



A Semantic Analysis of Gender Representation in Arabic and English Proverbs

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Abstract in English

This research paper adopts **Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)** as a theoretical framework for examining the representation of gender roles in Arabic and English proverbs. Proverbs are viewed as “linguistic repositories” that encapsulate a society’s culture, social values, beliefs, and ideologies transmitted across generations.

According to the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis, language is not regarded as a neutral tool; rather, it serves as both a reflection of and a mechanism for reproducing social structures and power relations. As argued by Norman Fairclough (1995), discourse plays a central role in constructing social reality and maintaining ideological systems. In practical terms, this perspective challenges the ways in which proverbs contribute to the construction and reinforcement of traditional stereotypes about men and women, thereby revealing the cultural assumptions surrounding femininity and masculinity embedded within the linguistic traditions under investigation.

The study analyzes the major semantic themes associated with male and female characters, highlighting both positive and negative representations, as well as the social expectations underlying these proverbs. The comparative approach adopted in the research enhances awareness of points of convergence—such as the recurrent association of women with the domestic sphere and emotional sensitivity, and men with strength and authority—while also identifying differences arising from distinct cultural contexts. For example, Arabic proverbs tend to emphasize family honor and moral commitment, whereas English proverbs place greater emphasis on individual behavior and pragmatic advice.

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The findings underscore the effectiveness of proverbs as powerful vehicles for disseminating and reinforcing gender ideologies, thereby exerting a direct influence on societal perceptions and expectations regarding gender roles.

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1. Introduction

This study is grounded in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which examines the relationship between language, ideology, and social structures. Within this framework, language is viewed as a social practice that constructs and maintains cultural values and power relations. Proverbs, as conventional and widely used expressions, play a significant role in transmitting collective wisdom and social norms across generations. Due to their authoritative status in everyday discourse, they often reflect and reinforce culturally established gender roles and expectations.

As concise yet meaningful forms, proverbs encapsulate shared cultural experiences, moral values, and social attitudes. They function as cultural mirrors that reveal underlying beliefs and worldviews, particularly regarding gender. Their brevity and memorability make them effective tools for preserving and perpetuating ideology.

Therefore, analyzing Arabic and English proverbs through CDA provides valuable insight into how gender representations are embedded in language and how they contribute to shaping and reinforcing social ideologies.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Proverbs form an important part of linguistic as well as culture system as repositories of societal values, beliefs, and normative expectations. Their universalization in everyday communication reflects and reinforces traditional views in relation to social roles and interpersonal relationships. According to Wolfgang Mieder (2004) proverb is a compact and conventionalized expression that summarizes a shared wisdom and can be used as a means for passing on the cultural norms among generations or from one generation to the next. “traditional sayings that express common truths or experiences of a culture” (p. 3). Based on their authoritative power and prevalence, proverbs possess the capacity to define the perception of social issues

such as gender roles among people. Numerous proverbs label male and female figures in a particular way in which each gender is attributed with specific characteristics and/or expectations. Such portrayals can perpetuate existing stereotypes and cultural notions related to ideas of masculinity and femininity. As noted by Robin Lakoff (1975), "language reflects social structures and often contributes to maintaining gender inequalities" (p. 45). Despite this, comparative semantic studies related to gender representation between Arabic and English proverbs do not exist in large amounts. Accordingly, the present study aims at scrutinising the gender portrayals in the proverbs of Arabic and English and delineating both the converge and divergence in the proverbs.

1.3 Research Questions

This research aims to answer the questions as follows:

- How do male and female individuals get semantically represented in Arabic proverbs?
- How are individual male and female roles semantically constructed in English proverb?
- What are the similarities and dissimilarities in the representation of gender in Arabic and English proverbs?

1.4 Significance of the Study

This investigation adds value to the scholarly literature in the fields of linguistics and cultural studies by examining the extent to which there is encoding of gender roles and social attitudes in proverbial language. Proverbs are generally accepted as important cultural artefacts to record and share the collective beliefs and experience of. According to Neal R. Norrick (1985), "proverbs reflect the shared values and assumptions of a society" (p. 31).

Chapter II

2. Theoretical Framework: Critical Discourse Analysis

According to Fairclough (1995), "discourse is a form of social practice" (p. 63), Language at the same time reflects and creates the social realities among which it is produced. From this perspective, discourse plays a role in the reproduction and

perpetuation of social relations, both those related to gender. Proverbs, well known as the traditional sayings, are a kind of discourse which expresses the collective knowledge, cultural values and social expectations.

