

A sociocultural Analysis of Animal Connotations in English and Algerian Arabic proverbs

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Abstract

Proverbs serve as cultural legacies, reflecting societal values, lifestyles, and beliefs across generations. This study aims to investigate the different animals' connotations in Arabic and English proverbs, and find out any similarities and differences in the meanings of dogs, cats, and wolves in these two cultures. Using Ben Salamh and Maalej's model, 42 Arabic and 45 English proverbs were analyzed. The research findings revealed some similarities and differences in the connotations of animals. It was founded that in the western culture, dogs are conceived positively, unlike cats and wolves. Conversely, in the Arabic culture, all these three animals are visualized negatively although they may have one or two positive treats. Therefore, it is recommended that foreign language teachers and learners should be aware of these similarities and differences to avoid any communicative breakdown or cultural misunderstanding.

Keywords: animal connotations, Arabic culture, English culture.

1. Introduction

Proverbs hold significant cultural importance, serving as reflections of collective beliefs and shared experiences. They permeate everyday life, transmitted across generations and fulfilling diverse communicative functions such as clarification, advice, and warning. As Lundmark (2008) notes, a proverb is a straightforward and tangible statement that conveys truths grounded in common sense or the practical wisdom of humanity.

Closely related to the study of proverbs is the concept of metaphor, which constitutes an integral component of human language and thought. Metaphors are seamlessly woven into both spoken and written communication, to the extent that they often go unnoticed, so deeply ingrained are they in linguistic and cultural frameworks. Carter (2012) observes that

metaphors have become conventionalized and automatic, shaping discourse whether consciously employed or unintentionally invoked. Defined by Knowles and Moon (2006), metaphor involves the use of language to signify meanings beyond the literal, establishing connections or resemblances between distinct entities. In doing so, metaphors enrich communication, enabling abstract concepts to be understood through parallels with concrete or familiar experiences.

One particularly rich area where metaphors and proverbs intersect is in the use of animal imagery. Both Arabic and English proverbs contain a large number of animal metaphors. Knowles and Moon (2006) argue that cultures often share certain metaphorical associations with animals, since humans share cognitive processes and animals exhibit similar features and behaviors across contexts. Nevertheless, cultural connotations may diverge due to factors such as religion, customs, and historical traditions. In this vein, Ni (2019) emphasizes that proverbs are deeply tied to the history, politics, religion, and traditions of nations, which shape how metaphors are conceptualized.

The primary objective of the current study is to investigate the use of metaphor across two distinct cultural contexts: Arabic and English. Through a contrastive analysis of proverbs in both languages, the research aims to elucidate the similarities and differences in how animal metaphors are conceptualized within these two cultures. By examining linguistic expressions involving animals, the study seeks to uncover underlying cultural beliefs and perceptions. Specifically, it endeavors to address the following research questions:

1. What are the cultural connotations associated with animal metaphors in Algerian Arabic dialect?
2. What are the cultural connotations associated with animal metaphors in English language?
3. What are the similarities and differences in meanings of animals in both cultures?

2. Literature review

Despite the fact that animal metaphors were plentifully studied in the recent decades, there are few studies conducted about this type of metaphor in the Arabic language. Davies and Bentahila (1989) investigated animal metaphor interpretations between English and Moroccan. A list of 51 animal names was presented to 40 native speakers of British English and 40 native speakers of Moroccan Arabic. Participants were instructed to indicate their meanings when these terms are applied to human beings such as 'X is a donkey'. All respondents shared interpretations of some animals. For example, fox and wolf are related to cunning, and donkey is related to stupidity. The results also showed that several differences in animal interpretations between these two languages. For instance, chicken is related to cowardly and mouse to timidity in English language, while in Moroccan Arabic; they are related to a pretty child, and to smallness, respectively.

