

## CULTURE-SPECIFIC PROPERTIES OF GREETINGS IN ACEHNESE AND TURKISH: A SOCIOLINGUISTIC STUDY IN CONVERSATIONAL OPENING

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### Abstract

People from different cultural backgrounds and geographical locations perform different types of greetings. This paper aims to examine the differences between Acehnese and Turkish greetings reflected in the types, forms, and functions. Forty people were involved in this study. Half of them are fluent Acehnese speakers who live in Banda Aceh, Greater Aceh, and Sabang. The other half are Turkish people who live in the Turkish-speaking community in Aceh. The data were collected from direct observation and survey. The observation method, which included both the Involved Conversational Observation Technique and the Uninvolved Conversational Observation Technique techniques, was used to obtain the data from the Turkish subjects. Meanwhile, the survey was used to collect the data from the Acehnese subjects. The results showed that while speakers from both countries use verbal/non-verbal as well as formal/non-formal greetings, Acehnese greetings are quite limited. Furthermore, Acehnese used seasonal greetings only for Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha, whereas Turkish used them in various ways. The greetings in Turkish are divided into two categories: time-bound greetings and time-free greetings.

**Keywords:** greetings, cultural differences, Acehnese, Turkish

### Abstrak

*Orang-orang dari latar belakang dan lokasi geografis yang berbeda menggunakan salam yang berbeda pula. Tulisan ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji perbedaan salam antara masyarakat Aceh dan Turki yang tercermin dari jenis, bentuk, dan fungsinya. Empat puluh orang terlibat dalam penelitian ini. Setengah dari mereka adalah penutur fasih bahasa Aceh yang tinggal di Banda Aceh, Aceh Besar, dan Sabang. Separuh lainnya adalah penduduk Turki yang tinggal di komunitas berbahasa Turki di Aceh. Data penelitian dikumpulkan dari observasi langsung dan survei. Metode observasi, yang meliputi metode simak libat cakap (SLC) dan simak bebas libat cakap (SBLC), digunakan untuk memperoleh data dari subjek Turki, sedangkan kuesioner digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data dari subjek Aceh. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa meskipun penutur dari kedua negara menggunakan salam verbal/non-verbal dan salam formal/non-formal, salam dalam bahasa Aceh terbatas. Selain itu, masyarakat Aceh menggunakan salam musiman hanya ketika Idul Fitri dan Idul Adha, sedangkan salam dalam bahasa Turki digunakan dengan berbagai cara. Ada dua kategori salam dalam bahasa Turki, yaitu salam terikat waktu dan salam bebas waktu.*

**Kata kunci:** salam, perbedaan budaya, bahasa Aceh, bahasa Turki

## INTRODUCTION

Greeting is widely used in daily interaction to open a social relationship. It is the foundation of communication to determine whether there is a possibility for further communication between the parties involved. This ritualistic act of communication has been claimed to be the boundary of conversation (Jucker, 2017), since what follows is determined by the starting exchange of content and context. For this reason, greeting has become an “access ritual” that facilitates and initiates the communication processes (Meirbekov et al., 2015). For example, if a stranger greets us with ‘Hello’ on the street, we have the choice to reciprocate the exchange or not. The interactions that follow are determined by our own choice.

However, due to different cultural backgrounds, history, and geographical location, greetings are performed in many different ways. For example, in the United States, people emphasize individual freedom and rights, while Confucianism adheres to strict hierarchy and ethics (Zhu & Liu, 2020). Differences in linguistic backgrounds also influence different ways of greeting strategies during interactions. Certain groups of people might use similar greetings even though they do not share the same linguistic backgrounds. For example, Muslims from different nationalities, cultural backgrounds, ethnicities, and linguistic backgrounds greet each other using the same standard salutation *salam* or *as-salāmu ‘alaykum*.

In the present study, we compare the greeting properties of Acehnese and Turkish by examining the conversational openings in both languages. We limit the scope of the study to three criteria, namely the types, forms, and functions of greetings in the two languages. The reasoning behind this framework is based on three basic explanations.

First, the study of greetings is part of a sociolinguistic study. Hence, comparing language properties with no societal associations will overrule some of the important and interesting aspects of the topic, perhaps even narrowing the view of the language disciplines themselves. If we study the language without referring to the people who use it, we exclude the possibility of finding a social explanation for the structure used. From the perspective of sociolinguistics, the appeal of language attitude is related to the socio-cultural values it alludes with. A person’s way of speaking reflects the social group he belongs to, the social implications of his speech, values, beliefs, and perspectives on life (Sumarsono, 2002).

Second, the phrase “language is a guide to social reality” (Sapir, 1956, p.69) is in line with the Indonesian expression *bahasa menunjukkan bangsa* ‘language shows the nation’. Both imply that language is a reflection of the socio-cultural reality in a society. Language and culture are akin to a coin, in which language system resides on one side and cultural system dwells on the other, but both come from the same package (Sizler, 1990 as cited in Chaer and Agustina, 2010, p. 168). However, different cultures and different languages have their own concepts and paradigms. The two share a very strong relationship and influence each other. The cultural values of a society have a strong connotation to their language and vice versa.

The third one is the historical relationships, religious affiliations, and daily-interaction practices between people from Aceh and Turkey. As reported by a Turkish newspaper published during the Aceh-Dutch war (1875) in 1516, the Sultan of Aceh named Firman Syah contacted Siman Pasa, the vizier of Sultan Selim I of Turkey, to establish a bilateral relationship between the two countries (Susiyanto, 2016). In terms of religion, all Acehnese and the majority of Turkish are Muslims. Interestingly, both are bound with the same cultural practices where the

people love spending time at coffee shops, which is known as *kahvehane* in Turkey, for a discussion or chat. From our experience after observing both Acehnese and Turkish interactions, there are differences in how they use greetings in their daily lives. Acehnese people do not use greetings too often when they interact with each other, while Turkish people are accustomed to using greetings in their daily interactions, even to non-Turkish speakers.

