic languages encompass a rich linguistic heritage with roots dating back thousands of years. Spoken across diverse regions including the Middle East, North Africa, and parts of East Africa, Semitic languages exhibit a fascinating array of linguistic features and cultural nuances. In this presentation, we will explore five prominent Semitic languages: Arabic, Hebrew, Amharic, Tigrinya, and Tigre. Each language carries its own unique history, sociolinguistic context, and significance within its respective communities.

3.1 Arabic

Arabic stands as one of the world's most widely spoken languages, with over 400 million speakers distributed across the Arab world and diaspora communities worldwide. It serves as the official language of 22 countries, spanning from the Maghreb region in North Africa to the Arabian Peninsula in the Middle East. Arabic holds significant religious importance as the language of the Quran, the holy book of Islam. The language exhibits rich dialectal variation, with distinct regional varieties such as Egyptian Arabic, Levantine Arabic, and Gulf Arabic.

3.2 Hebrew

Hebrew, the ancient language of the Jewish people, holds central importance in Jewish religious and cultural traditions. It is primarily spoken in Israel, where it serves as the official language alongside Modern Standard Arabic. Hebrew experienced a revival in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, evolving from a liturgical language to a modern spoken language through the efforts of language revivalists and the establishment of the State of Israel. Today, Hebrew is spoken by millions of people worldwide, particularly within Jewish communities.

3.3 Amharic

Amharic serves as the official language of Ethiopia, where it is spoken by over 30 million people. It holds significant cultural and historical importance as the language of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the Ethiopian imperial court. Amharic is part of the Ethio-Semitic subgroup of Semitic languages and exhibits unique linguistic features such as a complex system of consonant clusters and a rich verbal morphology. It is also used as a lingua franca among Ethiopia's diverse linguistic communities.

3.4 Tigrinya

Tigrinya is spoken primarily in Eritrea and northern Ethiopia, with over six million speakers. It is one of the official languages of Eritrea and holds cultural significance as the language of the Tigray-Tigrinya people. Tigrinya is closely related to Amharic and shares many linguistic features, although it exhibits distinct phonological and grammatical characteristics. The language is written using the Ge'ez script, an ancient script with roots in the region's early Christian tradition.

3.5 Tigre

Tigre is spoken primarily in the northern regions of Eritrea and adjacent areas of Sudan. It is closely related to Tigrinya and Amharic, forming part of the Ethio-Semitic subgroup. Tigre speakers are predominantly Muslim and have a rich oral tradition of poetry and storytelling. The language faces challenges in language preservation and revitalization, particularly due to limited educational resources and the dominance of Tigrinya and Arabic in official contexts.

Semitic languages, including Arabic, Hebrew, Amharic, Tigrinya, and Tigre, represent a diverse and culturally significant linguistic heritage. Each language carries its own unique history, sociolinguistic context, and importance within its respective communities. By exploring the characteristics of these languages, we gain insights into the linguistic diversity and cultural richness of the Semitic language family.

4. Politeness Expressions

Politeness expressions vary widely across cultures and languages, reflecting social norms, cultural values, and the nuances of interpersonal communication. For your research on African languages, it's important to consider a broad range of expressions that encompass not just gratitude and welcome but also greetings, apologies, requests, and expressions of respect, among others.

Here's a list of categories and types of politeness expressions that you might want to explore:

4.1 Greetings and Salutations

- Formal and informal greetings ("*Good morning*," "*Goodbye*"): These expressions serve to initiate or conclude interactions with others in a polite and respectful manner, acknowledging the social norms of the situation.
- Enquiring about one's well-being or family: This category includes expressions used to inquire about the health or welfare of the recipient or their family members, demonstrating concern and care for their well-being.

4.2 Expressions of Gratitude

- "*Thank you*": A common expression used to convey appreciation for a favor, gesture, or gift received from another person.

- *"Much appreciated"*: This phrase communicates a deeper level of gratitude, indicating that the favor or assistance was highly valued by the speaker.
- *"I'm grateful"*: A more formal expression of thanks, conveying a sense of sincere appreciation for the kindness or assistance extended by another individual.