In the same fashion, Nakhavali (2011) undertook a comparative study of animal expressions in English and Persian languages. Employing a pragma-semantic approach to analysis, the study delved into the nuanced meanings and usage of these expressions across both linguistic contexts. The findings revealed notable disparities in the connotations

associated with animals in each language. For instance, Persian expressions depicted dogs as unclean, worthless, erratic, and regretful, whereas in English, they were linked to notions of cruelty, violence, ingratitude, and loyalty. Such contrasting portrayals underscore the divergent cultural perspectives and societal attitudes towards animals prevalent in each language.

Moreover, Liu (2013) inquired the use of animal metaphor in English and Chinese proverbs. His study tackled animal proverbs from three main aspects: the same animal produces the same association and metaphorical meaning; the same animal produces different emotions and associations; and different animals produce the same association and metaphorical meaning. The results revealed that a limited number of English and Chinese proverbs are identical in both form and meaning, for instance, evil people, flaw, disable people, sly people, and timid people are mice. However, because of the difference in cultural background and geographical environment between China and Britain, these animals play a very different role in the two countries. The results also showed that different nations may use different animals to express the same metaphorical meanings.

Mohamed and Rashid (2014) studied cat metaphors in Malay and English proverbs. Their study focused on the examination of the meanings and metaphorical schemes of the Great Chain of Being framework. The study highlighted various differences in meanings related to the metaphorical schemas of English and Malay cat proverbs due to cultural differences between the two languages. Those scholars found out that, nevertheless, both cultures agree about relating cats to untrustworthiness, authority, and danger, they differ in some other metaphorical schemas of cat meanings. English people see cats as useful, cowardly, and lazy, whereas Malay people see them as opportunist, insignificant, and shameless.

Equally important, Ismail, Samian, and Muslim (2016) scrutinized animal connotations in Malay proverbs. They elaborated the semiotic theory to explain the animal symbols in Malay proverbs based on their high frequency and popularity. Those researchers found out that animals are depicted with several symbols representing their physical characteristics and behaviors expressed figuratively and compared with those of animals. Their study's results indicate that: elephant is a symbol of power, rat, snake, crocodile, squirrel, and fox are symbol of evil; pig and dog are symbols of humiliation; cow, mule, and camel are symbol of stupidity; and ants and bees are symbol of hard work.

3. Methodology

3.1.Data collection

To achieve the objectives of this study, the researcher opted to focus on the dialect of Wadi Souf in Algeria as a representative sample of Arabic cultural expressions. This choice was made to provide insight into the cultural connotations associated with animal metaphors within the Arabic-speaking community. For the English component of the study, widely recognized English animal proverbs were chosen, reflecting a broader scope of cultural references. These proverbs were selected from reputable sources: the Arabic animal proverbs were sourced from Ben Ali's (1998) book of Wadi Souf dialect proverbs, while the English

proverbs were drawn from Simpson and Speake's (2003) book. A total of 42 Arabic and 45 English proverbs related to animals were included in the study, ensuring a comprehensive examination of cross-cultural animal metaphors found in both linguistic traditions.

3.2. Data analysis

At its core, this study adopts a qualitative approach to its investigation. The qualitative methodology allows for a nuanced exploration of the cultural nuances and meanings embedded within the proverbs of both Arabic and English languages. To analyze the data collected, the study employs the framework established by Ben Salamh and Maalej (2018). This framework provides a structured and systematic method for organizing and interpreting the proverbs under examination.

Upon analysis, the obtained results are categorized and discussed according to three distinct classifications: Totally Overlapping Proverbs (TOP), Partially Overlapping Proverbs (POP), and Totally Different Proverbs (TDP).

a. **Totally Overlapping Proverbs (TOP):** This category encompasses proverbs that exhibit complete alignment or similarity in meaning and form across both Arabic and English cultures. These proverbs serve as prime examples of shared cultural concepts and beliefs between the two linguistic contexts.

b. **Partially Overlapping Proverbs (POP):** Proverbs falling into this category demonstrate partial alignment or similarity in meaning and form between Arabic and English cultures. While there may be some shared elements, there are also notable differences or variations in interpretation.

c. **Totally Different Proverbs (TDP):** This classification encompasses proverbs that exhibit significant disparities in meaning and form between Arabic and English cultures. These proverbs highlight the unique cultural perspectives and conceptualizations present within each linguistic context.