Due to the fact that they are constantly deployed in the daily communication of people, proverbs play a major role in the reinforcement of societal norms and attitudes. CDA highlights the fact that very often linguistic expressions contain implicit ideological meanings. As van Dijk (1998) explains, “ideologies are typically expressed and reproduced in discourse and communication” (p. 8). Within the realm of the investigation of proverbs also, the ideological aspect may consist of the cultural-specific notions of the notions of masculinity and femininity. Proverbs often define men and women using stereotypical attributes and the traditional roles of men and women in society. For instance, men are often seen as strong, leaders and have authority, while women are commonly seen as domestic, emotionally sensitive and caregivers. Furthermore, critical discourse analysis (CDA) allows scholars to explore the function that language plays in helping to sustain power-relation(s) between social groups.

Fairclough (1995) argues that discourse can be a mechanism where dominant ideologies in society are perpetuated. Because proverbs are understood as authoritative sources of wisdom and moral stance, they can support specific expectations of gender behaviour. Consequently, the images of men and women included in proverbs may affect people's sense of the proper role of each gender in society.

Another important facet of CDA is that it can analyse discourse within its cultural and social context. Wodak and Meyer (2016) state that Critical Discourse Analysis aims at understanding the relationships between language practises and larger social and cultural structures. When prose is applied to the study of proverbs, this approach helps the researchers study the gender identities of different societies through the language.

In the light of Arabic culture, one can see many traditional themes such as the themes of family honour, obedience, and communal responsibility, which are often reflected in Arabic proverbs. In contrast English proverbs tend to center around the behaviour of the individual, a personal sense of victory, morality; life's practical advice. Using Critical Discourse Analysis, this study investigates patterns and cultural messages embedded in Arabic and English proverbs, particularly with respect to gender. The research aims to highlight the ideologies underlying wholesome cultural perceptions of men and women, by examining how men and women are presented in these expressions. Ultimately, CDA offers an effective analytical frame through which

gender-related beliefs that influence cultural traditions can be understood and how language reflects and enforces perceptions of gender.

2.1. Proverbs as a Linguistic and a Cultural Expression

Proverbs are well known as a major part of language as well as culture. They are short, pithy expressions that contain widely accepted truths, moral teaching and pragmatic wisdom that stems from human experience. Proverbs are traditionally passed on from one generation to another via oral or written tradition, and are often used in everyday conversation in order to convey advice, warnings, or observations about life. According to Wolfgang Mieder (2004), a proverb may be classified as “a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorable form” (p. 3). The centrality of proverbs as abridged statements of shared knowledge relevant to cultural environment can be seen in this definition.

In terms of a language, a proverb is a set of figurative phrases having an illustrative and metaphorical meaning. Their structure and the word choice are generally very stable, thus enabling the traditional form of proverbs to continue existing across the time, space and sociocultural borders. The proverbs are, as Neal - Norrick (1985) proposes, “fixed expressions that communicate general truths and are recognized as traditional sayings within a speech community” (p. 31). Since they are brief and have the mnemonic characteristics, refrains can be easily memorized and be applied in a wide range of social situations. Proverbs have unique qualities that distinguish them as compared to any other type of expressing oneself.

First of all, it is their brevity, they tend to be very brief, something that can be more easily communicated and remembered, as such that they are made out of units that are easy to memories. And this is what makes them especially handy tools of bolstering wisdom and dispensing instruction on the daily speech. The other interesting aspect of proverbs is that it is figurative. There are so many sayings that use metaphors, images and symbolic words to get a meaning that would otherwise be misunderstood when taken directly. Through this figurative aspect, it is possible to communicate the universal ideas in a rather creative and resonant way. In his treatise, Wolfgang Mieder

assumes so. "the metaphorical structure of proverbs contributes to their durability and adaptability across different contexts" (2004, p. 7).

In a pure form, proverbs are a primaevial component of the conventional cultural patrimony, which is inevitably passed across generations; their very creation is based on mutual experiential discourses and continuity in history, making them by their very nature reflexive indicators of the cultural identities that are inherent to respective societies it is created in. Also, these proverbial phrases often serve pedagogical purposes, which randomly dispense moral advice along with prescriptions of behaviour, and their strategic use is a central process involved in the custody and transmission of shared values, ideologies and social standards. As cultural artefacts, they provide rich information about the interpretation of human behaviour, interpersonal relations and social expectations of societies. The repeated appearance of proverbial expressions in the practises of everyday life, in the contact with common people, is aimed to strengthen the generally accepted norms and it puts the individual behaviour in an appropriate common context.

Scholars often see in proverbs a window on a society's view point and cultural philosophy. According to Neal R. Norrick (1985) proverbs function as "concise statements that express the shared values and beliefs of a speech community" (p. 78). Regardless of the scattered way that they are called out to prove legitimacy or to give counsel, the continued use of proverbs helps to cultivate an aura of authority which serves to enhance the culture narratives to which they are contributing. Furthermore, proverbs make socialisation easy by upholding the norms and expectations of society. From kitul ages, people are exposed to proverbial expressions that have messages about family ties, work morals, moral values and community duties.

