



## POLITENESS IN ARABIC SPEECH ETIQUETTE

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### ABSTRACT

The article is devoted to introducing students in the process of learning Arabic to the speech etiquette of Arabs as an element of developing students' knowledge and skills in using linguistic and regional information about the countries of the language being studied.

### KEYWORDS

Etiquette, speech etiquette, linguistic and cultural studies, traditions, customs, rituals.

### INTRODUCTION

Issues of interaction between representatives of different cultures, including speech interaction, are very relevant today. A huge number of people of different nationalities, religions, and beliefs move around the world, constantly coming into contact with the residents of the countries they visit. The need to communicate and establish certain relationships inevitably arises. This can be done painlessly for both parties only if they know the customs and traditions of a given society. In order not to find yourself in a difficult situation,

you should use certain skills, for example, verbal interaction, one of the main elements of which is speech etiquette.

Speaking about the Arabs, we should note that their speech etiquette is based on centuries-old traditions of hospitality, piety, tolerance, and the concept of honour and dignity, inherited, among other things, from pre-Islamic times. At the same time, Arabs cannot be perceived as something homogeneous with a uniform perception of the surrounding reality. Arab society is diverse. This is



an alloy that appeared in the 7th-9th centuries AD. over a vast territory from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean. It absorbed the Bedouins of Arabia and the peoples who inhabited the countries conquered by the Arabs. For centuries, newcomers and natives interacted closely, their cultures intertwined and penetrated each other, creating a unique national pattern. Therefore, each Arab country has its own specifics, and along with general ideas, each Arab people has its own turns, appeals, and expressions that characterize various life situations. We will focus on the most common expressions that can be heard and used in any Arab country.

Speech etiquette is a manifestation of politeness and good manners. But it would be wrong to assume that this is a formal courtesy that has nothing behind it. In Arab society, a pious person, a true believer, bases what he says on the instructions of the Prophet Muhammad: “A good word is alms.

Try to alleviate, not aggravate, the situation” (Masterpieces of Arab Wisdom 2012: 250-251). Therefore, all Arabic speech etiquette is designed to show the interlocutor how important and dear he is to the speaker. Even if the Arab is facing an enemy, then in a situation not related to combat operations, for example, if a person is caught in bad weather or night and he asks for an overnight stay, the Arab will accept him. This is reflected in the proverb: “A guest is a guest, even if he has a sword in his hand.” On the other hand, completely peaceful objects such as a cup of coffee, at one time could serve to declare hostilities if the Arab tribes were at war. The tribe leader’s question:

“Who will drink a cup of so-and-so’s coffee?” addressed to his warriors implied a call to engage in battle with the strongest enemy warrior in order to defend the honor of his own tribe.

However, the very first and most important thing to establish contact is a greeting. The further development of communication may depend on the greeting. Whether it will be easy and pleasant, or people will have difficulty finding the right words, all this is connected with the very first impression of contact with a new, unfamiliar person.

In this regard, it can be noted that Arabic greetings are very ornate and figurative. In our opinion, they can be divided into three conditional categories. The first refers to greetings on a neutral occasion. For example, greetings from work colleagues, greetings from friends and relatives, greetings when visiting a store, some institution, etc. Here we can hear “Assalomu alaykum!” and the obligatory response “Va Alaykum Assalom!” (“Peace be with you!” - “And peace with you”). Initially, only Muslims greeted each other this way. Currently, this greeting has become more widely used in Arab society. This greeting certainly preserves the memory of those times when Muslims were persecuted by pagan enemies. A wish for peace, tranquility, and prosperity is a sign that this person has a friend, a fellow believer, that he has come in peace. Another neutral greeting, which depends only on the time of day, is “Good morning”, “Good afternoon”, “Good evening”. In the Arabic version, such greetings are more emotionally charged. The Arabs wish each other “Morning (evening) of goodness” - “Sabah (masa)



al-xayr”, and in the traditional answer “Morning (evening) of light” - “Sabah (masa) an-nur”. Greetings can be repeated, and each time words such as “roses, a thousand roses, jasmine,” etc. are added to the word “morning (evening).” - “Sabah al-ward, alf ward, yasmin.” Thus, increasing the beauty of the greeting and its “floridity” in the literal and figurative sense serve to create a friendly atmosphere and conditions for fruitful communication. During the daytime, the interlocutors wish each other “Happy day” - “Naharakum as-said.” The answer to this is “Have a blessed day to you” - “Naharakum al-Mubarak”. The welcoming ceremony does not end there, since traditionally it is accompanied by the words “Axlan va Saxlan” - “Welcome”, the literal translation of which means “(Be) like family, (so that it is) easy for you.” This wish can also have additions or change the form of individual components to enhance the meaning of the greeting. For example, a person can repeat the above formula in a different way, namely: “Ahlan va sahlán.” Here the words are taken in the form of the so-called dual number, which seems to multiply the significance of the greeting itself.

