

SWEARING IN ENGLISH AND ARABIC

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Abstract:

People swear constantly ,our life is full of promises which may fail to keep. Promises are sacred and must be kept .Swearing is calling on the name of God to ensure that one is saying the truth, swearing is to say something solemnly or emphatically to tell the truth,or cause somebody to take the oath of the office or make somebody swear to keep the secret. People usually swear by important things and all that hold dear to confirm or deny something . In this work , we present the swearing expressions in English and Arabic.The aim is to investigate the use of swearing in both English and Arabic , the devices through which it is achieved and the objects sworn by.The purpose of swearing is to add more emphasis to the text in a solemn testimony It is used in Arabic literatute and widely used in the Quran to confirm that a person is saying the truth. Swearing devices in Arabic and objects sworn by in Arabic poetry were presented. Cultural differences between Arabic and English were also explained.The role of culture in determining the social behaviour of people of which language is an important part is also discussed.The relationship between culture and society is so strong that they cannot be separated from each other.Arab linguists paid more attention to swearing than English ones due to cultural differences between the two languages.English has few jurative devices to swear,however, in English they use emphatic statements to assume that their saying is true.Some people use swearing as ameans of deception.Yet,one can do with swearing because it cheapens the name of God

القسم في اللغة الانكليزية والعربية

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ملخص البحث:

يقسم الناس دائماً، وحياتنا مليئة بالوعود التي ربما نفشل بالحفاظ عليها حيث ان الوعود مقدسة ويجب الحفاظ عليها، والقسم هو ان تدعو اسم الله لكي نؤكد بان الشخص يقول الحق وان تقول شئ ما وبشكل مؤكد لكي تقول الحقيقة او ان تجعل شخصا ما يقسم رسمياً او جعله يخفي سرا. ويقسم الناس عادة بالاشياء المهمة والاشياء العزيزة عليهم لتأكيد او انكار شئ ما، وفي هذا البحث نتعرف الى عبارات القسم في العربية والانكليزية والهدف هو ان نبين استخدام القسم في كل من العربية والانكليزية والادوات التي يحقق من خلالها والاشياء المحلوف بها والغرض من القسم هو اضافة تأكيد اكثر الى النص في شهادة مقدسة، والقسم يستخدم في الادب العربي وبشكل واسع في القرآن الكريم لكي يؤكد قول الحقيقة. كما تطرقنا الى شرح الفروقات الحضارية بين العربية والانكليزية فيما يخص القسم ودور الحضارة في تحديد السلوك الاجتماعي للناس حيث تكون اللغة جزءاً مهماً من ذلك، وكذلك هنالك ترابط وثيق بين الحضارة والمجتمع لا يمكن فصلها. وقد اهتم علماء اللغة العربية بالقسم اكثر من الانكليز نتيجة الاختلافات الحضارية بين اللغتين حيث ان الانكليزية تمتلك وسائل حلف قليلة مع ذلك ففي اللغة الانكليزية تستخدم عبارات تأكيدية لكي يفترضوا ان اقوالهم صحيحة ويستخدم بعض الناس القسم كوسيلة للخداع، مع ذلك يمكن الاستغناء عن القسم لانه يرخص اسم الله

Introduction

People use language to communicate with each other and to perform various functions. It is patterned and embodied in human social experience. (Gregory and Carroll, 1978:3). It is used as a means of organizing people and directing their behaviour to achieve different objectives in their societies. It is used to meet a variety of different needs where people can change this variety according to social circumstances. This is called context of situation (Dahwi, 2001, P. 125) It is a common phenomenon that old people, children , boys , girls, and educated people swear constantly. Marriage vows, contracts between sellers and purchasers,

business relationships between employers and employees are all frequently broken.

Our life is full of sacred promises which must be kept . The name of God should not be taken in vain. The new monarch has to , the president swears at his inauguration, witnesses swear in the court when a man's liberty is at stake and might hung upon his evidence and servants swear before their masters. Swearing is a reflection of habits and beliefs of nations. It has been practised throughout ages. Different swearing formulae were found in the books of history and literature. Swearing has been developed with the development of mankind. People swore with respect and admiration by their gods which were created by their imaginations. The Babylonians used to swear by their gods, by their fathers, mothers, brothers and other relatives. Galgamesh swore b y his mother, Nansoon, the Egyptians swore by their own kings who were elevated to the status of Gods . The Arabs in the pre - Islamic era had their own swearing expressions. They used to swear by the prophets and the descended papers. They swore by the Worshipped God and introduced swearing into their poetry. The poets swore by Ka'ba and by the ancient house of Allah. The poet Zuhair Bin Abi Sulma swore by the house around which men from Quraish and Jurhum toured.(Diwan Zuhair,2008,The Hanged Poem,Line 16)

With the coming of Islam, they swore by Allah and his attributes. They also swore by honour, health , sons and fathers. The prophet Muhammed (P B U H) prohibited swearing by any name other than Allah. The prophet said, "If anybody has to swear , he should swear only by Allah or keeps silent" (AL-Asqalani, 2000, P. 353). The people of Quraish used to swear by their fathers, but the prophet prohibited that. The prophet himself swore by "The one who sent me with the truth " and by the one the soul of Muhammed is in his hand. " Allah Almighty has sworn by the pen,

the dawn, the star, the fig , the olive, the mount of Sinai and the peaceful land.