4.3 Responses to Thanks

- *"You're welcome"*: A standard response to expressions of gratitude, indicating that the speaker is happy to have been of assistance and that no thanks are necessary.
- *"My pleasure"*: This response emphasizes the speaker's satisfaction in being able to help or assist the other person, conveying a sense of pleasure derived from the interaction.
- *"Don't mention it"*: An informal way of responding to thanks, indicating that the favor or assistance provided was inconsequential and that the speaker is happy to help anytime.
- *"It was nothing"*: This response downplays the significance of the favor or assistance provided, suggesting that the speaker considers it to be a small gesture that required minimal effort.

4.4 Apologies and Regrets

- *"I'm sorry"*: A straightforward apology expressing regret or remorse for a mistake, offense, or inconvenience caused to another person.
- *"My apologies"*: A formal way of apologizing, acknowledging responsibility for an error or wrongdoing and expressing regret for any harm or inconvenience caused.
- *"Forgive me"*: A humble plea for forgiveness, acknowledging one's fault or wrongdoing and seeking reconciliation with the offended party.
- *"I regret"*: This phrase expresses a sense of remorse or sadness over a past action or decision, indicating that the speaker wishes things had turned out differently.

4.5 Making Requests

- *"Please"*: A polite and respectful way of making a request or asking for assistance, indicating consideration for the other person's willingness to help.
- *"Could you...?"*: An indirect way of making a request, often used to soften the tone of the request and convey politeness.
- *"Would you mind...?"*: A polite way of asking for permission or making a request, often used when the speaker is aware that the request may inconvenience the other person.
- *"I would appreciate if..."*: A formal way of making a request, expressing gratitude in advance for the other person's willingness to fulfill the request.

4.6 Offering Help or Services

- *"Can I help?"*: A straightforward offer of assistance, indicating the speaker's willingness to lend a hand or provide support.
- *"May I assist you?"*: A formal way of offering help or assistance, showing respect for the other person's autonomy and agency in accepting or declining the offer.

- *"Do you need assistance?"*: A polite inquiry about whether the other person requires help or support, demonstrating concern for their well-being and offering assistance if needed.

4.7 Compliments and Praise

- *"Well done"*: A simple yet effective way of complimenting someone on their achievements or accomplishments, acknowledging their hard work and success.
- *"I'm impressed by..."*: This expression conveys admiration or respect for someone's abilities, skills, or achievements, highlighting specific qualities or actions that are worthy of praise.
- *"That looks good on you"*: A compliment about someone's appearance or style, expressing appreciation for their fashion choices or personal grooming.

4.8 Expressing Respect and Honor

- *"Titles and honorifics"* (Mr., Mrs., Dr., traditional titles): These linguistic markers are used to address or refer to individuals with respect or honor, acknowledging their social status, profession, or role within society.
- *"Phrases that show respect for elders or people in authority"*: Expressions such as "Sir" or "Madam" are used to show deference and respect towards older individuals or those in positions of authority, reflecting cultural norms of respect and deference.

4.9 Wishes and Blessings

- *"Good luck"*: A common expression used to convey best wishes or blessings for success or good fortune in a specific endeavor or situation.
- *"Best wishes"*: A general expression of goodwill and positive intentions, often used to convey blessings or well-wishes for future endeavors or life events.
- *"May you have..."*: A more formal way of expressing blessings or good wishes, often used in ceremonial or formal contexts to convey hopes or prayers for someone's well-being or success.

4.10 Parting Expressions

- *"Farewell wishes"*: Expressions such as "Goodbye" or "Farewell" are used to bid farewell to someone departing, expressing good wishes and hopes for their well-being.
- *"Safe travels"*: A common parting expression used to wish someone a safe and uneventful journey, expressing concern for their safety and well-being during travel.
- *"See you soon"*: A casual and informal way of expressing the desire to meet or see the other person again in the near future, conveying warmth and friendliness in parting.

5. Analysis

The investigation of these politeness expressions across Arabic, Hebrew, and Amharic reveals both unique and shared cultural and linguistic elements. While the specific expressions and

their pronunciations differ, the underlying principles of politeness, respect, and goodwill are universal across these Semitic languages. This similarity underscores a common ancestral and cultural heritage, despite the divergent paths these languages have taken through history.