Many studies have been conducted regarding greetings in various languages around the world. These studies focused on greetings in different linguistic perspectives, for example, greetings based on socio-pragmatic analysis (e.g., Akindele, 2007; Blattner & Fiori, 2011; Salmani-Nodoushan, 2006; Shleykina, 2019), politeness norms in greetings (e.g., Almoaily & Riyadh, 2018; Bouchara, 2015; Michno, 2017; Odebunmi, 2013), and speech acts in greetings (e.g., Jucker, 2017; Meirbekov et al., 2015; Zeff, 2016). There are also studies on the culture-specific properties of greetings, for example, a study by Duranti (1997) about the Samoan language in Western Samoa. Of all studies found in the literature, however, little is known about the culture-specific properties of greetings particularly in the Acehnese language spoken by the people in the Aceh Province and in the Turkish language by the Turkish living in Aceh. Building from the previous studies and also the above three mentioned reasons, we try to shed light on the culture-specific properties of conversational openings in both Acehnese and Turkish. Specifically, we try to examine the types, forms, and functions of greetings in the Acehnese and Turkish languages. The topic offers such an interesting insight since we compared at how they share some historical, social, cultural, and religious backgrounds, but at the same time, they perform different types of greetings, especially in conversational opening.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

At first glimpse, it appears that greeting is a fairly simple part of people's everyday communication of a well-defined daily speech act that is commonly used by every individual. In some ways, greetings mark the boundaries of social communications where people may act as a stepping stone to open a much larger social conversation and relationship. However, a closer look at it reveals that this social-situational exchange is much more complex than it seems. The basic definitions of greeting performances usually occur within two focal exchanges: the opening interactions of an encounter and the expressions that are used during the interaction (Jucker, 2017).

An opening exchange in a human encounter uses language that correlates to the speech situation. This interaction is normally determined by the greeting activities and the expressions of greeting that are used to start the interaction. The former refers to the social interactions between both speaker and interlocutor that produce greeting expressions, while the latter is the opposite, in which the words expressed are the lingual units that control the flow of the social interactions (La Saadi & Emawati, 2020). These reciprocal acts of greeting strategies have become the "access rituals" that initiate and facilitate the flow of conversation to ensure a successful process of communication (Meirbekov et al., 2015, p. 268).

Additionally, greeting also reflects a pragmatic concept of politeness which plays a crucial factor in developing a course of communication in order to maintain an interpersonal relationship (Wei, 2010). As an opening between acquaintances, greeting is an act of verbal or lexical body-behavioral exchange (Pillet-Shore, 2008) that gradually embraces the interlocutors into "a social co-presence (or a mutual interaction space)" when those involved are "physically

co-present” (Nilsson et al., 2018, p. 63). In their study, Nilsson et al. (2018) mention that gaze is the first step in initiating greetings to attract mutual attention. It operates in chronological order to unlock a larger action (Stivers & Rossano, 2010; Rossano, 2012, 2013) in order to mobilize responses (Stivers & Rossano, 2010).

Greeting goes beyond normal perception of the way people greet each other. It is an aspect of language politeness that depends on the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the communities. Each community has its own greeting systems that are unique. Each language has a cultural dimension (Stadler, 2012) that adheres to different forms of greetings, which vary according to the customs of the language users. Therefore, people from different communities or countries commonly follow different ways of greeting even though they are involved in the same setting or situation. The ground reason for this diverse context originally comes from the fact that aside from the correct expressions, the language users are fully aware that there are socially and culturally correct expressions to choose from and abide by. For this reason, failure to use a culturally proper context of greetings in different cultural environments often leads to misunderstanding and inappropriate behavior conduct (Zeff, 2016).

In Japanese, for example, honorifics are considered to be a significant aspect of the interaction compass. It symbolizes a range of socio-cultural meanings, such as identity, social roles (e.g., guest), relationships (e.g., guest-host), or stance (e.g., authority, politeness) (Burdelski, 2013). In conversations, the relationship between a speaker and an interlocutor normally influences the choices of speaking styles, i.e., plain or polite style, that occur unconsciously regardless of personal preferences (Kikuchi, 1997; Usami, 2002; Jamila & Musaev, 2011). Basically, the speaker must use *Teinei-tai* (polite style) or *Futsu-tai* (plain style) at the end of every utterance depending on the age, social status, relationship, and situation of both parties. Interestingly, both of these styles are overshadowed by the concept of *uchi-soto* (in-group-out-group) honorific. This social custom distinguishes the relationship between speakers. Generally speaking, the in-group interlocutors (e.g., family, close friend, subordinate, etc.) must be humbled, whereas the out-group interlocutors (e.g., stranger, customer, boss, etc.) must be addressed with utmost respect and honor. For this reason, people of close association, such as family members and close friends, do not practice and include this style of communication in their interactions because using such honorifics may put some distance between them. The opposite situation occurs within the out-group when they communicate with each other (Mohd et al., 2020).

Contrary to the Japanese culture that depends on sets of words, Mohd et al. (2020) in their research said that Malay politeness of greeting between interlocutors is resolved around the emotion they feel during the conversation. Furthermore, according to Zahid & Johari (2018), the main factors which influence the way of greeting in Malay politeness is dependent upon title, power, rule, role, and social status. Additionally, Rashid et al. (2017) in their study explain that Chinese people share the same style of politeness greeting with Malay, where the stress was emphasized on friendliness and intimacy.

Meanwhile, Halliday (1979) in his work on greetings in American society generalizes two particular ways of greeting, namely (1) time-free greetings (e.g., Hello, How are you?, Nice to meet you, etc.) and (2) time-bound greetings (e.g., Good night, Happy New Year, Happy Birthday). Furthermore, Americans tend to ignore formality and social status in the introduction (Salmani-Nodoushan, 2007). As opposed to the informal, loud, friendly, and direct American

ways of greeting, British society is generally more formal, indirect, polite, and cold. They also tend to use last names and titles (Shawish, 2019).