Swearing is also used in the law courts. Any other swearing except in the name of Allah is not considered a valid swearing and should not be taken seriously like swearing by friendship, brotherhood, honour, prophets and saints , brothers and sisters.

Swearing is " calling on the name of God to ensure that one is saying the truth , or that one will keep ones word. "(Thomas, 1998 , P. 1). It is important for a doctor not to betray the secrets of his degree. In marriage vows or even in a civil marriage there is a solemnity about official promises. In the church people call on Gods name or they made promises. The marriage promises are public vows between two people. A man may make a private oath with himself and God that he is never going to marry. However, it is better to marry than to be alone. Now people raise their right hands in some countries, or put their hands on the bible or the Quran or on a cross . A Jew will often take an oath with head covered.

Swearing is to say something solemnly or emphatically to tell the truth , or cause somebody to take the oath of the office, or make somebody swear to keep the secret. Somebody may swear by all gods that he is right. Others may swear by all that they hold dear When we swear we speak emphatically. One may swear that he had paid for the goods, or say emphatically that he had done so especially when accused of not having done so. People often used to swear by God , or gods or many sacred things when they want to confirm something being affirmed or denied. Swearing expressions were used since the beginning of life. In the glorious Quran , we find many swearing expressions said by Allah, messengers, believers, unbelievers and even the satan swore by the power of his creator to lead them all astray. (Sad, aya 82 and 83, AL-Hilali and Khan, 1979, P. 653)

قال فبِعزتك لاغوينهم اجمعين الا عبادك المخلصين

People in the pre-Islamic era used to swear by the gods Hubal , Lat and Uzza. In Islam they swore by the signs of Allah. This is due to the cultural and religious differences between the two societies. Religion Provides a a symbolic framework that allows an individual to understand his place in the universe. Religious symbols represent the most basic elements of human existence, and because of this, the symbols themselves assume crucial significance(Plog and Bates, 1980:336)

The Islamic religious discourse , of which swearing is part, is represented by the formal standard Arabic language which has a great effect on its audience, and this religious discourse reflects the ability of its user to " stir particular emotional reactions" (Werlich, 1982: 275) Thus, the text of religious discourse , specifically of oath, considerably affects the hearers since they have an emphasizing power reflected by sacred words like Allah , the messenger, heaven , etc. As a matter of fact, any text which has any kind of jurative devices has more effect on its audience than a text which has no jurative devices (Dahwi , 2001:p. 10)

Oaths are still sworn on the head or skin of a tiger by the Santals and other indigenous and other tribes of India. The prevalence of river-worship is seen in the extent to which in the old and modern world oaths by rivers are most sacred. In earlier ages men swore by Styx or Tiber and to this day an oath on water of the Ganges is to the Hindu the most binding of pledges, for the goddess will take awful vengeance on the children of the perjurer. The sun , moon and earth, the rivers and meadows and waters, are invoked side by side with Zeus and Hera and Appollo, and the gods of the Carthaginians. (Tyler, 2007, p. 2)

2. Definitions

O. E. D. (1989, Vol. 10/631) defines swearing as "a solemn or formal appeal to God(or a deity or something held in reverence or regard), in witness of the truth of a statement , or the binding character of a promise or undertaking. It suggests obligation like other jurative devices. Swearing is an " appeal to the name of god, who serves as witness that a person is speaking the truth or intends to fulfil a vow. "(Douma, J. , P. 87) Swearing is a solemn appeal or call to God , a person or thing held sacred by the person using this appeal or call to confirm something being affirmed or denied or to witness what one says, to witness that a person is keeping his promise or covenant or to witness the fulfillment of his vow. (Ibid, P. 19)

Swearing is a commitment to tell the truth(especially in a court of law) ; to lie under oath is to become subjected to prosecution for perjury. It is a solemn promise , usually invoking a devine witness , regarding your future acts or behaviour . Swearing deals with different aspects of life such as legal, religious , social and military.