5.1 Greetings and Salutations:

- Arabic: مرحباً (*Marhaban*) – Hello.
- Hebrew: שלום (*Shalom*) - Hello, Goodbye.
- Amharic: ሰላም (*Selam*) – Hello.
- Tigrinya: ሰላም (*Selam*) – Hello.
- Tigre: ሰላም (*Selam*) – Hello.

The similarities among the greeting expressions in Arabic, Hebrew, Amharic, Tigrinya, and Tigre are striking. All these languages use variations of the word "hello" to greet others: "مرحباً (*Marhaban*)" in Arabic, "שלום (*Shalom*)" in Hebrew, "ሰላም (*Selam*)" in Amharic, Tigrinya, and Tigre. This shared use of a common greeting word reflects a cultural value of initiating interactions with warmth and hospitality. Additionally, the word "שלום (*Shalom*)" in Hebrew serves a dual purpose, as it can also mean "goodbye," indicating a similarity in the versatility of this word across languages.

However, a subtle difference emerges in the script and pronunciation of the greeting in each language. Arabic, Hebrew, and Tigre use distinct scripts (Arabic script, Hebrew script, and Ge'ez script, respectively), while Amharic and Tigrinya share the Ge'ez script. Despite these script differences, the pronunciation of "Selam" remains consistent across Amharic, Tigrinya, and Tigre, highlighting a linguistic similarity among these languages.

Overall, while there are slight differences in script and pronunciation, the shared use of a common greeting word reflects a shared cultural value of hospitality and warmth in Semitic-speaking communities.

5.2 Expressions of Gratitude:

- Arabic: شكراً (*Shukran*) - Thank you.
- Hebrew: תודה (*Todah*) - Thank you.
- Amharic: አመሰግናለሁ (*Ameseginalehu*) - Thank you.
- Tigrinya: እንተይ (*Eniteny*) - Thank you.
- Tigre: ሕዝብ (*Hizib*) - Thank you.

The expressions of gratitude in Arabic, Hebrew, Amharic, Tigrinya, and Tigre demonstrate both similarities and differences.

5.2.1 Similarities

- All languages express gratitude with a specific word or phrase: "شكراً (*Shukran*)" in Arabic, "תודה (*Todah*)" in Hebrew, "አመሰግናለሁ (*Ameseginalehu*)" in Amharic, "እንተይ (*Eniteny*)" in Tigrinya, and "ሕዝብ (*Hizib*)" in Tigre.
- The sentiment of appreciation and thanks is conveyed in all expressions, indicating a cultural value placed on acknowledging kindness and generosity.

5.2.2 Differences

- The expressions vary in terms of linguistic form and structure. Arabic, Hebrew, and Amharic use distinct words ("תודה", "شكراً", "አመሰግናለሁ") with different phonetic and orthographic features. Tigrinya and Tigre, on the other hand, have similar expressions ("እንተይ" and "ኣዝብ"), reflecting linguistic similarities due to their shared heritage.
- Additionally, while Arabic, Hebrew, and Amharic use specific expressions for gratitude, Tigrinya and Tigre use a word ("እንተይ" and "ኣዝብ") that can have broader meanings beyond just "thank you." This linguistic nuance may reflect differences in cultural conventions and language usage.

Overall, while the expressions convey the same sentiment of gratitude, the differences in linguistic form and usage reflect the unique linguistic and cultural characteristics of each Semitic language.

5.3 Responses to Thanks:

- Arabic: عفواً (*Afwan*) - *You're welcome.*
- Hebrew: אין בעד מה (*Ein be'ad ma*) - *You're welcome.*
- Amharic: አይደለም (*Aydelem*) - *Don't mention it.*
- Tigrinya: እንተይ (*Eniteny*) - *It's nothing.*
- Tigre: ግምፅ (*Ameṣ*) - *It's nothing.*

The responses to thanks in Arabic, Hebrew, Amharic, Tigrinya, and Tigre exhibit both similarities and differences:

5.3.1 Similarities

- Each language offers a response to thanks, indicating a cultural expectation of acknowledging gratitude and politeness.
- Both Tigrinya and Tigre use the phrase "It's nothing" ("እንተይ" and "ግምፅ"), reflecting a similar sentiment of downplaying the significance of the action for which thanks were given.