In Indonesia, the diversity of greeting expressions depends on the relationship between the addresser and the addressee (La Saadi & Ernawati, 2020). It means that the way of greeting is distinguished by the levels of status, such as age or social status (Pattiasina, 2011).

Greeting is a part of speech act that is highly formulaic. The range and scale of the formula seem to be heavily reliant on the formulaic elements (Jucker, 2017). However, this formless formality has the power to determine the possibility of further communication and guarantee the smooth process of social interaction. An appropriate form of greeting can convey different expressions such as respect, politeness, and concern to others. For this reason, the basic communicative function of greeting is to confirm social interpersonal relationships and strengthen the communication between people in order to maintain the social relation before establishing it at the next level (Zhu and Liu, 2020). In short, a greeting is an opening of a topic (Chen, 1997) that acts as the recognition of social interaction (Firth, 1972).

Pragmatically speaking, greeting can act as an illocutionary force and linguistic routines of politeness. Illocutionary act refers to meaningful words spoken by speakers for particular purposes to achieve a certain effect or communicative goal. For example, 'Please open the door', 'Can I do something for you?', and 'You're dismissed'. Meanwhile, politeness routine relates to the spontaneous responses or reactions to people when they come together. It is part of the politeness repertoire in a linguistic form for guidance in politeness norms. For example, 'Hello', 'How do you do?', or 'I am pleased to meet you' (Wei, 2010).

In their study, Jdetawy & Hamzah (2020) compare greeting acts to linguistic etiquette. In this sense, the objectives of greetings are to achieve (Akindel, 2007) the goals to identify establishment and solidarity affirmation among linguistic community members, achieve peaceful and harmonious social interaction, understand the interlocutors, open good communication and interaction process, unite community members, bring out openness and friendliness in every circumstance and context, appreciate the interlocutors, and care for others' well-being.

Furthermore, greetings can also fulfill some of the social functions (Bibiri et al., 2016) that include communicative functions (formal or neutral formula) where greeting goes beyond the exact words uttered that was used to establish the common code between the interlocutors, for example, 'Good morning' can be decoded as 'I wish you a good day'; phatic functions which involve the verbal and non-verbal level of greetings, as well as the para verbal level (intonation, gestures, pantomime); and conative functions which usually involve engagement such as the greeting of a radio host or TV anchor.

One of the classifications of greeting is illocutionary acts. This expressive class of greeting should not be taken literally since the objective is to understand the covert meaning of greeting that lies in the routinization of communicative interaction. There are six types of illocutionary acts (Wei, 2010). They are (1) assertive, to express the certainty of fact, e.g., 'Levi is in the capital'; (2) directives, to get someone to do things, e.g., 'Please turn off the fan'; (3) commissives, commitment for future action on oneself, e.g., 'I'll finish the paper tonight', 'How may I help you?'; (4) expressive, to convey certain feelings toward the addressee, e.g., greeting 'Hello', congratulating 'Congratulations on your promotion', gratitude 'You made my day'; (5) word force that cause changes in an official manner (sometimes on the institutional level), e.g.,

'You're dismissed', 'You're officially selected as the Captain of the force'; and (6) verdictives, used to determine the official order, e.g., 'Halt' said by a captain (Wei, 2010).

According to Bibiri et al. (2016), greetings can be classified into two categories. The first one is conventional (formal and neutral) which is a common written communicative interaction adopted in official communication, such as in business or diplomatic discourse. The second is unconventional (non-formal) which is a persuasive way of greeting to draw attention and to impress. Greetings can also be divided into verbal and non-verbal greetings (Harvey, 1982 cited in Nkamigbo, 2022). Non-verbal greetings include handshaking, hand-holding, waving, cheek kissing, and touching (Jenkins, 2007; Salmani-Nodoushan, 2007; Jibreen, 2010; Katsumi et al., 2017). On the other hand, verbal greetings are all types of communicative acts that are used to start a conversation or introduction (Mohd et al., 2020). They may occur in one of three forms: (1) question forms, such as 'How are you?', 'How have you been?'; (2) interjection forms, such as 'Hi', 'Hello'; and (3) affirmation forms, such as 'Good afternoon', 'Good morning' (Jdetawy & Hamzah, 2020).

As a common language in communication, the forms of greetings depend on different occasions. On the first meeting, people tend to be more formal and polite whilst being more casual and friendly with those they were familiar and well acquainted with. For example, people may simply say 'Hello', 'How do you do?' or 'It's nice to meet you' on their first meeting but become more friendly when it comes to people they know, and therefore their greetings can be something like 'What's up!' or 'Yoo!'. The choice of greeting can also be influenced by the interference of external factors, such as environment, time, and place. For example, salespersons may greet people with 'Welcome' on the first entry, or we may say 'Good morning' when we greet someone in the morning. Additionally, greetings can also be exclamatory and interrogative. Greeting may also be used to express someone's personal feelings such as, 'You did it well'. Another type of greeting may be used to show a close relationship between both parties, such as 'Have you eaten today?', 'Are you feeling well?', 'It's been such a long time!' (Zhu & Liu, 2020).

In Acehnese, the age of the interlocutors controls the manners of conversation openings. The younger person initiates an opening with a respectful greeting. The older person will respond and subsequently commence the flow of conversation while the younger person responds in a passive way. Interestingly, the same age group commonly will start the conversation at the same time with a rapid tempo that results in an overlap production of response. Usually, Acehnese greetings are established by eliciting the respective Phatic Inquiry routine formula of *Assalamu 'alaikum* that initiates the ritualized response for Phatic Response of *Wa'alaikumsalam*. Subsequent to the Phatic Inquiry (PI) and Phatic Response (PR), the conversation will be followed by some sort of further responding discourse, such as *Peu haba?* 'How are you?'. This greeting sequence usually results in a rapid overlap of either PI/PR, PI/PI, or two PIs in a row (Usman & Yusuf, 2017).