The second, most colorful group of greetings relates to welcoming guests. After the welcoming beginnings discussed above, the hosts begin to express their joy at the arrival of the guest: “Make yourself at home, walk lightly” - “Halaltum ahlyan va vatyatum sahlán”, or “We want you to be not a guest, but a host at home” - “La nuriduka deifan bal sahiba d-dar”, or “Welcome to the one who came to us, peace and greetings to him” - “Akhlyan bi-man atana bi-tahiya wa salam”, or

“Greetings to you, fragrant roses (rose oil) and incense (bakhur)” - “Marhaban bika mamzuj bi ytri l-ward va raihati l-bakhur.” Here it must be said that in the Arab East they love and value flower essences. Both women and men use them, although some perfumes are very expensive. A pleasant aroma emanating from a person, along with virtuous qualities, creates a favorable impression of a person. And Arabs are very jealous of what others think about them. As for incense, owners always use it when receiving guests to show them their respect. The guest is also wished to “have a good time among friends and girlfriends” - “Narju laka teyyiba l-kama beina ikhwanika wa akhvatika.” It is interesting that in this expression the concept of “friends and girlfriends” is expressed by the words “brothers and sisters”. This clearly corresponds to the greeting “Make yourself at home.” If a guest is perceived as a relative, then, consequently, all members of the owner’s family become relatives for him.

The third group of greetings are greetings addressed to people gathered, for example, for some kind of mass event. Here you no longer need to wait for an answer, but the greeting itself should fully reflect the satisfaction of the organizers of this meeting with the presence of a large number of people. They usually say: “We welcome you with joy and wish you a happy time, full of love and attention” - “Nurakhhibu bikum ajmalya tarhib wa natamanna lakum waktan saidan malian bi-l-hubb wa-l-ihtimam.” The first part of the greeting literally translates to “We greet you with the most beautiful greeting.” At



some scientific meeting those present may be greeted as follows: “Make yourself at home in this blessed high and beautiful meeting, God willing, and we would like you and we to benefit from it” - “Ahlyan bikum fi haza l-majlisi l-mubarak wa-r-raki wa-l-jamil in shaa Allah wa narju an tufida wa tastafida minna.” The host party does its best to create an atmosphere of comfort and creative spirit for those present. This can be expressed in the words: “We are happy that you are present with us, may Allah greet you, and we are waiting for your participation and cooperation” - “Suadaa bi-tawajudak maana wa-hayyaka Allah wa nantyrusharakatak wa tafaulak.” There are a huge number of similar formulations in Arabic speech etiquette, since there are many semantically similar, synonymous expressions. The main thing that characterizes them is the use of the maximum number of positively charged words and phrases. The goal is to immerse those present in an aura of goodwill, attention and respect.

After greetings, the communication ceremony moves on to the exchange of news information. In this case, the ritual question follows: “How are you? How is the family? How are the children and parents?” - “Keifa l-akhval? Keyfa l-ailya (usra), and l-awlad, al-validan? The answer, as a rule, is also ritual, although it may have some variations that reflect the degree or emotional coloring of the state of affairs. For example, probably the most common answer: “Everything is fine” - “Bi-kheir”, where the words “kheir” means “good, good”. You can say: “Everything is in complete perfection” - “Kullyu shey tamam.” “Tamam” is “complete, perfect”, as well as

“fullness, perfection”. Simpler expressions: “Hasanan”, “Jeyidan” – “Good”, “Excellent”. A less joyful development of affairs is reflected in the words: “La basa bi-ha” or “Kif-kif, nus-nus.” The first expression means that things are going well, “there is no problem with them” in literal translation, that is, “Everything is fine.” The second answer, firstly, is given in a colloquial form, which is more concise, and secondly, it reflects a less successful development of events and corresponds to the Russian version: “This way and that; neither shaky nor shaky; “middle to half”, etc. Colloquial forms of the second expression come from the literary words “keyfa” - “like, so” and “nisf” - “half”. It should be noted that when meeting unfamiliar people, they usually use expressions that radiate optimism, so as not to scare off the interlocutor right away. This is quite consistent with the advice of the Prophet Muhammad: “Try to give people only good news. Don’t force them to avoid you” (Masterpieces of Arab Wisdom 2012: 251). In addition to these most general questions, more specific ones may follow, related to the type of activity of the speakers: “How are your cattle?” or “What are the crop prospects like?” etc.

The manifestation of politeness is also inherent in the development of the conversation, when the newcomer is asked to share the news: “What news do you have?” - “Aaty-na akhbarak” or “Shu yndak min akhbar va ulum.” Literally this means: “Tell (give) us news” or “What messages and knowledge do you have?” As Ben Sandal, a researcher of the customs and traditions of the



UAE, writes, earlier, if a person had no news or did not want to speak in front of everyone, he would answer: “Everything is the same, nothing new” - “Tabka wa tadum ma hunaka ulum” (“ It remains and drags on, there are no new messages (knowledge).” The answer could have been more ornate: “There are no news or messages that need to be brought to you, except good and cheerful ones” - “Ma hunaka habr wa la eylm yajibu rafahu ileikum geyr habr al-kheir wa-l-masarra” . If the listeners insisted, then the guest could tell the news to the sheikh of the tribe, leaving it to his discretion to convey the information received to his fellow tribesmen (Ben Sandal 2004: 76). These are some points related to the manifestation of politeness in Arabic speech etiquette.

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