

A Contrastive Analysis of the Use of Love Expressions in Arabic and English

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Abstract: *Love is one of the most beautiful feelings in this world. Every society and culture have their ways and words of expressing their love emotions. Love spreads positive feelings such as peace and happiness. However, it may cause negative feelings such as grief and unhappiness. This topic is interesting as it will represent the differences and similarities between different languages in order to know words that express love emotions. This paper aims to know the words of love in Arabic and English. The purpose of this research is to answer this question: What are the similarities and differences in the expression of love emotions between the Arabic and English languages? To answer this question, the researchers will use two qualitative research methods, first introspection /intuition as a native Arabic speaker, second informant interview of an Australian woman who speaks Australian English. One of the advantages of introspection/ intuition is that the person describes his/her own knowledge and information [1]. This based on human experience and knowledge of the mother tongue. Furthermore, the advantages of the interview in qualitative research is that it increases the flexibility stages and uses tools such as talking and writing. In addition to the possibility of recording information in a voice form to review and analyse the information [2]. These tools will help to collect data and information about Arabic through researchers' knowledge and information in English through the informant involved in the research. An additional reason for this subject and the comparison between the two languages is that the Arabic language is filled with expressions of love, unlike my inspiration of the English language, and I was curious to research this topic to see if there are synonyms of Arabic words of love in English.*

Keywords: Love; Feeling; Emotion Language; Cross-Culture Discourse; Contrastive Analysis; Arabic Language; Translation

1. Contextualization

Language has an important role to play in identifying the similarities and differences in the expression of emotions and love feelings between different cultures. Language is defined as “a symbolic guide to culture” (Sapir, 1949, cited in author [3], p.1). There is a strong link between the life of the community and the vocabulary of the language they speak.

Therefore, in many cultures, some words do not have an equivalent vocabulary in other cultures. For example, the words of food, in Polish there are superior words for stew cabbage (bigos) and pulm jum (powdle), while these words are not in the English language. These words defined the food culture in different nations [3]. She mentions that one of the most important concepts in this context is that in all languages words have a special cultural meaning and this meaning includes the characteristics of living, society and way of thinking. For example, in Japan, they use the word "mini". This word does not only reflect social ceremony, but it reflects the way of thinking about important events in life. Whorf's and Sapir's theory shows that people's ideas determine the classification of the language they speak. However, they also add that differences in languages are a cause of different thinking among speakers of that language [3]. This paper will discuss the words of love emotions in two cultures and two different languages that is Arabic and English. According to the Oxford Dictionary emotions are “A strong feeling deriving from one's circumstances, mood, or relationships with others”. This word was presented in

the English language in the sixteenth century [4]. The word emotion in English refers to the feelings, thinking or body of the person. For example, a person can talk about “feeling hungry” or “feeling heartburn” and cannot say the “emotions of hunger” [5]. She states that there is no doubt that the emotions lexicon in all languages show the similarities and differences, however, that all languages have some basic words such as happiness, sadness, anger, fear. This is considered the most famous words that express feelings and emotions in the English language, in the Spanish language is ‘felicidad’, ‘tristeza’, ‘ira’ and ‘miedo’, and in the Arabic language is ‘farah’, ‘huzn’, ‘ghudub’, and ‘khof’ [6]. Authors [7] explain that European languages differ in the use of emotion words because they are associated with cultural behaviour and identity. The links between cultural identity and emotion abuse in certain words lead to words that cannot be translated into other languages. Such a word called untranslatable words. For example, the word ‘forelsket’ a Norwegian word which means “A Euphoric feeling experienced when you start falling in love” [8]. Most words of emotions in English have been translated into other languages, and this translation has been verified using the back-translation method [6].

Moreover, the Oxford Dictionary defines love as “an intense feeling of deep affection”. Love is a universal concept that relies on understanding emotions in all languages, religions, cultures and races. When a man loves a woman, they feel love without the need to express it with words [9]. However, this universal concept does not mean that there is

a universal meaning of love in all languages. An example of this in English is 'love', in French 'amour', and in German 'Liebe'. Interpretation of love varies from one culture to another because it depends on the cultural contexts of people. Author [9] explains that emotions of love give power to others and helping them solve problems. When people feel the love, they become more positive and creative, and it is making them able to write a poem to express their love. Love provides them with the power of love, which makes them able to do anything for those who love. He also explains that love in our time focuses on the emotions of love and its expressions more than deeds. For linguists, love is a polysemous word that includes the diversity of relationships and passion [10]. According to author [11], the relationship between love and language is a long and complex story. He says although it is a complex concept in English, it helps people to understand and organise experiences and describe feelings, desires and relationships.