4. Results

The comparative analysis of Arabic and English proverbs pertaining to dogs, cats, and wolves revealed a blend of shared motifs and unique cultural interpretations across both linguistic traditions. Although overarching similarities are discernible, the portrayal of these animals is imbued with distinct cultural nuances that shape their connotations within each respective culture.

4.1. Totally Overlapping Proverbs (TOP)

It is an open secret that animals share some characteristics and behaviors. Therefore, the investigation of the proverbs in Arabic and English shows that there are identical proverbs in both cultures.

Concerning the totally overlapping proverbs, a common connotation related to dogs in both cultures is spitefulness. For example, the proverb "dogs bark, but the caravan goes on" in English and its Arabic counterpart 'Al-qāfilah tamsīr wa al-kalb yanbah' (i.e. The caravan goes on and the dog is barking) both convey a similar message despite originating from different cultures. One common connotation associated with dogs in both cultures is

spitefulness. In this context, the dog symbolizes a person who is envious, malicious, or trying to disrupt the progress or success of others.

The essence of both proverbs lies in resilience and perseverance in the face of adversity. Despite the noise or obstacles created by those with ill intentions, the caravan, representing a successful individual, group, or endeavor, continues its journey unaffected. It emphasizes the idea that while detractors may attempt to hinder progress or spread negativity, their actions ultimately fail to deter those who are determined and focused on their goals.

Furthermore, these proverbs serve as a poignant response to malevolent individuals. Rather than succumbing to their negativity or engaging in fruitless conflict, the message encourages individuals to maintain their course and not be swayed by the distractions or criticisms of others. It underscores the importance of staying focused on one's path, regardless of the challenges or detractors encountered along the way.

It can be said that both the English and Arabic proverbs highlight the universal theme of resilience in the face of adversity, using the imagery of barking dogs and moving caravans to convey the idea that success and progress continue despite the presence of spiteful individuals or obstacles.

4.2. Partially Overlapping Proverbs (POP)

The shared cultural perception of dogs as representing hopelessness is evident in both Arabic and English proverbs. In both cultures, dogs are seen as creatures inherently resistant to change, with their habits remaining deeply ingrained despite efforts to alter them. This notion reflects a belief in the fixed nature of certain behaviors, particularly those considered negative or undesirable.

In English culture, expressions such as "the dog returns to its vomit" and "you can't teach an old dog new tricks" convey the idea that dogs have a tendency to revert to familiar, often unpleasant behaviors, and that attempting to instill new habits in them, especially as they grow older, is futile.

Similarly, in Arabic culture, the proverb "Dhāīl al-kalb a'waj law kān tdīrah 'ām fī qasbah" (i.e. A dog's tail is crooked; even if you put it in a tube for a year) emphasizes the notion of ingrained behavior by using the image of a dog's tail remaining serpentine even after being placed in a rod for a year. This vivid metaphor suggests that individuals with bad habits are unlikely to change, regardless of external influences or attempts at reform.

These proverbs highlight a shared understanding across cultures of the stubbornness and resistance to change often associated with certain behaviors, symbolized by the enduring nature of dogs' habits. They serve as cautionary reminders of the challenges inherent in attempting to alter deeply ingrained patterns of behavior, whether in oneself or others.

The concept of loyalty associated with dogs is a common theme shared between English and Arabic cultures. Dogs are often regarded as symbols of unwavering loyalty and fidelity, and this sentiment is reflected in various proverbs and expressions in both languages.

In English culture, the proverb "dogs not eat dogs" underscores the principle of loyalty and mutual support, particularly in professional or competitive environments. It suggests that individuals should maintain loyalty and integrity even in competitive or

challenging situations. The imagery of dogs refraining from harming one another emphasizes the importance of trust and cooperation among colleagues or associates.