Oath : " Oath is swearing with appeal to the name of God , who serves as witness that a person is speaking the truth or intends to fulfil a vow. "(Douma, J. 1989, P. 87). A private oath is when a person appeals with himself to almighty God with a holy intention, soberly and reverently to give honour to god.

3. The aim of the research

The purpose of the present work is to investigate the use of swearing in both Arabic and English showing the realizations of swearing in the two languages and the objects sworn by. The work also tries to

know how swearing differs in Arabic and English due to cultural differences.

4. The Value of the Study

The present study, we hope, is of value to linguists , language teachers, researchers , rhetoricians and grammarians

5. Procedure:

The collection of data depended on The holly Quran, literature, public folklore, The Bibles and everyday swearings we have heard of among the public . Swearing is defined and explained. Swearing expressions were presented in both Arabic and English. The purpose of swearing is stated. The objects sworn by were identified. The translations of the Quranic verses were taken from Al-Hilali and khan(1996) . Cultural differences between English and Arabic were explained and compared.

6. The Purpose of Swearing

The purpose of swearing is to add more emphasis to the text in a solemn testimony to attract the addressees attention to an important thing which deserves listening and thinking, this syntactic structure is often found in most Arabic literature and widely used in the Glorious Quran in which all the syntactic structures of swearing are used at the beginning of speeches of Allah in order to attract the people to something full of importance. The speaker may resort to swearing when the addressee is not in line with him and continues his speech as a means of emphasizing his speech a n d attracting t h e addressee's attention (AL-Dahwi, 2001, P.

80). God requires full faithfulness, however, we do not take our words seriously. Irreverant swearing , needless swearing, disguised swearing and surreptitious swearing are condemned. Swearing is used to confirm that a person is speaking the truth and the powers of an office will be honourably used. In a court, we assert that we are truthful men when we swear an oath. There is also the promissory oath , like the Hippocratic oath that a doctor might swear Men and women taking high office swear that they will carefully exercise their authority. These are official and public oaths. Swearing also gives honour to God who knows whether words are true or not. Swearing does a lot of work in social interactions. In the past researchers have theorized that men swear to create a masculine identity and women swear to be more like men. More recent studies, however, theorize that women swear in part because they are emulating women they admire. In addition, the use of particular expletives can:

- establish a group identity
- establish membership in a group and maintain the group's boundaries
- express solidarity with other people
- express trust and intimacy
- add humor, emphasis or "shock value"
- attempt to camouflage a person's fear or insecurity.

Swearing has also become a habit. (Wilson, T. V. 2008, p. 1.)

7. Swearing devices and sworn by objects in Arabic

In Arabic we usually swear by all that held sacred. Swearing particles have their semantic and syntactic functions that are used in certain different contexts. There are some lexical items widely associated with swearing. They are used when people want to emphasize their

speech and add syntactic and rhetorical features to the text, e. g. , / la / لا is associated with اقسم (I do swear). The particle / wa / و is used by the speakers of Arabic more than any other particle and it is used with all the nouns sworn by. For example:

By Allah, I am not lying

والله لست كاذبا

The particle / ta / ت is used with the name of Allah only. It is a substitute of /wa/

BY Allah

تالله

/lam/ is also used only with the name of Allah, e. g. ,
By Allah, those who do wrong do not come to good.

لله لا يفلح الظالم

The particle /dʒi:r/ denotes the meaning(truly) by means of oath and it is always in the genitive case as in the utterance:

I truly swear I will not do that.

علي الجير لا أفعل ذلك

Dixon (1971:461) suggested that jurative verbs can be divided according to their semantic domain to the verbs of speaking and the verbs of gesturing. Arabic jurative verbs can be divided into two main categories according to their semantic domains: the first is used to express swearing literally whereas the second is expressing swearing metaphorically, e. g. ,

ويوم تقوم الساعة يقسم المجرمون ما لبثوا غير ساعة

"...The transgressors will swear that they tarried not but an hour"(AL-Hilali and Khan:1067, Sura xxx, ?aya LV, ar-rum). The particle /uqsim/ may be used with /La/.

It has been noticed that people usually swear by the following according to their level of education and religious beliefs :

7.1. Swearing by the name of Allah , the creator of everything, and his other names and attributes, using the expression , "I swear, " e. g

I swear by Almighty God who created you اقسم بالله العظيم الذي خلقك

Iblees has sworn by **the power of his lord** to lead people all astray.