2. Methodology

In this paper, information and data were collected through two types of qualitative research methods: introspection/intuition and an informant interview.

a) Introspection / Intuition: the researchers using his own intuition and experience [12]. There are steps which have been done to collect data through this method. First: Provide information about the Arabic language and the most important words of love, especially the words which uses in the standard Arabic language. The information was collected through the researchers' background knowledge as a native speaker of the Arabic language. In addition, the reading through different resources such as encyclopedia, web pages, dictionaries, articles, and previous studies on this subject. Second: A list of love words in the Arabic language was prepared with the writing of its meanings to be used in the interview questions. Example of these words: Tattim: Love that oppresses the heart and enslaves it and Hawa: the intensity of love that is inherited grief. These words and its meaning have been collected from different sources (e.g. Arabic lexicon [1], web magazine [14], step feed Web site, and from a book written by author [9] in p. 176. One of the advantages of using this method in qualitative research is that the researcher uses his own experience and intuition and know how to use his own language [12].

b) Informant Interview: In this interview, information is obtained about another language unknown to the researcher by talking to the informant who is a native speaker of the language that the researcher wants to know. The researcher uses the intuition of the informant to find out all the information he needs in the research [12]. To prepare for the interview: First: After reading and collect information, the researcher writes the interview questions (See discussion). Second: a researcher sends these questions to the informant to think about it before the interview. In this research, the informant is a native speaker who speaks

Australian English. The interview was recorded, and some notes were taken to return to it and used it in the result and discussion. One of the advantages of using the informant interview method of qualitative research is to help the researcher to obtain information about another language and to know the intuition and expertise of the informant about the language in which he or she speaks.

In order to analyse this data, lexicon tools will be used to identify the similarities and differences between researcher and informant information about Arabic and English. The reference to these lexicon tools is the introduction written by author [3], which contains much information for word analysis and its relation to culture.

Validity and Reliability

By discussing the results of the research, the validity of the results will be determined based on data collected through the introspection/intuition and the informant. The definition of the validity is the trustworthiness of the final results of the research [12]. Authors [15], state that some researchers who write qualitative research use validity to describe the legitimacy of their research. The reliability helps to find out if it is possible to repeat the study and get similar results to this research [12].

Although the methods used in this qualitative research methodology help to obtain information for analysis, discussion and finding results, they have disadvantages. One of the disadvantages of introspection/ intuition and informant interview is that it increases the risk of not distinguishing between the intuition and bias of the intuition of the researchers 'experiences and ideas. Another disadvantage that sentence is considered, separated from the context and thus cannot be understood and analysed because of the lack of knowledge of the context of this sentence [12].

3. Results and discussion

Based on the collected data, note the following results:

First: The Arabic language contains 39 nouns that express love according to author [13] which is an Arabic dictionary. Each word contains a deep and different emotional meaning. For example ('iikhlas اخلاص, 'ieزاز اغزاز, 'iikha' إخاء, tatayum تَتَيَّم, taeshshuq تَعَشَّقُ, taelluq تَعَلَّقُ). In addition, the Arabic language has four different names for the beloved which is (habib حبيب, khalil خليل, mahbub مَحْبُوب, muhib محب) [13]. The English language does not contain nouns which are expressing love. However, it contains phrases such as 'butterflies in my stomach', 'fall in love'. The diversity of words from culture to another reflect the specific characteristic of these cultures. This type of words be the keywords of these cultures. This is because of cultural elaborations and its relation to words [3]. For instance, the Arabic language has several nouns for swords, camels and stones because these things describe the nature of living in Arabic culture.

Second: The words of love in the standard Arabic language

were and are still used in different social contexts. The concept of love among Arabs has a deep history in Arabic literature, language and music. These literature texts represent the strong emotions of love [9]. Contrarily, English speakers prefer to use the phrase "I love you" in most social contexts.

