

# PROMISE AND THREAT IN ENGLISH AND ARABIC RELIGIOUS TEXTS

Asst. Prof. RIYADH TARIQ KADHIM AL-AMEEDI

*(Ph.D in Linguistics and Translation)*

Department of English  
College of Education  
University of Babylon

HASHIM ALIWEY MOHAMMED

*AL-HUSSEINI*

( MA in English Language and Linguistics )  
College of Education  
University of Wassit

## **3-The Speech Act of Threat in English and Arabic**

### **3-1 Semantic View**

#### **3-1-1 in English**

The speech act of threatening may be uttered for many reasons, some of which involve intention or capacity to commit a violent act or a true threat.

Some lexicographers such as Collins (1987:123), Pearsal (1998:1930) and Hornby (2000:1408) define threat as a declaration of an intention to inflict pain, injury, damage, or other hostile action on someone in retribution for something done or not done. Some legislators of civil law, Fein et al, (1995:1), suggest that a statement is a true threat when a reasonable person making the statement in context would foresee that such a statement would be interpreted by those to whom it is communicated as a serious expression of an intent to bodily harm or assault. They believe that threat of violence may arise from feelings or ideas that range from one person to another. Added to this, speech may be put in the realm of threatening when the goal of the speech is to end a legal activity through violence with attempt to injure or intimidate (ibid).

Two points of view about the threat act can be mentioned: the objective view when the person makes a statement with an intention to cause serious harm to the listener and the subjective view when the S

makes a statement of threat to the listener regardless of whether the S actually intends to carry out the threat. Thus there is a difference between making and posing a threat.

### **3-1-2 in Arabic**

Arab rhetoricians mention that threat is always associated with a bad thing upon the addressee, it causes harm to a determinate person by means of violence or undesirable act (ابن منظور، ١٩٥٥: ٤٦٣، الرازي، ١٩٨١: ابن).

Arab legislators illustrate that threat involves the S's more or less coercive attempts to get somebody to do or to refrain from doing something by means of violence, unlawful act or a violation of an absolute right. Such a threat will intimidate the addressee and oblige him to act (or to refrain from acting) in a way detrimental to (or beneficial to) the S (السنهوري، ١٩٥٢: ٣٣٤؛ الخلف والشاوي ١٩٨٢: ٣٧٥: 115 1965: سلطان، ١٩٦٢: ١٨٣؛ الخصري).

According to the religious point of view, Islamic jurists mention that man, by nature, is prone to fall into evil and error; and his errors either bring harm only to him or may harm the community as a whole. Some of these errors may be regarded as grave sins by which the legislator associates them with severe retribution in the Hereafter or severe punishment in this world. Therefore, some of these grave errors and crimes, such as murder, adultery, theft, calumny, and drunkenness, were not left to men to decide, but Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger Mohammed (ﷺ) specify the penalties that the perpetrators of these crimes deserve. Other errors are left to the legislators to decide the suitable punishment for them (Al-Ghazali, 1994:145). One of these punishments is carried out by the act of threat. Thereby some legislators regard the act of threatening as a means of reformation and treatment to the perpetrators of these errors. Furthermore, threat may prevent other people from committing such errors to avoid punishment (الصدر، ١٩٧٠: ٩١). Therefore, some Arab jurists believe that threatening the sinners with punishment is a

basic notion of the Divine Justice since Allah’s threat will never be broken or disappointed (و آخرون ، د.ت.: ٤٩ البصري)

### **3-2 Syntactic View**

#### **3-2-1 in English**

Generally, the act of threatening can be expressed by the word ‘threat’ which is, as Pearsall (1998:1930) points out, originated from an old English word ‘oppression’ which is of Germanic origin, ‘Verdviessen’ (irritate).

Palmer (1963:277-81),(Hornby, 1968:207) and Pearsall (1998:1930) propose some patterns for the verb ‘threaten’:

Sub.] +V + Od] -١

**38- I threaten you.**

preposition + prepositional object +Sub.] + V + Od ] -٢

**39- I threaten him with punishment.**

**3- [Sub.] + V + 'to' + infinitive**

**40- The government threatens to suppress the demonstrate.**

Most linguists agree that the verb ‘*threaten*’ is rarely used performatively. Thus, this speech act is manifested by different expressions.

believes that ‘threat’ is a semantic phenomenon which can (١٩٧٣:٧٥)Halliday be expressed by different situations as in :

**41- I’ll smack you if you do that again.**

**42- You’ll have to stay indoors if you do that.**

This semantic phenomenon can be realized grammatically in terms of Halliday’s Systemic Grammar, as a transitive clause of action in simple future tense with ‘*smack*’ as process, ‘*I*’ as an actor and ‘*you*’ as goal, the dependent clause being conditional.

Davies (1986:116) states that there is a close relationship between ‘threat’ and the imperative mood on the one hand, and the conditional meaning of an ‘if-construction’, on the other hand. Thus, both of the following are synonymous:

**Talk and I’ll shoot Max.-٤٣**

**44-If you talk I’ll shoot Max.**

The imperative construction in (43) is derived from the ‘if-construction’ in (44) through ellipsis.

Leech (1989:317) and Fraser (1997:179) illustrate that the relation between the imperative form and ‘threat’ can be expressed by the use of the coordinator ‘*or*’ after the imperative. This relation is conditional:

**45- Don’t make a move, or I’ll shoot. (If you move, I’ll shoot.)**

**46-Talk or I’ll shoot. (If you don’t talk, I’ll shoot.)**

Similarly, Leech and Svartrik (1975:159) observe that threat can be expressed conditionally by using the conjunctive ‘*and*’ which indicates positive condition:

**47-Do that, and I’ll punish you. (If you do that, I’ll ... .)**

Quirk et al, (1985:139) suggest *dare* to express threatening rebuke:

**48- How dare you do such a thing?**

**49- Don’t you dare tell lies!**

Grammarians such as Jespersen (1954:270-72) and Hornby (1968:207) demonstrate that a threat can be performed by the future modals ‘*will*’ in the first person and ‘*shall*’ or ‘*should*’ in the second and third persons:

**50- I will punish you if you don’t study well.**

**51- If you do anything stupid you shall be sorry.**

**52-Tom was told that if he behaves badly he should go to bed without any supper.**



indicative verbs so as to strengthen the future action of such verbs (1964:159). Some Arab linguists argue that the particle 'س' is a contraction of 'سوف' (will) (الثعالبي، ١٩٣٨: ٥٢٠):

58-(10) "وَأَمَّا مَنْ بَخِلَ وَاسْتَغْنَى (٨) وَكَذَّبَ بِالْحُسْنَى (٩) فَسَنُيَسِّرُهُ لِلْعُسْرَى" (٨: الليل-10)

59- "إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِنَا سَوْفَ نُصَلِّيهِمْ نَارًا" (٥٦: النساء)

In addition to these declarative sentences, threat can be achieved by interrogative (60), imperative (61) and prohibitive (62):

60- "أَفَمَنْ أَسَّسَ بُنْيَانَهُ عَلَى تَقْوَىٰ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانٍ خَيْرٍ أَمْ مَنْ أَسَّسَ بُنْيَانَهُ عَلَىٰ شِقَاٍ جُرْفٍ هَارٍ فَانْهَارَ" (التوبة: ١٠٩) " به في نار جهنم

61- "... قُلْ تَمَنَّعُوا فَإِن مَّصِيرُكُمْ إِلَى النَّارِ" (إبراهيم: ٣٠)

62- "... وَلَا تَرْكَبُوا إِلَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا فَتَمَسَّكُمُ النَّارُ" (هود: 113)

### 3-3 Pragmatic View

#### 3-3-1 in English

The act of threatening, as being one of the uses of directive language, can regulate and reinforce the social relationship. It is rarely accepted as a performative speech act. But Austin (1962:131) says that the verb 'threaten' is a commissive which can be used performatively and explicitly in some contexts. He believes that the perlocutionary act of 'threat' is to intimidate the H. Likewise, Hamblin (1987:34) lists *threaten* can with the commissive verbs as it is made in the same future-tense form. However, this act is mainly expressed implicitly in a conditional forms, and the object is to get the addressee to act in a certain way:

**63- If you continue to park across my driveway I'll pour glue in your carburetor.**

Mey (1993:137) gives '*threaten*' a performative character but the expression '*I threaten you*' can have the property of doing what it explicitly is denying:

**64- I'm not threatening you, but if I ever see your face again around these parts... .**

Here, the S is explicitly denying the act of threatening towards the addressee, but he is implicitly doing the threat (ibid.: 136).

