

A Cultural Linguistics Perspective on Animal Proverbs, with Special Reference to Two Dialects of Arabic

Sami Ben Salamh

Department of English Language and Translation
College of Languages and Translation
King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Zouheir A. Maalej

Department of English Language and Translation
College of Languages and Translation
King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Abstract

This article aims to study animal proverbs in Saudi Arabic (SA) and Tunisian Arabic (TA). The article is grounded in cultural linguistics, which is a composite framework from cognitive linguistics, Boasian linguistics, ethnosemantics, and the ethnography of speaking. It has adopted a cultural linguistic approach to proverbial discourse. For that reason, possible specific scenes for the generic scenes of the analyzed proverbs are spelled out by proverbial discourses throughout the article. The findings show that proverbs work in the sociocultural environment as proverbial discourse, necessitating a specific scene onto which a generic scene is mapped. The findings also show that the two sub-cultures share very few generic scenes, drawing on different animals and cultural knowledge associated with them. The article also highlights the significance of the socio-physical environment and sub-cultural heritage subsuming the SA and TA linguistic and religious sub-cultures. The findings of the article show that SA and TA may use the same animal names but with a different focus.

Keywords: animal proverbs, cultural linguistics, ethnosemantics, Saudi Arabic, Tunisian Arabic

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Introduction

Human cognition may function in different ways. It may work by mapping human behavior and characteristics onto non-human entities, which is an age-old perspective in human understanding known as anthropomorphism (Horowitz & Bekoff 2007; Epley & Waytz 2008; Chartrand et al 2008). This kind of conceptualization of non-humans is informed by the conceptual metaphor, NON-HUMAN IS HUMAN. Another way in which the human mind functions is by mapping machine characteristics onto human behavior and characteristics, which is known as mechanomorphism (Caporael 1986). This trend dominated the mind of first generation cognitive scientists, who believed that the mind was disembodied (Lakoff & Johnson 1999), and worked with the conceptual metaphor, A HUMAN IS A MACHINE. The other way cognition may work, which is the main focus of the study at hand, is by mapping animal behaviors and characteristics onto human behavior and characteristics, which is also an age-old practice known as zoomorphism (Kiełtyka & Kleparski 2007). Such a practice builds on the conceptual metaphor, PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS. Still, proverbs with animal names have been exhibited in many cultures (Fayemi 2009; Liu 2013).

By and large, proverbs have a sociocultural discursive dimension. For instance, the second author's wife was chatting on Skype with their daughter, and he overheard his daughter, not knowing that he was there, saying that he is good to travel with for tourism but not so for other occasions, to which he replied proverbially in the Tunisian dialect: "I am like fish, eaten but blameworthy." He captured the contradiction between his praiseworthy behavior as a devoted father and his daughter's negative comment about him in terms of a consumed fish whose consumption brought blame on it. The following day, feeling that she made a blunder, his daughter sent him a lengthy heartfelt apology. Thus, a specific scene (the discussion of travelling) may trigger a generic scene (in fish terms), which are mapped onto each other, therefore requiring some form of uptake (here, apology) on the part of participants (father and daughter) in discourse.

It is worth noting that the proverbs analyzed in the current article are not contextualized due to the difficulty of collecting them as naturally-occurring discourse; they should be considered discursively instead. Still, possible specific scenes for the generic scenes are spelled out by proverbial discourses throughout the article. The list of proverbs is provided in the Appendix.

The current article adopts a cultural linguistic perspective on proverbial discourse, combining cognitive linguistics, Boasian linguistics, ethnosemantics, and the ethnography of speaking. The scheme of this article is as follows. The first section offers an overview of two trends in proverb analysis. The framework of cultural linguistics is spelled out in the second section. The third section analyzes the generic and specific domains of proverbs in Saudi Arabic (SA) and Tunisian Arabic (TA). The last section offers a discussion of the implications of such analyses for language and culture.