By the one who sent muhammed. والذي ارسل محمدا

By the one who made us meet without an appointment. والذي جمعنا بغير ميعاد

descended the Quran. By the one who والذي أنزل القرآن

By the one who created you. والذي خلقك

By the one who made the seeds grow from the earth. والذي أنبت الحب من الارض

By the one who brought you here. والذي جاء بك الى هنا

By the knowledgeable, the hearing. والسميع العليم

7.2. Swearing by health and life , the vital valuable energy working for the survival of the human race. One may swear by his own life or the life of his dear son, daughter, mother or grandfather. Words denoting the meaning of swearing by peoples life are jurative devices widely used in the pre-islamic era and at the beginning of Islam, e. g. , by your life). Allah also swears by the life of his prophet.

لعمرك انهم لفي سكرتهم يعمهون

Verily, by your life in their wild intoxication , they were wandering blindly (Al-Hilali and Khan, 1996, Sura 15, ?aya 72 , P.370-378, ?al-Hijir.)

My eye will be blind if I swear falsely.

I will not come back to my family (die) if I swear falsely.

I swear by my power. I swear by my youth. I will not see comfort if swear falsely. If I swear falsely I will be crashed by a car. Some women swear by their pregnancy and by their strength and honour

I swear by my youth (The best part of my life). I ll not enjoy my youth

(as a punishment from Allah) , if I swear falsely

7. 3. People swear by the souls of their dead fathers and mothers or the souls of their grandfathers who are dear to them. They remember them and do not swear falsely by their souls.

7. 4. Swearing by the most important parts of the body which people are going to suffer if they lose them as a punishment from God for swearing falsely, e. g. , " I swear by your(my) eyes, "I swear by your head", the head contains other important parts like eyes and the eyes have the seeing power. However, no one swears by "Your hands", or "Your nose" These are culturally established swearings. Girls may swear by their hair which they are proud of.

7. 5. Swearing by the graces of god e. g. , "I swear by this food", "I swear by this water " for water is the origin of life and food gives strength to life. "I swear by food and salt. "

7. 6. Swearing by the holy books. A Muslim swears by the Glorious Quran a Christian swears by the Bible, and a Jew usually swears by Torah, e. g. ,

I swear by the book of Allah.

I swear by the book descended to the heart of Muhammad. (The Quran)

I swear by every letter in the Quran

7. 7. Swearing by religious figures and personalities like prophet Muhammed, Imam Ali , AL-Hussein , Sheikh Abdul Qadir, Jesus. Muhammed is the prophet of Islam , and Jesus is the founder of the Christian religion. By Moses who spoke with Allah. Some people swear by AL-Abbas saying:

I swear by the honour of Al_abbas.

I swear by the handpalm of AL-Abbas

I swear by the moon of Bani-Hashim. (Al-Abbas)

I swear by the flag of AL-Abbas.

Some people swear by Fatima , the daughter of Muhammad:

I swear by AL-Zahra', I swear by the sufferings of AL-Zahra', I swear by the rib of AL-Zahra'. Both christians and Muslims swear by Mariam , the virigin. Others swear by the Imams:

I swear by Hydar AL-Karrar(Ali)

وحيدر الكرار

I swear by the stranger of Karbala'(Imam Ali)

وغريب كربلاء

I swear by the head of AL-Hussain(the son of Imam Ali)

و رأس الحسين

I swear by the soul of Al-Hussain.

وروح الحسين

I swear by Zainab , the daughter of Muhammed.

وزينب بنت محمد

I swear by the one who didn't pray for an idiol.
(Imam Ali)

والذي لم يسجد لصنم

7. 8. Swearing by holy places , e. g. , "I swear by Mecca" the holy place to which people pilgrim. I swear by the house of Allah(Mecca)

I swear by Madeena. I swear by the well of Zam Zam. I swear by the grave of AL-Abbas.

7. 9. Swearing by holy times. Allah himself has sworn in the Quran by the morning time , and the night when it becomes dark.

7. 10. Allah has sworn by his creatures. He has sworn by the stars in the sky, e. g. , " I swear by the sky with towers and the appointed day ", the sun and the moon . He has sworn by the figs, olives and the mountain of Sinai and by the pen which is a symbol of knowledge

7. 11. swearing by the angels (for they are lovely and innocent, kind and thoughtful)

7. 12. swearing by my honour for honour is a highly regarded public moral duty and of the highest value.

7. 13. I swear by the milk I drank from my mother.

7. 14 . Before Islam the Arabs used to swear by the idols Lat , Hubal and Minat.

7. 15. Swearing by weapons like sword and spear which signify power, and very dear to the warrior.