Wunderlich (1979:279) and Trosborg (1995:188-89) think that some SAs including threat are not exclusively determined by the form and content of the U tokens; they may, in certain restricted contexts, be determined by institutional expectations and obligations to act and the person-specific assessments of the communicative situation. Hence the A of threatening can be performed by other SA forms, other than its form, such as directives and requestives which are often not performed to forward an interest of the addressee:

**65-I advise you to shut your mouth. (threat by advice)**

**66-If you don't cut the grass you won't get your pocket money.  
(threat by request).**

Here, threat in (65) and (66) is expressed indirectly and implicitly by another form which can be interpreted according to the specific situation (ibid).

In most cases, threat can be expressed implicitly by the use of 'will' and 'shall' since they predicate future course of action. Generally speaking, 'will' is used to express a threat in the first person singular and plural, while 'shall' in the second and third persons. Besides, 'will' and 'shall' are always used in a conditional threat:

**67- I (we) will kill you if you confess.**

**68- You shall be punished if you fail.**

**69- He (she, it) shall be punished if he comes late.**

In accordance with Leech's classification of SAs, the act of threatening has a conflictive function which conflict with the social goal. In terms of Leech's cost and benefit scale, commissive with the modal 'shall' are conflictive. Hence, a threat like 'you shall be punished' means cost for the H, who is going to pay for it, with the benefit of the pleasure of condescension going to the S. However, a threat, like a

compulsion, leaves no option for the H, in that S cannot threaten to punish and give choice to the H. Therefore, the following U is pragmatically unacceptable:

**70-? You shall be punished, if you don't mind\*.**

Consequently, we can say that threats violate the Tact Maxim since the course of action which the S predicates of the H is disastrous to the latter. Thus the modal 'shall' denoting a threat can be regarded as a case of negative politeness in being cost for the H and allowing no option for him (Leech, 1983:104-10).

To sum up, we believe that threat may be influenced by some factors which govern the relationship between S and H. Such factors involve the relative power of the S over the H, the social distance between the S and H, i.e., status, age, and sex, the size of imposition according to the degree of the important action, and the relative rights and obligations between the S and H, i.e., whether or not S has the right to make a particular threat and whether the H has the obligation to comply.

### **3-3-2 in Arabic**

The act of threatening has been given relative attention by Arab scholars. Most of them examine what constitutes a verbal threat, believing that it involves conveying both the intention to perform an act that the addressee will view unfavorably and the intention to intimidate the addressee. Broadly speaking, threat is always accompanied by some acts such as dispraise humiliation and punishment. Therefore, by declaring S's threat, the addressee may be faced by one or all of these acts (الطوسي، ١٩٧٩: ١٧٩-٨٠، عرفة، ١٩٨٤: ٧٥). We can infer that such acts may represent the perlocutionary effect of the threat.

Threat can be expressed explicitly by the lexical verbs 'توعد' or 'هدد' and their derivatives. The act of threatening is one of the commissive verbs 'الوعد أفعال' that commit the threatenor to doing something desirable for him but undesirable for the threatened. It commits the S to some future action or likely to come soon, imminent occurrence, in order to be effective (سلطان، ١٩٦٢: ١٨٧، السنهوري، 1952: 339).

The degree of strength of the threat is different from one person to another. This difference can be attributed to different factors such as the degree of certainty of the S, the authority of S over H, the formality of the U, the age, the sex, the social status



of S, time and place of the U and whether threat be verbal, nonverbal or both. (سلطان، ١٨٧؛ فتيان، ١٩٨٥ : ٣٩-٤٤ : ١٩٦٢).

Since a future act is predicated by the threatenor, threat can be expressed implicitly by different expressions and forms which denote a future tense. Thus threat can be performed by the particles of future 'س' and 'سوف' (will or shall) .

It can also be expressed by the conditional clauses. These clauses contain two propositions: 'جواب الشرط جملة' (main clause) and 'الشرط جملة فعل' (subordinate clause). Generally speaking, conditional clauses cannot exist in the past. Furthermore, they can be introduced by certain particles such as 'إن' (if), 'إذا' (if), 'من' (who), 'أما' (if), and some relative pronouns. These particles will transfer the tense of the clause from present into future. The achievement of the threat is conditioned by the achievement of the conditional clause, i.e., the subordinate clause (ابن 432-508 : 1990 السامرائي، ؛ هشام، ١٩٨٨ : ٣٦٣)

- 71- (٢٩: الكهف) " وَإِنْ يَسْتَعِثُّوا يُعَاثُوا بِمَاءٍ كَالْمُهْلِ يَشْوِي " الوجوه "
- 72- (٥: التوبة) "فَإِذَا انْسَلَخَ الْأَشْهُرُ الْحُرْمُ فَاقْتُلُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَيْثُ وَجَدْتُمُوهُمْ"
- 73- (١٣: الأنفال) "وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ"
- 74- (٨٧: الكهف) "قَالَ أَمَّا مَنْ ظَلَمَ فَسَوْفَ نَعَذِّبُهُ"
- 75- "إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ أَمْوَالَ الْيَتَامَى ظُلْمًا إِنَّمَا يَأْكُلُونَ فِي بُطُونِهِمْ نَارًا وَسَيَصْلُونَ سَعِيرًا" (النساء : ١٠) .

In certain cases the conditional clauses of threat are accompanied by the particles of future 'س' and 'سوف' for the sake of emphasis as in (74) and (75). Here, these particles are only located in the main clause (جواب الشرط جملة) and never exist in the subordinate clause (الشرط جملة فعل). Sometimes, the conditional particles are omitted from the conditional clause of threat without affecting the conditional meaning of the U. The conditional threat will be inferred implicitly according to the contextual meaning (؛ المطلبي، ١٩٨١ : ٣٦٣ ٧١ : ١٩٨٣، الرفاعي).

76- " الزَّانِيَةُ وَالزَّانِي فَاجْلِدُوا كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا مِائَةَ جَلْدَةٍ " (2: النور)

Here, the conditional threat is implied in the particle 'ف' in 'فاجلدوا'. The deep structure of this conditional threat is 'زناهما فاجلدوا إن ثبت' (they shall be flogged if their adultery is proved) (الرفاعي، ١٩٨٣: ٣٦٣).