Consequently, proverbs are used as pedagogies which dictate attitudes and behaviours in particular social contexts. Moreover, they often reveal latent cultural views on different social groups such as gender roles, social stratification and familial relations.

2.2 Gender and Language

Gender has become an important issue in linguistic research and especially in the sub-discipline of sociolinguistics and discourse analysis. Within the framework of

linguistic inquiry, gender is seen here, not only as referring to the biological differences between males and females, but also in reference to the social status, and the social roles that are socially constructed and mediated through culture and cultural practises and that are associated with masculinity or femininity. If formulated and perpetuated, these roles are created through interpersonal interaction and communicative practises. In the words of Deborah Cameron (1992), people get these performances right. "gender is understood as a social construct that is continuously produced and reproduced through language and social practices" (p. 8). The view in the framework of language is that language is a central mechanism in the process of gender identities construction and gender identities perception held within sociocultural circumstances.

Scholars have gone on to emphasize the way in which linguistic patterns reflect the roles of male and female gender and the power relations that exist in social structures. Language works to highlight the way societies define certain expectations, behaviours, and attributes of males and females. Within this framework the study of gender in linguistics focuses on how language reflects and perpetuates existing cultural views about gender. As noted by Robin Lakoff (1975), "linguistic differences between men and women often mirror broader social inequalities and cultural assumptions about gender roles" (p. 45). Reproduction of gender stereotypes is often encoded into the constructs of language in the form of idioms, proverbial expressions, idiomatic phrases that display the rooted ideas about the social prototypes of masculinity and femininity. The assumption in many settings is that women are care keepers of emotionality, aestheticism as well as home care, thus when it comes to physical strength, executive power, and autonomy, they move to the male realm.

These symbolic representations have a significant impact on the perception patterns according to which people construct their ideas about gender roles and relationships between each other. As a result, language serves as a medium of experience of the transfer and reaffirmation of the existing gender paradigms. According to Deborah Tannen (1990), "linguistic patterns frequently reflect cultural beliefs about masculinity and femininity and may contribute to maintaining stereotypical perceptions of gender" (p. 24). The circulation and the cultural acceptance of these linguistic forms suggests that, however vaguely, they work to define the social expectations that relate to gendered behaviour. Language and societal attitudes related to gender show a very close connection. Linguistic expressions both reflect the cultural

dominant beliefs in the society, and constructively influence the ways of understanding gender roles in the society and therefore contextualize the way these women and men come to perceive these society's functions.

Through the communicative interactions of everyday life, language reinforces normative frameworks and value systems that are related to gender identity and behaviour. Scholars confirm that language is a powerful medium in the construction of social ideologies. According to Norman Fairclough 1995 "discourse plays a central role in constructing social reality and maintaining ideological structures within society" (p. 73). In this respect, the lexical choices used in proverbs, aphorisms and other traditional idiomatic forms can reinforce dominant cultural conceptions in regard to gender.

2.3 Semantic Analysis of Linguistic Studies

Semantics is one of the main branches of linguistics which focuses its academic efforts on the complex study of the concept of meaning as it is expressed in language. It examines the ways in which lexical units, phrasal constructions and sentential structures are used to communicate semantic information as well as how this information is then understood by interlocutors in various contextual circumstances. The field is still preoccupied with explaining the relationship between forms of language and the abstract concepts or ideas that they realise. According to John I. Saeed (2016), semantics can be put in words as. "the study of meaning communicated through language" (p. 3). This definition helps to understand the central role played by semantics in understanding the workings of language as an integrated system of meaning.

In the field of linguistic studies, semantics focuses on the manifestation of the lexical items and constructions of phrases that capture both actual and allusive meanings. Numerous linguistic phenomena incorporate, among other things, proverbs in their expressions of meaning that cannot be reduced to simple lexical interpretation. Because the proverbs often use metaphorical and symbolic language, the immense knowledge implied in these proverbs and its cultural ramifications cannot be understood without close examination of semantics. Semantic analysis represents a very basic tool for exploring the processes upon which meaning construction and its interpretation in language are based. It aids the academic studies on the articulation of

ideas, attitudes and values that are intrinsic to the linguistic expressions. Through semantic analysis, it becomes possible to understand the underlying meanings and conceptual patterns as per dictated by communicative practises in certain communities of speakers.

According to Geoffrey Leech (1981), "meaning in language is complex and can involve several layers, including conceptual, associative, and social meanings" (p. 9). It is important to note that the multilayered design of proverbs, as a complex semantic system, is particularly relevant to exegetical research due to the high number of cases in which such pieces of linguistic art are dimensional of cultural and symbolic content beyond the literal meaning. A strict, methodical review of these layers of analysis gives us some valuable information on the spread of moral teaching, social cultural teaching, and the religious thought systems. Besides, the ability to conduct such a semantic probing empowers scholars to be critical regarding how linguistic forms carry and promote social and even cultural ideology. Being typical lexical artefacts, proverbs are always encoded communal values and orientations and consequently represent the ethos of the societies to which they are typical. Accordingly, a denotation study can make it easier to realise latent cultural premises, including concepts of social status, interpersonal relationships, and gendered identities.