## METHODOLOGY

The nature of the study is descriptive and the data were analyzed in a qualitative manner. There were 40 people involved in this study. Half of them are Acehnese who are fluent in the Acehnese language and live in Banda Aceh, Aceh Besar, and Sabang. The other half are Turkish people who live in a Turkish-speaking community in Aceh. The data for this study were

collected from direct observation and a survey. According to Ary et al. (2010, p. 220), observation is one of the most common tools for data collection in a qualitative research. The observation method, which included both the Involved Conversational Observation Technique and the Uninvolved Conversational Observation Technique, was used to obtain the data from the Turkish subjects. Meanwhile, the survey was used to collect the data from the Acehnese subjects. The instruments for data collection were open-ended questionnaires and observation sheets. The researchers observed the Turkish participants' daily conversations during their interactions with the community members. The data were those of the greeting speeches in Turkish from the participants during their conversations. For the Acehnese participants, we used open-ended questions. We asked questions about their age, occupation, social background, and the Acehnese greetings. The distribution of the survey was done in two ways, namely, meeting the participants directly and sending the questionnaires through WhatsApp. From the survey, we got the data in the form of greetings in Acehnese. The Turkish greetings and the Acehnese greetings that we respectively collected from the observation and survey were then listed in a table. To make sure that the data were correct, we confirmed the data with the Turkish and Acehnese language experts.

In general, the overall procedures of the research methodology were conducted based on the four organized structures designed by the researchers. First, we designed the questionnaire items and the observation sheet. Second, we distributed the questionnaire to the Acehnese-speaking participants and observed the Turkish-speaking participants. Third, we marked the data (greeting expressions) from the analysis of the questionnaire and the observation. In marking the types of greeting, we follow Nkamigbo's (2022) division of greeting types which are verbal and non-verbal. For the forms of greetings, we use Halliday's (1979) time-bound and time-free greetings. While for the functions of greetings, the theory of Bibiri et al. (2016) is used, which includes communicative, phatic, and conative functions. Fourth, we cross-validate the findings through a triangulation method by asking some Acehnese and Turkish language experts to confirm the validity of the greeting data from each language.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Types of Greetings in Acehnese and Turkish

The results showed that there are two types of greetings in both Acehnese and Turkish, namely verbal and non-verbal greetings (see Table 1). The forms of greeting are divided into two: time-bound greetings and time-free greetings. The former is those which are performed with particular reference to the situational context during which an exchange occurs, while the latter are those which are performed without any particular context.

**Table 1. Types of Verbal Greetings in Acehnese and Turkish**

<b>Verbal Greetings in Acehnese</b>	<b>Verbal Greetings in Turkish</b>
<i>Assalamualaikum</i> (Peace be upon you)	<i>Selam</i> (hi)
<i>Peu haba</i> (How are you?)	<i>Hos geldin</i> (Welcome)
<i>Kiban jino</i> (How are you?)	<i>Nasilsin</i> (How are you?)
<i>Alhamdulillah, ka mereumpok lom geutanyo</i> (God bless, we finally meet again)	<i>Iyi gunler</i> (Good afternoon)
<i>Teurimong gaseh</i> (Thank you)	<i>Bayramınız mubarek olsun</i> (Happy holidays)

Verbal Greetings in Acehnese	Verbal Greetings in Turkish
<i>Beu bagah puleh</i> (Get well soon)	<i>Gecmis olsun</i> (Get well soon)
<i>Neu bismillah laju</i> (Please enjoy your meal)	<i>Afiyet olsun</i> (Enjoy)
<i>Beujroh</i> (Thank you)	<i>Tesekkur ederim</i> (Thank you)
<i>Beu get get</i> (Good bye)	<i>Gule-gule</i> (Good bye)
<i>Lon lakee izin</i> (See you again)	<i>Hakkin helal et</i> (Sorry/please make it legal)
<i>Kamo lake izin</i> (Good bye)	<i>Elveda</i> (Good bye)
<i>Beurayek saba gaseh tanyo gaseh Allah</i> (Be patient, may Allah be always with you)	<i>Basiniz sag olsun</i> (My condolences with you)
<i>Seulamat beh</i> (Good luck)	<i>Kolay gelsin</i> (Good luck with your work)
<i>Alhamdulillah, ka puleh beu sehat sabee</i> (God bless, may you always be healthy)	<i>Sihatlar olsun</i> (May you always be healthy)

For the non-verbal greetings, the Acehnese are commonly seen practicing hand-shaking and saying the standard salutation of *assalamualaikum*. There are two common situations when Acehnese people practice *assalamualaikum* (Usman & Yusuf, 2017). The first one is when they visit someone's house or a place. This type of greeting is a very ordinary social act and occurs daily in the Acehnese culture. Adult men usually raise their right hands at the ear level when meeting with acquaintances or strangers and say *assalamualaikum*. This type of greeting is commonly practiced when both participants are at a relative distance from each other. Typically, this happens under two circumstances: (1) when they meet someone they know or someone they have not met for a long time, and (2) when they meet a stranger for respectability purposes. The second common situation for the Acehnese to say *assalamualaikum* is when someone wants to get the attention from someone else. *Assalamualaikum* is a substantial greeting among the Acehnese, and therefore, when someone says this greeting, the interlocutor(s) will give full attention to the person.