Third: There are factors that are affected the expression of love that is the people and the circumstances in which these words are spoken or written. In the Arabic language, these words of love are one of the strongest words used to express emotions of love. In the history of standard Arabic, these words have passed through two stages: the pre-Islamic stage and the after-Islam stage. In the pre-Islamic period, Arab people wrote numerous stories and poems about lovers and their situations with a precise description of the details of the body of women, for example. The theme of these poems and stories is passion, sex and romance such as the story of Abla and Antar and the story of Majnoon and Leila [9]. After the appearance of Islam, the concept of love is linked to sincere love, purity and modesty. Moreover, these words used to show love especially between married people. As Islam laid down basic rules for the emotional relationship between women and men, they should not be in an emotional relationship before getting married. The English language uses the term 'I love you' and 'I like you' to express love for all people with different feelings.

Fourth, these results are strongly linked to the objective of this research, since the difference is clear between the Arabic and Western civilization. Arabs use these words to express their love and the depth of their feelings. In addition, the way of thinking, nature of life and the fundamentals of the relationship between men and women are different from Western society. Which makes the Arabs take care of religious rules, customs and traditions when using these words.

Fifth: The similarity between Arabic and English is by using these loves expression such as (my love, my soul, my life, my soulmate, my dear, my heart) in their daily lives contexts with their families, friends and children.

Discussion

These results were obtained after comparing the researchers' information on the Arabic language with the informant's information about the English language during the informant interview. When the researchers sent the interview questions, the first one of them contains the most famous words of love in the standard Arabic language with its meanings. The informant explained that the English language does not contain single words or nouns that express love. However, it contains adjectives and phrases. This table shows the words of love in Arabic and corresponding phrases in English according to informant knowledge:

Arabic English

Tattim: Love that oppresses the heart and enslaves it. Your

love has captivated me, stolen my heart

Hawa: the intensity of love that is inherited grief. Fall in love, fall for someone, love sick

Shaghaf: Love that has the heart and opens its cover. "shaghaf" is love the nests in the chambers of the heart. I

have got you under my skin, break down my walls

Sababah: is love that exudes from your pores. Butterfly in my stomach

Isheq: "True" love. Love in its most pure form, without jealousy or inconsistency. "ishq" is love that entwines two people together. Unconditional love

Teeh: is love in which you lose yourself. Head-over-heels in love, madly in love, I am crazy, mad about you

Walah: is love that carries sorrow within it Love sick

Gharm: is love that is willing to pay the price No phrase in English equivalent with this word

Hayam: refers to madness and insanity caused by excessive love. So basically, this is when lovers lose all sense of reason and go absolutely nuts madness

The multiplicity of the words of love in the standard Arabic language shows the depth of the meanings which make these words as keywords in Arabic. According to author [3], keywords are important words and reveal the civilisation. Arabic literature is homegrown to these words and is used for various social contexts. Many of the love stories in Arabic literature such as the story of the thousand and One Night is one of the most famous romantic stories. Writing the expressions of love and romance are the themes of literature and history of the Arabic language [9]. The informant explained in answer to the second question that English literature contains expressions of love such as (sacrificial love, under my skin). However, the phrase 'you are the apple of my eyes' may not be used romantically. It used to express the love of the parents to the sons in everyday contexts.

These words in the Arabic language use in different ways depending on people and circumstances. In the English language, the phrase 'I love you' is used to express love emotions with everyone. Moreover, the lifestyle of Arab societies is different from that of Western societies. According to the informant in the western society, the men and the women go through several emotional relationships, and therefore they use the term 'I like you' at the beginning of the relationship and the word 'I love you' when the relationship becomes stronger. However, in the Arab Muslim society, the emotional relationship between men and women has been associated with marriage, and thus the use of these expressions of love strengthens the love relationship between them after marriage.

According to the informant, Western societies such as Australian, American, and British society do not prefer to use strong expressions of love in their relationships because they feel uncomfortable.

Based on these results, this study suggests that there are differences in the expression of love between Arabic and English. The Arabic language contains several love words,

and each word has a different meaning. The English language does not contain similar vocabulary to these Arabic words. Though it contains phrases that express the meanings of the Arabic vocabulary.

4. Conclusion

This research faced many challenges, including the lack of studies on the words of love in Arabic. The difference between the standard Arabic language and the colloquial dialect spoken by the researchers. For future research, it is suggested that to make research and study of the words of love in Arabic dialects, because it is full of different words of love.

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