In certain other cases, there are some particles which are used to convert the tense of the U from past or present into future. Thus these particles such as 'لا' (not), 'إذ' (then), 'لم' and 'لن' (not) are sometimes used to express an implicit threat (الجر: (؛ النحاس ، ١٩٧٩: ٥٧ 631 جاني، ١٣٦٦هـ :

77- " سَأْرِيكُمْ آيَاتِي فَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلُونِي " (37: الأنبياء )

78- " فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ إِذْ الْأَغْطَالُ فِي أَعْنَاقِهِمْ وَالسَّلَاسِلُ يُسْحَبُونَ " (٧١-٧٠: غافر)

79- " وَحَشَرْنَاَهُمْ فَلَمْ يُغَادِرْ مِنْهُمْ أَحَدًا " (47: الكهف)

Arab rhetoricians illustrate that one of the devices used to express the future events of threat is by the use of some perfect verbs. This technique is used, particularly in the Glorious Quran, to emphasize the irrevocable occurrence of the SA. Rhetoricians believe that this use of these verbs will increase the intimidation and terror in the soul of the H (mental threat) ( نور الدين ، ١٩٨٤: ٥٢ 155 1964: المخزومي ) ؛

80- " أَتَىٰ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلُوهُ " (1: النحل)

In this Quranic verse, Allah (ﷻ) is addressing the pagans and referring to the fact that the decree of Allah, which is expressed by the perfect verb "أتى" (came), will inevitably come to pass and then Allah (ﷻ) will punish them severely. Thus how foolish of pagans to wish such a haste.

In addition to what has been mentioned above, threat can be performed implicitly by some expressions. These expressions such as: 'تمتعوا' (enjoy), 'بشراً' (delight) and 'وعد' (promise) are ironically used with reference to unpleasant events, i.e., threat. These words are used metaphorically because the usual meaning of them is

used with reference to the pleasant consequences to the addressee (الهاشمي، د.ت. ٥٠، ٣٢٥):

81- «وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ أَنْدَادًا لِيُضِلُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ قُلْ تَمَتَّعُوا فَإِن مَصِيرَكُمْ إِلَى النَّارِ» (٣٠: إبراهيم)

82- «بَشِّرِ الْمُتَافِقِينَ بِأَنَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا» (١٣٨: النساء)

83- «النَّارُ وَعَذَابُ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَبئسَ المَصِيرُ» (٧٢: الحج)

Moreover, there are certain words such as 'ويل' (woe) and 'يصلى' (burn) which are always and directly used with reference to the threatening speech:

7-84- « فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْ عَذَابِ يَوْمِ الِيمِ» (٦٥: الزخرف)

85- «سَأَصْلِيهِ سَقَرًا» (٢٦: المدثر)

In most cases, threat, explicit and implicit, is accompanied by different particles of emphasis. These particles are mainly used to make a binding threat and to attract H's attention. They include: particles of vow such as 'والله', 'تالله', 'بالله', 'وربك' (by Lord), the inceptive 'ل-', the emphasizing suffixes 'ن-', and 'ن-' as in (86), the particles of future 'س' and 'سوف' (will and shall), the repetition of certain words (87), the particle 'إنما' or 'إن' (surely) (88), and the fronting of the abstract subject (89) (د.ت. :٦٠، الهاشمي):

86- «وَتَاللَّهِ لَأَكِيدَنَّ أَصْنَامَكُمْ بَعْدَ أَنْ تُوَلُّوا مُدْبِرِينَ» (57: الأنبياء)

87- «ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُونَ(4) كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُونَ» (4-5: النبأ)

88- «...إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ أَمْوَالَ الْيَتَامَى ظُلْمًا إِنَّمَا يَأْكُلُونَ فِي بُطُونِهِمْ نَارًا» (١٠: النساء)

89- «إِنَّا أَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ سَلَاسِلًا وَأَغْلَالًا وَسَعِيرًا» (٤: الإنسان)

### **3-4 Felicity Conditions of Threat in English and Arabic**

For a speech act of threatening to come off properly, the S must assure himself that certain conditions have to be fulfilled. Fraser (1998:163) proposes three conditions to constitute a verbal threat. Accordingly, a threat made by the S should express to the H:

- a-The belief that some unfavorable A will happen.
- b-The belief that A is undesirable to the H's best interest.
- c-The intent to intimidate the H.

In order for the threat to be effective, Fraser believes that the S has to be either able or willing to carry out the terms of the threat (ibid).

In accordance with his notion of success and satisfaction, Vanderveken (1999: 16) thinks that a threat will be successful according to the following conditions:

- 1-The illocutionary point: a threat has the things-to-words direction of fit; its point is to have the world transformed by the future course of action of the S.
- 2-Mode of achievement: The S must invoke a position of authority over the H, and the S puts himself under an obligation to do the A.
- 3-Propositional content condition: the S will do the A in future.
- 4-Preparatory Conditions: the S presupposes that he is capable of doing the A, and the A is bad for the H.
- 5-Sincerity condition: the S intends to do what he commits himself to do.
- 6-Degree of strength: S's threat has to be expressed with a strong insistence upon the H.

Searle (1972:147-154) lists some conditions for the SA of promising. He believes that such conditions can be applied to the other types of SAs with some modifications:

- 1- Normal input and output conditions: both S and H should have the ability to use and comprehend the U.
- 2-Propositional content conditions: the P of threat should predicate a future A of the S, and be uttered in a certain context.
- 3-Preparatory Conditions: the S must believe that the H does not prefer the A done, and that A has not already been done.

4-Sincerity Condition: the S should have the intention, the ability, and the will to carry out the terms of threat.

5-Essential Conditions: by uttering threat, the S insists on getting H to do A in virtue of his authority over the H. The S is committed by his U to do A.

6-The wrap-up-condition: the S's threat is real and correct if the structure of the U is syntactically and semantically used to express a threat in that dialect, and if the above conditions obtain.

For the sake of our analysis in both English and Arabic, a unified model will be set according to the above conditions as well as the researchers' propositions:

1-Comprehensive Conditions (CmCs):

a-The S should specify a particular H.

b-Both S and H should have the ability to use and comprehend the verbal threat.

2-The Propositional Content Conditions (PCCs):

a-The P expressed must predicate a future A of the S.

b-The P expressed should denote, syntactically or semantically, a particular threat.

c-The P should specify means of punishment, and the desired behaviour from threat if possible.

3-The Preparatory Conditions (PCs):

a-The S must believe that the H does not prefer the A done.

b-The S should be in a position of authority over the H.

c-The H prefers the A not to be done since the A is bad for him.

d-The A will not occur in the normal course of events.

4-The Sincerity Condition (SC):

The S intends to intimidate the H and to punish the undesired behaviour of the H.

5-The Ethical Condition (EC):

The S should have the ability to perform or cancel his threat, since it is harmful to the H, if the H shows the desired behaviour.

6-The Definitive Condition (DC):

The A of threatening is correct and real if the above conditions obtain.

## 3-5 Analysis

### 3-5-1 Analysis of English Texts

1-“And Jonah began to enter into the city a day’s journey, and he cried, and said, yet forty day’s, and Nineveh shall be overthrown” (Jonah, 3:4).

In this Biblical verse, Prophet Jonah (ﷺ) is addressing his people of Nineveh. He implicitly threatens them with punishment because they refuse to accept his Divine Call. He limits the time of punishment to forty day if they do not repent. Then he departs them in wrath forgetting that Allah (ﷻ) has Mercy as well as forgiveness (Moulton, 1907:1422). The threat is expressed by Jonah on behalf of an authorized agent (Allah (ﷻ)). The A of threatening is expressed implicitly by the particle of future ‘shall’. For the sake of increasing its effectiveness, threat is appointed by a limited time. i.e., forty days.

The FCs of this U are:

1-The CmCs:

Jonah (ﷺ) is addressing the people of Nineveh and both of them have the ability to use and comprehend the U.

2-The PCCs:

a-The P ‘Nineveh shall be overthrown’ predicates a future A by forty days.

b-The P of threat is expressed by the syntactic particle ‘shall’ and by the word ‘overthrown’ which presupposes threat.

c-The P of threat specifies the overthrow of the city as the means of punishment, and the acceptance of Jonah’s call as the desired behaviour.