A number of methodological approaches can be used in the deconstruction of the semantic content of the proverbs. One commonly taken approach highlights the difference between literal and figurative meanings that are present in propositional structures. Given the importance of metaphorical and symbolic devices in using proverbs, it is important to navigate through the intertwining of meanings found in these semantic resources at different layers so as to interpret them precisely.

A second strategy is a systematic analysis of semantic themes and categories of relationships between words used in proverbs and in other corpora containing proverbs. Such thematic profiling is done in order to understand or explain the longevity of certain ideational constructions and socio- cultural values in a particular tradition. A third type of approach consists of comparative semantic analysis, which offers juxtapositions of proverbic units in a cross linguistic and cross-cultural context in an effort to determine convergence or divergence of meaning and interpretive frameworks. As Wolfgang Mieder (2004) notes, "comparative studies of proverbs can provide valuable insights into both universal human experiences and culturally specific beliefs" (p. 15). These

analyses help to support the understanding of scholars and explain the modalities by which disparate societies represent analogous concepts in vastly different linguistic and cultural paradigms. Within these methodologies paradigms, semantic analysis stands as a powerful tool at the disposal of the analysis of the latent meanings within the proverbial expressions and at the service of paving the way to understand how language reflects the reality of cultures and societies.

2.4 Gender as Represented in Proverbs

Proverbs are generally considered to be reflections of its social and cultural beliefs of a community. Based on everyday experiences and community wisdom, they tend to express traditional perceptions with respect to social roles and interpersonal relations. Frequently, proverbs challenge the relationship between men and women and outline the roles and expectations given to people of each gender in societal contexts. As one researcher, Wolfgang Mieder (2004), argues, proverbs represent, among other things, “traditional expressions that preserve the experiences and attitudes of a culture” (p. 3). As such, proverbs can shed light on the images of masculinity and femininity in a given society.

In many cultural settings, sayings are used to define the roles of men and women according to the prevailing social expectations of male-female roles; men are often linked to things such as power, order, and leadership while women are often linked to things such as domestic responsibilities, feelings, and beauty. These depictions give scholars a look into the historical and cultural discourses of gender roles.

According to Tannen (1990), "language reflects cultural beliefs about gender and often reveals differences in how men and women are perceived within social contexts" (p. 24). Therefore, a systematic study of proverbs will help researchers to understand how the linguistic expressions reflect either more general societal attitudes toward gender. Furthermore, not only due to its reflection of prevailing cultural beliefs, proverbs may also be used in order to reinforce traditional gender association and expectations. Given their very common use as sources of advice or moral instruction, proverbs usually have a kind of authority that enhances the messages they contain. When such proverbs define particular behaviours or characteristics as appropriate for men and women, they may help entrench the existing social norms. Language scholars

have reinforced the fact that language expressions could determine people's interpretation of social roles.

According to Deborah Cameron (1992). "language is an important medium through which social ideologies and cultural values are communicated and reproduced" (p. 8). In the context of proverbs, if exposed to conventional sayings repeatedly, people's perception of allowable gender behaviour and perpetual entrenched cultural stereotypes could be influenced. Moreover, proverbs are often used as a tool for socializing, that is, pronunciation as individuals values and expectations of their local community. Through their use everywhere people talk, proverbs may subtly encourage the acceptance of traditional gender roles and norms. Consequently, the study of the gender representation in proverbs provides important information on the role of linguistic practises in the constitution of social attitudes and the perpetuation of culturally specific gender traditions.

Chapter III

Gender Representation Semantically between Arabic and English Proverbs

3.1 Reflection of Women in Arabic Proverbs

Arabic proverbs are often accurate summaries of traditional societal views of the roles and qualities of women. Functioning as repositories of collective wisdom, these aphorisms tend to associate a woman with different semantic motifs which mirror some prevailing cultural expectations and/or social norms. Predominant themes pertaining to women in Arabic proverbial literature include notions of beauty, domestic responsibility, motherhood, emotional sensitivity and obedience. Such motifs, taken together, depict the stereotypical view of women within the cultural and social context of many Arabic speaking communities. According to Wolfgang Mieder (2004), . "proverbs frequently encode the cultural experiences and social attitudes of a community" (p. 3). Within Arabic culture there are many proverbs that highlight the importance of women in the family especially as mothers/ caregivers. These aphorisms shed light on the importance of the family unit and the role the women play in maintaining the stability of the household. Concomitantly, such expressions shed light

on wider cultural ideas about appropriate behaviour as well as societal expectations of women. Arabic proverbs present women with an affirmative and an adverse image.