Similarly, in Arabic culture, the proverb "Yaqūl lilkalb esh wa yaqūl lilkhāyn khush" (i.e. He tells the dog to go away, but tells the traitor to come in) portrays the notion of loyalty in a slightly different context. Here, the dog symbolizes loyalty and fidelity, while the deceiver represents disloyalty or betrayal. The proverb admonishes individuals who prioritize deceitful or untrustworthy individuals over those who are honest and faithful. By saying "esh" (meaning "stop") to the dog and "khush" (meaning "enter") to the deceiver, it highlights the paradoxical behavior of welcoming deceit while rejecting loyalty.

These proverbs reflect the cultural value placed on loyalty and fidelity, using the symbolism of dogs to convey the importance of maintaining trust and allegiance in interpersonal relationships, whether in professional or personal contexts. They serve as reminders of the virtues of loyalty and the pitfalls of betrayal, resonating across both English and Arabic-speaking communities.

The analysis of proverbs from both Arabic and English cultures reveals a shared perception of wolves symbolizing untrustworthiness. Despite the diversity of cultural origins and expressions, the symbolic representation of wolves consistently conveys the idea of deceit and betrayal.

In the English culture, the proverb "do not call a wolf to help you against the dogs" serves as a cautionary warning against seeking assistance from individuals who may ultimately deceive or betray you. While the origin of this proverb may be Russian, its adoption into English culture underscores its universal applicability. The imagery of wolves, known for their cunning and predatory nature, emphasizes the potential danger of relying on untrustworthy allies who may turn against you in the future.

Similarly, the Arabic proverb "l-ṣṣīd idhā shāb yaṭmu'ū fih laḍyāb" (i.e. When the lion grows old, the wolves grow bold) reinforces the theme of wolves representing untrustworthiness. Here, the lion, symbolizing strength and authority, becomes vulnerable to the deceit of wolves as it ages. This proverb highlights the vulnerability of powerful individuals when they become weakened or less vigilant, as they become susceptible to manipulation and betrayal by cunning opportunists.

Both proverbs illustrate a shared cultural understanding of wolves as symbols of deceit and betrayal. They serve as cautionary tales, reminding individuals to be wary of those who may appear friendly or helpful but ultimately harbor ulterior motives. Whether in English or Arabic culture, the symbolism of wolves conveys a timeless message about the dangers of misplaced trust and the importance of remaining vigilant in navigating interpersonal relationships and power dynamics.

4.3. Totally Different Proverbs (TDP).

Although there are similarities as noted above, the findings indicate notable variations in how animals are depicted and understood in the proverbs of Arabic and English cultures. Below, we delve into shared meanings attributed to animals in both cultures. In addition to the associations of dogs with hopelessness, spitefulness, and loyalty, as previously

mentioned, Arabs, particularly Algerians, also connect this animal with messiness and humility, as evidenced by the following proverbs:

a. A dog is messy:

The Arabic proverb "Takhlaṭat bik'rā' kalb" (i.e. It got mixed up by a dog's leg) vividly portrays the idea of messiness attributed to dogs. The imagery of something being "mixed up by a dog's leg" evokes a sense of disorder and chaos caused by a messy individual. This proverb serves as a metaphor for situations where things are disorganized or in disarray due to the actions or presence of someone who is untidy or careless.

b. A dog is humble:

The proverb "Jawwa' kalbak yataba'ak" (i.e. Starve your dog and it will follow you) highlights the concept of humility associated with dogs in Arabic culture. It suggests that by allowing your dog to experience hunger, you can ensure its obedience and loyalty. This proverb symbolizes the idea that individuals may become more reliant and submissive when they are in need or dependent on others.