3-The PCs:

a-Jonah (ﷺ) believes that his people do not want the threat done.

b-Jonah (ﷺ) is expressing his threat on behalf of an authorized agent (Allah (ﷻ)).

c-Jonah’s tribesmen prefer not to be punished.

d-Punishing the tribesmen of Nineveh will not happen if they accept Jonah’s call.

4-The SC:

Jonah (ﷺ) intends to call His Lord (ﷻ) to punish his people since they refuse to accept his call.

5-The EC:

The punishment of Jonah's people will be preformed or canceled since the threat is expressed by Jonah(ﷺ) on behalf of an authorized agent 'Allah(ﷻ)' who has the ethical choice to A or not.

#### 6-The DC:

The A of threatening is correct and real since all the above conditions are met.

**2-“When thou shalt ... do that which is evil in the sight of the Lord thy God, to provoke him to anger: I call heaven and earth to witness you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish ... and the Lord shall scatter you among the peoples, and ye shall be left few in number among the nations” (Deuteronomy, 4:25-27).**

Allah (ﷻ) is addressing the Children of Israel by giving them some commandments. He threatens them implicitly with continuous punishments if they keep on disobeying Allah's commandments. Furthermore, He will scatter them among the countries and will punish them with different means of torture. In this conditional threat Allah(ﷻ) will punish the undesired behavior of the addressees, i.e., making the evil with negative consequences to them. Threat is expressed by the conditional construction as well as the particle of future 'shall'.

The FCs of this speech are:

#### 1-The CmCs:

The S 'Allah(ﷻ)' is addressing the H (the Children of Israel) and both S and Hs have the ability to use and comprehend the U.

#### 2-The PCCs:

- a-The P “shall perish, scatter, and be left few in numbers” predicates a future A.
- b-The P of threat is expressed syntactically by the conditional construction and the particle of future 'shall'.
- c-The P of threat specifies the scattering of the Children of Israel among nations as the means of punishment, and the obedience of Allah's commandments as the desired behaviour.

#### 3-The PCs:

- a-Allah(ﷻ) knows that the Children of Israel do not prefer to be punished.
- b-Allah(ﷻ) has the authority over the Sons of Israel.
- c-The Sons of Israel prefer not to be punished.
- d-Scattering of the Sons of Israel among nations will not occur if they neglect the evil.

#### 4-The SC:

Allah (ﷻ)intends to intimidate the Sons of Israel and to punish them if they don't obey His commandments.

5-The EC:

Allah (ﷻ)intends to perform His threat in virtue of His authority over the Children of Israel. But Allah(ﷻ) will cancel His threat if they show good behaviour.

6-The DC:

Threat is correct and satisfactory since all the above conditions obtain.

**3-“Whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come” (Matthew, 12:32).**

In this Biblical speech, Jesus (ﷺ) is addressing the Pharisees when they accuse him of being the prince of the devils. He tells them that he will forgive their accusation to him. Then he implicitly and conditionally threatens them that Allah(ﷻ) will not forgive any blasphemy against His Glory (Moulton, 1907: 1695). The A of threatening is expressed by the conditional construction and the particle of future 'shall'.

The FCs of this speech are:

1-The CmCs:

The 'Jesus(ﷺ)' is addressing the Pharisees and both have the ability to use and comprehend the verbal U.

2-The PCCs:

a-The P 'shall not be forgiven him' predicates a future A.

b-The P of threat is expressed syntactically by the conditional form and the particle of future 'shall'.

c-The P of threat specifies a mental punishment to the Pharisees in this world and in the Doomsday.

3-The PCs:

a-Jesus(ﷺ) believes that the Pharisees do not prefer the A done.

b-Jesus (ﷺ)is talking on behalf of an authorized agent 'Allah(ﷻ)'.

c-The Pharisees prefer the A not to be done.

d-The punishment will not occur if the Pharisees do not speak against the Holy Spirit(ﷻ).

4-The SC:

Jesus(ﷺ) intends to intimidate the Pharisees.

5-The EC:



Jesus(ﷺ) expresses his threat on behalf of Allah(ﷻ) who is able to punish the blasphemy of the Pharisees against Him or may forgive them if they repent.

6-The DC: Threat is real since all its conditions are available.

**4-“If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die” (Deuteronomy, 22:22)**

In this Biblical verse, Allah(ﷻ) through His Messenger ‘Moses(ﷺ)’ threatens the adulterers (only married persons) with death in this life. Such an U is one of Moses’ commandments to the Children of Israel. This verse states that the punishment for the guilty of fornication is death for both the married adulteress and the married adulterer (Moulton, 1907:1370). The A of threatening is expressed implicitly by the conditional construction.

The FCs of this verse are:

1-The CmCs:

The S ‘Moses(ﷺ)’ is addressing the adulterers of the Children of Israel and both have the ability to use and comprehend the verbal threat.

2-The PCCs:

a-The P ‘shall both of them die’ predicates a future A.

b-The P of threat is expressed implicitly by the conditional form.

c-The P specifies the punishment of death as the means of punishment to the adulterers.

3-The PCs:

a-Moses(ﷺ) believes that the adulterers do not prefer to be punished.

b-Moses(ﷺ) is expressing his provision of the punishment through an authorized agent ‘Allah(ﷻ)’.

c-Those who will make adultery prefer not to be punished.

d-The punishment is conditioned by the occurrence of the guilty of adultery and the fulfilment of certain conditions.

4-The SC:

Moses(ﷺ) intends to intimidate those who will commit the crime of adultery.

5-The EC:

The punishment of death is declared by an authorized agent ‘Allah(ﷻ)’ in order to prevent such a crime of adultery.

6-The DC:

Threat is real since all the above conditions obtain.

**5-“And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth” (Genesis, 6:13).**

In this Biblical verse, Allah (ﷻ) implicitly threatens the people of Noah (ﷺ) since they make evil in the sight of Allah (ﷻ); and they fill the earth with violence, injustice, and blasphemy. Allah (ﷻ) tells His Messenger that He will punish his people with flood. Thus Allah (ﷻ) will destroy them and all the sinners by a great flood. It is noticed that the development of wickedness in the world at that time leads to the flood (Moulton, 1907:1544). The A of threatening is expressed by the modal verb ‘will’.

The FCs of this verse are:

1-The CmCs:

Allah (ﷻ) is addressing the wicked of Noah’s folk through His Messenger ‘Noah’ and both S and Hs have the ability to use and comprehend the verbal threat.

2-The PCCs:

a-The P ‘will destroy them with the earth’ predicates a future A.

b-The P of threat specifies the destruction through flood as the means of punishment.

c-The P of threat is performed by the syntactic particle of future ‘will’.

3-The PCs:

a-Allah (ﷻ) knows that the wicked of Noah’s people do not prefer to be punished.

b-Allah (ﷻ) has a superior authority over everything in this world.

c-The wicked of Noah’s people do not prefer to be punished.

d-The punishment is determined owing to the development of wickedness in the world.

4-The SC:

Allah (ﷻ) intends to intimidate the people of Noah so as to repent and to punish them if they do not show the desired behaviour.

5-The EC:

Allah (ﷻ) has the ability to perform His punishment upon the wicked if they do not show their repentance to Allah (ﷻ).

6-The DC:

Threat is imminent because all the above conditions are available.

**6-“But if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.” (Daniel, 3:15).**

Nebuchadnezzar the King has been told by the Chaldeans that Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, some Jews believers, refuse to worship the golden image which the king has set up. Thus the king implicitly and conditionally threatens them to be thrown into a burning fiery furnace if they will not fall down and worship this idol. The A of threatening is expressed by the conditional construction and the particle of future 'shall'.

The FCs of this verse are:

1-The CmCs:

The S 'Nebuchadnezzar the king' is addressing Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego and both participants have the ability to use and comprehend the verbal U.

