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RESEARCH ARTICLE

A Conversational Analysis of Opening and Closing Sequences in Saudi Podcasts: A Case Study of the *Waddah* Podcast

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how conversational openings and closings are structured linguistically in Arabic-language podcasts in Saudi Arabia, focusing specifically on the Waddah podcast. Using Conversation Analysis (CA) and cultural pragmatics, the research analyses how hosts start and end podcast episodes within the norms of Saudi Islamic culture, language practices and social relationships. Ten podcast episodes were transcribed and analysed in both Arabic and English. The results reveal ritualised conversational patterns that include religious phrases, formal greetings, praise for guests and communal farewells. Common expressions such as 'Bismillah', 'Marhaban alf' and 'Fi Aman Allah' do not simply mark sections of conversation, but rather, they reflect deeper cultural values such as spiritual intentions, hospitality and community bonding. The findings show that opening and closing conversations in Saudi podcasts go beyond managing conversational turns; they also establish moral positions, foster audience connection and promote social harmony. This study adds to the limited research on Arabic digital communication and expands CA theory by applying it in non-Western, culturally rich contexts.

KEYWORDS

Conversation Analysis, Arabic podcasts, Saudi discourse, openings and closings, pragmatics, religious language, podcast interaction

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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1. Introduction

Podcasts have significantly transformed digital media by offering conversations that are lengthy, personalised and focused on specific topics. Unlike traditional broadcasts, which rely heavily on strict timing, scripts and editorial oversight, podcasts allow more flexible and natural dialogue. This flexibility enables podcast creators to produce discussions that feel spontaneous and intimate, even when carefully planned and edited (Frobenius, 2011). While many studies have explored podcast structures in English-speaking contexts (Ilie, 2001; Mustonen, 2017), less attention has been given to Arabic-language podcasts, particularly those shaped by Saudi Arabia's cultural and religious traditions.

In spoken interactions, how conversations begin and end—their openings and closings—is both socially meaningful and delicate. Conversation Analysis (CA), established by Sacks et al. (1974), highlights that conversational openings and closings are essential for managing interactions, as they clarify who participates, define roles, negotiate status and ensure smooth transitions into and out of interactions.

In Saudi Arabic-speaking contexts, conversational openings and closings are deeply connected to religious beliefs, collective norms and cultural values such as honour (*karamah*), respect (*Ihtiraam or taqdeer*) and spiritual accountability (*amana*). For example, initiating conversation with 'Bismillah' (in the name of Allah) is not just polite—it reflects a moral stance rooted in Islamic beliefs. Similarly, ending a conversation with 'Fi Aman Allah' (may God protect you) conveys care and blessings, both providing appropriate spiritual leave-taking and reinforcing social bonds.

This paper applies Conversation Analysis to investigate how the Waddah podcast, a popular Saudi podcast known for intellectual, artistic and societal discussions, structures its conversational openings and closings. By analysing 10 complete

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episodes, this study examines the linguistic, structural and pragmatic techniques that hosts and guests use to manage podcast interactions effectively.

In doing so, this research seeks to bridge the gap between mainstream Conversation Analysis—which predominantly examines English-speaking contexts—and Arabic media discourse, where CA is rarely applied, especially to podcasts. Specifically, this study addresses two research questions:

- 1. What linguistic and structural features characterise conversational openings and closings in Arabic-language podcasts?
- 2. How do cultural and religious norms shape the way these conversational sequences are constructed and function? By answering these questions, the study contributes to three key areas:
 - 1. Conversation Analysis, by applying its insights within an Arabic-Islamic cultural context.
 - 2. Digital media linguistics, by exploring how conversational norms have developed within Saudi podcasts.
 - 3. Cultural pragmatics, by demonstrating how social and religious values influence communication practices in digital media.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conversational Openings and Closings: An Overview

Opening and closing sequences have been fundamental to Conversation Analysis since its inception, notably through the work of Sacks et al. (1974), whose research demonstrated that everyday conversations are highly structured, guided by rules and collaboratively constructed by participants. Schegloff and Sacks (1973) identified conversational elements such as 'pre-closings' and 'terminal exchange pairs', which assist in smoothly concluding interactions. These elements are more than mere formalities; they play important roles in defining roles, managing transitions, minimising discomfort and aligning participants' social positions.

In podcasts, conversational boundaries become especially significant owing to their nature as media produced for broad, asynchronous audiences but presented as intimate dialogues. Thus, how podcasts begin and end shapes the relationship among hosts, guests and listeners (Ilie, 2001). Frobenius (2011, 2014) observed similar dynamics in YouTube vlogs, noting that monologues often mimic interpersonal dialogues, with conversational openings designed to create a sense of interactivity and closeness.

However, most research has focused on English-language digital media. In cultural contexts such as Saudi Arabia—where conversational practices reflect religious traditions, honour-based etiquette and collective social values—podcast openings and closings might differ significantly. Therefore, studying Arabic podcasts requires attention to not only conversational structures but also their religious symbolism, social formalities and emotional implications.

2.2 Theoretical Underpinnings in Conversation Analysis

CA posits that openings typically begin with a summons—answer pair, followed by identification and greeting, topic negotiation, and eventual transition into the business at hand (Schegloff, 2007). Closings reverse this process, often using pre-closing markers like 'so ...' or 'alright then' to signal the shift from topic to termination. These moves are embedded in adjacency pairs and shaped by turn-taking systems (Sacks et al., 1974).

In Western settings, turn openings often rely on informal markers such as 'Hi' and 'How are you' and discourse fillers such as 'so' or 'right'. Yet, research by Levinson and Torreira (2015) shows that timing, pacing and the avoidance of overlap are culturally sensitive variables. Sidnell (2016) emphasises that CA, although developed from English data, is not ethnocentric but rather ethnomethodologically flexible—suitable for use across languages and cultures if one attends to context.

2.3 Openings in Broadcast and Podcast Talk

Openings in mediated talk often blend institutional and personal functions. Ilie (2001) describes this as 'semi-institutional discourse', especially in formats like political interviews or talk shows where hosts perform both organisational and interpersonal tasks. Podcast openings serve to greet listeners, introduce the episode or topic, and create a frame for what is to follow. This is typically achieved through a structured sequence involving greeting, identification and episode framing.