In the positive dimension women are commonly observed as subservient mothers or faithful wives and indispensable in the domestic area. Aphorisms added to the emphasis on maternal love or the need for women in the child-rearing process demonstrate a great respect for women's roles in the family. These portrayals, which celebrate the role of women for the sake of maintaining the balance within society and within the family, exist in tandem with derogatory versions of women as they are found in some Arab proverbs. Such proverbs often attribute to women traits of emotional instability and excessive verbosity or lack of rational decision making. These representations are of old traditional stereotypes that have pervaded many societies throughout history. As Deborah Cameron (1992) observes, "language often reflects underlying social ideologies and may reproduce cultural assumptions about gender roles" (p. 8). These negative portrayals are integrated in proverbs thus reflecting historical attitudes towards women that are now indelible in the realm of culture. In addition, proverbs are mechanisms of the intergenerational transmission of cultural norms.

According to Neal R. Norrick (1985), "proverbs express shared values and beliefs that guide social behavior within a community" (p. 31). Consequently, the portrayal of women in Arabic proverbs not only reflects the historical attitudes, but rather it is involved in construction of a societal expectations related to women's roles. Through the awareness of the semantic themes and cultural connotations imbued in these proverbs scholars may gain a deeper understanding of the ways in which language alleviates and perpetuates gendered cultural perception in Arabic-speaking societies.

3.2 Portrayal of Women in English Proverbs

English proverbs are often reflect society's views of women, placing emphasis on particular semantic themes, such as domesticity, beauty, morality and affective temperament. Women are constantly portrayed in connection with their roles in families or society, including those as wives, mothers or caregivers. According to Wolfgang Mieder (in 2004) it can be said that English proverbs reflect everlasting women's cultural attitudes. "encode the collective wisdom and social expectations of a community" (p. 3), In the particular realm of women, this phenomenon often consists

of two parts of admiration and warning of conduct and character. Proverbs such as “A woman's work is never done” “شغل المرأة ما يخلص أبدًا” highlight women’s domestic responsibilities, whereas expressions like “Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned” “ماكوا غضب أعظم من امرأة زعلت”.

The current interest is in the emotional charge associated with literary and cultural representations of women as being at one and the same time powerful and potentially disruptive. These patterns help with drawing recurrent patterns that form the overall cultural story in relationship to femininity and social roles English proverbs often give rise to cultural mores and attitudes towards behaviour between women, which cover aspects of women's behaviour like obedience, modesty, diligence and nurturing. The effect of these adages is the development of the view that women have the major task of keeping family financial stability and appropriateness. According to Tannen (1990), "language serves to communicate and reinforce societal attitudes, and proverbs, as culturally sanctioned statements, contribute to the socialization of gender roles" (p. 24). The social ideals incorporated in the English proverbs are an expression of admiration of the role women play in life and sets unwritten rules on the behaviour of the women.

These proverbs both show the positive images of women as virtuous and caring, at the same time, give the warning messages about the emotional instability or frailty of women that creates the delicate fabric of respect, control, and social guidelines.

3.3 Representation of Men in Arabic Proverbs

Arabic proverbial traditions always relate the male figures to character traits such as strength, courage, leadership, wisdom and authority. These attributes support the dominant view of men as protectors, providers and guardians of social and familial power. The values of bravery, decisiveness and honour are considered to be the quintessential elements of masculinity in the proverbial discourse. According to Mieder (2004), "proverbs act as cultural mirrors, and in Arabic societies, they encode expectations of men’s roles both within the family and in wider social contexts" (p. 3). For example, proverbs emphasising valour in battle, responsibility in command, and the utmost importance of honour serve purposes of reaffirmation of maleness and provide paradigmatic reference points for male behaviour. These representations go

beyond a description of the societal roles men play in society, including the praise of attributes that society deems to be inherently masculine.

Beyond the obvious characteristics, Arabic proverbs will often make use of symbolic vocabulary in order to convey deeper cultural implications relating to masculinity. Masculinity in these proverbs is linked with authority, social and ethical responsibility. For example, the bravery or sagacity of men is often confused with honour, societal honour, and leadership and thus the larger societal axioms. According to Neal R. Norrick (1985). "proverbs preserve the shared beliefs and social ideals of a community, making them a key medium for transmitting cultural norms" (p. 31). These proverbs serve to idealise the social roles of men as well as to reinforce socially valued masculine characteristics from generation to generation. As a result somewhat, the meaning of masculinity in Arabic proverbs reflects both pragmatic expectations as well as symbolic connotations, thereby reflecting deeply-entrenched cultural ideals relating to the identity of men.