2-The PCCs:

a-The P 'shall be cast into a burning fiery furnace' predicates a future A.

b-The P of threat is expressed by the syntactic forms of the conditional construction and the particle of future.

c-The P specifies the throw into the midst of the fire to the three Jews as the physical punishment.

3-The PCs:

a-Nebuchadnezzar the King believes that the three Jews do not prefer to be punished.

b-The King has a superior authority over the three Jews.

c-The three Jews prefer not to be punished.

d-The punishment will not occur if the three Jews worship the King's idol.

4-The SC:

The King intends to intimidate the three Jews by his threat and to perform his threat if they refuse to obey his orders.

5-The EC:

The King has the ability and authority to perform his threat.

6-The DC:

Threat is genuine since all the above conditions are met.

**7-“Whosoever doeth any work in the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death”**

**(Exodus, 31:15).**

Allah (ﷻ) is addressing, through His Prophet Moses(ﷺ), the Children of Israel by giving them some commandments. Here, Allah(ﷻ) implicitly threatens

them with the punishment of death if they breach the Sabbath, the sacred day of Jews. Such a punishment would be, not for the breach of the Sabbath in itself, but for their contumacious defiance of the Divine Law. Threat is expressed by the conditional construction and emphasized by the particle of emphasis ‘surely’.

The FCs of this verse are:

#### 1-The CmCs:

The S ‘Allah(ﷻ)’ is addressing the Hs ‘the Children of Israel’ and both S and Hs have the ability to use and comprehend the U.

#### 2-The PCCs:

a-The P ‘shall surely be put to death’ predicates a future A.

b-The P of threat is expressed by the syntactic construction of condition.

c-The P of threat specifies the death as the means of punishment to those who breach the Sabbath.

#### 3-The PCs:

a-Allah (ﷻ)knows that the Children of Israel prefer not to be punished.

b-Allah (ﷻ)has a superior authority over all creatures.

c-The Children of Israel prefer not to be punished.

d-The punishment will not happen if the Children of Israel do not break the Sabbath.

#### 4-The SC:

Allah(ﷻ) intends to intimidate the Children of Israel so as not to breach the Sabbath.

#### 5-The EC:

Allah (ﷻ)has the ability and authority to perform His threat or to cancel it if the Hs show the obedience of Allah’s Law.

#### 6-The DC:

Threat is correct and real since all the above conditions are met.

### **3-5-2 Analysis of Arabic Texts:**

#### 1- (التوبة: ٦٨) “ وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتِ وَالْكُفَّارَ نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ”

In this Quranic verse, Allah (ﷻ)implicitly threatens the hypocrites and the unbelievers with a severe punishment in the Hereafter. He will deprive them from His grace and mercy since He assures His threat by the word ‘خالدين’ (eternal) which means that the punishment will last forever without any forgiveness. The A

of threatening is expressed by the perfect verb ‘وعد’ which is used ironically to denote a threat and to emphasize the irrevocable occurrence of the punishment (مغنية، 1978: 67).

The FCs of this verse are:

1-The CmCs:

The S ‘Allah (ﷻ)’ is addressing the Hs ‘the hypocrites and the unbelievers’ and both S and Hs have the ability to use and comprehend the verbal threat.

2-The PCCs:

a-The P ‘بنار جهنم المنافقين والكفار وعد’ (a promise with the fire of Hell to the hypocrites and unbelievers) predicates a future A in the Hereafter.

b-The P of threat is expressed by the perfect verb ‘وعد’.

c-The P of threat specifies the fire of Hell as the means of punishment to the addressees.

3-The PCs:

a-Allah (ﷻ) knows that the unbelievers do not prefer the A done.

b-Allah(ﷻ) has the superior authority over the unbelievers.

c-The unbelievers prefer not to be punished.

d-The punishment will not occur if the unbelievers repent.

4-The SC:

Allah(ﷻ) intends to intimidate the unbelievers and to punish them if they do not repent.

5-The EC:

Allah(ﷻ) should perform His threat in virtue of His authority over the unbelievers and He will not cancel His threat if they do not repent.

6-The DC:

Threat is correct since all the above conditions are met.

2 - ”وَيَصْلَى سَعِيرًا فُسُوفَ يَدْعُوا تُبُورًا وَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوْتِيَ كِتَابَهُ وَّرَاءَ ظَهْرِهِ “

(الانشقاق : ١٠ - ١٢ )

(But he that is given his book from behind his back shall call down destruction on himself and burn in the fire of Hell) (Zayid, 1980:448).



threat may be cancelled if the sinners abandon their wickedness .

6-The DC:

Threat is satisfactory since all the above conditions are met.

3- ” 000 أتى أمرُ اللهِ فلا تستعجلوهُ “ (1:النحل )

Allah (ﷻ) implicitly threatens the pagans when they make fun of Allah’s Messenger Mohammed (ﷺ). Here, the speech is a response to the pagans’ mock claim that “if there is One True God with unified control, why does He not punish the wrong-doers at once?”. Therefore Allah (ﷻ) answers them that His punishment, ‘أمرُ الله’ to them will inevitably come sooner or later. Then the pagans will wish to avoid such a punishment (٤٩٦: ١٩٧٨ مغنبة،). The A of threatening is expressed by the perfect verb ‘أتى’ which is used to denote a threat according to the context of the U.

The FCs of this U are:

1-The CmCs:

The S ‘Allah (ﷻ)’ is addressing the pagans (Hs), and both S and Hs have the ability to use and comprehend the verbal threat.

2-The PCCs:

a-The P ‘أمر الله أتى’ predicates a future A in the Doomsday.

b-The P of threat is expressed by the perfect verb ‘أتى’ which indicates a future occurrence of the A.

c-The P of threat specifies an implicit punishment.

3-The PCs:

a-Allah (ﷻ) knows that the pagans do not prefer to be punished.

b-Allah (ﷻ) has a superior authority over the pagans.

c-The pagans prefer not to be punished.

d-The punishment will not occur in the normal course of events.

4-The SC:

Allah (ﷻ) intends to intimidate the pagans so as to urge them to discard their paganism.

5-The EC:

Allah(ﷻ) has the ability to perform his threat if the pagans continue to show their bad belief, i.e., paganism.

#### 6-The DC:

Threat is correct since all the above conditions obtain.

#### 4- ” وَالسَّارِقُ وَالسَّارِقَةُ فَاقْطَعُوا أَيْدِيَهُمَا جِزَاءً بِمَا كَسَبَا “ (المائدة: ٣٨)

The Quranic verse illustrates that the punishment of amputation of hand is declared by Allah(ﷻ) as retribution for the thieves. Here, Allah(ﷻ) makes a conditional threat to those who want to steal. Thus the punishment of amputation of hand is conditioned by the A of stealing in certain cases. The conditional particle is omitted in this verse; it can be implied according to the context of U. Hence, the phrase ‘والسارقة السارق’ represents the subordinate clause which has an implicit conditional meaning ‘سرقتهما فاقطعوا إن ثبتت’. The phrase ‘فاقطعوا أيديهما’ represents the main clause according to the context of the U and the occurrence of the particle ‘ف’ which is used in the main clause to denote the result of the conditional clause (سرقتهما فاقطعوا إن ثبتت، (٣٦٣: ١٩٨٣ الرفاعي). The deep structure of this speech will be ‘سرقتهما فاقطعوا إن ثبتت’ (if they surely steal, cut off their hands). The A of threatening is expressed implicitly by the conditional form as well as the imperative form which is expressed by the word ‘أقطعوا’.

The FCs of this verse are:

#### 1-The CmCs:

The S ‘Allah(ﷻ)’ is addressing the thieves, both have the ability to use and comprehend the verbal threat.