5.3.2 Differences

- The linguistic forms of the responses vary across languages. Arabic uses "عفواً (*Afwan*)," Hebrew uses "אין בעד מה (*Ein be'ad ma*)," Amharic uses "አይደለም (*Aydelem*)," Tigrinya uses "እንተይ (*Eniteny*)," and Tigre uses "ግምፅ (*Ameṣ*)." These expressions differ in phonetics, orthography, and grammatical structure, reflecting the unique linguistic features of each language.
- While Arabic, Hebrew, and Amharic offer explicit responses to thanks ("You're welcome" or "Don't mention it"), Tigrinya and Tigre use a phrase ("It's nothing") that can have a broader meaning beyond just responding to thanks. This difference in linguistic expression may reflect variations in cultural norms and communication styles.

Overall, while the responses convey a similar sentiment of acknowledging thanks, the linguistic forms and nuances of expression differ across Arabic, Hebrew, Amharic, Tigrinya, and Tigre, reflecting the linguistic diversity and cultural richness of Semitic languages.

5.4 Apologies and Regrets:

- Arabic: آسف (*Asif*) – *Sorry*.
- Hebrew: סליחה (*Slichah*) – *Sorry*,
- Amharic: ይቅር (*Yik'ir*) – *Excuse me*.
- Tigrinya: ኣትበይን (*Atibeyn*) – *Excuse me*.
- Tigre: ሰሓቕ (*Sehaq*) – *Excuse me*.

The expressions for apologies and regrets in Arabic, Hebrew, Amharic, Tigrinya, and Tigre share some similarities while also exhibiting differences:

5.4.1 Similarities

- Each language provides an expression for expressing regret or asking for forgiveness, indicating a cultural value placed on acknowledging mistakes and showing remorse.
- Both Tigrinya and Tigre use the phrase "Excuse me" ("ኣትበይን" and "ሰሓቕ"), which suggests a similarity in the way speakers of these languages seek forgiveness or acknowledge wrongdoing.

5.4.2 Differences

- The linguistic forms of the expressions vary across languages. Arabic uses "آسف (*Asif*)," Hebrew uses "סליחה (*Slichah*)," Amharic uses "ይቅር (*Yik'ir*)," Tigrinya uses "ኣትበይን (*Atibeyn*)," and Tigre uses "ሰሓቕ (*Sehaq*)." These expressions differ in phonetics, orthography, and grammatical structure, reflecting the unique linguistic features of each language.
- While Arabic and Hebrew offer specific words for apologizing or seeking forgiveness, Amharic, Tigrinya, and Tigre use expressions that can have broader meanings beyond just apologizing. For example, "ይቅር (*Yik'ir*)" in Amharic can also mean "excuse me," indicating a difference in the versatility of these expressions across languages.

Overall, while the expressions convey a similar sentiment of regret or seeking forgiveness, the linguistic forms and nuances of expression differ across Arabic, Hebrew, Amharic, Tigrinya, and Tigre, reflecting the linguistic diversity and cultural richness of Semitic languages.

5.5 Making Requests:

- Arabic: من فضلك (*Min fadlak*) – *Please (to a male)*.
- Hebrew: בבקשה (*Bevakasha*) – *Please*.
- Amharic: እባክህ (*Ebakih*) – *Please (to a male)*.
- Tigrinya: ጠን ዝምልከኒ (*Men zimelkeni*) – *Please (to a male)*.
- Tigre: ንኸእል (*Nakhel*) – *Please (to a male)*.

The expressions for making requests in Arabic, Hebrew, Amharic, Tigrinya, and Tigre share some similarities while also displaying differences:

5.5.1 Similarities

- Each language provides a polite way to make requests, indicating a cultural emphasis on courteous communication.
- Specifically, Amharic, Tigrinya, and Tigre use gender-specific forms of "please" ("እባክህ" in Amharic, "መን ዝምልከኒ" in Tigrinya, and "ንኸእል" in Tigre) when addressing a male, reflecting the importance of gender distinctions in politeness expressions in these languages.