For the Turkish people, non-verbal greetings are expressed in the form of shaking hands and hugging when they meet. The hugging only happens when both parties have not seen each other for quite a long time and are done only between man and man or woman and woman. In relation to this, Eesa (2019) shares the same opinion on hugging in greeting. She said that it is only done by someone who has been absent for a long period of time or if the one in question is a man of honor. The traditional way of hugging is by embracing each other followed by pressing one's left cheek to the interlocutor's right cheek and then back to the right cheek to the interlocutor's left cheek. Another form of non-verbal greeting in Turkish is by bringing one's head close to someone's head, starting by pressing it to the left side of the other's head followed by the right side without embracing him. This is usually preceded by handshaking. This type of non-verbal greeting is usually practiced among young people. Under certain conditions, men perform this type of greeting because they have not seen each other for a long time and usually one of them will give a tighter hug.

### Forms of Greetings in Acehnese and Turkish

In general, there are similarities in the forms of Acehnese and Turkish non-verbal greetings. The greeting forms are divided into time-bound greetings and time-free greetings. The significant



difference is in the number and variety of greetings itself. Acehese has very limited forms of greetings while Turkish has many different types of greeting forms.

In the Acehese language, there is no formal greeting such as ‘good morning’, ‘good afternoon’, and ‘good night’. The greeting *assalamualaikum* does not correspond to those expressions even though it is used for all those time-bound occasions. There is no seasonal greetings in Acehese, either. Greetings such as ‘happy new year’ and ‘happy birthday’ which are found in many other languages are not found in Acehese. The reason is related to the religious law. Religion holds a fundamental position within the society and things that are not found in the *sharia* law are strictly forbidden. For the Acehese people, religion and culture cannot be separated. Aceh is synonymous with Islam and the Islamic rules have been integrated into the cultures to fit the rule of life of the people. The acculturation process is based on the religious law, and henceforth the custom practices of the Acehese people follow those of the Islamic law. Therefore, the nature of Acehese customs is identical to Islam (Harun, 2007).

The seasonal greeting in the Acehese language is limited to specific seasonal occasions, such as big religious celebrations of Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha. It is also interesting to note that the Acehese do not follow the same pattern of greetings that the majority of Indonesian people use during the occasions. Instead of saying the full expression of *Selamat Hari Raya Idul Fitri/Idul Adha, mohon maaf lahir dan batin*, Acehese people only say *Lakee meuah lahee ngon baten* or *Neupeumeuah dosa long*, which roughly means ‘Please forgive me’.

In general, there are not many forms of greetings in the Acehese tradition for both time-bound and time-free greetings. During the research, many respondents were not able to provide an answer when they were asked for seasonal or daily formal greetings. Those who did provide an answer came up with all different forms of expressions for the same occasion. One respondent uttered an expression for a specific occasion and the other respondents said a totally different expression. Interestingly, when the researchers tried to confirm their answers with different respondents, some said they did not use the expressions. To conclude, Acehese people do not use standard salutations for both seasonal and daily formal greetings.

Regarding this limitation, Daud (2015) mentioned that the expression of ‘thank you’ does not exist in Acehese culture. Acehese people say *Alhamdulillah* ‘Praise be to God’ instead of ‘thank you’. The idea is not to directly thank someone for their kindness or help. When someone says *alhamdulillah* for a gift or assistance, they indirectly praise God for the blessing through you, thus indirectly thanking and appreciating you. Thankfulness is implied behind the action. Acehese people do not express their gratitude or appreciation through words but through action. In other words, if someone is being kind to others, they will repay him with more kindness (Ramlan, 2018).

Similarly, Harun (2007) also stated that the term ‘thank you’ is not known in the Acehese culture. The term *teurimong gaseh* ‘thank you’ is the byproduct of cultural translation from Indonesian or Malay. For the people who live in the rural area, the term itself is a bit odd in some ways knowing that Acehese people are used to saying *alhamdulillah* which has a religious connotation. In fact, ‘thank you’ is perceived as asserting distance between the giver and the recipient. The gift contains sincerity that cannot be measured in words. So, it sounds awkward if for example a child says ‘thank you’ when their parents give him/her something. Thus, the expression *alhamdulillah* implies thankfulness. It is considered as a self-awareness application of Islamic values in social life.

Another common greeting in the Acehese culture is *assalamualaikum*. It is a familiar expression when people greet each other, both in formal and non-formal situations. In the Acehese tradition, there is a strong ethical value in which parents should teach their children on the necessity of greetings in social life (Harun, 2007). The word *assalamualaikum* has two meanings. First, the word is derived from the Arabic word *salaam* which literally means ‘peace’. As a conversational opening, the word is synonymous with ‘Hi/Hello’. People also use the full expression *assalamualaikum* for the same purpose. Second, *assalamualaikum* means ‘peace be upon you’. So, when you greet someone with that expression, you indirectly pray for them and wish them good fortune. Since the word *salaam* literally means ‘peace’ in Arabic, greeting someone with *assalamualaikum* is an invocation for one to be safe. It means you wish nothing but safety for someone and always be under Allah’s protection and away from all bad things (Eesa, 2019).

On the other hand, greetings in Turkish can be found in almost every aspect of people’s life. For example, they perform greetings when they meet each other, when they work or do activities, when they experience misfortune or illness, when they eat, praise or support someone, when they go on a trip, and even when they say farewells. The different forms of greetings in Turkish indicate that Turkish people have more verbal ways of expressing politeness during an interaction.