#### 2-The PCCs:

a-The P ‘فاقطعوا أيديهما’ predicates a future A.

b-The P of threat is expressed by the conditional form.

c-The P of threat specifies the punishment of amputation of hand as the means of punishment to the thieves in certain cases.

#### 3-The PCs:

a-Allah(ﷻ) knows that the thieves do not prefer to be punished.

b-Allah(ﷻ) has an authority to legislate such a provision of punishment.



c-The thieves prefer not to be punished.

d-The punishment is conditioned by the existence of certain conditions.

4-The SC:

Allah(ﷻ) intends to intimidate those who prefer to steal and to punish their criminal A of theft.

5-The EC:

The punishment of amputation of hand will be performed or cancelled according to certain conditions. Such a punishment is awarded by Allah(ﷻ) to protect innocent people from the crime of theft.

6-The DC:

Threat is correct since all the above conditions obtain.

5- ” ثُمَّ تُتْبِعُهُمُ الْآخِرِينَ أَلَمْ نُهْلِكِ الْأُولِينَ وَيَلَّ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ“

((المرسلات: ١٥-١٧))

Allah (ﷻ) is threatening the rejecters of truth with woe in the Doomsday. Arab interpreters say that 'ويل' (woe) is always associated with the threat of punishment; it is a valley in the middle of the Hell which is devoted to the greater oppressors and disbelievers. (1965: 51 شبر،). The A of threatening is expressed by two forms: the declarative sentence 'يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ وَيَلَّ' and the interrogative sentence 'وَيَلَّ أَلَمْ نُهْلِكِ الْأُولِينَ'. The threat in the declarative sentence is expressed by the word 'ويل' (woe) which presupposes a threat. Furthermore, the threat in the interrogative sentence is performed by the interrogative construction 'أَلَمْ نُهْلِكِ الْأُولِينَ' which has an implicit threat to those who refuse or will refuse the religion of truth (مغنية، ١٩٧٨: ٤٩٠)

The FCs of these verses are:

1-The CmCs:

The S 'Allah(ﷻ)' is addressing the unbelievers of truth, and both have the ability to use and comprehend the U.

2-The PCCs:

a-The P ‘يَوْمئذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ وَايْلٌ’ predicates a future A in the Doomsday.

b-The P of threat is expressed by the word ‘وَايْلٌ’ which implies threat, and the interrogative form which carries also a threat.

c-The P of threat specifies the ‘woe’ as the means of punishment to the unbelievers and to be faithful as the desired behaviour.

3-The PCs:

a-Allah(ﷻ) knows that unbelievers do not prefer to be punished.

b-Allah(ﷻ) has an authority over the unbelievers.

c-The unbelievers prefer not to be punished.

d-The punishment will not occur if the unbelievers become faithful.

4-TheSC:

Allah(ﷻ) intends to intimidate the unbelievers and to punish them if they insist on rejecting the Religion of Truth.

5-The EC:

a-Allah(ﷻ) has the ability to perform his punishment on the disbelievers if they continue rejecting the truth.

6-The DC:

a-Threat is correct and real since all the above conditions are met in this U.

” فَاسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ لَاقِطَعَنَّ أَيُّدِيكُمْ وَأَرْجُلُكُمْ مِنْ خِلَافٍ وَلَأَصْلَبَنَّكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ“-

( ٤٩ :الشعراء )

When the magicians of Pharaoh perceive the power of Allah(ﷻ) through Moses’ rod, they fall down to the ground in adoration of the Lord(ﷻ) of the worlds, and confess their faith. Thereby, Pharaoh implicitly threatens the repentant magicians with the extreme punishment for their apostasy. The A of threatening is emphasized by some particles of emphasis such as ‘ل’ in ‘سوف’, ‘لاقطعن’, and ‘لاصلبكنم’ and ‘ن’ in ‘اقتعن’ and ‘اصلبكنم’. Threat is expressed by the particle of future ‘سوف’ (shall).

The FCs of this speech are:

1-The CmCs:

The S ‘Pharaoh’ is addressing the Hs ‘the magicians’, both participants have the ability to use and comprehend the verbal speech.

## 2-The PCCs:

a-The P 'خلاف' 'أيديكم وأرجلكم من لاقطن' predicates a future A.

b-The P of threat is expressed by the particle of future 'سوف'.

c-The P of threat specifies the punishment of cut and crucifixion as the means of torture to the magicians and the obedience of Pharaoh's orders as the desired behaviour.

## 3-The PCs:

a-Pharaoh believes that the magicians prefer not to be punished.

b-Pharaoh has a superior authority over the magicians.

c-The magicians prefer not to be punished.

d-The torture will not occur if the magicians obey Pharaoh's tyranny.

## 4-The SC:

Pharaoh intends to intimidate the magicians and to punish their repentance.

## 5-The EC:

Pharaoh has the ability to perform his threat or to cancel it if the magicians obey Pharaoh's orders.

## 6-The DC:

Threat is real and correct since it matches with the above conditions.

## 7- "قال لئن اتخذت إلها غيري لأجعلنك من المسجونين" (الشعراء: ٢٩)

When the Prophet Moses (ﷺ) calls Pharaoh to believe in the One True God, Pharaoh refuses to accept this call. Moreover, Pharaoh, in this verse, implicitly and conditionally threatens Moses with prison if he puts forward the name of the One True God as against Pharaoh's pretended godhead. The A of threatening is emphasized by some particles of emphasis such as the inceptive 'ل' in 'لئن' and 'لأجعلنك' and the emphasizer 'ن' in 'لأجعلنك'. Threat is expressed by the conditional construction.

The FCs of this verse are:

1- The CmCs:

The S 'Pharaoh' is addressing and threatening the H 'Moses(ﷺ)' and both the S and H have the ability to use and comprehend the verbal speech.

2- The PCCs:

a-The P 'من المسجونين لاجلنك' predicates a future A.

b-The P of threat is expressed by the conditional construction.

c-The P of threat specifies the punishment of prison to Moses as the means of punishment.

3-The PCs:

a-Pharaoh believes that Moses prefers not to be cast into prison.

b-Pharaoh has an authority over Moses since he is the ruler.

c-Moses(ﷺ) prefers not to be cast into prison.

d-Punishing Moses(ﷺ) will not happen if he obeys Pharaoh's order.

4-The SC:

Pharaoh intends to intimidate Moses(ﷺ) so as to make him discard his divine call.

5-The EC:

Pharaoh has the ability to perform his threat since he is a tyrannical ruler.

6-The DC:

Threat is correct and real since all the above conditions are met in this speech.

## **4- Promise and Threat in English and Arabic**

### **4-1 in English**

Many linguists agree upon the idea that there is an apparent relationship between promise and threat. Therefore, they assure the fact that promises should not be kept distinct from threats. Egner (2002:3) believes that promising and threatening are universally understood as a commitment to do something. For this reason both acts are grouped together as two members of the same class, i.e., commissives. In spite of their universality, we believe that the acts of promising and threatening are culture-dependent in that they depend upon the legal, religious or ethical conventions in a particular dialect.

Jespersen (1954:270) states that a threat is a promise of something disagreeable, which can be expressed in future. Searle (1969:58; 1972:148) mentions that the crucial difference between promise and threat is that a promise is a pledge to do something for H, not to H, whereas a threat is a pledge to do something to H, not for H. He believes that threat is something the threatened does not want it to be done. Sometimes, it is possible to use the locution ‘**I promise**’ to express a threat because it has the strongest IF indicating devices for the degree of commitment. From this, it would follow that a threat remains a threat even though its wording is that of a promise (ibid.):

**90-I promise to fail you if you do not hand in your essay on time.**

Similar to what has been mentioned above, Allan (1986:195) draws a distinction between ‘true promises’ and threats. Such a distinction can be attributed to the background knowledge and belief of both the S and H. This distinction can be clarified by the following examples:

**91-I promise I’ll give you a good mark if you are polite.**

**92-I promise I’ll call the police if you do not go.**

We can infer unambiguously that (91) is a true promise since it is pleasing to the H, whereas (92) is a threat since the word ‘promise’, here, is ironically used in reference to unpleasant events.