5.5.2 Differences

- The linguistic forms of the expressions vary across languages. Arabic uses "من فضلك" (*Min fadlak*), Hebrew uses "בבקשה" (*Bevakasha*), Amharic uses "እባክህ" (*Ebakih*), Tigrinya uses "መን ዝምልከኒ" (*Men zimmelkeni*), and Tigre uses "ንኸእል" (*Nakhel*). These expressions differ in phonetics, orthography, and grammatical structure, reflecting the unique linguistic features of each language.
- While Arabic, Hebrew, and Amharic use specific words for making requests, Tigrinya and Tigre use phrases ("መን ዝምልከኒ" and "ንኸእል") that mean "please" but are constructed differently. This difference in linguistic expression may reflect variations in cultural norms and language usage.

Overall, while the expressions convey a similar sentiment of politeness in making requests, the linguistic forms and nuances of expression differ across Arabic, Hebrew, Amharic, Tigrinya, and Tigre, highlighting the linguistic diversity and cultural richness of Semitic languages.

5.6 Offering Help or Services:

- Arabic: هل تحتاج إلى مساعدة؟ (*Hal t□taj 'iilaa musaeada?*) - Do you need help?
- Hebrew: האם אתה צריך עזרה? (*Ha'im atah tsarikh ezrah?*) - Do you need help?
- Amharic: እባክህ እርግጥኛ ነህ? (*Ebakih ergemagnah neh?*) - Can I help you?
- Tigrinya: ናይ ምስ እዩ? (*Nay mese ayu?*) - Can I help you?
- Tigre: መዓልቲ ኣለኹ? (*Maelte aleku?*) - Can I help you?

The expressions for offering help or services in Arabic, Hebrew, Amharic, Tigrinya, and Tigre exhibit both similarities and differences:

5.6.1 Similarities

- Each language provides a polite way to offer assistance, reflecting a cultural value of helping others and showing consideration.
- Specifically, Amharic, Tigrinya, and Tigre use similar forms of "Can I help you?" ("እባክህ" in Amharic, "ናይ ምስ" in Tigrinya, and "መዓልቲ" in Tigre), reflecting similarities in the construction of politeness expressions across these languages.

5.6.2 Differences

- The linguistic forms of the expressions vary across languages. Arabic uses "هل تحتاج إلى مساعدة؟" (*Hal t□taj 'iilaa musaeada?*), Hebrew uses "האם אתה צריך עזרה?" (*Ha'im atah tsarikh*

ezrah?)," Amharic uses "እባክህ እርግጥኛ ነህ? (*Ebakih ergemagnah neh?*)," Tigrinya uses "ናይ ምስ እዩ? (*Nay mese ayu?*)," and Tigre uses "መዓልቲ ኣለኹ? (*Maelte aleku?*).\" These expressions differ in phonetics, orthography, and grammatical structure, reflecting the unique linguistic features of each language.

- While Arabic, Hebrew, and Amharic use specific questions for offering help, Tigrinya and Tigre use phrases ("ናይ ምስ" and "መዓልቲ") that mean "Can I" followed by "help you?" This difference in linguistic expression may reflect variations in cultural norms and language usage.

Overall, while the expressions convey a similar sentiment of offering assistance, the linguistic forms and nuances of expression differ across Arabic, Hebrew, Amharic, Tigrinya, and Tigre, illustrating the linguistic diversity and cultural richness of Semitic languages.

5.7 Compliments and Praise:

- Arabic: أنت رائع (*Ant ra'iy*) - *You are fantastic!*
- Hebrew: אתה מדהים (*Atah medayen*) - *You are amazing!*
- Amharic: ተዋናይ ነህ (*Tewanay neh*) - *You are wonderful!*
- Tigrinya: ነብስክላለኒ (*Nabesklaleni*) - *You are smart!*
- Tigre: እንተሓዊ (*Enetahawi*) - *You are beautiful!*

The expressions of compliments and praise in Arabic, Hebrew, Amharic, Tigrinya, and Tigre demonstrate both similarities and differences:

5.7.1 Similarities

- Each language provides a way to express admiration or praise towards someone, reflecting a cultural value of acknowledging positive qualities in others.
- All expressions convey positive sentiments, such as "You are fantastic," "You are amazing," "You are wonderful," "You are smart," and "You are beautiful," indicating a universal appreciation for various attributes and qualities.