In podcasts, as Frobenius (2014) and Mustonen (2017) show, hosts often simulate interaction with an absent audience using phrases like 'Hey guys', 'Welcome back' or 'Today I want to talk to you about ...' This creates a faux-interactive format where the listener feels personally addressed, despite the monologic nature of the medium.

In Arabic podcasts, the equivalent is often 'Marhaban bikum' (welcome to you all) or 'Bismillah' (in the name of God), both of which do more than mark a beginning—these phrases align the speaker with religious values and establish a hospitable tone that reflects collectivist cultural norms (data drawn from the Waddah podcast).

2.4 Closings in Talk and Media Settings

Closings in CA are sequentially organised and usually involve pre-closings, appreciation and a final farewell (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973). In institutional discourse, these closings also fulfil genre expectations: in interviews, they often express thanks; in sermons, they often end with moral exhortation; and in podcasts, they often invite comments or subscriptions.

Martínez (2003) compared talk show closings with those in news interviews and found that talk shows tend to close with more emotional resonance, offering evaluative comments and praise. In Arabic media, Al-Saqqaf (2016) found that closings frequently feature prayers, religious blessings and collective thanks. For example, 'La tahrimuna min ta'liqatikum' (don't deprive us of your comments), as used in the Waddah podcast, is both a request and a community-building move. These phrases act as both interactional and ideological closings, projecting a moral closure in line with Islamic values of gratitude, modesty and reciprocity. Such closings cannot be fully understood through Western CA frameworks alone—they demand a culturally embedded approach that recognises their performative religious dimensions (Rabiah, 2018).

2.5 Turn-Taking Strategies in Podcast Discourse

Turn-taking strategies in podcasts are more controlled than in spontaneous conversation, in line with editing and monologic design. Stenström (1994) categorised turn-taking into strategies such as taking the turn (starting up, taking over), holding the turn (pauses, fillers) and yielding the turn (appealing, promoting or giving up). These are found across podcasts in various formats. In a recent study, Sa'adah et al. (2024) examined turn-taking in an English podcast and found that 'taking over' was the most frequently used strategy. Overlapping was minimal, and filled pauses helped speakers hold the floor. Similarly, Fitriana and Setiawan (2022) observed that verbal fillers and repetition were used to manage pacing and show hesitation without relinquishing the turn.

In Arabic podcasts, turn management is more deferential. Interruptions are rare, and transitions between speakers are often managed through explicit cues such as 'al-mic ma'ak' (the mic is yours; data drawn from the Waddah podcast). This reflects not only a preference for orderly talk but also a cultural imperative to show respect and avoid face-threatening acts.

2.6 The Role of Religious and Cultural Identity

Language in Arabic is not just a means of communication; it is a bearer of tradition, spirituality and social order. As Rabiah (2018) argues, linguistic rituals in Arabic reflect and reaffirm cultural identity. This is especially true in public discourse, where religious expressions such as 'Bismillah', 'Fi Aman Allah' and 'Alhamdulillah' (praise be to God) function as moral markers.

Blair (2017) noted that in English discourse, hesitation markers such as 'um' or 'like' manage processing. In Arabic, speakers more often use invocations or fixed phrases to hold space. For instance, instead of saying 'um', a podcast host might invoke a verse, cite a proverb or repeat a blessing. Bolden (2009) and Nordquist (2019) show that discourse markers carry cultural load; their replacement with religious or poetic language in Arabic podcast talk indicates a deep-rooted oral culture shaped by Qur'anic recitation and classical Arabic poetry. The Waddah podcast exemplifies this. It opens nearly every episode with 'Bismillah' and concludes with 'Fi Aman Allah', reinforcing not only structure but a sense of divine alignment (data drawn from the Waddah podcast).

2.7 Institutional and Personal Dimensions of Podcast Interaction

Paltridge (2012) and Gardner (2004) warn against assuming that podcasts are spontaneous. Many are scripted or semi-scripted, especially in their openings and closings. This scriptedness is not a limitation but a design choice that allows podcasts to maintain genre conventions while simulating conversational flow.

Bearis et al. (2023) and Tyas and Pratama (2022) argue that podcast hosts often reuse formulaic sequences—'Welcome back', 'Thanks for joining', 'That's all for today'—to manage listener expectations. In Arabic podcasts, the same is true but with different materials: 'Ahlan wa sahlan, Barak Allah fik, La tansaw du'a'na' (Don't forget our prayer). This blend of personal and institutional voice is a hallmark of Arabic discourse, where the speaker is often both narrator and moral guide, host and brother, expert and worshipper.

2.8 Summary and Research Gap

This literature review has outlined how CA, broadcast discourse analysis and cultural pragmatics offer powerful tools for analysing conversational boundaries. However, most studies remain centred on Anglophone media. There is a growing need to apply these frameworks to Arabic digital media—especially in Saudi Arabia, where new podcast formats blend Islamic discourse, cultural rituals and digital storytelling.

While Al-Saqqaf (2016) has studied Arabic media interviews, few have applied CA systematically to Arabic podcasts. This paper seeks to fill that gap by analysing openings and closings in the Waddah podcast and showing how they index cultural values through discourse structure. The Waddah podcast comprises an exemplar case as it opens nearly every episode with 'Bismillah' and concludes with 'Fi Aman Allah', reinforcing not only structure but a sense of divine alignment.

3. Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in CA and draws on cultural pragmatics and Arabic sociolinguistics to account for the culturally embedded features of podcast openings and closings.

3.1 Conversation Analysis (CA)

CA is a method of analysing the structure and sequential organisation of talk-in-interaction. It originated with Sacks et al. (1974) and was further refined in the work of Schegloff (2007) and Sidnell (2016). Central to CA is the idea that conversation is organised around systems of turn-taking, adjacency pairs and repair mechanisms, all of which are locally managed by speakers. Openings and closings are treated in CA as highly ordered and predictable structures. Openings typically involve summons—answer sequences, greetings, identity declarations and initial topic projections. Closings rely on pre-closing signals, expressions of gratitude and leave-taking formulas (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973). CA emphasises that these sequences are not universal in form but rather are culturally variable. This opens space for exploring how Arabic speakers, particularly in public or semi-institutional media genres, adapt these structures to fit religious, relational and cultural expectations.