3.4 Representation of Men in English Proverbs

English proverbs often highlight social roles and duties of a man in a traditional woman's role, but emphasise characteristics such as leadership, being strong, brave and providing. Men are generally represented as protectors, decision-makers and people of authority, both in the family and among the society at large. Proverbs like "The father is the head of the household" or "A man's word is his bond" emphasise the importance of men to their social role and moral obligation and also speaks of cultural expectations regarding masculinity. According to Wolfgang Mieder (2004), "English proverbs function as repositories of cultural wisdom and social norms, codifying behaviors deemed appropriate for men in a given society" (p. 3). These are historical and cultural expressions, which play a major role in shaping masculine identity of the society.

In linguistic terms, English proverbs are more prone to use metaphorical, hyperbolic, and evaluative terms thus making male archetypes serpentine, strong and pragmatic. Masculinity is a notion that is usually accompanied by being a leader, honoured, and strong. By way of example, the culture values of cherished human qualities of males, which are assertiveness, decisiveness, risk taking, are given enormous emphasis in such expressions as the phrase, Boys will be boys, and the phrase, He who hesitates is lost. According to Deborah Tannen (1990), "language both

reflects and reinforces social structures, and proverbs operate as culturally sanctioned linguistic tools that convey normative expectations for men" (p. 24). Drawing on an inspiring critique of the current trends in the linguistic patterns, it is possible to better grasp symbolic modalities according to which English proverbs are encoded to reproduce the idea of hegemonic masculinity.

3.5 Proverbs About Gender Relations

Proverbs also talks a lot about gender relations providing guidance, a cautionary look and moral commentary on the dynamics between a husband and a wife. In the Arabic and English society, such stereotypical expressions define roles and duties and future behaviour of husbands and wives. As an example, the English formula member of the series Happy wife, happy life and the Arabic version remind the audience of the utmost priority of the conjugal harmony and, at the same time, strengthen the family traditions ingrained in Arab culture. Such platitudes shed light on the ceremonies of spousal relationship as dictated by the biological values and demands of the society.

The family roles form one of the most important themes in many proverbs and family roles are often described in the gendered manner. Women are normally viewed as the main nurturers, homecare givers whereas men have been mostly regarded as providers, guardians and the main decision makers. These characterizations can be used to support the division of labour, as well as the hierarchical organisation that has been the mainstay of the family institution. According to Neal R. Norrick (1985), "proverbs serve as concise statements of shared cultural knowledge, often encoding lessons about proper behavior and social organization" (p. 31). Numerous proverbs codify the attitudes behind social power relations between men and women, thus explaining societal ideas about authority, power and decision making. While some of the proverbs confirm male supremacy or male leadership, others are counsel given in respect of marital or familial relations. The continued repetition of these aphorisms as they are worked into the world of daily discourse reinforces the existing hierarchy of power, and informs the construction of gendered hierarchies. By examining systematically some of the proverbs relating to marriage, family, and gendered and religious relations, scholars shed light on how language reflects and reinforces cultural-specific expectations of men and women and their relations.

Aspect	Arabic Proverbs	English Proverbs
Marital Harmony	The need to emphasise cooperation and equilibrium between husband and wife is apparent. البيت لا يقوم إلا على وفاق الزوجين.	"Happy wife, happy life."
Husband's Role	The husband is oftentimes conceptualised as the protector and provider. الرجل سند البيت وحاميه.	"the husband is the head of the family."
Wife's Role	The wife is by and large identified with care, patience and maintenance of family stability. المرأة عمود البيت وصانعة الراحة.	"A good wife makes a good home."

Chapter IV: Comparative Analysis and Discussion

4.1 Similarities Between Arabic and English Proverbs

Arabic and English proverbs often share similar gender stereotypes, and therefore reflect the established ways of thinking in society and expectations around men and women. Across both of the traditions, women are always linked with domestic duties, aesthetic standards, emotional sensitivity, and caregiving. Whereas, men are generally associated with characteristics like physical strength, authority, leadership and providing resources. These comparative patterns suggest that gender-related cultural assumptions are pervasive across cultures that are so diverse. According to Wolfgang Mieder's (2004) statements about proverbs, they perform the following functions: "mirrors of societal attitudes," often reinforcing traditional roles that define acceptable behavior for each gender (p. 3). These stereotypes are shared which implies that despite the linguistic and cultural differences, societies often think about men, and women in similar ways, thus focusing on complementary though unequal social roles.

Beyond the field of specific stereotypes, there are the Arabic and English proverbs which reflect universal attitudes to gender roles. Both corpora depict men as the

decision-makers and providers as a whole, while the female gender is pictured as a caretaker and a person of moral values. Such commonalities suggest that the cultural transference of gendered expectations cross progressive individual societies because these expectations reflect some commonality of human social patterns.