7. 16. Allah has sworn by his creatures

As mentioned in point 10 above, Allah has sworn in the Glorious Quran by his creations to show the importance of his great signs and creations i. e. his created objects and the evidence that prove his existence , e. g. ,

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| 1. By the forenoon | 1. والضحى |
| 2. By the night when it darkens (and stand still) | 2. والليل اذا سجي |
| 3. Your Lord (O Muhammad) | 3. ما ودعك ربك وما قلى |
- has neither forsaken you nor hates you
(Ad-Duha, AL-Hilali and Khan, 1996, P. 876)

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. By the Fig , and the olive | 1. والتين والزيتون |
| 2. By Mount Sinai | 2. وطور سينين |
| 3. By this city of Security(Mecca) | 3. وهذا البلد الامين |

(At-Tin, The Fig , AL-Hilali and Khan, 1996, P. 877)

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| 1. By the night as it envelops | 1. والليل اذا يغشى |
| 2. By the day as it appears in brightness | 2. والنهار اذا تجلى |

(AL-Lail, The Night, AL-Hilali and Khan, 1996, P. 874)

- | | |
|--|----------------------|
| 1. By the sun and its brightness | 1. والشمس وضحاها |
| 2. By the moon as it follows it(the sun) | 2. والقمر اذا تلاها |
| 3. By the day as it shows up brightness | 3. والنهار اذا جلاها |
| 4. By the night as it conceals it(the sun) | 4. والليل اذا يغشاها |
| 5. By the heaven and Him who built it. | 5. والسماء وما بناها |
| 6. By the earth and Him who spread it. | 6. والارض وما طحاها |
| 7. By the soul and Him who perfected it. | 7. ونفس وما سواها |

(AL-Shams, AL-Hilai and Khan, 1996, P. 873)

1. I swear by this city(Mecca) 1. لا اقسم بهذا البلد
 2. And by the begetter(i. e. Adam) 2. ووالد وما ولد
and that which he begot(his progeny)
- (AL-Balad, The City AL-Hilali and Khan , 1996, P. 871)

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1. By the Dawn 1. والفجر
 2. By the ten nights 2. وليال عشر
 3. And by the even and the odd 3. والشفع والوتر
 4. and by the night when it departs 4. والليل اذا يسر
- (AL-Fajir , The Dawn, AL-Hilali and Khan , 1996, P. 869)

By the heaven , and At-Tariq والسماء والطارق
(AL-Tariq, The Bright Star , AL-Hilali and Khan, 1979, P. 864)

-
1. By the heaven holding the big star 1. والسماء ذات البروج
 2. And by the promised day 2. واليوم الموعود
(the day of resurrection)
- (AL-Buruj, The Big Star, AL-Hilai and Khan, P. 861)

-
16. I swear by the afterglow of a sunset 16. فلا اقسم بالشفق
 17. And by the night and whatever 17. والليل وما وسق
it gathers in its darkness
 18. And by the moon when it is at the full 18. والقمر اذا اتسق
- (AL-Inshiqaq, AL_Hilali and Khan , Ibid , p. 859.)

-
15. I swear by the planets that recede 15. فلا اقسم بالخنس
 16. And by the planets that move 16. الجوار الكنس
swiftly and hide themselves.
 17. And by the night as it departs 17. والليل اذا عسعس
 18. And by the dawn as it brightnes 18. والصبح اذا تنفس
- (At-Takwir , AL-Hilali and Khan , P. 854)

1. I swear by the day of resurrection 1. لا اقسم بيوم القيامة
2. And I swear by the self-reproaching person(believer) 2. ولا اقسم بالنفس اللوامة

(AL-Qiyama, The Resurrection , AL-Hilali and Khan , P. 836)

1. (I swear) by the pen and by what they 1. ن. والقلم وما يسطرون
 - (the angels) write(in the records of men)
- (AL-Qalam, the pen , AL-Hilali and Khan, P. 812)

By the star when it goes down والنجم اذا هوى

(AL-Najm, AL-Hilali and Khan , P. 753)

By the Glorious Quran والقران المجيد

(Qaf, Al-Hilali and Khan, P. 739)

By the manifest book that makes things clear والكتاب المبين

(Ad-Dukhan, The smoke, aya 1, AL-Hilali and Khan, p. 707)

8. Swearing in Arabic Poetry

The topic of swearing is very much associated with rhetoric because it is related to religion and religion is represented by the glorious Quran which is the source of rhetorical devices and stylistic features such as metaphor, simile, irony, synecdoche , terseness and its two kinds:brevity and ellipsis(AL-Dahwi , 2001. 64)

Swearing is found in the pre-Islamic and Islamic poetry which constitutes the cornerstone of Arabic literature. Different devices are used in poetry to represent the culture of the society. Poetry expresses the human activities of a society. It is an art that expresses the

feeling of a person towards his environment and its people. The particle /ælæ/

is used in poetry of Jamil Buthayna(1966:75)آلى

الىت الا اصطفى بالحب غيركم حتى أغيب تحت الرمس بالقاع

I swore I shall not love but you till I am buried in the grave

The particle قسما is also used in poetry to express swearing literally, e. g. ,

I swear by him who granted death and life. قسما بالذي امات وأحيا

(Diwan Ibn-Shadad, 1988, P. 2)