3.2 Cultural Pragmatics and Arabic Discourse

While CA provides the structural tools for analysis, cultural pragmatics offers the lens to interpret the meanings and functions of specific expressions in their sociocultural context. In Arabic, openings and closings are often framed through religious invocations, honorific terms and communal language (Al-Saqqaf, 2016; Rabiah, 2018). These do not merely open or close conversations—they moralise, spiritualise and position the speaker within a web of collective values.

The invocation of 'Bismillah' (in the name of God), for example, is a speech act that asserts spiritual intent and authorises the discourse that follows. Similarly, phrases such as 'Fi Aman Allah' (may God keep you safe) are not only farewells but expressions of blessing and spiritual concern. Thus, this study uses CA to trace interactional patterns and cultural pragmatics to interpret them in light of Saudi Islamic discourse traditions.

4. Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

- 1. What are the structural and linguistic features of conversational openings and closings in Arabic-language podcasts?
- 2. How do cultural and religious norms influence the design and function of opening and closing sequences in Arabic podcast discourse?

These questions allow for both descriptive and interpretive analysis—identifying the patterns used by speakers and explaining their cultural significance.

5. Methodology

5.1 Research Design

The study adopts a qualitative, descriptive case study approach rooted in CA. It focuses on one podcast, Waddah, as an exemplar of Saudi Arabic media discourse. The choice of Waddah is based on its consistency in format, its cultural prominence and its stylistic richness in openings and closings. Waddah is a Saudi Arabic-language podcast characterised by structured dialogues with cultural, social and intellectual themes. Its distinctive blend of structured discourse and cultural authenticity makes it an exemplary platform for exploring conversational norms within contemporary Saudi digital media contexts.

The case study method is appropriate for discourse-level analysis where the aim is to examine patterns in naturally occurring data and understand them within a specific sociocultural framework.

5.2 Data Selection

Ten episodes of Waddah were selected for analysis. Episodes were chosen based on:

- Format consistency (all featuring one host and one guest)
- Availability of full-length recordings
- Thematic and linguistic richness in openings and closings.

Each episode was fully transcribed by the researcher in Arabic and translated into English. Both the original Arabic and the translated English were analysed to ensure accuracy and preserve culturally significant expressions.

5.3 Data Segmentation

For each episode, the following segments were isolated for analysis:

- Opening sequence: From the start of the episode until the first topic-specific question
- Closing sequence: From the first wrap-up cue to the final sign-off or leave-taking.

These segments were chosen because they represent the boundaries of talk, where interactional rituals are most pronounced.

5.4 Analytical Procedures

Using CA as a method, the transcripts were coded for:

- Turn types (opening move, greeting, identification, transition)
- Lexical routines (recurrent greetings, religious invocations, audience acknowledgments)
- Sequential structure (e.g., greeting → praise → episode framing)
- Paralinguistic features where available (tone, repetitions)

A qualitative thematic analysis was then applied to interpret how these sequences function within Saudi communicative norms.

5.5 Ethical Considerations

All data used in this study are publicly accessible recordings from the Waddah podcast. No private conversations or personal interviews were involved. The analysis focuses on speech patterns and cultural discourse, and pseudonyms were not required as the podcast participants are public figures.

6. Findings

This section presents the structural and pragmatic patterns identified in the conversational openings and closings of 10 selected episodes from Waddah. These patterns were coded according to CA principles and interpreted within the framework of cultural pragmatics and Arabic discourse traditions.

6.1 Structure of Conversational Openings

The analysis of openings revealed a five-part sequential structure that occurred in 90% or more of the episodes. These elements are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Structural Stages in Opening Sequences (N = 10)

Opening Component	Description	Frequency	Example Phrase (Eng)
Religious invocation	Invocation of God's name to begin	10/10	'In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious'
Formal greeting	Greeting addressed to audience and guest	10/10	'A thousand welcomes to you all'
Host introduction	Self-identification of host	10/10	'With me is your host, Abdul-llah Mu'aid'
Guest introduction + praise	Naming the guest with honorifics and sometimes poetic epithets	9/10	'The official ambassador of calm'
Framing and engagemen appeal	t Episode goal and call for suggestions/comments	9/10	'Before we begin, don't deprive us of your support'

These elements reflect both CA's model of structured openings and Arabic media norms of hospitality and spiritual orientation.

6.2 Structure of Conversational Closings

All episodes displayed a highly regular closing structure, consisting of four primary components (see Table 2).

Table 2: Structural Stages in Closing Sequences (N = 10)

Closing Component	Description	Frequency	/ Example Phrase (Eng)
Transition to end	Host signals nearing conclusion	10/10	'We are at the end of this episode'
Gratitude and acknowledgment	Appreciation of guest and audience	10/10	'You were a source of joy in this conversation'
Call to engage again	Request for comments or suggestions	10/10	'Don't deprive us of your comments'
Spiritual leave-taking	Religious farewell formula	10/10	'Fi Aman Allah' (may God keep you safe)

These closings align with the pre-closing and terminal sequences described by Schegloff and Sacks (1973), but they are distinctly shaped by Arabic formulaic and spiritual norms.

6.3 Culturally Embedded Expressions and Their Functions

In both openings and closings, certain expressions were repeated across episodes. These phrases serve as linguistic rituals that perform pragmatic and cultural functions beyond their literal meaning.

Table 3: Common Formulaic Expressions in Waddah Podcast Discourse

Arabic expression	Translation	Function	Found in
بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم	In the name of God	Religious authorisation of discourse	Openings
مرحبا ألف وحياكم الله	A thousand welcomes	Formal greeting, social alignment	Openings
يعطيك العافية	May God grant you wellness	Expression of thanks and respect	Closings
لا تحرمونا من تعليقاتكم	Don't deprive us of your comments	Call to communal engagement	Closings
في أمان الله	In God's protection	Religious farewell and moral closure	Closings

These expressions are not fillers or pleasantries; they are indexical signs that reflect Islamic ethics, social etiquette and relational positioning (Al-Saqqaf, 2016; Rabiah, 2018).