1. The Extended Conceptual Base Theory and the Great Chain Metaphor Theory

There are two dominant theories of proverbs: the Extended Conceptual Base Theory (ECBT) and the Great Chain Metaphor Theory (GCMT). The former is known as a pragmatic approach to proverbs, while the latter is a cognitive one.

Honeck and Temple (1994) consider the ECBT to be both a “problem-solving framework” and “process-oriented theory” (pp. 91-92). They argue that proverb resolution follows a multistage-processing model, which consists of three processing phases, namely, a literal, a figurative-meaning, and an instantiation phase. These three stages are mutually exclusive, wherein the literal interpretation excludes the other two; in the absence of enough clues for a non-literal interpretation, a figurative understanding is adopted (Honeck & Temple, 1994, p. 93). Honeck and Temple (1994) argue that “the figurative meanings for proverbs cycle back to incorporate their literal meanings” (pp. 94-95).

Two types of context situations are distinguished for the interpretation of proverbs, irrelevant and relevant. An irrelevant context situation is one where a proverb is used rather artificially, with no supportive context or situation to which the proverb may be applicable. A relevant context situation is, on the other hand, uttered in a genuine communicative situation to which it is intended to apply (Honeck & Temple 1994; Temple & Honeck 1999). Temple and Honeck’s “irrelevant-context situations” category is problematic. This category presupposes that proverbs are invoked in a context-free environment. Abstracting away pedagogic situations, proverbs are not used in isolation, with people finding a specific state of affairs in the world that may fit them. Thus, the “irrelevant-context situations” category has no real practical usefulness, and is pragmatically inappropriate.

By contrast, Lakoff and Turner (1989) define the GCMT as “an ensemble, something like a string quartet, in which there are four members with separate entities, but who so often play together that their identity as a group is more prominent than their identities as individuals” (p. 172). The first member of this quartet is the GENERIC IS SPECIFIC metaphor, which maps a single generic-level schema onto a large number of specific-level schemas having the same generic-level structure (Lakoff & Turner 1989, p. 162). The GENERIC level of the mapping is the proverb’s text and the SPECIFIC level is the state of affairs in the world that the proverb profiles. The GENERIC-SPECIFIC mapping preserves the schematic structure of the SPECIFIC level, and requires that the two levels have the same isomorphism or internal schematic structure; otherwise, the GENERIC level would not be invoked to conceptualize the SPECIFIC one. Lakoff and Turner (1989) argue that the GENERIC IS SPECIFIC “applies to proverbs worldwide” (p.166).

Unlike the ECBT, the GCMT with its four components is more complex. Beside the GENERIC IS SPECIFIC metaphor, it involves the Great Chain of Being (GCofB), the Nature of Things (NofT), and the Maxim of Quantity (MofQ). According to the GCofB, “we understand proverbs as offering us ways of understanding the complex faculties of human beings in terms of these other things” (Lakoff & Turner, 1989, p.166). Lakoff and Turner (1989) classify entities in the world in terms of the GCofB, which consists of HUMANS on top, with ANIMALS, PLANTS,

COMPLEX OBJECTS, and NATURAL PHYSICAL THINGS resting at the bottom. Animal proverbs map animal behavior onto human behavior, whereby what is at stake is man's "aesthetic and moral sense, and rational capacity, not his physical characteristics, his animal desires, or his raw emotions" (Lakoff & Turner, 1989, pp. 166-67).

The GCofB offers itself as "a contemporary unconscious cultural model indispensable to our understanding of ourselves, our world, and our language" (Lakoff & Turner, 1989, p. 167). By linking the GENERIC IS SPECIFIC and the GCofB, the GCMT "allows us to comprehend general human character traits in terms of well-understood non-human attributes; and, conversely, it allows us to comprehend less well-understood aspects of the nature of animals and objects in terms of better-understood human characteristics" (Lakoff & Turner 1989, p. 172).