Similarly, "Al-kalb kalb law kaan qilaadatah dhahab" (i.e. A dog is still a dog, even if its collar is made of gold) underscores the notion of humility by emphasizing that a dog remains a dog regardless of any adornments or material possessions it may have. This proverb implies that external markers of wealth or status do not change one's intrinsic nature or character. It serves as a reminder that true worth and identity are not determined by superficial appearances but by one's inherent qualities and behavior.

These proverbs provide insights into the multifaceted symbolism of dogs in Arabic culture, illustrating how they are perceived not only as symbols of loyalty and companionship but also as representations of messiness and humility. They reflect cultural values and beliefs surrounding cleanliness, obedience, and the importance of remaining true to one's nature despite external influences.

In English proverbs, dogs are depicted and understood in a diverse range of ways, differing from the conceptualizations found in Arabic proverbs. Below are some examples on the various connotations associated with dogs in English culture:

a. A dog is grateful: The proverb "feed a dog for three days and he will remember your kindness for three years; feed a cat for three years and she will forget your kindness in three days" emphasizes the loyalty and gratitude of dogs compared to cats. It suggests that dogs are appreciative of kindness and have a longer-lasting memory for it.

b. A dog is successful: The expression "every dog has his day" suggests that even individuals who may be overlooked or underestimated will eventually achieve success or recognition at some point in their lives.

c. A dog is a slanderer: The proverb "a dog that will fetch a bone will carry a bone" implies that individuals who engage in gossip or spread rumors are likely to be untrustworthy themselves. This reflects the idea that those who are inclined to find fault in others may also be guilty of similar behavior.

d. A dog is a lazy worker: The proverb "why keep a dog and bark yourself?" questions the necessity of doing a task oneself when one has a dog that could perform it. It

suggests that relying on one's own efforts is preferable to relying on others, especially if those others are lazy or ineffective.

e. A dog is coward: The proverb "a live dog is better than a dead lion" implies that it is preferable to be cautious and survive than to be brave and face potential danger or harm. It emphasizes the value of self-preservation over bravado.

f. A dog is a friend: The proverb "love me, love my dog" emphasizes the close bond between individuals and their pets, suggesting that acceptance and affection should extend to both.

g. A dog is a trouble: The advice to "let sleeping dogs lie" advises against stirring up trouble or reopening past conflicts, implying that it is best to avoid unnecessary confrontation or conflict.

h. A dog is vulnerable: The proverb "it is easy to find a stick to beat a dog" implies that it is effortless to find fault or criticize others, especially those who are vulnerable or defenseless.

i. A dog is a goal: The expression "there are more ways of killing a dog than choking it with butter" suggests that there are multiple approaches to achieving a desired outcome or solving a problem. It emphasizes the importance of flexibility and creativity in problem-solving.

These proverbs collectively offer a rich tapestry of perspectives on dogs in English culture, portraying them as symbols of gratitude, success, trustworthiness, laziness, caution, companionship, trouble, vulnerability, and strategic thinking. Each proverb reflects a unique facet of the human-dog relationship and offers insights into broader cultural values and beliefs.

Surprisingly, we did not find any shared connotations of cats in the proverbs of both languages. In the Arabic proverbs, a cat is used to describe a deceiver, determined, mentor, unlucky, or a hasty person. It is also used to describe a danger. For instance,

a. A cat is a deceiver: The proverb "Jabt qatiṭ yawannas fiya 'aad yabarrqli fi 'awiinaatah" (i.e. I brought a kitten for company, and it turned into a watcher of me) illustrates the notion of cats being associated with deception. It warns against the false appearances of friendship, highlighting how someone initially thought to be a friend may later reveal themselves as an enemy.

b. A cat is a danger: The proverb "Udhkur al-qaṭ yaji yanuṭ" (i.e. Mention the cat, and it jumps in) portrays cats as symbols of danger. It suggests that merely mentioning a cat will attract trouble or invite danger; emphasizing the notion that fear or apprehension can draw negative consequences.