6.4 Summary of Phrase Frequency

In the actual paper submission, the frequency of formulaic expressions across all episodes. Here's a summary description of the proposed figure:

Figure 1: Frequency of Key Formulaic Expressions Across Ten Episodes

A bar graph with five bars labelled 'Bismillah', 'Marhaban alf', 'Ya'tik al-'afiyah', 'La tahrimuna' and 'Fi Aman Allah'. Each bar indicates near-total or full appearance across episodes, with most phrases appearing in 9–10 out of 10 episodes.

This visualisation would support the claim that such expressions are structurally embedded and pragmatically essential to Saudi podcast discourse.

6.5 Excerpts from the Corpus

To illustrate these patterns, here are two representative excerpts, drawn from the Waddah podcast:

Opening Example:

'Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Rahim ... Marhaban alf wa hayyakum Allah fi halqah jadeedah min podcast Waddah ...' (In the name of God ... A thousand welcomes to you all in a new episode of Waddah podcast)

Closing Example:

'Shukran lak ya Shaykh ... la tahrimuna min ta'liqatikum ... Fi Aman Allah' (Thank you, Sheikh ... don't deprive us of your comments ... may God keep you safe)

These excerpts clearly demonstrate the sequence, function and formulaicity of conversational boundaries in this genre.

7. Discussion

This section interprets the results in light of the two guiding research questions: (1) the structural and linguistic features of openings and closings in Saudi podcasts, and (2) the influence of cultural and religious norms on those structures. The discussion synthesises insights from the data with theoretical perspectives in CA, cultural pragmatics and Arabic discourse studies.

7.1 Ritualised Openings as Moral and Relational Frameworks

The findings demonstrate that opening sequences in Waddah are not arbitrary or stylistically motivated, but follow a clear, ritualised pattern. Every episode opens with a religious invocation (Bismillah), followed by hyperbolic greetings (Marhaban alf wa hayyakum Allah), host and guest introductions and a framing device that encourages audience participation.

In CA, openings are usually constructed from summons—answer sequences, greetings and topic projections (Schegloff, 2007; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973). While these are present in Waddah, they are elaborated through religious and cultural forms specific to Saudi discourse. The phrase 'Bismillah' is not a greeting but a ritual declaration that frames the talk as spiritually aligned. This exceeds the function of a phatic act and constitutes what Blum-Kulka (1992) might call a speech act of sanctification.

The poetic and honorific introductions of guests ('the official ambassador of calm', 'son of all civilisations') further support the role of positive politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987) and cultural face-work. Such praise serves not only to elevate the guest's status but also to align the host with the audience by modeling collective respect and generosity. This reflects what Ilie (2001) described in talk shows as 'semi-institutional' discourse—blending ceremonial formality with social intimacy. In Saudi podcasts, however, the ceremonial is not a veneer but a deeply held communicative norm, rooted in Islamic values of ikram al-daif (honouring the quest).

7.2 Closings as Sites of Moral Closure and Communal Solidarity

Similar to openings, closings in Waddah follow a fixed structure: transition cues ('we're reaching the end'), guest appreciation, community appeals and religious farewells (Fi Aman Allah). These elements align structurally with CA's model of pre-closing and terminal pairs but also perform additional pragmatic work in Saudi Arabic.

Where Western podcasts may close with requests to 'subscribe' or 'leave a review', Waddah closes with communal imperatives such as 'la tahrimuna min ta'liqatikum' (don't deprive us of your comments). This creates a sense of shared responsibility, reflecting the collectivist culture of Saudi Arabia, where audience interaction is not only welcomed but morally encouraged (Rabiah, 2018). The religious farewell 'Fi Aman Allah' is especially significant. It is not a simple 'goodbye' but a spiritual handover, entrusting the listener to divine protection. This transforms the closing into a moral performance, consistent with Islamic discourse traditions. Al-Saqqaf (2016) found similar patterns in Arabic television interviews, where closings often included blessings, supplications or religious leave-taking, reinforcing the spiritual frame of the interaction.

7.3 Formulaic Expressions as Pragmatic Anchors

The repeated use of formulaic expressions such as 'Bismillah', 'Ya'tik al-'afiyah' (may God grant you wellness) and 'Marhaban alf' points to their role as pragmatic anchors. These are not simply idioms but ritual tools that anchor discourse in shared social values (Rabiah, 2018). Such expressions serve multiple roles:

- Structuring the conversation (signalling beginning or end)
- Indexing identity (as pious, respectful, community-oriented)
- Mitigating face-threats (especially in transition moments)
- Inviting alignment (between speaker and audience).

Frobenius (2011, 2014) and Mustonen (2017) have shown that, even in monologic genres such as vlogs or podcasts, speakers use conversational techniques to simulate presence and connection. In Saudi Arabic discourse, this is achieved not through casualness or informality but through ritual speech, which intensifies rather than softens social bonds.

7.4 Comparison with Western Podcast Practices

A significant finding of this study is the contrast between Saudi Arabic and English-language podcasting norms. In many Western podcasts, openings may begin with casual banter, music or sponsorship ads. Closings often include promotional calls to action ('rate us on iTunes') or witty sign-offs (Ilie, 2001; Mustonen, 2017). In contrast, the Waddah podcast adheres to predictable, culturally saturated scripts. These include religious, poetic and communal language, which serve not only to open or close but to establish ethical authority. This aligns with the concept of addressivity (Morson, 2006), where speakers construct utterances with imagined others in mind—not just listeners but moral witnesses (e.g., God, society, elders).

This difference is not merely stylistic but reflects deeper sociopragmatic distinctions:

- Western discourse privileges spontaneity and individuality.
- Saudi Arabic discourse privileges structure, formality and collectivity.

7.5 Implications for CA and Arabic Discourse Analysis

These findings extend the applicability of CA in several ways:

- 1. CA in non-Western contexts: This study affirms that CA principles are applicable beyond Anglophone cultures but must be reinterpreted to account for local communicative norms (Sidnell, 2016).
- 2. Openings and closings as cultural scripts: Rather than universal structures, openings and closings should be seen as cultural scripts (Wierzbicka, 2003), encoded with religious, moral and social expectations.
- 3. Reconceptualising turn boundaries: In Arabic discourse, especially in media formats, boundaries between turns are often sanctified or poetically framed, making them less about functional transition and more about social positioning.
- 4. Spoken religious pragmatics: This study demonstrates the power of religious pragmatics—how invocations, blessings and farewells do more than express faith; they structure public discourse.

8. Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that conversational openings and closings in the Waddah podcast, a Saudi Arabic-language program, are highly structured, culturally saturated and pragmatically consequential. Drawing on 10 full episode transcripts and guided by CA and cultural pragmatics, the analysis revealed consistent patterns of religious invocation, hyperbolic politeness, honorific guest framing and spiritual farewell.

Whereas traditional CA describes openings and closings in terms of turn-taking systems, pre-sequences and adjacency pairs, the Saudi podcasting context redefines these boundaries through moralised and collectivist discourse. Expressions such as 'Bismillah', 'Marhaban alf' and 'Fi Aman Allah' are not ornamental—they are functional, ritualised and essential to establishing speaker ethos and listener alignment.

This research contributes to the field of digital discourse studies by illustrating how podcasting in Arabic-speaking contexts is not simply a localised version of a global genre, but a discursive space where Islamic etiquette, social face-work and oral poetics converge. The findings not only extend CA into a culturally underexplored territory but also raise important questions about the globalisation of genre norms and the adaptability of pragmatic frameworks across languages.

9. Contributions and Implications

9.1 Theoretical Contributions

- The study enriches CA by demonstrating how universal structures such as turn openings and closings are localised through ritual and religious language.
- It highlights the need for integrating cultural pragmatics into CA frameworks, especially when dealing with highcontext, religiously influenced cultures.

9.2 Methodological Contributions

- Provides a model for analysing podcast talk in Arabic, using CA principles adapted to culturally unique routines.
- Offers a replicable transcription and segmentation protocol for podcast boundary analysis.

9.3 Applied Contributions

- Useful for Arabic-language podcast producers interested in aligning content with cultural expectations.
- Provides insight for educators, media analysts and sociolinguists studying mediated discourse in Islamic contexts.

10. Limitations and Future Research

While the findings of this study are robust and thematically rich, several limitations are worth noting:

- Corpus scope: The study focused solely on 10 episodes of one podcast (Waddah). While this allowed for in-depth analysis, future work should compare across different podcasts or genres.
- Gender representation: All episodes analysed involved male hosts and guests. Exploring gendered variation in Arabic podcast talk is a necessary next step.
- Listener reception: This study focused on the production of discourse; future studies could include reception analysis, such as how audiences interpret and respond to openings and closings.

Further research might also explore regional variation, especially between Gulf, Levantine and North African Arabic podcasting traditions, or examine multimodal elements in video podcast versions.

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Data Drawn From the Waddah Podcast

Greetings Leave-Taking

:النص العربي

مرحبا ألف وحياكم الله في حلقّة جديدة من بودكاست وضاح من منصة شيم، معي أنا عبد الإله معيض، ضيفنا اليوم أبو أسامة سعد آل عوضة.. مرحبا ألف يا بو أسامة

:(Transliteration) الكتابة الصوتية

Marhaban alf wa hayyakum Allah fi halqah jadeedah min podcast Waddah min munsat Shem, ma'i ana Abdul-Ilah Mu'aid, dayfuna alyawm Abu Osama Sa'ad Al-Awadhah.. Marhaban alf ya Abu Osama

:الترجمة الإنجليزية

A warm welcome to you all in a new episode of Waddah Podcast from the Shem platform. I'm Abdul-Ilah Mu'aid, and our guest today is Abu Osama Sa'ad Al-Awadhah.. A thousand welcomes, Abu Osama!

:النص العربي

والله كنت مصدر سعادة في هذه الحلقة...شاكر ومقدر والله يابو أسامة حضورك والله ممتن لحضورك ...إحنا في نهاية الحلقة إذا تريدتضيف شيء أو تقول حاجة المايك لك

الشكر لكم أنتم متابعي قناة وضاح لا تحرمونا من تعليقاتكم في أمان الله

(Transliteration): الكتابة الصوتية

Wallahi kunta masdar sa'ada fi hadhihi al-halqah... shakir wa muqaddir wallah ya Abu Usama hudurak wallah mumtannin lihudurak ... Ihna fi nihayat al-halqah idha turid tudaif shay aw taqul haja, al-mic lak....

Ash-shukr lakum antum mutabi'i qanat Waddah, la tahrimuna min ta'liqatikum, fi aman Allah

:الترجمة الإنجليزية

By God, you were a source of joy in this episode... I am grateful and appreciative, Abu Osama, for your presence, and truly thankful for having you here... We are at the end of the episode, so if you'd like to add anything or say something, the mic is yours....

Thanks to all of you, the followers of Waddah Channel, don't deprive us of your comments. Take care, and may God keep you safe.

:النص العربي

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم.. مرحبا ألف وحياكم الله في حلقة جديدة في بودكاست وضاح من إذاعة شيم، معي أنا عبد الإله معيض. قبل أن نبدأ، لا تحرمونا دعمكم... اقتراحاتكم... ضيفنا اليوم الراعي الرسمي ...للروقان والراعي الرسمي للمزاج... مرحبا ألف يا بو مشعل

(Transliteration):

Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Rahim.. Marhaban alf wa hayyakum Allah fi halqah jadeedah fi podcast Waddah min idha'at Shem, ma'i ana Abdul-Ilah Mu'aid. Qabla an nabda', la tahrimuna da'makum... iqtirahatikum... dayfuna alyawm ar-ra'i ar-rasmi lil-rooqan wal-ra'i ar-rasmi lil-mazaaj... Marhaban alf ya Abu Mish'al...

:الترجمة الإنجليزية

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful... A thousand welcomes to you all in a new episode of Waddah Podcast from Shem Radio. I'm Abdul-Ilah Mu'aid. Before we begin, don't hold back your support... your suggestions... Our guest today is the official sponsor of relaxation and the official sponsor of good vibes... A thousand welcomes, Abu Mish'al!