According to Lakoff and Turner (1989), the NofT is "a largely unconscious, automatic, commonplace theory about the nature of things, that is, the relationship between what things are like and how they behave" (p. 170). Thus, the NofT is "a causal theory that links attributes to behaviour the characteristic behaviour of a form of being is a consequence of its characteristic attributes" (Lakoff & Turner, 1989, p. 171). The NofT in the GCMT combines with the GCofB to account for proverbs. The MofQ, on the other hand, uses Grice's (1975) dictum, "Be as informative as is required and not more so" (p. 45). This builds into the GCMT "a pragmatic principle of communication" (Lakoff & Turner, 1989, pp.171-72), regulating the flow of knowledge between the different components of the theory. For instance, in the proverb "Big thunder, little rain" the MofQ constrains the amount of knowledge we have about thunder and rain, excluding lightning, wind, etc.

2. Cultural Linguistics

Before spelling out the tenets of cultural linguistics, a couple of conceptions of culture and cultural dimensions ought to be addressed. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998,) distinguish culture into three components, (i) "explicit culture," which "reflects deeper layers of culture" and which consists in "the observable reality of the language, food, buildings, houses, monuments, agriculture, shrines, markets, fashions and art"; (ii) "norms and values," and "assumptions about existence" (pp. 21-23). Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's explicit culture corresponds to Nida's (1964) five components of culture, namely, (i) ecology, (ii) material culture, (iii) social culture, (iv) religious culture, and (v) linguistic culture.

Palmer (1996) spells out cultural linguistics as follows: "Cognitive linguistics can be tied in to three traditional approaches that are central to anthropological linguistics: Boasian linguistics, ethnosemantics (ethnoscience), and the ethnography of speaking. To this synthesis is given the name *cultural linguistics*" (pp. 4-5). To capture its scope, Palmer (1996) argues that cultural linguistics is "primarily concerned not with how people talk about some objective reality, but with how they talk about the world that they themselves imagine. (p. 36)" For Palmer (1996), "language is the play of verbal symbols that are based in imagery. (p. 30)"

In the Boasian tradition, “grammatical systems and their potential implications for the study of culture” were at the origin of the development known in linguistic anthropology as “linguistic relativity” which was championed by Sapir and Whorf, who assigned to grammar a constraining role on the way we perceive the world (Whorf, 1956, p. 212). Palmer (1996) indicated that Boasians were also “concerned with discovering the psychological bases of languages and cultures” (p. 11), which led them to allocate an important place to mental imagery in the study of peoples’ lives.

The second traditional approach in anthropological linguistics is ethnosemantics, which is “the study of the ways in which different cultures organize and categorize domains of knowledge, such as those of plants, animals, and kin” (Palmer, 1996, p. 19). As such, this tradition is a precursor of prototype theory in cognitive linguistics. The third approach is the ethnography of speaking, which is “concerned with intentions, sociocultural context, and cultural conceptions of discourse itself” (Palmer, 1996, p. 26). For these three approaches to be in tune with cognitive linguistics, Palmer (1996) writes that there is need “to advance the program of Whorf, avoid the objectivism of ethnosemantics, and add precision to ES” (p. 26).

The current article adopts the GENERIC IS SPECIFIC as emergent meaning from cognitive linguistics, linguistic relativity from Boasian linguistics, how SA and TA organize cultural knowledge about the domain of animals from ethnosemantics, and intentional, sociocultural conceptions of discourse from the ethnography of speaking. This framework is represented in the following figure.