c. A cat is determined: The expression "Hikmat fi raas qaṭ" (i.e. Wisdom in the head of a cat) emphasizes the determination attributed to cats. It suggests that when a cat sets its mind to something, it will persevere until it achieves its goal, highlighting the persistence and single-mindedness associated with cats.

d. A cat is a mentor: The proverb "Sayyabni ya qaṭ khalli netkhabaṭ" (i.e. Leave me, cat, let me be beaten) depicts cats as mentors or advisers. It implies that even if someone is

forewarned of potential harm or negative consequences, they may still proceed recklessly, disregarding advice and ultimately suffering the consequences.

e. A cat is unlucky: The expression "Al-qatṭah bakhret marrah fi ḥayataha ḥaraqet dhīlhā" (i.e. The cat tried incense once in its life, and it burned its tail) portrays cats as symbols of misfortune. It suggests that unlucky individuals are destined to remain unlucky, drawing parallels between the cat's unfortunate experience and the perpetuation of misfortune in one's life.

f. A cat is hasty: The proverb "Al-qatṭah min az-zarbah jābat dharhā 'amyān" (i.e. Out of haste, the cat gave birth to her kittens blind) highlights the notion of cats being associated with hastiness. It suggests that rushing or hurrying leads to mistakes or incomplete tasks, drawing a parallel between a cat giving birth prematurely and projects being left unfinished due to haste.

These proverbs collectively offer a nuanced portrayal of cats in Arabic culture, depicting them as multifaceted symbols with attributes ranging from deception and danger to determination and misfortune. They reflect cultural beliefs, attitudes, and observations about human behavior through the lens of feline symbolism.

The analysis of English proverbs reveals a diverse range of connotations associated with cats, portraying them as symbols of ungratefulness, curiosity, laziness, cautiousness, control, usefulness, and even danger. These connotations are exemplified in the following proverbs:

a. A cat is ungrateful: Illustrated by the proverb "feed a dog for three days and he will remember your kindness for three years; feed a cat for three years and she will forget your kindness in three days," cats are depicted as creatures lacking in gratitude. This proverb suggests that while dogs are known for their loyalty and appreciation, cats are perceived as indifferent and quick to forget acts of kindness.

b. A cat is curious: Exemplified by the proverb "curiosity killed the cat," cats are characterized by their inherent curiosity. This saying warns against the potential dangers of excessive inquisitiveness, implying that curiosity can lead to undesirable outcomes or even harm.

c. A cat is lazy: Captured in the expression "the cat would eat fish, but would not wet her feet," cats are associated with laziness. This proverb suggests that cats prefer to avoid discomfort or inconvenience, symbolizing a reluctance to exert effort or engage in challenging tasks.

d. A cat is cautious: The proverb "a cat in gloves catches no mice" portrays cats as symbols of cautiousness. It implies that being overly cautious or hesitant can impede one's ability to achieve goals or make progress, likening the ineffective pursuit of mice by a gloved cat to missed opportunities due to excessive caution.

e. A cat is a controller: Illustrated by the proverb "when the cat's away, the mice will play," cats are depicted as symbols of control or authority. This proverb implies that in the absence of supervision or oversight, others will behave recklessly or indulge in mischief, highlighting the influence and control exerted by the cat.

f. A cat is a goal: The proverbs "more ways of killing a cat than choking her with cream" and "there is more than one way to skin a cat" portray cats as symbols of objectives or challenges. They suggest that there are multiple approaches or solutions to achieving a desired outcome, emphasizing versatility and creativity in problem-solving.

g. A cat is useless: The proverb "keep no more cats than will catch mice" suggests that cats should be valued for their utility in catching mice, implying that keeping excess cats serves no practical purpose. It underscores the importance of efficiency and practicality in resource allocation.

These proverbs collectively offer a rich tapestry of insights into the symbolic significance of cats within English culture, portraying them as complex allegorical figures embodying a spectrum of traits and characteristics. Such cultural observations provide profound reflections on human behavior and societal dynamics through the allegorical lens of feline symbolism.