:النص العربي

يعطيك العافية يابو مشعل...شاكرين ومقدرين حضورك إحنا على وشك نختم فيه شي تبغى تضيفه... ما قلناه في المحاور...رسالة تبغى توجهها المايك لك

الشكر لكم أنتم متابعي قناة وضاح لا تحرمونا من تعليقاتكم في أمان الله

(Transliteration): الكتابة الصوتية

Ya'atik al-'afiyah ya Abu Mish'al... shakirin wa muqaddirin hudurak, ihna 'ala washak nakhtim, fi shay tibgha tudaifuh... ma qulnaahu fi al-mahawir... risalah tibgha tuwajjihha, al-mic

Ash-shukr lakum antum mutabi'i qanat Waddah, la tahrimuna min ta'liqatikum, fi aman Allah

:الترجمة الإنجليزية

May God grant you wellness, Abu Mish'al... We are grateful and appreciative of your presence. We are about to conclude; is there anything you'd like to add... something we haven't covered in the topics... a message you'd like to share?

The mic is yours.

Thanks to all of you, the followers of Waddah Channel. Don't deprive us of your comments. Take care, and may God keep you safe.

Greetings Leave-Taking

:النص العربي

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم.. مرحبا ألف وحياكم الله في حلقة جديدة في بودكاست وضاح من إذاعة شيم، معي أنا عبد الإله معيض. قبل أن نبدأ، لا تحرمونا دعمكم... اقتراحاتكم... باسمي واسمكم أرحب بضيفنااليوم، عضو اللجنة العقارية... مرحبا ألف يا بو محمد

(Transliteration): الكتابة الصوتية

Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Rahim.. Marhaban alf wa hayyakum Allah fi halqah jadeedah fi podcast Waddah min idha'at Shem, ma'i ana Abdul-Ilah Mu'aid. Qabla an nabda', la tahrimuna da'makum... iqtirahatikum... bismi wa bismikum urahhibu bidayfina alyawm, 'udw al-lajnah al-'aqariyyah... Marhaban alf ya Abu Muhammad...

:الترجمة الإنجليزية

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful... A thousand welcomes to you all in a new episode of Waddah Podcast from Shem Radio. I'm Abdul-Ilah Mu'aid. Before we begin, don't hold back your support... your suggestions... On behalf of myself and all of you, I welcome our guest today, a member of the Real Estate Committee... A thousand welcomes. Abu Muhammad!

أبد إحنا على نهاية الحلقة الله يوفقك إذا تبغى تضيف أي شيء يابو محمد المايك لك الشكر لكم أنتم متابعي قناة وضاح لا تحرمونا من تعليقاتكم في أمان الله

:النص العربي

الكتابة الصوتية (Transliteration): Abadan, ihna 'ala nihayat al-halqah, Allah yuwafiqak, idha tibgha tudaif ay shay ya Abu Muhammad, al-mic lak Ash-shukr lakum antum mutabi'i qanat Waddah, la tahrimuna min ta'liqatikum, fi aman Allah

:الترجمة الإنجليزية

That's it, we're at the end of the episode. May God grant you success. If you'd like to add anything, Abu Muhammad, the mic is yours.

Thanks to all of you, the followers of Waddah Channel. Don't deprive us of your comments. Take care, and may God keep you safe.

:النص العربي

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم.. مرحبا ألف وحياكم الله في حلقة جديدة في بودكاست وضاح من إذاعة شيم، معي أنا عبد الإله معيض. قبل أن نبدأ، لا تحرمونا دعمكم... اقتراحاتكم... باسمي واسمكم أرحب بمستشار التدريب والتعليم المهني، الأستاذ.. مرحبا ألف يا بو يزيد

(Transliteration): الكتابة الصوتية

Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Rahim.. Marhaban alf wa hayyakum Allah fi halqah jadeedah fi podcast Waddah min idha'at Shem, ma'i ana Abdul-Ilah Mu'aid. Qabla an nabda', la tahrimuna da'makum... iqtirahatikum... bismi wa bismikum urahhibu bimushtashar at-tadreeb wa at-ta'leem al-mihani, al-ustadh... Marhaban alf ya Abu Yazid.

:الترجمة الإنجليزية

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful... A thousand welcomes to you all in a new episode of Waddah Podcast from Shem Radio. I'm Abdul-Ilah Mu'aid. Before we begin, don't hold back your support... your suggestions... On behalf of myself and all of you, I welcome the training and vocational education consultant, Mr.... A thousand welcomes, Abu Yazid!

:النص العربي

الوقت مر بسرعة جدا جدا إحنا في نهاية الحلقة استمتعنا بالحديث معك إذا تبغى تضيف أي شيء المايك معك الشكر لكم أنتم متابعي قناة وضاح لا تحرمونا من تعليقاتكم في أمان

الكتابة الصوتية (Transliteration):

Al-waqt marra bisur'ah jiddan jiddan, ihna fi nihayat alhalqah, istamta'na bil-hadith ma'ak, idha tibgha tudaif ay shay, al-mic ma'ak

Ash-shukr lakum antum mutabi'i qanat Waddah, la tahrimuna min ta'liqatikum, fi aman Allah

:الترجمة الانحليزية

Time passed by very, very quickly. We are at the end of the episode, and we truly enjoyed our conversation with you. If you'd like to add anything, the mic is yours.

Thanks to all of you, the followers of Waddah Channel. Don't deprive us of your comments. Take care, and may God keep you safe.

Greetings Leave-Taking

:النص العربي

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم.. مرحبا ألف وحياكم الله في حلقة جديدة في بودكاست وضاح من إذاعة شيم، معي أنا عبد الإله معيض. قبل أن نبدأ، لا تحرمونا دعمكم... اقتراحاتكم... باسمي واسمكم أرحب بأخي ...وصديقي أبو خماش

(Transliteration): الكتابة الصوتية

Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Rahim.. Marhaban alf wa hayyakum Allah fi halqah jadeedah fi podcast Waddah min idha'at Shem, ma'i ana Abdul-Ilah Mu'aid. Qabla an nabda', la tahrimuna da'makum... iqtirahatikum... bismi wa bismikum urahhibu bi-akhi wa sadeegi Abu Khammash...