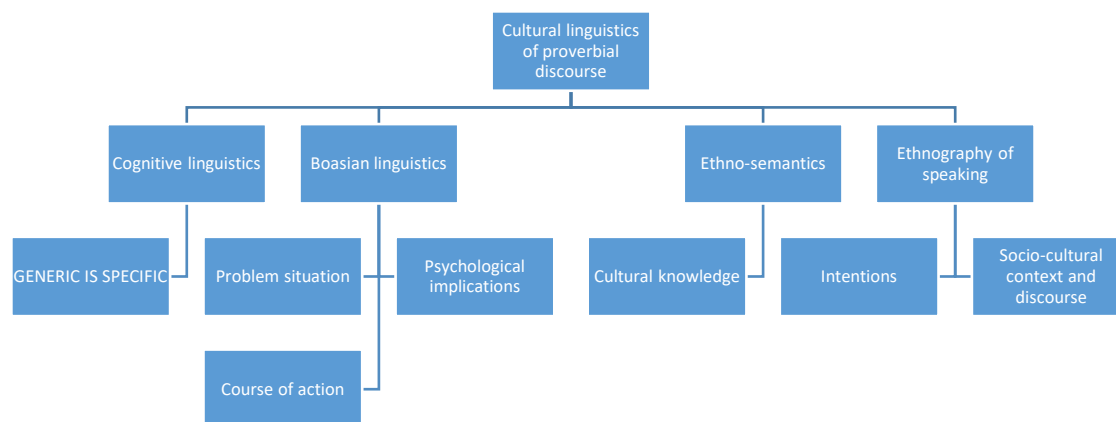


Figure 1: Diagrammatic representation of the cultural linguistics of proverbial discourse

3. Data Collection

Since the area of proverbs is a huge one, we decided to restrict our study to animal proverbs owing to their saliency in the socio-physical environments of Saudi Arabia and Tunisia. For both SA and TA, proverbs have been arrived at through introspection. We also decided to work separately on a list of animal proverbs in their respective dialect of Arabic, checking their list against natives’ views. SA relied for a completion and check of Saudi proverbs on Al-Johiman’s (1983) nine-

volume set of Saudi proverbs as well as relevant websitesⁱ. As to the Tunisian proverbs, they have been completed from and checked against one relevant websiteⁱⁱ.

Once this was done, we sat together to compare what we have come up with. But we realized that the number of proverbs in SA far exceeds those of TA (249 against 48, respectively). For the sake of comparability, we agreed to align the number of SA proverbs to that of TA proverbs, which required pairing SA proverbs with their TA counterparts and reject SA proverbs that have no equivalent GENERIC SCENE in TA. The final set was 45 pairs of proverbs listed in the Appendix in English and Arabic according to the target concept to which they belong and to the linguistic and animal name overlap between the two dialects.

4. Comparing Saudi Arabic and Tunisian Arabic Proverbs

Before comparing and contrasting some of the pairs of proverbs, a few terminological points related to four theoretical concepts are in good order. First, building on Lakoff and Turner's (1989) GENERIC IS SPECIFIC, we adopt the concept of "generic scene" for the textual material of the proverb. Second, the "specific scene" is adopted for the state of affairs onto which the generic scene is mapped, with the "specific scene" being a "target story" to understand "through our agile capacity to use both story and projection" (Turner, 1996, p. 6). Thus, there is no proverb without a story; however the proverb does not create the story. Third, the "target concept" is the semantic domain targeted by the mapping of the generic scene onto the specific scene. A fourth concept, "generic-level information," is introduced to capture the range of states of affairs which the mappings try to zoomorphize in SA and TA.

This comparison/contrast of proverbs between SA and TA will be tentatively organized in terms of Totally Overlapping Proverbs (TOP), Partially Overlapping Proverbs (POP), and Totally Different Proverbs (TDP).

4.1. Totally Overlapping Proverbs (TOP)

TOP are proverbs in which SA and TA share the same animal names and the same linguistic expressions in the generic scene to conceptualize a given target concept. Out of the 45 proverbs in the Appendix, SA and TA share 6 TOP proverbs only, of which only one will be analyzed here.

(1)

(SA): *kull* *šaat* *m3allga* *f3argubha*
 Each sheep hang-PASS-PERF in leg its
 'Each sheep is hung by its own leg.'

(TA): *kull* *šaaħ* *tit3allaq* *min* *kri3ħa*
 Each sheep hang-PASS-IMPERF from leg its
 'Each sheep is hung by its own leg.'