Ibn AL-Mu'taz swore by the checks of his love

لا ورمان الخدود فوق أغصان القدود

The poet Deek AL-**Jin** swore by the "the shoes of his love "He says:

I swear by her shoes nothing has trodden the earth dearer to me than her shoes"

In public poetry, women swore by their fasting and prayers:

Other women swore by the "voice" الصوت which they call when they lose something saying: "O, you the listeners, I swear on you by Allah, Muhammad and Ali if you have heard or seen (name of the thing lost) it belongs to(owner) and you have to give it back to him. Another one swears by the past injustice she has undergone and by her sufferings:

I swear by the sufferings of my life

I haven't loved any one but you.

The other one swears by the throne and the chair of Allah , or by the ones who went round the house of Allah(Ak-Ka'ba)(Muhi Al-Deen ,2006,p. 1)

9. Culture

Culture plays a significant role in determining the social behaviour of people in their society which may be quite different from that of other societies. Thus, every society has its own customs and traditions which are different from those of other societies. A part of this social behaviour is language which can reflect some parts of culture related to a given society. The oaths of the lower culture show a remarkable difference from those of later stages. In the apparently primitive forms, the curse of the perjurer is to take effect in this world. But as nations became more observant, experience must have shown that bears and tigers were as apt to kill truth-tellers as perjurers, and that even the lightningflash falls without moral discrimination. As a result, language is considered a mirror of culture. Hence the relationship between culture and language is so strong that they cannot be separated from each other. "Language does not exist apart from culture (Sapir, 1970 : 20). Culture forms the socially inherited practices and beliefs that determine the texture of our lives.

Part of culture is religion which constitutes its greatest pillar and occupies a central position since the purpose of religion is to make people's deeds agree with the divine will. Some anthropologists define religion as a system of beliefs, and symbols that make life meaningful and intelligible (Plog and Bates, 1980 : 366). Eliot (1962 : 27) affirms that no culture can appear or develop except in relation to a religion. Dawson (1948:50) states that "we cannot understand the inner form of a society unless we understand its religion, we cannot understand its cultural achievements unless we understand the religious beliefs that lie behind them. (Dahwi, 2001, 13). What is true in one society might be untrue in another society. Yazidi sects swear by the peacock which they

respect. A Hindu respects a cow and may swear by the sexual organ of his father as a direct creator or he may swear by fire for god is fire.

Culture is a social phenomenon that reflects customs and traditions of a certain society. The relationship between culture, religion and Language is so strong that they cannot be separated from each other. A part of culture is religion which is defined as any system of beliefs, symbols and that makes life meaningful. Religious ideology can be understood on two levels : the first is that it provides a symbolic framework that allows an individual to understand his place in the universe . The second is that these religious symbols represent the most basic elements to human existence. An important fact is that culture can appear or develop only in relation to religion. Arab linguists , therefore , paid m o r e attention to swearing than English ones due to the differences of culture between Arabic and English. Each swearing particle has its syntactic and semantic functions and each one is used in a certain context that differs in both Arabic and English.

10. Swearing in English

Since most English people do not believe in prophets, holy places, religious personalities, holy times , creation of Allah and angels, there are few jurative devices to swear . Some people simply use " I swear" for emphasis. Others swear by their honour or by the memory of their fathers and dead sons. Instead of the swearing expression used in Arabic , English people focus on certain words and expressions. They use stress and intonation. English Christians swear by Jesus Christ, Mary the Virgin , the holy land, or by the Bible. This is due to the differences between Arabic and English culture and religions . The jurative devices in English are supposed to perform all the syntactic and semantic functions of the

Arabic ones and may result in some loss in meaning. Men usually swear by someone greater than themselves . The Christians swear by the Lord God who knows our hearts with all our imaginations and intentions. He is our judge and can punish every false promise and vow (Thomas , 1998, p. 4) Emphatic statements are employed to assure that what you are saying is true. " God helps us" "God is my witness" "So help me God" " I swear before Almighty God " " I call God as my witness", "By heaven", "By the earth, by Jerusalem, or by my head. Hannah also swore by the priest Eli , saying, " As surely you live my Lord " (Thomas, 1998, p. 3). Poor people may gather together and swear to overthrow the master. The gesture of lifting the hand towards heaven was also an Israelite form of oath. In England for example , in the parliament at Shrewsbury in 1393, when the Lords took an oath on the cross of Canterbury never to suffer the transactions of that parliament to be changed, the members of the Commons held up their hands to signify their taking upon themselves the same oath(Tyler, 2007, p. 99 and 2.)