**Table 2. Time-bound Greetings in Turkish**

Daily Formal Greetings	Seasonal Formal Greetings
<i>Iyi sabahlar</i> (Good morning)	<i>Mutlu yeni yillar</i> (Happy new year)
<i>Günaydın</i> (Good morning)	<i>Doğum günün kutlu olsun</i> (Happy birthday)
<i>Tünaydın</i> (Good afternoon)	<i>Iyi bayramlar</i> (Happy holidays)
<i>Iyi günler</i> (Good afternoon)	<i>Bayramımız mubarek olsun</i> (Happy holidays, may you be full of blessings)
<i>Iyi akşamlar</i> (Good evening)	<i>Hayırlı kandiler</i> (Happy (religious) holidays)
<i>Iyi geceler</i> (Good evening)	<i>Hayırlı cumalar</i> (Happy Friday)

Time-bound greetings in Turkish occur in both formal greetings and seasonal formal greetings (see Table 2). As a Muslim-majority country, the difference in time and seasonal greetings used by the Turkish people are very much influenced by the European culture. This is not surprising considering that the country is located right between two continents, Asia and Europe. If we look closely, seasonal greetings such as *mutlu yeni yillar* and *doğum günün kutlu olsun* are the expressions that European people commonly say during the holiday season. However, it has also become a tradition in the Turkish culture. On the other hand, there are traces of Islamic culture in Turkish greetings. Expressions such as *iyi bayramlar*, *bayramımız mubarek olsun*, *hayırlı kandiler*, *hayırlı cumalar* are some of the seasonal greetings that reflect the Islamic culture. In fact, both cultures have been harmoniously adopted by the people into their daily life.

Time-bound greetings in Turkish have a fixed pattern and form. They follow the same patterns, and they are used in the same way by people from different speech communities. Here is the extract of the conversational greetings when two people who know each other meet.

A: *Merhaba* (Hi/Hello)

B: *Merhaba* (Hi/Hello)

- A: *Nasılsın?* (How are you?)  
B: *İyiyim, sen nasılsın* (I'm good, how about you?)  
A: *Bende iyiyim* (I'm good, too)

When two people meet for the first time, they will greet the following way.

- A: *Hoşgeldin* (Welcome!)  
B: *Hoşbulduk* (Nice to meet you)  
A: *Nasılsın* (How are you?)  
B: *İyiyim, sen nasılsın* (I'm good, how about you?)  
A: *Bende iyiyim* (I'm good too)

The same pattern can also be found in time-bound greeting. It is common for the interlocutor to repeat the same expression that the speaker has uttered at the beginning of the conversation. The example is as follows.

- A: *İyi sabahlar* (Good morning)  
B: *İyi sabahlar* (Good morning)  
A: *İyi geceler* (Good evening)  
B: *İyi geceler* (Good evening)  
A: *Doğum günün kutlu olsun* (Happy birthday)  
B: *Doğum günün kutlu olsun* (Happy birthday)  
A: *Hayırlı cumalar* (Happy Friday)  
B: *Hayırlı cumalar* (Happy Friday)

The time-free greetings also follow the repetitive pattern of the time-bound greeting. For example, people always say *teşekkür ederim* 'thank you' after greeting expressions that is related to motivation/support/praise/appreciation.

### Functions of Greetings in Acehnese and Turkish

There are several functions of greetings in Acehnese and Turkish. In general, greetings in both languages function as phatic communion. They are used as a conversational opening, showing concern, appreciation, respect, sympathy, wish, solidarity, and forgiveness. Considering that there are not many greetings in Acehnese, this part will rely more heavily on the functions of greetings in the Turkish language.

A phatic expression is an expression that serves to establish or maintain communication. It is commonly used by community members to greet each other or to maintain social relations. We can find this type of greeting in both languages. Here are the examples from the Acehnese language:

- A: *Peu haba?* (How are you?)  
B: *Haba get* (I'm good)

In the Turkish language:

- A: *Merhaba* (Hi/Hello)  
B: *Merhaba* (Hi/Hello)  
A: *Nasılsın?* (How are you?)  
B: *İyiyim, sen nasılsın* (I'm good, how about you?)  
A: *Bende iyiyim* (I'm good too)

Greetings that are used to start a conversation (in Acehnese):

A: *Peu haba?* (How are you?)

B: *Haba get* (I'm good)

A: ... ..

Following *assalamualaikum*, this conversation opener is a common type of greeting uttered by Acehnese people. It does not matter who the addressee is although the context of the greeting can be different. This greeting can be casually uttered to open a conversation when long-time friends, acquaintances, and family members greet each other. Since they are familiar with each other, usually the next topic will proceed well and warm. In this context, the greeting acts almost as an 'excuse' for another topic of conversation and all parties involved are happy to continue the exchange. However, strangers also use this greeting to break the ice or to avoid awkwardness. Unlike the first situation, the addressee can choose whether to continue the conversation or not. Usman & Yusuf (2017) named this type of greeting a ritualized inquiry and ritualized response to routines. *Peu haba?* is a routine formula of Phatic Inquiry after the addressee's well-being that elicits an almost formulated Phatic Response of *haba get*.

In the Turkish language, greetings that are used in a meeting are as follows.

A: *Merhaba* (Hi/Hello)

B: *Merhaba* (Hi/Hello)

A: *Nasılsın?* (How are you?)

B: *İyiyim, sen nasılsın* (I'm good, how about you?)

A: *Bende iyiyim* (I'm good, too)

A: ... ..

*Merhaba* means 'hi' or 'hello'. Turkish people use this word when they pass each other on the street. It symbolizes familiarity between speakers or as a conversation opener between strangers. Usually, after they greet each other by saying *merhaba*, they will continue by exchanging news, using the words *nasılsın* and *iyiyim* as answers for good news.

Here are some expressions that Turkish people normally say to express concern and attention.