As Turner (1991) argues, we understand proverbs by extracting from the generic scene "generic-level information" which may be applicable to many cultural scenarios in our socio-physical

environment (p.71). The secret of applying a generic scene to an infinite number of specific scenes depends on our “ability to draw detailed, metaphorical mappings between dissimilar domains of knowledge” (Gibbs & Beitel, 1995, p.133). This generic-level information is selected from the source domain of the *sheep* in (1): A sheep’s destiny is to be slaughtered; when it is slaughtered, the sheep will be hung by its own leg not by any other sheep’s leg. The generic scene is built on a cultural scene of slaughtering sheep, which is mapped onto the target concept of accountability. Needless to say that this generic-level information is projected onto a multitude of cultural scenarios such as when someone insists on buying one particular model of car in spite of being warned against its unreliability, when a teacher advises his students not to miss classes but they do so, or when someone keeps reminding of someone else to do his/her prayers.

Both the Saudi and Tunisian sub-cultures use the *sheep’s hanging by the leg* to conceptualize accountability and responsibility. The problem situation here is typically perceptual and emotional, whereby someone is, for instance, warned not to buy a particular model of car (perception) because it is unreliable. Despite this warning, they insist on buying it (emotion). The psychological implications of this have to do with the addressee emotionally thinking that the model is good, which may entail a course of action whereby the knowledge that the model may be bad is ignored by the addressee. The proverb is intentionally instantiated in the sociocultural context to make the addressee act against their perception and emotion, i.e. not to buy that particular model of car. The substance of this proverbial discourse is that if the addressee ignores the enunciator of the proverb, he/she will have only himself/herself to blame.

4.2. Partially Overlapping Proverbs (POP)

POP are proverbs which either show different animal names and share the same linguistic expression in the generic scene, or share the same animal name and adopt a different linguistic expression. The proverbs in this category are the ones between 7 and 22 in the Appendix. Two proverbs will be analyzed here.

(2)

(SA): *ya ši:n iS-Sarj 3al bagar*
 what ugliness the saddle on the cows.
 ‘How ugly the saddle is on cows’ backs!’

(TA): *Sarj Dhabb 3ala bhi:m ʕa3war*
 saddle gold on donkey one-eyed
 ‘A golden saddle on a one-eyed donkey’s back.’

The two proverbs in (2) differ in terms of what animal is used but share what they put on it (“a saddle”). The generic-level information for both SA and TA builds on a sociocultural paradox: A saddle is a decoration used, among other things, to beautify a horse; however, when it is worn by an unfitting animal, the saddle creates an awkward situation for the animal in question and for itself. The GENERIC IS SPECIFIC here applies to many sociocultural scenarios such as decorating a run-down car with alloy rims, expensive loudspeakers, and roof-top fancy lights. The

mapping functions in the sociocultural context as follows: ornamenting a run-down car is ridiculous because no matter what is invested in it, there is no pay-off, beauty-wise.

The problem situation here is perceptual and behavioral, whereby the proverb enunciator perceives in the socio-physical environment a behavior or state deemed incompatible with someone's status or state. To be critical of this behavior, TA invokes cultural knowledge about the *donkey*, which is held to be dull, and often contrasted with the Arabian horse's beauty and intelligence, while SA invokes the *cow* as unfitting of such a status even though it is often referred in SA to as *umm elxir* (the mother of loftiness) since it yields milk, cheese, butter, and meat. The psychological implication of this incompatibility of statuses is to have the addressee emotionally think that the observed behavior is inadequate, and that he/she should take a course of action to put an end to what has been observed by the proverb enunciator, i.e. in the case of the specific scene of the run-down car, the owner should stop investing in it.

Likewise, the pair of proverbs in (3) below shows different animal names and the same linguistic expression in the generic scene:

(3)

(SA): *eDrab* *il-kalb* *yesta?dib* *il-fahd*
 Hit-IMP the dog discipline the leopard
 'Beat the dog in order to discipline the leopard.'