Allan believes that “ the difference between ‘true promises’ and threats is a matter of contrary conclusion about H’s preferences with respect to S’s undertaking to do A”. He states that some utterances may be ambiguous or indeterminate between a promise and a threat. Such an ambiguity may be attributed to the fact that the S may be uncertain whether the H would prefer the promise or not as in the following examples (ibid: 196):

**93-I promise to let you work overtime.**

**94-I promise to report you to the boss.**

It is obvious at the first glance that the above utterances are irresolute between a promise and/or a threat. Such an irresolution can be solved according to the context of the U. Thus if the acts uttered in the above Us are preferable and beneficial to the addressees, then the IFs of such Us will be acts of promising. Besides, the FCs of promising can be applied appropriately to these acts. On the contrary, if the acts uttered are unpleasant and harmful to the addressees, then the IFs of these Us will be

acts of threatening. Moreover, the FCs of threatening can be applied confidently to such acts.

Similarly, as both acts of promising and threatening can be expressed implicitly by the modals ‘will’ and ‘shall’, it is noticed sometimes that certain speech acts expressed by the modals may oscillate between a promise or a threat. This hesitation between these two acts can be distinguished according to the contextual factors and the social relationship between the participants:

**95- I’ll come back and see this machine tomorrow.**

Here, it is not clear whether the illocution of this utterance is a threat or a promise. But, on the one hand, if the factory inspector addressing the employee whom is to be the cause of the machine failure utters the above U, then the illocution of this U is a threat. Therefore, by applying the FCs of this speech, will find that the FCs of threat will validate this U. Thus the proposition of this U predicates a future act of the S, and it is not pleasing to the H. Moreover, the S has a superior authority over the H. On the other hand, if this U is uttered by the mechanic who is able to repair the machine addressing the owner of the machine, then the illocution of this U is a promise. Thereupon, if we apply the FCs of this U, will find that the FCs of promise will prove this speech. Hereupon, the proposition of this U predicates a future act of the S, and the act promised is pleasing to the H.

Hamblin (1987:34) illustrates that threats are no more than unwelcome promises or statements of unwelcome intention. We can notice from the above definitions that promise and threat cannot be separated from each other.

By the same token, Lyons (1977:737) and Verschueren (1983:737) point out that promise and threat may share similar preparatory, sincerity, and essential conditions. Furthermore, both acts can be expressed linguistically as well as non-linguistically; and they can, in certain cultures, oblige people to carry out the respective actions so as not to lose face.

It is noticed that both acts can denote a conditional speech act. Hence, conditional promises and threats are speech acts that can be used to exercise the behavioural of other persons (Beller, 2002:113). Leech (1983:226-7) believes that ‘threaten’, as well as ‘promise’, can denote a conditional SA in the sense that “ ‘S threatened h with x’ is roughly ‘s undertook to see to it that something unpleasant (x) would happen to h, if h did not do some act A desired by s.’ ”

**96-If you make any noise you'll be sent home.**

This example illustrates that the S will react negatively, i.e., threat, if H shows undesired behaviour (make a noise), but the S will react positively, i.e., promise, if H shows the desired behaviour (be quiet). Beller (2002:114) suggests that the canonical formulations for the conditional promise and threat would be:

**“If you do (*desired behaviour*), then I will reward you with (promise)” vs.**

**“If you do (*undesired behaviour*), then I will punish you by (threat)”.**

By these formulations, Beller believes that there are two action sequences: a cooperative one (promise) and a not cooperative one (threat).

The former sequence is formulated according to the belief that if the addressee cooperates and fulfills the S's goal (showing a desired behaviour), the promisor is obliged to cooperate and to give reward (promise). The promisor himself declares 'his promise' to be a necessary consequence of condition (showing a desired behaviour), so he must guarantee the reward (ibid).

The latter sequence includes two lines of argumentation: First, the S is obliged to punish the addressee (threat) if the addressee does not cooperate (showing undesired behaviour). The S declares his threat of punishment to be a necessary consequence of condition (showing undesired behaviour), so he must react consequently in order to keep his credibility. Second, it can be argued that the threat implies a complementary promise that determines the following interpretation: “ if the addressee refrains from doing the desired behaviour, then the S must refrain from the punishment since there is no cooperation between them” (ibid: 115).

Verschueren (1979:458) finds out that what makes some SAVs performatives and others non-performatives is not to be found in the semantic structure of the verbs but in the pragmatic restrictions on their uses. He believes that in certain cultures, the act of threatening is not readily accepted since the formula 'I threaten you' would place the SA in a particular moral perspective. It would account as passing a negative moral judgment on the act, and as a result the act could not be performed seriously. Thus the S may use a euphemistic explicit performative, 'I promise you' to perform an act of threatening. Such use of 'promise' instead of 'threaten' would be attributed to some pragmatic constraints. This substitution of the performative verb 'threaten' by another 'promise' means that we are dealing with a performativity continuum (ibid.). In this respect, Allan (1986:196) affirms that both acts of promising and threatening are two sides of the same coin. He believes that both acts are derived from one

illocution, i.e., promising. Allan believes so because he thinks that there is a performative verb ‘promise’ but no performative verb ‘threaten’ (ibid.).

Davies (1986:166-72) and Beller (2002:114) point out that both promises and threats can be formulated conjunctively. The following conjunctive formulation will express the connection between the new consequences set by the S and the addressee’s behaviour:

**“Do P (desired behaviour) and I’ll reward you with (promise)” vs.**

**“Do P (undesired behaviour) and I’ll punish you by (threat)”.**

**97- Be polite and I’ll reward you.(If you’re polite, I’ll reward you.)**

**98-Be impolite and I’ll punish you.(If you’re impolite, I’ll punish you)**

More interestingly, there is a relative relationship between promising and threatening on the one hand and politeness theory on the other. Politeness theory is based on the concept of ‘face’. This theory claims that speakers avoid threat to the ‘face’ of those they address by various forms of indirectness, vagueness and promises. Face has two aspects: positive and negative. An individual’s positive face is reflected in his desire to be appreciated by others. An individual’s negative face is the desire to remain undisturbed by others (Brown and Levinson, 1987:66).

According to Brown and Levinson, certain IAs are liable to threaten face; such acts are known as ‘face-threatening acts’ (FTAs). Hence, orders and requests, for example, threaten negative face, whereas criticism and disagreement threaten positive face. They maintain that promises can be regarded as a positive politeness strategy (ibid: 128).

## **4-2 in Arabic**

Generally, Arab scholars agree that promise and threat cannot be isolated from each other as they share certain features. Most religious legislators believe that the relationship between promise and threat is regarded as one principle of the Islamic Religion and the Divine Justice. They think that Allah, the Almighty, is truthful and sincere in His promise as well as His threat (وأخرون، د.ت.: ٤٧ البصري). Legislators propose that since Allah promises believers with reward and threatens unbelievers with punishment, He should not violate neither His promise nor His threat. Thus it is a matter of justice to live up to one’s promise and threat (ibid: 49). Therefore, Almighty



Allah assures that He is sincere in His promise and threat in different emphatic Quranic verses:

99- "وَعَدَ اللَّهُ لَنَا يُخْلِفُ اللَّهُ وَعْدَهُ" (الروم: ٦٠)

100- "رُسُلُهُ فَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ اللَّهَ مُخْلِفَ وَعْدِهِ" (إبراهيم: ٤٧)

101- "وَيَسْتَعْجِلُونَكَ بِالْعَذَابِ وَلَنْ يُخْلِفَ اللَّهُ وَعْدَهُ" (الحج: ٤٧)

We can notice from the above examples that Allah (ﷻ) on the one hand promises that He will aid His Prophet (ﷺ) and the believers over the oppressors sooner or later. Then He gives an assurance to them that He will never depart His promise. On the other hand, He threatens, in the same verses, the unbelievers and the oppressors with a severe punishment. Such a punishment will not be cancelled since it is expressed and assured by the binding word of promise 'يُخْلِفُ اللَّهُ وَعْدَهُ لا'.