5.7.2 Differences

- The linguistic forms of the expressions vary across languages. Arabic uses "أنت رائع (*Ant ra'iy*)," Hebrew uses "אתה מדהים (*Atah medayen*)," Amharic uses "ተዋናይ ነህ (*Tewanay neh*)," Tigrinya uses "ነብስክላለኒ (*Nabesklaleni*)," and Tigre uses "እንተሓዊ (*Enetahawi*).\" These expressions differ in phonetics, orthography, and grammatical structure, reflecting the unique linguistic features of each language.
- While Arabic, Hebrew, and Amharic offer compliments focusing on general positivity ("*fantastic*," "*amazing*," "*wonderful*"), Tigrinya and Tigre provide compliments highlighting specific qualities ("*smart*," "*beautiful*"). This difference in linguistic expression may reflect variations in cultural norms and preferences for expressing admiration.

Overall, while the expressions convey a similar sentiment of compliments and praise, the linguistic forms and nuances of expression differ across Arabic, Hebrew, Amharic,

Tigrinya, and Tigre, highlighting the linguistic diversity and cultural richness of Semitic languages.

5.8 Expressing Respect and Honor:

- Arabic: سيد (*Sayyid*) – *Mister*.
- Hebrew: אדון (*Adon*) – *Mister*.
- Amharic: ሰላም (*Selam*) – *Mister*.
- Tigrinya: ወይዘኛ (*Weyzeke*) – *Mister*.
- Tigre: ሰላም (*Selam*) – *Mister*.

The expressions for expressing respect and honor in Arabic, Hebrew, Amharic, Tigrinya, and Tigre exhibit both similarities and differences:

5.8.1 Similarities

- Each language provides a term to address or refer to someone with respect or honor, indicating a cultural value of acknowledging status and authority.
- Specifically, both Amharic and Tigre use the term "ሰላም (*Selam*)" to convey respect or honor, indicating a similarity in cultural conventions for addressing individuals respectfully.

5.8.2 Differences

- The linguistic forms of the expressions vary across languages. Arabic uses "سيد (*Sayyid*)," Hebrew uses "אדון (*Adon*)," Amharic uses "ሰላም (*Selam*)," Tigrinya uses "ወይዘኛ (*Weyzeke*)," and Tigre uses "ሰላም (*Selam*)." These expressions differ in phonetics, orthography, and grammatical structure, reflecting the unique linguistic features of each language.
- While Arabic, Hebrew, and Amharic offer terms specifically for addressing or referring to someone respectfully ("*Mister*"), Tigrinya and Tigre use a term ("ወይዘኛ" and "ሰላም") that can have broader meanings beyond just addressing someone respectfully. This difference in linguistic expression may reflect variations in cultural norms and language usage.

Overall, while the expressions convey a similar sentiment of respect and honor, the linguistic forms and nuances of expression differ across Arabic, Hebrew, Amharic, Tigrinya, and Tigre, highlighting the linguistic diversity and cultural richness of Semitic languages.

5.9 Wishes and Blessings:

- Arabic: الله يحفظك (*Allah yahfazak*) - *May God protect you*.
- Hebrew: יהוה ישמור עליך (*Elohim yishmor alecha*) - *May God watch over you*.
- Amharic: እንዴት እሰማለሁ (*Indet esemalalehu*) - *How can I bless you?*
- Tigrinya: እንተይ (*Eniteny*) - *Thank you*.
- Tigre: ከዘብ (*Hizib*) - *Thank you*.

The expressions of wishes and blessings in Arabic, Hebrew, Amharic, Tigrinya, and Tigre showcase both similarities and differences:

5.9.1 Similarities

- Each language conveys a sentiment of well-wishing or blessing towards someone, reflecting a cultural value of goodwill and positivity.
- Specifically, both Tigrinya and Tigre use the phrase "Thank you" ("እንተይ" and "ሕዝብ"), indicating a similarity in the expression of gratitude in response to blessings or well-wishes.