- *Allah kavuştursun* (May Allah protect you throughout your journey)
- *Hoşçakal* (Goodbye)
- *Allahısmarladık* (May Allah protect all of you)
- *İyi yolculuklar* (Farewell)
- *Güle güle* (See you again/later)
- *Görüşmek üzere* (See you again)
- *Görüşürüz* (See you again)
- *Kendine dikkat et* (Stay safe)
- *Allaha emanet ol* (Be careful)
- *Kendine iyi bak* (Be careful)
- *Hayırlı yolculuklar, yolun açık olsun* (Farewell, have a good trip, good luck)
- *Su gibi git, su gibi gel* (Goodbye, wish you a safe return)

The above expressions are commonly used when someone leaves after a meeting. It represents an act of caring and giving attention to the interlocutors. Apart from wishing their well-being, the speaker also wants to show their concern to them. *Hayırlı yolculuklar, yolun*

*açık olsun* means 'farewell, have a good trip, good luck', *iyi yolculuklar* means 'farewell', *güle güle* means 'see you later', *Allah kavuştursun* means 'may Allah protect you throughout your journey', and *elveda* means 'good-bye'. Turkish people use these expressions to reply to their interlocutors when they are going to part. *Hayırlı yolculuklar*, *yolun açık olsun*, *iyi yolculuklar*, and *güle güle* are usually used to respond to *hoşçakal* and *Allaha ismarladık*. Meanwhile, *Allah kavuştursun* is a farewell used by the interlocuter who is going out of town to pursue an education either at a university or military, which normally takes a long time.

*Elveda* means 'goodbye'. It is derived from the word *el*, which means 'hand', and *veda*, which means 'to separate'. The expression is used for a final goodbye when those involved are certain that they will never return. It can be used in many different contexts, both personal and public. In a personal context, for example, in an inharmonious marriage relationship when one of them wants to leave their house and has no intention of going back, *elveda* will be uttered by the one who is leaving. In a general context, for example, when a friend is about to leave somewhere and has no intention of going back or there is little chance of return, they will say *elveda*. Another example is if one of the family members dies, we can say *elveda* to the deceased. So, *elveda* is used for the context of bad or sad farewells.

*Kendine dikkat et*, *Allaha emanet ol*, and *kendine iyi bak* are almost similar in meaning, namely 'take care of yourself' or 'be careful'. These greetings can be used by both the speakers and the interlocutors. The speaker or the person who is going to leave can say one of these three greetings to the speech partner or the person left behind. Vice versa, the person left behind can also say the same greetings to the person who is going to leave. The answers or responses to the greeting are *sana da* which means 'you too' or the more polite form of *size de* which means 'you too', or it can also be in the form of the same greeting.

*Su gibi git, su gibi gel* literally means 'like water that flows, so does the water that comes back'. This expression is conveyed by Turkish speakers to friends or children who are going to leave for quite a long time by pouring water on the road. This expression implies 'you leave in good condition, and hopefully, when you return, you will also be in good condition, just like the clean water that was poured'.

Here are examples of greetings to congratulate someone in Turkish.

- *Tebrik ederim* (Congratulations)
- *Aferin* (Well done)
- *Bravo* (Well done)

*Tebrik ederim* means 'congratulations'. This greeting is used to convey a congratulatory message to the interlocuter who has achieved something. *Aferin* literally means 'well done'. This greeting is used to praise someone for the success of something. It is commonly said by parents to their children, or teachers to their students. *Bravo* means 'amazing'. It is used to encourage the interlocutors, such as in a sports match to encourage the team.

The following examples are greetings used by the Turkish people to pay respect.

- *Berhudar ol* (Be blessed), spoken by parents to children who kiss their hands as a form of respect.
- *El öpenlerin çok olsun* (Inshaallah (if God wills), other people will respect you too), spoken by parents to children who kiss their hands as a form of respect.
- *Ellerinizden öperim* (I kiss your hands), a sign of respect from the younger to the older one when greeting over the phone.

*Berhudar ol*, which means 'may your days be filled with goodness', is said by parents to their children when children are kissing their hands as a form of respect or are said to younger people who have helped them with their work. Similarly, *El öpenlerin çok olsun* can also be said by parents to their children when children are kissing their hands as a form of respect. The expression means 'God willing, other people will also respect you, hopefully, many other children will follow your kindness'. From the Turkish perspective, children who kiss their parents' hands as a form of respect are considered to be good kids. The reason mainly has something to do with the fact that nowadays young people rarely want to kiss the hands of their elders, so when they see someone do it, it becomes an interesting occurrence in society. Meanwhile, *ellerinizden öperim* is a greeting from the younger to the elders when they end a telephone conversation.

Greetings to express sympathy for the victims of grief or misfortune can be seen in the following examples.

- Expression that is commonly said for a victim  
*Allah iyilerle karşılaştırsın* (My condolences/may you be given courage and strength)
- Expressions that are commonly said to families who have been left behind by death  
*Başınız sağ olsun* (My condolences)  
*Mekani cennet olsun* (Rest in peace)  
*Allah rahmet eylesin* (Rest in peace / May Allah grant His mercy)

The responses:

- Siz sağ olsun* (I wish you good health)  
*Dostlar sağ olsun* (I wish you (my friends) good health)
- Expressions of good wishes to people who inform them on a tragedy they have experienced  
*Allah korusun* (May Allah protect you)  
*Allah korumuş* (May Allah protect us)

*Allah iyilerle karşılaştırsın* means 'may Allah grant you with kindness'. This greeting is used by the speakers to their speech partners who have been wronged by something. Usually, Turkish people use *Allah iyilerle karşılaştırsın* to provide moral support so that their speech partners can always be strong in facing what is befalling them. *Başınız sağ olsun* means 'my condolences/may you be given courage and strength', *mekanı cennet olsun* means 'rest in peace', while *Allah rahmet eylesin* means 'rest in peace/may Allah grant His mercy'. These three expressions were used to convey condolences to their speech partners who have lost a family member. It is expressed to provide moral support to the families left behind. The answer to the greeting was *siz sağ olsun* or *dostlar sağ olsun*, which means 'I wish you good health'. *Allah korusun*, which means 'may Allah protect you' is used to convey condolences to the speech partner who has experienced a misfortune or an accident.

The following are greetings to express wishes.