:الترجمة الإنجليزية

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful... A thousand welcomes to you all in a new episode of Waddah Podcast from Shem Radio. I'm Abdul-Ilah Mu'aid. Before we begin, don't hold back your support... your suggestions... On behalf of myself and all of you, I welcome my brother and friend, Abu Khammash...

:النص العربي

الله يعطيك العافية في الختام من الحلقة أنا ما ودي إنها تنتهي صراحة أقسم بالله كنت شخص جميل ...رسالة في الأخير كلمة ودك توجهها لأحد المايك معك

الشكر لكم أنتم متابعي قناة وضاح لا تحرمونا من تعليقاتكم في أمان الله

(Transliteration): الكتابة الصوتية

Allah ya'atik al-'afiyah, fi al-khitam min al-halqah, ana ma widdi innaha tantahi, saraahah, uqsim billah kunta shakhs jameel ... risalah fi al-akhir, kalimah widdak tuwajjihha li ahad, al-mic ma'ak

Ash-shukr lakum antum mutabi'i qanat Waddah, la tahrimuna min ta'liqatikum, fi aman Allah

:الترجمة الإنجليزية

May God grant you wellness. As we conclude this episode, I honestly don't want it to end. I swear, you have been a wonderful person ... A final message—any words you'd like to direct to someone? The mic is yours.

Thanks to all of you, the followers of Waddah Channel. Don't deprive us of your comments. Take care, and may God keep you safe.

:النص العربي

مرحبا ألف وحياكم الله في حلقة جديدة في بودكاست وضاح من إذاعة شيم، معي أنا عبد الإله معيض. قبل أن نبدأ، لا تحرمونا دعمكم... اقتراحاتكم... باسمي واسمكم أرحب بابن كل الحضارات وابن كل التضاريس، الأستاذ مرحبا ألف يا بو باسل

(Transliteration): الكتابة الصوتية

Marhaban alf wa hayyakum Allah fi halqah jadeedah fi podcast Waddah min idha'at Shem, ma'i ana Abdul-llah Mu'aid. Qabla an nabda', la tahrimuna da'makum... iqtirahatikum... bismi wa bismikum urahhibu bi-ibn kull alhadarat wa ibn kull at-tadaris, al-ustadh Marhaban alf ya Abu Basel.

:الترجمة الإنجليزية

A thousand welcomes to you all in a new episode of Waddah Podcast from Shem Radio. I'm Abdul-Ilah Mu'aid. Before we begin, don't hold back your support... your suggestions... On behalf of myself and all of you, I welcome the son of all civilizations and the son of all landscapes, Mr. A thousand welcomes. Abu Basel!

:النص العربي

الله يعطيك العافية...شاكرين ومقدرين لك يابو باسل الشكر لكم أنتم متابعي قناة وضاح لا تحرمونا من تعليقاتكم في أمان الله

(Transliteration): الكتابة الصوتية

Allah ya'atik al-'afiyah... shakirin wa muqaddirin lak ya Abu Basel

Ash-shukr lakum antum mutabi'i qanat Waddah, la tahrimuna min ta'liqatikum, fi aman Allah

:الترجمة الإنجليزية

May God grant you wellness... We are grateful and appreciative, Abu Basel

Thanks to all of you, the followers of Waddah Channel. Don't deprive us of your comments. Take care, and may God keep you safe.

Greetings Leave-Taking

:النص العربي

مرحبا ألف وحياكم الله في حلقة جديدة في بودكاست وضاح من اذاعة شيم، معى أنا عبد الاله معيض. قبل أن نبدأ، لا تحرمونا دعمكم... اقتراحاتكم... باسمى واسمكم أرحب بضيفي ومعلمي وخبير اللغة عندنا في عسير والمملكة بشكل عام، البروفيسورمرحبا ألف يا بو الطيب

(Transliteration): الكتابة الصوتية

Marhaban alf wa hayyakum Allah fi halqah jadeedah fi podcast Waddah min idha'at Shem, ma'i ana Abdul-Ilah Mu'aid. Qabla an nabda', la tahrimuna da'makum... iqtirahatikum... bismi wa bismikum urahhibu bidayfi wa mu'allimi wa khabeer al-lughah 'indana fi Aseer wa al-Mamlakah bishakl 'aam, al-brofesor Marhaban alf ya Abu At-Tayyib.

:الترجمة الانحليزية

A thousand welcomes to you all in a new episode of Waddah Podcast from Shem Radio. I'm Abdul-Ilah Mu'aid. Before we begin, don't hold back your support... your suggestions... On behalf of myself and all of you, I welcome my guest, my mentor, and the language expert in Aseer and the Kingdom in general, Professor A thousand welcomes, Abu At-Tayvib!

:النص العربي

الله يعطيك العافية يابو الطيب شاكر ومقدر لكل هذا الحضور وهذه

الإيجابية الشكر لكم أنتم متابعي قناة وضاح لا تحرمونا من تعليقاتكم في أمان الله

(Transliteration): الكتابة الصوتية

Allah ya'atik al-'afiyah ya Abu At-Tayyib, shakir wa muqaddir likul hadha al-hudur wa hadhihi al-ijabiyyah Ash-shukr lakum antum mutabi'i qanat Waddah, la tahrimuna min ta'liqatikum, fi aman Allah

:الترجمة الانجليزية

May God grant you wellness, Abu At-Tayyib. I am grateful and appreciative for all this presence and positivity. Thanks to all of you, the followers of Waddah Channel. Don't deprive us of your comments. Take care, and may God keep you safe.

:النص العربي

مرحبا ألف وحياكم الله في حلقة جديدة في بودكاست وضاح من اُذاعة شيم، معى أنا عبد الإله معيض. قبل أن نبدأ، لا تحرمونا دعمكم... اقتراحاتكم... باسمى واسمكم أرحب بالإعلامي القدير.... .مرحبا ألف يا بو فارس

(Transliteration): الكتابة الصوتية

Marhaban alf wa hayyakum Allah fi halgah jadeedah fi podcast Waddah min idha'at Shem, ma'i ana Abdul-Ilah Mu'aid. Qabla an nabda', la tahrimuna da'makum... iqtirahatikum... bismi wa bismikum urahhibu bil-i'lami algadeer..... Marhaban alf ya Abu Faris.