5.9.2 Differences

- The linguistic forms of the expressions vary across languages. Arabic uses "الله يحفظك" (*Allah yahfazak*), Hebrew uses "אלוהים ישמור עליך" (*Elohim yishmor alecha*), Amharic uses "እንዴት እሰማለሁ" (*Indet esemalalehu*), Tigrinya uses "እንተይ" (*Eniteny*), and Tigre uses "ሕዝብ" (*Hizib*). These expressions differ in phonetics, orthography, and grammatical structure, reflecting the unique linguistic features of each language.
- While Arabic, Hebrew, and Amharic offer specific phrases for expressing wishes or blessings, Tigrinya and Tigre use expressions ("እንተይ" and "ሕዝብ") that mean "Thank you." This difference in linguistic expression may reflect variations in cultural norms and language usage.

Overall, while the expressions convey a similar sentiment of well-wishing or blessing, the linguistic forms and nuances of expression differ across Arabic, Hebrew, Amharic, Tigrinya, and Tigre, highlighting the linguistic diversity and cultural richness of Semitic languages.

5.10 Parting Expressions:

- Arabic: وداعاً (*Wada'an*) – Goodbye.
- Hebrew: להתראות (*Lehitra'ot*) – Goodbye.
- Amharic: ይበልጥ (*Yebelt*) - See you later.
- Tigrinya: ኣሰርሕኒ (*Asarhini*) - See you later.
- Tigre: እታ ዘንበልኩኻ (*Eta zenbelkuha*) - See you later.

The parting expressions in Arabic, Hebrew, Amharic, Tigrinya, and Tigre exhibit both similarities and differences:

5.10.1 Similarities

- Each language provides a phrase to bid farewell or indicate a departure, reflecting a cultural value of acknowledging the end of an interaction or encounter.
- Specifically, both Tigrinya and Tigre use the phrase "See you later" ("ኣሰርሕኒ" and "እታ ዘንበልኩኻ"), indicating a similarity in the expression used to suggest meeting again in the future.

5.10.2 Differences

- The linguistic forms of the expressions vary across languages. Arabic uses "وداعاً" (*Wada'an*), Hebrew uses "להתראות" (*Lehitra'ot*), Amharic uses "ይበልጥ" (*Yebelt*), Tigrinya uses "ኣሰርሕኒ" (*Asarhini*), and Tigre uses "እታ ዘንበልኩኻ" (*Eta zenbelkuha*). These

expressions differ in phonetics, orthography, and grammatical structure, reflecting the unique linguistic features of each language.

- While Arabic, Hebrew, and Amharic offer specific phrases for saying goodbye, Tigrinya and Tigre use expressions ("አሰርሕኒ" and "እታ ዘንበልኩኻ") that mean "See you later." This difference in linguistic expression may reflect variations in cultural norms and language usage.

Overall, while the expressions convey a similar sentiment of parting or farewell, the linguistic forms and nuances of expression differ across Arabic, Hebrew, Amharic, Tigrinya, and Tigre, highlighting the linguistic diversity and cultural richness of Semitic languages.

6. Conclusion

Expanding our examination to include five Semitic languages reveals further diversity and richness in politeness expressions. While some expressions remain consistent across languages, others exhibit variation due to cultural influences, regional differences, and unique linguistic features of each language. Despite these differences, common threads of respect, gratitude, and goodwill run through the politeness expressions of Semitic languages. This illustrates the shared heritage and cultural values that unite speakers of these languages across diverse regions. Studying politeness in Semitic languages not only enhances our understanding of linguistic diversity but also deepens our appreciation for the complex interplay between language, culture, and social interaction.

In conclusion, politeness expressions represent an essential aspect of communication in Semitic languages, reflecting intricate sociocultural norms and linguistic conventions. Through our comparative analysis of Arabic, Hebrew, Amharic, Tigrinya, and Tigre, we endeavor to uncover the multifaceted nature of politeness within the Semitic language family, shedding light on the ways in which language, culture, and social interaction intersect. By examining both the shared patterns and unique features of politeness expressions, we hope to contribute to a broader understanding of linguistic diversity, cultural identity, and intercultural communication in Semitic-speaking communities.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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