5. Discussion of results

The present study aims to answer three main questions. In this section, we will discuss all of them with reference to the findings presented in the previous section. Concerning the first question that is "What are the cultural connotations associated with animal metaphors in Wadi Souf Arabic dialect?" The findings of this study revealed that dogs, cats, and wolves symbolize different meanings in the Arabic culture. As it is shown above, dogs are associated to hopelessness, spitefulness, loyalty, mess, and humbleness. Interestingly, this finding coincides with Sameer (2016) influential study of investigating certain animals in English and Arabic proverbs mainly dogs and horses. The latter found that dogs are related to some meaning molecules such as weakness, scruffiness, Cowardness, humbleness, loyalty, ungratefulness, and worthlessness. Such findings also lend support to Benneghrouzi and Abdelhay (2012) about gender and metaphor in the Algerian context. Those researchers found that the word dog triggers off certain connotations such as nastiness, spitefulness, untrustworthiness, and subservience. However, none of these studies found that dogs may refer to mess. This connotation may be an exception to the people in Algeria that they associate a dog to a messy person (e.g. 'Takhlat bika'rā' kalb' (it was mixed by a dog's leg)).

The primary objective of this study is to address three central inquiries. In this section, we will delve into each of these questions by drawing upon the findings presented in the preceding section. Regarding the first query, which pertains to the cultural implications associated with animal metaphors in the Wadi Souf Arabic dialect, our investigation revealed distinct symbolisms attributed to dogs, cats, and wolves within Arabic culture. As delineated earlier, dogs are emblematic of concepts such as hopelessness, spitefulness, loyalty, messiness, and humility. Notably, these findings align with the influential study conducted by Sameer (2016), which examined animal metaphors in both English and Arabic proverbs, focusing primarily on dogs and horses. Sameer's research similarly highlighted a range of meanings ascribed to dogs, including weakness, scruffiness, cowardice, humility, loyalty, ungratefulness, and worthlessness.

These findings are further supported by the work of Benneghrouzi and Abdelhay (2012), who explored the intersection of gender and metaphor within the Algerian context. Their research identified that the term "dog" evokes associations with traits such as nastiness, spitefulness, untrustworthiness, and subservience. However, neither of these studies documented the connotation of dogs being linked to messiness. This particular interpretation may be unique to individuals in Algeria, as evidenced by the proverb "Takhl̄ṭat bika'rā' kalb" (it was mixed by a dog's leg) which suggests the attribution of messiness to dogs, exemplifying the idiosyncratic associations within Algerian culture.

Furthermore, the results indicated that in Arab culture, cats are perceived as symbols of deception, danger, determination, mentorship, misfortune, and hastiness. This finding contrasts with the conclusions drawn by Benneghrouzi and Abdelhay (2012), who observed that in the Algerian context, cats symbolize attributes such as cuteness, love, and warmth. It appears that within the Wadi Souf region of Algeria, cats carry negative connotations. Additionally, these findings challenge the assertions made by Salamh and Maalej (2018) regarding the positive evaluation of cats in Arabic culture, where they are seen as symbols of self-defense. Consequently, it can be inferred that Arabs hold divergent interpretations of cats, which may encompass both positive and negative connotations.

Additionally, the findings indicated that in Arabic culture, wolves are associated with multiple connotations. Within the Wadi Souf region, wolves evoke images of individuals characterized by boastfulness, spitefulness, persistence, untrustworthiness, and cowardice. This result aligns with the findings of Waśniewska (2018), who observed that wolves symbolize an adversary as a bloodthirsty, vicious, and cruel creature.

Regarding the second research question, which investigates the cultural implications linked to animal metaphors in the English language, the data analysis uncovered that dogs in English proverbs evoke associations with gratitude, achievement, idleness, gossip, timidity, challenges, susceptibility, and objectives. This finding partially aligns with the results of Liu (2013), who noted that Western individuals view their dogs as companions, members of the family, and kindred spirits (e.g., "love me, love my dog"), attributing to them qualities of loyalty. However, the current study revealed additional negative assessments of dogs, including perceptions of causing trouble and spreading rumors.