(TA): *iDrab* *il-qaTTuSa* *tirabba* *il-3arusa*
 Hit-IMP the cat discipline the bride
 'Hit the cat in order to discipline the bride.'

Proverbial discourse crystallizes reasonable/unreasonable and desirable/undesirable human behaviors. Owing to this, they capitalize on different kinds of thinking such as the cause-effect, effect-cause, and analogy principles (Gibbs, 2001, p. 169). For instance, in (2) and (3) above, the kind of thinking followed is the cause-effect principle.

The linguistic expressions in the generic scenes in (3) above capitalize on a cause-effect directive: *eDrab/iDrab* (hit) → *yesta?dib/tirabba* (discipline). The generic-level information is: Because you cannot directly control a stronger entity, a weaker one is victimized; the intention of its victimization is for a stronger entity to be indirectly disciplined. In this context, the *dog* in SA is taken to be weaker than the *leopard* while in TA it is the *cat* that is weaker than the *bride*. In terms of the recipient of such an effect in the generic scene, SA selects the *leopard* whereas TA opts for a human being, the *bride*. In this cultural logic, beating the dog/cat is seen as a causal condition to discipline the leopard and the bride. One example of GENERIC IS SPECIFIC is when, for instance, your son and his cousin make a blunder and you shout at or blame your son in order for his cousin not to do it again. Another would be when your own mother unknowingly makes your daughter do something wrong and you shout at your daughter to indirectly insinuate your disagreement with your mother's behavior.

The problem situation here is perceptual and behavioral, whereby the proverb enunciator perceives in the socio-physical environment two entities committing misbehavior which angers him/her. The behavioral dimension has to do with a sociocultural situation whereby chastisement of a weaker entity causes an effect in a stronger entity. The enunciation of the proverb can be accompanied in the discourse situation by a psychologically pre-emptive punishment (physical one), or a threat of the weaker entity in the presence of the stronger entity such as “if you do it, I promise to punish you” whose intended outcome is to scare the latter. Why are the *dog* and the *cat* beaten while the leopard and the bride are not? Owing to their dependence for their livelihood on humans’ food remnants, the *dog* and the *cat* may be subject of chastisement in the presence of their genus for stealing fish or meat to dissuade them from committing the same errors again.

4.3. Totally Different Proverbs (TDP)

So far, TOP and POP proverbs have been dealt with. TOP proverbs show total cultural and linguistic commonalities while POP proverbs are examples of either partial cultural sharing and linguistic or cultural difference as well as linguistic commonalities. However, TDP introduce proverbial discourse that shares neither the same animal names nor the same linguistic expressions in the generic scene, and yet the two different generic scenes in the two sub-cultures are pragmatically equivalent to conceptualize the same target concept. The TDP proverbs are found between 23 and 45 in the Appendix. Consider the following proverb:

(4)

(SA): *wiš* *3awwad* *il-bagar* *raqyi* *iT-Tawaya*
 what accustom-PERF the cows ascension the mountains
 ‘What makes cows accustomed to climbing up big mountains?’

(TA): *baat* *laila* *w3a* *ij-raan* *SbaHH* *yqarqar*
 spend-PERF night with frogs next morning croak-IMPERF
 ‘It spent a night with frogs, and so it woke up croaking.’