The oaths now administered among civilized nations are chiefly intended for maintaining governments and securing the performance of public business. In England the coronation oath is to be administered by one of the archbishops or bishops in the presence of all the people, who, on their parts, reciprocally take the oath of allegiance to the crown. The chief officers of state take an official oath well and truly to serve his majesty. Special oaths are taken by privy councilors, archbishops and bishops, peers, baronets and knights , recruits and others(Ibid, P. 6). Witnesses in English law courts must give their evidence under the sanction of an oath , or of what is equivalent to an oath , and the ordinary form of oath adapted to Christians is:"The evidence you shall give shall be the truth, the whole truth , and nothing but the truth. So help you God" Laying the hand on the Gospel was kept up to a modern date in the oath in the university of

oxford. Other objects , as the cross and the bishop's crosier were sworn by(Ibid, P. 6 and 4.). Among the oath-formulas used in Christendom , that were taken by provincial governors under Justinian is: "I swear by God Almighty , and His only begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ , and the Holy Ghost , and the Most Holy Glorious Mother of

God and ever Virgin Mary, and by the Four Gospels which I hold in my hand, and by The holy Archangels Michael and Gabrael. . An oath of office is an oath or affirmation a person takes before undertaking the duties of an office, usually a position in government or within a religious body, although such oaths are sometimes required of officers of other organizations. Such oaths are often required by the laws of the state, religious body, or other organization before the person may actually exercise the powers of the office or any religious body. It may be administered at an inauguration, coronation, enthronement, or other ceremony connected with the taking up of office itself, or it may be administered privately in some cases may be administered privately and then repeated during a public ceremony. Some oaths of office are a statement of loyalty to constitution or other legal text or to a person or other office-holder(e. g. , an oath to support the constitution of the state , or of loyalty to the king)Under the laws of a state it may be considered treason or a high crime to betray a sworn oath of office. (Wikipedia , the free encyclopedia, 2008, Oath of office, P. 1). The oath as to England is to be tendered by the Clerk of the Council, and taken in presence of Her Majest in council, or otherwise as Her Majesty shall direct. All recruits to the British Army and royal Air Force must take an oath of allegiance upon joining these armed forces , a process known as "attestation. Those who believe in God use the following words:"I swear by Almighty God that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth),

her heirs and successors. [wikipedia, 2008 , oath –of-officeP. 4](#) (Others replace the words "swear by Almighty God" with solemnly, sincerely and truly declare and affirm. In modern culture we are asked to make pledges, take wedding vows, enter into contracts, covenants, commitments, and to agree to join accountability groups. Wedding vows are also contracts, a simple agreement or covenant, between two people that they will be a husband and wife for life. All clergy will impose some form of "wedding vows" to be taken at any wedding over which they officiate. The Bible guarantees us that refraining from oaths and vows is not sinful. (Booth, Craig, W. Oaths, vows, Pledges, and Sovereignty, 2002, p. 9, The Faithful Sovereignty2002Word. org. , <http://www the faithfulword. org/oaths. html>, 2008)

A contract is a formal obligation , often between two or more persons, most often in writing. Some formal agreements contain hidden oaths. Someone is also asked to sign a rental agreement. The agreement also contains words such as, "swear to abide by the terms of this covenant, "then the agreement crosses the line into swearing an oath. It is used to be a Standard practice to ask a person to "swear an oath of honesty...so help you God" before he provided testimony. (Booth, 2002, P. 12)

Corrupted people may play with words. The queen and the president may not keep their oath. If they respect their oath, there would be less injustice in the world . You can call on God to punish you if you swear falsely . However, we can do without swearing because they cheapen the name of God. The more easily men swear, the easily they tell lies. (Thomas, 1988, 4). God encourages proper swearing but upright swears are condemned. Some swearers are not careful about the truth and they use swearing as a means of deception. An oath which is used to pulling a trick on someone is rejected. Sinful people are confronted with

the seriousness of what they are about to say or what they are about to do. . A man can be a member of the cabinet , or a president and has made a solemn oath, yet he can be a liar, we do not take his oath seriously. If he commits perjury he will be punished. Swearing is also used in treaties of war, peace and trade. Swearing is necessary "if one party swears an oath in the name of his false god, then that is his sin, but we may remind him of the declarations he made under oath before his god. "(Douma, 1989, p. 94). The oath of office does not require blind obedience. We realize that god is the highest and final Judge of good and evil to whom we must render absolute obedience. Swearing brings the swearer to the day of judgement. For every idle word we must give an account. It is by our words that we are condemned. Will hell be full of swearers? You have taken his name in vain, but he will forgive (Thomas, 1998, P. 8). Simplicity, honesty, rightness of expression are characteristics of the language of swearing. The mark of truth is chastity of speech to reinforce our affirmations. We should tell nothing but the truth in the name of the lord.