The examination of data also unveiled that cats, as depicted in English proverbs, are associated with various implications including ingratitude, inquisitiveness, lethargy, prudence, dominance, utility, and peril. This discovery corroborates the findings of Muhammad and Rashid (2014), who observed that English proverbs portray cats as commanding, formidable, hazardous, and unreliable. Furthermore, it echoes the conclusions drawn by Liu (2003), who noted the negative connotations attached to cats in Western culture, where they are perceived as malevolent, indolent, and covetous.

Besides the above connotations of dogs and cats, data analysis divulges that wolves symbolize motivation and untrustworthiness. This finding matches Liu (2003) result that wolves are given a ferocious meaning. They are used to refer to enmity and greediness. Besides these findings, Benneghrouzi and Abdelhay (2012) concluded that, despite its use to

symbolize strength and enormity, a wolf metaphor is used in the Algerian context to indicate sneering.

Regarding the last question of this study, which explores the similarities and disparities in the meanings of animal connotations across both languages, the data analysis revealed certain shared interpretations of animals in Arabic and English proverbs. These similarities were observed either in meaning alone or in both meaning and form. As noted by Liu (2013), there exist proverbs that transcend national or cultural boundaries, reflecting universal themes. This finding can be attributed to the fact that animals possess shared biological characteristics and behaviors, contributing to their universal symbolism across diverse cultures.

However, despite these shared connotations, the data analysis also divulges several discrepancies in some interpretations. For instance, dogs are perceived differently in proverbs between the two languages. While English culture views dogs positively as companions and close animals, as evidenced by proverbs like "every dog has his day," this favorable attitude is not mirrored in Arabic culture. Arabs hold negative associations towards dogs, as exemplified by the proverb "Al-kalb kalb law kaan qilaadatahu dhahab" (i.e. A dog is still a dog, even if its collar is made of gold) which implies that the nature of a dog remains unchanged regardless of external adornments. Thus, it can be inferred that cultural norms, traditions, and lifestyle significantly influence the interpretation of metaphors.

This interpretation is supported by Liu's (2013) assertion that culture exerts a profound impact on language usage. Variations in cultural backgrounds, moral concepts, modes of thought, and geographical settings can lead to different roles assigned to animals in various countries, such as Britain and China. Furthermore, the Sapir–Whorf hypothesis, or the linguistic relativity theory, posits that each language represents a distinct perspective on the world and corresponds to a specific mode of thinking. This theory underscores the notion that cultural and linguistic factors shape interpretations of metaphors and symbolic language.

6. Conclusion

Generally speaking, the present study aims to investigate animals' connotations in both Wadi Souf Algerian Arabic and English. In order to achieve this aim, Ben Salamh and Maalej (2018) model was adopted as a theoretical framework for analysis. The general findings from this study reveal the presence of animal metaphors in both Arabic and English proverbs. The findings also highlighted some similarities and differences in the connotations of animals, mainly, dogs, cats, and wolves. The identical proverbs provide support to the thesis of universalism, where similarities are resulted from the animals' biological and behavioral traits and peoples' shared cognitive processes. On the other side of the coin, differences reinforce the thesis of relativism. To put it differently, since the Arab countries and the western countries have different cultures, history, and customs, they have different connotations for the same animals.

Transferring these findings to pedagogical grounds, these findings are significant in the field of language teaching and learning. On the one hand, teachers should get benefits from the similarities in proverbs in English and Arabic to facilitate the learning process of

English as a foreign language. By the same token, s/he should raise the students' attention toward the differences in the meanings and uses of proverbs cross-culturally. On the other hand, learners should be aware of the importance of learning proverbs and idioms of the target language because they are part from the learners' communicative competence. It is recommended that more studies are required to investigate the connotations and conceptualizations of other animals in Arabic and English proverbs.

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