The generic-level information is: Someone emulates the behavior of others; they do not succeed; they are belittled because what they do does not befit them. The target concept here is dwarfing someone who cannot emulate others’ behaviors. In SA, the proverb capitalizes on the incapacity of the cow to climb high mountains. The adoption of a certain behavior seems to be subject to possessing a certain capacity (here the physical capacity of the cow to climb up). Because the cow is physically cumbersome to climb high mountains, it is mocked and dwarfed since it is incapable of emulating, for instance, the behavior of goats. Thus, in SA the proverb seems to say to the cow: You are a cow; you can only do what being a cow allows you to do. One possible scenario is about someone who does not understand the sea and plays the captain of a boat, but on the first sea tempest, he/she loses control of the boat and ruins it. In TA, however, the proverb capitalizes on the instinctive capacity of a frog to croak. Selecting this instinctive feature of croaking in frogs entails that non-frogs are inapt to do it because they will be acting unnaturally. One possible scenario of dwarfing and self-humiliation is the following: Someone whose English is quite below average and

who, after coming back from a very short stay in the States, tries to reply to people in bad English. Thus, in TA the proverb seems to say to humans: You are not a frog; you cannot do what frogs can because you do not have their natural features.

The problem situation here is perceptual and behavioral, whereby the proverb enunciator perceives in the socio-physical environment one entity emulating the behavior of another entity. The behavioral dimension has to do with a sociocultural situation whereby this entity fails to do so. The enunciation of the proverb is critical of this entity and its unnatural capacity. Why are the *cow* and the *frog* taken to be generic exemplars? Knowledge about cows and their physical stature and frogs and their croaking features tells us about their capabilities. The sociocultural discourse in (4) discourages cow- and frog-unrelated behaviors in humans. In other words, this proverbial discourse tries to correct behaviors that do not befit some individuals. It also wants to prevent psychological sufferance by emotionally embarrassing the self if this misbehavior is not corrected.

5. Discussion

The current discussion focuses on four themes relevant to the data under study, namely, range of mappings involved between the generic and specific scenes, The Great Chain of Being Metaphor in relation to animal proverbs under study, the types of animals capitalized upon in SA and TA, and the kind of indirect evaluation made of animals and humans in the proverbs under study.

5.1. Range of Mappings

Working on TA proverbial discourse, Maalej (2009) isolated three types of proverbs according to range of mapping, namely, mapping-free, single-mapping, and multiple-mapping proverbs. According to him, mapping-free proverbs are ones which address one particular state of affairs. They are not of the GENERIC IS SPECIFIC type, therefore including no metaphoric thought and no mapping. Such proverbs may include TA's *itRadda wit hadda w-laww ykun 3aliik id-dain, w-t3ašša w-tmišša law kaan ykun xaTwtain* (Have lunch and relax even if you are in debt, and have dinner and have a walk even if it is only a few steps.) and SA's *ma ba3d l3ud g3ud* (there is no more staying after incense). Thus, these proverbs are aphoristic, giving folk dietetic advice about eating, relaxing, and walking, and leaving a gathering, respectively. Since all the proverbs in the current article include an animal name, no single proverb is mapping-free.

On the other hand, single-mapping proverbs may be of the GENERIC IS SPECIFIC type, but show very limited applicability by allowing a single mapping onto a specific scene (Maalej, 2009). Such proverbs may include examples such as the common Arabic proverb, *iða kaan il-kalaam min fiDDa fa is-skut min Dhabb* (If speech is silver, silence would be gold.). This proverb spells out its own mappings between silver onto speech, on the one hand, and gold onto silence, on the other, on the surface of discourse, and invites selecting silence over speech. Such a preference is motivated by the higher market value of gold over silver. There are very few proverbs of this kind in the current article (see 11 in the Appendix).

As their name indicates, multiple-mapping proverbs have a wide-ranging applicability to states of affairs in the world (Maalej, 2009). Thus, they are of the GENERIC IS SPECIFIC type par

excellence. The following proverbs may be used to exemplify this. In TA, *id-dwaam yinqib ir-rxaam* (Perseverance makes holes in marble) may apply to scenarios such as: someone who starts his life as a poor person and works harder and harder may improve his social status; a student who may find something impossible to learn, but on thinking that he/she can do it, he/she finishes by doing it. In SA, *kuØr iddag yfik il-lHam* (more hammering would cause welded joints to split apart), which may apply to scenarios such when a father keeps repeating something to his children to change their behavior or when a teacher keeps warning his students against something for them to succeed. As has been shown in the analysis so far, almost all of the pairs of proverbs in the current article are of the multiple-mapping type, because all of them use an animal as a source domain for the target domain of humans.