Theme	Representation in the Arabic Proverbs	Representation in the English Proverbs	Shared Cultural Meaning
Domestic Role of Women	Women are usually referred to as taking care of the household and rearing family children. "المرأة مربية البيت والأولاد."	Proverbs stress women's role in the house (i.e., "A woman's work is never done").	Women are also usually depicted as caretakers and in charge of family life.
Emotional Characteristics of Women	Women are at times categorised as emotional or sensitive "النساء قلوبهن رقيقة وحساسات."	Similar depictions can be found in the proverbs that talk about the emotional response of women	Both of these traditions equate femininity with sensitivity of emotions.
Strength and Authority of Men	Men are shown to be strong, brave and the heads of the family or society "الرجل قوي وشجاع وعمود البيت والمجتمع."	Proverbs usually refer to men as choice-makers and mentors	Masculinity is linked with power, leadership and responsibility.
Family Responsibility	Men are responsible for providing and protecting the family "الرجل معيل وحامي الأسرة."	English proverb also emphasise the role of men as providers and heads of the families	Both cultures place much emphasis on the role of men as providers for the family.
Moral and Social Guidance	Proverbs give guidance on proper behaviour in marriage, in family relations	They have similar proverbs giving advice for marital harmony and on social behavior	Proverbs are in the form of tools for teaching social norms and values.

4.2 Difference in Gender Representation

Despite the stereotypes, there are strong differences in the depiction of men and women in the two languages. Arabic proverbs also tend to put a strong emphasis on the importance of familial honour, social obedience and being morally responsible, especially for women, which is a reflection of the collectivist cultural values. The proverbial formulations of English, by contrast, are found to be much more interested in explaining particular behaviour and in personal ethical systems, which is why they

represent the gender roles that a woman should play in the home, including the affective dispositions involved, and the concept of agency and self-sufficiency granted to men. Semantic analysis reveals that the Arabic proverbial corpus, in most cases, makes use of metaphoric and symbolic frames in the formulation of gendered expectations thus summarizing general cultural ideals in a small figurative frame.

Comparatively, English proverbs, although also figuratively minded, were more prone to these more direct appeals to morality or useful advice as to gender conduct. These divergent patterns suggest that linguistic structure and cultural priorities both are responsible for the communication processes and their contribution to the formation of gender roles in the context of proverbial expression.

Aspect	Arabic Proverbs	English Proverbs	Explanation
Cultural Values	Emphasise Family honour, obedience and collective social values. "العائلة تقوم على الشرف والطاعة والقيم الاجتماعية المشتركة."	Focus more on individual behaviour and individual responsibility	Reflected by collectivist vs. individualistic cultural orientations.
Representation of Women	Often represent women in relation to the family honour, modesty and obedience. "تصوّر المرأة غالبًا على ضوء شرف الأسرة، والحشمة، والطاعة."	Frequently highlight women's personality traits, emotions or domestic tasks	Arabic proverbs emphasise social roles whereas English proverbs emphasise individual characteristics.
Representation of Men	Men are highly correlated to honour, bravery and leadership in the community. "الرجل مرتبط دائمًا بالشرف، والشجاعة، والقيادة في المجتمع."	Men are generally portrayed as independent, decisive and responsible people	Masculinity in Arabic proverbs is related to social status and honour, and in English proverbs the action of the individual is emphasised.
Linguistic Style	Usually use expressions with metaphors and symbols to express meanings frequently.	Tend to say more straight-forward and practical statements	Appropriates rhetoric difference in the two traditions

Social Focus	Emphasis on family structure, social hierarchy.	Focus on individual behaviour and applied recommendations	Cultural priorities determine the expression of gender roles.
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4.3 Cultural Implimentations and Social Implications

Proverbs, being cultural artefacts, are deeply influenced by the context of their genesis, thus include cultural, historical and sociological aspects. Within the Arabic-speaking world, the proverbial aphorisms are likely to describe the more collective concerns of family relations, honorific behaviours, and the intransability of social hierarchies, while their English equivalents will likely mirror the individualistic concerns - moral reasoning and norms of social appropriateness. Thus, the cultural lens through which the proverbs are produced informs the attributes, the demeanour and the gendered role attributed to men and women which is a symbolic illustration of the interconnection between language and tradition.

Given the ubiquity and most of the time the use of proverbs in everyday discourse, they have a critical place in the consolidation and normalization of gender representations that prevail within society. In this way they express the culturally sanctioned ideas about what is culturally accepted for males or females to act like as well as the prescriptive advice and collective expectations. As Deborah Cameron (1992) notes, "language is a primary medium through which social ideologies are communicated and perpetuated" (p. 8). Proverbs, therefore, are not just reflective mirrors of gender norms, but also perpetrators that instil gender norms in successive generations.