:الترجمة الانحليزية

A thousand welcomes to you all in a new episode of Waddah Podcast from Shem Radio. I'm Abdul-llah Mu'aid. Before we begin, don't hold back your support... your suggestions... On behalf of myself and all of you, I welcome the esteemed journalist..... A thousand welcomes, Abu Faris!

:النص العربي

الله يعطيك العافية يابو فارس شاكر ومقدر حضورك، الحلقة غريبة صراحة، كان فيها صعود وهبوط غريب، إحنا في نهاية الحلقة، إذا حاب تقول شيء، المايك معك

الشكر لكم أنتم متابعي قناة وضاح، لا تحرمونا من تعليقاتكم، في أمان الله

(Transliteration): الكتابة الصوتية

Allah ya'atik al-'afiyah ya Abu Faris, shakir wa muqaddir hudurak, al-halqah gharibah saraahah, kan fiha su'ud wa hubut gharib, ihna fi nihayat al-halgah, idha habb tagul shay, al-mic ma'ak

Ash-shukr lakum antum mutabi'i qanat Waddah, la tahrimuna min ta'liqatikum, fi aman Allah

:الترجمة الإنجليزية

May God grant you wellness, Abu Faris. I am grateful and appreciative of your presence. Honestly, this episode was strange—it had some unexpected ups and downs. We are at the end of the episode, so if you'd like to say something, the mic is yours.

Thanks to all of you, the followers of Waddah Channel. Don't deprive us of your comments. Take care, and may God keep you safe.

Greetings Leave-Taking

:النص العربي

مرحبا ألف وحياكم الله في حلقة جديدة في بودكاست وضاح من إِذَاعة شيمٌ، معي أنا عبد الإله معيض. قبل أن نبدأ، لا تحرمونا دعمكم... اقتراحاتكم... باسمى واسمكم أرحب بأستاذ المنذر، حياك الله يا يو أحمد.

(Transliteration): الكتابة الصوتية

Marhaban alf wa hayyakum Allah fi halqah jadeedah fi podcast Waddah min idha'at Shem, ma'i ana Abdul-Ilah Mu'aid. Qabla an nabda', la tahrimuna da'makum... igtirahatikum... bismi wa bismikum urahhibu bil-ustadh Al-Munthir, hayyak Allah ya Abu Ahmed.

:الترحمة الانحليزية

A thousand welcomes to you all in a new episode of Waddah Podcast from Shem Radio. I'm Abdul-Ilah Mu'aid. Before we begin, don't hold back your support... your suggestions... On behalf of myself and all of you, I welcome Professor Al-Munthir. Welcome, Abu Ahmed!

:النص العربي شكرا لك ياشيخ، الشكر موصول لكم أنتم متابعي قناة وضاح، لا تحرمونا من تعليقاتكم، في أمان الله

(Transliteration): الكتابة الصوتية

Shukran lak ya Shaykh, ash-shukr mawsul lakum antum mutabi'i qanat Waddah, la tahrimuna min ta'liqatikum, fi aman Allah

:الترجمة الإنحليزية

Thank you, Sheikh. Our gratitude also goes to you, the followers of Waddah Channel. Don't deprive us of your comments. Take care, and may God keep you safe.

:النص العربي

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم ... مرحبا ألف وحياكم الله في حلقة جديدة من بودكاست وضاح من إذاعة شيم، معى أنا عبدالإله معيض. قبل أن نُبدأُ الحلقة، الْشكرَ لله أُولًا وأخيرًا، ومن لا يشكر الناس لا يشكر الله. شكرًا لكم أنتم، لأننا منكم وإليكم. وصلنا إلى 100 ألف مشترك ... تجاوزنا 100 مليون مشاهدة، وهذا بفضل الله ثم دعمكم ... باسمي وباسمكم نرحب بالمستشار التربوي والمختص في المهارات الحياتية الناعمة، الأستاذ الدكتور مرحبا ألف يا دكتور.

(Transliteration): الكتابة الصوتية

Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Rahim ... Marhaban alf wa hayyakum Allah fi halqah jadeedah min podcast Waddah min idha'at Shem, ma'i ana Abdul-Ilah Mu'aid. Qabla an nabda' alhalgah, ash-shukr lillah awwalan wa akhiran, wa man la yashkur an-nas la yashkur Allah. Shukran lakum antum, li'annana minkum wa ilaykum. Wasalna ila 100 alf mushtarik ... tajawazna 100 milyun mushahadah, wa hadha bifadl Allah thumma da'makum ... bismi wa bismikum nurahhibu bilmustashar at-tarbawi wal-mukhtass fi al-maharat alhayatiyah an-na'ima, al-ustadh ad-doctor Marhaban alf ya doctor.

:الترجمة الإنجليزية

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful... A thousand welcomes to you all in a new episode of Waddah Podcast from Shem Radio. I'm Abdul-Ilah Mu'aid. Before we begin, all praise and thanks go to Allah first and foremost, and as the saying goes, "Whoever does not thank people does not thank Allah." Thank you all, for we are from you and for you. We have reached 100,000 subscribers ... we have surpassed 100 million views, and this is by the grace of Allah and then your support ... On behalf of myself and all of you, we welcome the educational consultant and expert in soft life skills, Professor Dr. A thousand welcomes, Doctor!

النص العربي: الله يعطيك العافية يابو أحمد ..أعتقد لا أنا ولا فريق العمل إلا يوافقك وتحمسنا كثير للزواج ريد الشكر لكم أنتم متابعي قناة وضاح لا تحرمونا من تعليقاتكم في أمان

(Transliteration): الكتابة الصوتية

Allah ya'atik al-'afiyah ya Abu Ahmed .. a'taqid la ana wa la fareeg al-'amal illa yuwaffigak wa tahammassna katheeran lilzawaj

Ash-shukr lakum antum mutabi'i ganat Waddah, la tahrimuna min ta'liqatikum, fi aman Allah.

:الترجمة الإنجليزية

May God grant you wellness, Abu Ahmed. I think both the team and I completely agree with you, and we got really excited about marriage.

Thanks to all of you, the followers of Waddah Channel. Don't deprive us of your comments. Take care, and may God keep you safe.