The Gospel of Matthew (2008) tells us: "don't swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is the throne of God ; nor by the earth , for it is the footstool of his feet; nor by Jerusalem , for it is the city of the great King. neither shall you swear by your head , for you cant make one hair white or black. But let your 'yes' be 'yes' and your 'NO' be 'NO'. Whatever is more than these is of the evil one". (Matthew 5:33-37 in George P. , 2008, p. 1) 11. **Similarities and Differences between English and**

Arabic Swearing

It is obvious from the previous sections (9 and 10) that swearing in both languages differs according to social circumstances , context of situation and social experience. The life of both English and Arab people is full of promises. This is a universal phenomena. They both respect the

name of God, however, the beliefs and habits in both languages are different because both societies have undergone different stages of development. Both societies(religions) have different views of God. Muslims believe in the oneness of God while in Christianity they believe in the Lord(the father), the son and the holy spirit. Jesus is elevated to the status of the son of the Lord. As a result, the swearing expressions are different.

In both languages, the purpose of swearing is the same: to add more emphasis to the text, to attract the addressees attention to an important thing which deserves listening(Please see section 6) or when the addressee is not in line with him to confirm that he is saying the truth.

Swearing in Islam is restricted to the name of Allah. Allah has sworn by his created objects(section 16)Both English and Arab people swear in the law courts. The concept and its purpose is the same, however, the linguistic forms are different. In both English and Arabic marriage vows the boy and the girl should show acceptance and marriage promises might be similar, however, a christian might promise not to marry another woman. An Arab man is not obliged to give such a promise, he is allowed to marry up to four at the same time . Both English and Arab people put their hands on holy books when they swear. The idea is the same , to say something emphatically, to say the truth or keep a secret or swear by dear things. In both languages, they may swear by the memory of their dead Sons or fathers, by their honors, or by holy books. In both languages, the oath of the office is taken to show loyalty to the constitution.

In Arabic we have more swearing expressions than in English(section 6) like /wa/, /ta/, /bi/, /li/, in the name of Allah and his attributes(section 6. 6.) . This is due to cultural differences. The one who swears by Allah falsely will be punished. In English they do not swear by

the parts of the body. No one swears by the graces of God, religious personality, or holy times. In both Christianity and Islam , they prefer not to swear. However, English people may swear by Jesus Christ , the Holy Spirit, Virgin Mary, the Four Gospels and the Holy Archangels. . These religious swearings stir emotional reactions in the learner because they have emphasizing power reflected by sacred words like heaven and Jesus. Finally, in both languages swearing plays an important role in social interaction.

12. Conclusions

People swear constantly , our life is full of promises which may fail to keep. Swearing is calling on the name of God to ensure that one is saying the truth, to say something solemnly or emphatically to tell the truth, or cause somebody to take the oath of the office or make somebody swear to keep the secret. People usually swear by important things and all that hold dear to confirm or deny something.

Swearing is a formula emphasizing the truth of telling that something has happened or not. The aim is to make Allah a witness that the speaker is saying the truth. The most common swearing particles in Arabic are /aqsamtu/, /qasaman/ , /ahlifu/ /aleitu/, /wallahi/ , /billahi/ , /ayma allah/, /aymun allah/, in addition to the names of Allah and his attributes like /alrahman /, /alrahi:m/, and /alkhāliq/. Swearing by the Quran, Kaba, the prophet or the king, by my son , by my honour or to emphasize the news that something will happen or not. It is better for a person not to swear except for emphasis or to defend himself or get back a right. The swearer may oblige himself to do something or leave. One should not swear only in the name of Allah Almighty. Allah has sworn by his power and his creatures . Lord has sworn by himself because there is

no one greater than himself . To swear by anything other than God is evil or from Satan. A person should not swear by anything besides Allah. The purpose is to call Allah as our witness and the judge of our honesty and sincerity in what we are saying. The implication is that if I am lying, or if I am not keeping my word, then God may hold me accountable and punishes me. He knows my thoughts and heart. Swearing is valid if it is taken in the name of Allah. To fulfill this is obligatory. If an oath is broken, one has to pay penalty. It is necessary that the thing sworn by must have importance or weightage. Falsehood is prohibited, but swearing without the name of Allah is not considered a Qasam that must be fulfilled . However , those who do not have a religious belief usually focus , emphasize and lay force or stress on a word or words to make the significance clear or to show the importance of that word or expression for example , one may insist or declare emphatically that he is innocent.

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