Conclusion

The findings of the research findings highlight the importance of language in the selection and reinforcement of cultural conceptions related to gender. Through an approach undertaken through a Critical Discourse Analysis framework, it can be seen that proverbs do not only serve as an embodiment of social values but are also used as a perpetrator of labels that serve and support gender ideologies. The findings of this analysis indicate that Arabic and English proverbs often link thinking of authority, strength and leadership with men while women are mostly linked to the domestic sphere, and emotional traits. These types of constructs of meaning about the social

definition of masculinity and femininity are actually embedded in the commonplace linguistic inventory, which infuses personal speech. To the effect therefore, the continued use of gender-specific proverbs serves to reinforce dominant cultural norms and expectations over the generations and consequently entrap different gendered differences between men and women.

Comparative study on these two linguistic traditions explains in even greater detail the prevalent stereotypes, yet, at the same time, amidst defining culturally exclusive differences in the employment of gender. Various salient findings were derived using the analytic outcomes. The Arabic and English proverbs normally identify women with the home, beauty and higher rate of emotional sensitivity, though the men are always depicted as symbol of power, influence and leadership. Cultural priorities can be traced: most Arabic collections focus on the importance of the honour of the family, moral obligation, and compliance with the social norms, but the English proverbs tend to focus on personal behaviour, ethical responsibility, and practical advice that would help to meet the interest of a person. In linguistic perspective, Arabic maxims often use symbols and metaphors to define gender norms which is unlike English morally admonishing proverbs which are more literal.

Proverbs in both traditions are seen to work as the systems of reinforcing already established gender roles and passing socially approved norms across generations. This truth is in line with the opinion expressed by larger academic community that artefacts of rhetoric do fulfil remedial functions in the cultural milieu hence guaranteeing the persistence of normative patterns of behaviour. Despite the revelations obtained as a result of this investigation, the research is also limited in a variety of ways, which can be critically reflected upon.

To begin with, the empirical field of study was limited to a minute sample of proverbs, which of necessity reduces the representativeness of the samples in depicting the complete range of cultural variation existing in both the Arabic and the English society. Secondly, when used, qualitative semantic analysis involves an inherent threat of researcher biasing; the privileging of certain meanings in a particular manner is an idiosyncratic one, which could lead to the conscious or unconscious underlining of research results. Changes in current language usage and the shift in gender relationships were not sufficiently treated as the main concerns of the investigation related to traditional proverbs.

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تحليل دلالي لتمثيل النوع الاجتماعي في الأمثال العربية والإنجليزية

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Abstract in Arabic

تعتمد هذه الورقة البحثية مفهوم تحليل الخطاب النقدي (CDA) كإطار نظري لدراسة توصيف أدوار النوع الاجتماعي (الجنس) في الأمثال العربية والإنجليزية؛ وذلك باعتبار الأمثال "مكتنزات لغوية" تضم ثقافة المجتمع وقيمه الاجتماعية ومعتقداته وأيديولوجياته المنقولة عبر الأجيال.

وفقاً لمنظور تحليل الخطاب النقدي، لا يُنظر إلى اللغة كأداة محايدة، بل هي مرآة ووسيلة لإعادة إنتاج البنى الاجتماعية وعلاقات القوة. وبحسب "فيركلو" (Fairclough، 1995)، فإن دور الحوار محوري في خلق الواقع الاجتماعي والحفاظ على الأنظمة الأيديولوجية. وفي التطبيق العملي، يتحدى هذا المنظور كيفية مساهمة الأمثال في بناء وتعزيز الصور النمطية التقليدية للرجل والمرأة، مما يفسر الافتراضات الثقافية حول الأنوثة والذكورة في التقاليد اللغوية المعنية.

تفكك الورقة البحثية أهم "الموضوعات الدلالية" المرتبطة بالشخصيات الذكورية والأنثوية، مع تسليط الضوء على التمثيلات الإيجابية والسلبية على حد سواء، فضلاً عن التوقعات الاجتماعية الكامنة وراء هذه الأمثال. ويعزز المنهج المقارن المتبع في البحث الوعي بنقاط الالتقاء — مثل تكرار ربط النساء بالمجال المنزلي والحساسية العاطفية، وربط الرجال بالقوة والسلطة — كما يرصد نقاط الاختلاف الناشئة عن السياقات الثقافية المتباينة؛ فعلى سبيل المثال، تبرز أهمية شرف العائلة والالتزام الأخلاقي في الأمثال العربية، بينما يبرز التركيز على السلوك الفردي والنصيحة البراغمية (العملية) في الأمثال الإنجليزية.

تؤكد النتائج على فاعلية الأمثال كأدوات قوية لنشر الأيديولوجيات الجنسانية وتكريسها، مما يؤثر بشكل مباشر على التصورات والتوقعات المجتمعية.