- When you meet someone  
*Assalamualaikum* (Peace be upon you)
- When you congratulate parents on having a new baby  
*Allah anahı babahı büyütsün* (May Allah raise him with his parents)

- When someone buys a new thing  
*İyi gunlerde kullanın/ Güle-güle kullan* (Use it well)
- When someone has a new haircut  
*Saatler olsun / sıhhatler olsun* (Good health/may you always be healthy)
- When you receive something from someone  
*Ellerin dert görmesin* (May your hand always be healthy)

*Allah analı babalı büyütsün* means 'May Allah raise him with his parents'. This greeting is familiar for the Turkish society. It is used to express their happiness at the birth of a child. *İyi gunlerde kullanın* means 'use it well, may your days be filled with goodness', while *güle-güle kullan* means 'enjoy it'. Both of these greetings are used to congratulate someone who has just bought goods. For all newly purchased items, you can use these expressions, except if the speech partner has just bought a house, there are special greetings for that situation. *Saatler olsun* means 'good health', while *sıhhatler olsun* means 'may you always be healthy'. The two greetings can be used to congratulate someone who has just had a haircut. *Ellerin dert görmesin* literally means 'I don't want to see your hands in trouble'. This greeting is used by the speaker when he is certain that the interlocutor has given a hand to help him with his work or do something for him.

The phrases that are commonly used in Turkish for forgiveness are:

- *Pardon* (Sorry/excuse me)
- *Afedersin* (Sorry/excuse me)
- *Kusurabakma* (I'm sorry)
- *Kusurakalma* (I'm sorry)
- *Özürdilerim* (I'm sorry)
- *Zahmet oldu* (I'm sorry to bother you)
- *Hakkın helal et* (Let your right be)

*Pardon* means 'sorry' or 'excuse me'. This expression is used for apologizing if we bump into people on the street, and then we ask questions to them. It means 'excuse me, I want to ask something...'. *Afedersin* has the same meaning as *pardon*, which is 'sorry' or 'excuse me', but it is more polite than *pardon*. It is used when the speaker wants to get the attention of their speech partner on what they are going to say. For example, when the speaker wants to ask something to someone he/she meets on the street, the speaker usually uses this utterance. *Kusurabakma* means 'I'm sorry' and *kusurakalma* means 'I apologize' or in the Indonesian context it can be translated as 'sorry, don't take it to heart'. These two utterances are used to apologize for small mistakes that usually occur accidentally when the speakers want to briefly interrupt the work of their speech partners. *Özürdilerim* means 'I'm sorry'. It is used to apologize for their mistakes. *Zahmet oldu* means 'I'm sorry to bother you' which is used to express gratitude. Usually, it is used together with other apologetic phrases to reinforce the appreciation, such as, *ozur dilerim*, *zahmet oldu* or *pardon*, and *zahmet oldu*. *Hakkın helal et* means 'please forgive me for your rights'. It is used to ask forgiveness for all the wrong-doings they have made. People usually use the expression during Eid al-Fitr or when they are about to part with his speech partners.

The following expressions are greetings that are commonly used to express gratitude in the Turkish language.

- *Alhamdulillah* (Thank you, praise be to God)
- *Teşekkür ederim* (Thank you)
- *Teşekkürler* (Thank you)
- *Sağol(un)Allah razi olsun* (Thank you, God bless you)
- *Elin(iz)e sağlık* (Thank you, may you always be healthy)
- *Zahmet olmasın* (Thank you, but don't trouble yourself)
- *Su gibi aziz ol* (Thank you)
- *Allah sofranıza bereket versin* (May Allah bless the place where this food is served)
- *Allah kesene bereket versin* (May Allah bless you)

*Teşekkür ederim*, *teşekkürler*, and *sağol (un)* mean 'thank you'. They are used to express gratitude to the speech partners who have given something to them. Giving here can be in the form of goods or assistance. Usually, the expressions are followed by *Allah razi olsun* which means 'God bless you'. The interlocutor can answer by saying *rica ederim* which is similar to 'you are welcome'. *Ellerin(iz)e sağlık* means 'thank you, may you always be healthy', *su gibi aziz ol* means 'may His blessings continue to pour out like this water', and *Allah sofranıza bereket versin* means 'may Allah bless the place where this food is served'. These three utterances have the same meaning, namely to express gratitude to those who have cooked and served the food and drinks. It is also common to use these expressions when receiving invitations to eat at someone's house. *Allah keneket versin* means 'may Allah give blessings to those you have spent'. *Kesene* means 'what you have spent or treated'. It is used to convey gratitude to those who have treated them food at restaurants.

## CONCLUSION

There are several types, forms, and functions of greetings in both Acehnese and Turkish. First, both languages have the same types of greetings, namely verbal and non-verbal greetings as well as formal and non-formal greetings. Second, while Acehnese forms of greetings are limited in variations, Turkish has numerous forms of greetings. Seasonal greetings in Acehnese language are only those for Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha. However, there are various seasonal greetings in Turkish which can be divided into two categories: time-bound greetings and time-free greetings. The former is classified into two types: daily formal greetings and seasonal formal greetings. The latter is classified further into three different types: greetings related to motivations/supports/praises/appreciations, greetings for gratitudes and apologies, and greetings during meetings and farewells. Third, Acehnese greetings are used to express wishes, apologies, and conversational openings. Meanwhile, greetings in Turkish serve as a phatic expression that functions as a conversational opening, to show concern, appreciation, respect, sympathy, wishes, solidarity, and forgiveness.

The results of this research provide an interesting insight into the cultural differences between two countries that to some extent share a similar connection through religion. However, this research is still limited to the current greeting phenomenon. For future studies, it will be even more interesting if the scope of the study can explore the history of each culture that brought up this greeting. Furthermore, there are some other topics that are also interesting



to look into such as why the greetings in Acehnese are limited in number whereas the greetings in Turkish are numerous and with different varieties.

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