It is noticed that promise in Arabic may be metaphorically or figuratively used to indicate a threat to the addressee. Here, the performative promise is used to commit the S to do something bad to the addressee with the intention of threatening him rather than pleasing him. Since promise has the effect of being good to the H, Arab rhetoricians state that the promise denoting threat is called 'تهكمي وعد' (ridiculous promise) (عبدہ) (٦٣ : ١٩٧٣ ، عبده) as in the following Quranic verses:

102- "وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْمُتَافِقِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتِ وَالْكُفَّارَ نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا" (التوبة : ٦٨ )

103- "الشَّيْطَانُ يَعِدُكُمُ الْفَقْرَ وَيَأْمُرُكُمْ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ" (البقرة: ٢٦٨)

104- "فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ يَوْمِهِمُ الَّذِي يُوعَدُونَ" (الذاريات: ٦٠)

According to the researchers' point of view, such a use can be attributed to the fact that promise is more commitment than threat. Thus if someone threatens another by the act of 'promising', he is obliged to perform his threat since 'promise' carries a sense of obligation for the S to fulfill his threat.

Linguistically, we can notice that both promise and threat (والوعد الوعد) are derived from the same root 'وعد' (promise). Therefore, they should have common features of commitment but 'وعد' (promise) is more commitment than 'توعد' (threaten) and also 'الوعد' is associated with telling good news to the H while 'الوعد' with telling

bad news. Arab rhetoricians state that the verb 'وعد' (promise) can be used in good news as well as bad news when it is followed by an object ( ابن منظور ، ١٩٥٥ : ٤٦٣ ؛ ) : (186 ألاحمدى ، ١٩٧٩ :

#### 105- خيرا وعدت الرجل

(I promise the man with good.)

#### 106- شرا وعدت الرجل

(I promise the man with evil.)

But one cannot use 'وعد' (promise) in both cases if it is uttered without an object. In order to distinguish between the two cases, Arab rhetoricians mention that some prefixes, such as 'أ' or 'ت', should be added to the root 'وعد' (promise) followed by the preposition 'ب' to indicate a threat 'أوعد' or 'توعد' ( ibid ):

#### 107- أوعدني بالسجن

(He threatens me with prison.)

#### 108- توعدني بالسجن

(He threatens me with prison.)

According to the futurity aspect of these two acts they can be expressed by the particles of future 'س - سوف' (will or shall), Moreover, these particles are only used with promise and threat as emphasize. Here, both particles are used as emphatic devices within the structure of the U (الهاشمي ، ٥٩٠ ، د.ت.٠):

109- ( ٤٧ : مريم ) " قَالَ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكَ سَأَسْتَغْفِرُ لَكَ رَبِّي " (implicit promise)

110- ( ٥٦ : النساء ) " إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِنَا سَوْفَ نُصَلِّيهِمْ نَارًا " (implicit threat)

The use of these particles in expressing promise or threat depends mainly on the contextual factors which are related to the physical or social setting of the U. Thus the U, for instance,:

111- قريبا . سيصل أبي (My father will come soon.)

may be interpreted as a 'threat' to the H if H does not prefer the coming of S's father as there is a sort of misunderstanding between S and H. By contrast, the same U may

denote a 'promise' to the H if H prefers the coming of S's father since they are friends. Here, such a difference between promise and threat can be disambiguated according to the background knowledge of both S and H (السامرائي، ١٩٩٠: 404-408 ؛ حسان، ١٩٩٨: ٣٣٦ - ٣٧٢).

Sometimes, certain SAs, whether explicit or implicit, can denote either promise or threat when the context of the U includes persons, who are supposed to hear without being directly addressed, other than the addressees. Therefore, the following Quranic verses may denote a promise to particular addressees and/or a threat to the other persons:

112- "إِنَّمَا تُوعَدُونَ لَصَادِقٍ" (٥: الذاريات)

113- "سَنُرِيهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْآفَاقِ" (٥٣: فصلت)

We can notice in the (112), for example, that Allah (ﷻ) is addressing the believers as well as unbelievers at the same time but in two directions. On the one hand Allah (ﷻ) promises His Prophet Mohammed (ﷺ) and the believers that He will conquer all the world to the Religion of Islam at the time of the appearance of the Promised Savior 'peace be upon him'. On the other hand Allah (ﷻ) threatens unbelievers with different signs of punishment such as floods, diseases, earthquakes and so on in this life. Such signs of torture are decreed so as to make the unbelievers repent and worship the Lord. Hence, both FCs of promise and threat can be applied to the same U but in different contexts according to certain addressees or hearers (الطباطبائي، 1974: 430-33).

It is worth mentioning that threat, unlike promise, cannot put the threatenor under a severe obligation to perform what he threatens to do. Here, since the threatenor has the ability and authority to do the A, then he has a choice either to do A or to refrain from acting. Therefore, the threatenor will not be blamed or rebuked, as in promise, for breaking his threat but he may be praised (الصدر ٤٠٢: ١٩٧٨ مغنية،) ، ١٩٧٠: ٢٠٦).

## 5- Conclusions

1-The analysis shows that the SAs of promising and threatening in both English and Arabic can be applied to religious texts by analyzing their FCs. This means that religious texts can be regarded as acts of communication.

2-It has been found that in most cases of English texts, the performative verbs of promising are expressed implicitly by the modal verbs 'will' and 'shall' as well as the conditional form; while in Arabic texts promising is expressed explicitly as well as implicitly by different lexical, semantic, and pragmatic forms. Thus one can conclude that the SA of promising is performed more explicitly in Arabic texts than in English.

3-The study shows also that the SA of promising in Arabic culture does not always imply a commitment to do something to the H, as in English culture. Thus it can be used for the purpose of terminating the conversation between the participants, and to satisfy cultural expectations or to save face.

4-As for the performative verb of threatening, the analysis shows that in both languages threat is mainly expressed implicitly by different syntactic and semantic forms. This fact reveals that both languages have a similar point of view as to the implicit nature of the A of threatening.

5-The study finds out also that threat in both English and Arabic cannot only be determined by the declarative form since it can be expressed in more than one structure such as imperative, prohibitive, and interrogative.

6-Concerning the tense of the performative verbs of promising and threatening, English and Arabic are different in using the performative verbs. The study reveals that English performative verbs of these two acts can be expressed only by using the present tense; while Arabic tends to use the present or/and the past tense. Moreover, Arabic can use some past verbs to express a promise or a threat in given contexts.

7-The study has arrived at a significant conclusion that both acts of promising and threatening have been found to be closely related in both languages since the A of threatening is derived from the same illocution, i.e., promising. It is also concluded that both acts can share some FCs and some syntactic forms.

The differences between the two languages behind using the formula ‘I promise you’ to express a threat can be attributed to the following points:

a-English tends to avoid using the formula ‘I threaten you’ by a euphemistic formula ‘I promise you’ owing to the fact that this formula of threatening is rarely accepted as a performative and has a pragmatic restriction or an offensive meaning in English culture.

b-Arabic tends to use the performative verb ‘وعد’ (promise) to express a threat since it has the strongest degree of commitment of the S, and to emphasize the degree of punishment in a metaphorical way.

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