5.2. The Great Chain of Being Metaphor

The range of mappings established, we turn now to examining the source and target domains through Lakoff and Turner’s (1989) “Great Chain of Being Metaphor,” repeated here for convenience:

- HUMANS: Higher-order attributes and behavior (e.g. thought, character)
- ANIMALS: Instinctual attributes and behavior
- PLANTS: Biological attributes and behavior
- COMPLEX OBJECTS: Structural attributes and functional behavior
- NATURAL PHYSICAL THINGS: Natural physical attributes and natural physical behavior (pp. 170-1).

Unlike anthropomorphism, which imposes human features on animals in the Chain of Being, zoomorphism is in striking contrast with it. Animal proverbs are a case of reversal between HUMANS and ANIMALS in the Chain of Being, whereby animals’ instinctual behavior and characteristics become defining features of human higher-order behavior and characteristics. This posits the animal kingdom as a source domain for understanding the human domain, which is posited as less understood than the animal domain.

5.3. Animals Capitalized upon

The concepts targeted by the proverbs under study have to do mostly with a range of sociocultural desirables (accountability, discipline, intelligence) and undesirables (hypocrisy, opportunity for gloating, boastfulness). They also seek to evaluate and keep in check negative human behaviors and characteristics (simplemindedness, bias, self-interest) as well as regulate interpersonal relations (blaming others, discipline, stimulation). Table 1 lists the top-five animals capitalized upon in SA and TA to zoomorphize the proverbs’ target concepts, which accounts for over 70% of the overall proverbs in SA and over 50% in TA.

Table 1: Animals capitalized upon in SA and TA proverbs

Animals capitalized upon in SA		Animals capitalized upon in TA		
	Animal name	Frequency	Animal name	Frequency
1	Camel	10	Dog	8

2	Horse/donkey	8	Cat	5
3	Leopard/fox/lion	6	Donkey	4
4	Cow/bull	5	Cow/bull	3
5	Dog	3	Ewe/sheep/goat	3

As can be inferred from the table above, SA seems to capitalize more on domestic animals than pets while TA seems to capitalize more on pets and smaller animals than domestic ones though SA used small animals such as uromastyx, chick, and mosquito and TA used smaller animals such as donkey, sheep, and goat.

Nida (1964) isolates five cultural categories: ecological culture (the environment), material culture (food, clothing, houses and towns, transport, etc.), social culture (politics, leisure and sports, etc.), religious culture (religion and related issues), and linguistic culture (the way language works). Although most of the animals in the table exist in the ecological environment of both Saudi Arabia and Tunisia, they occupy different places in these two sub-cultures. As a domestic animal, the camel, for instance, occupies a preponderant socioeconomic position in the Saudi sub-culture as a source of wealth and as an important part of the food chain, followed by the cow/bull. Pets are generally infrequent in Saudi Arabia compared to Tunisia. The dog is commonly seen in the countryside accompanying the shepherd to guard the herds of sheep. Although the lion has disappeared from the Arabian Peninsula, the leopard and the fox accounted for 6 proverbs, and they may exist in the physical environment of Saudi Arabia.

However, the TA proverbs seem to target pets such as dog and cat, which are more available in the Tunisian socio-physical environment. It is a familiar sight in Tunisia for dogs and cats to be found astray but they are also kept as part of the household, especially the German shepherd (as a guard dog), the poodle, and the Siamese cat (as decorative ones). The cow, bull, ewe, sheep, and goat are a source of wealth in the countryside, and a source of food for the population, while the camel occupies a minor position in TA. Although the donkey is nowadays a rare sight in cities, it still plays a major socio-economic role of transporting goods and humans and tilling the land in agricultural areas along with tractors.

5.4. Evaluation of Humans through Animals

Although Table 1 tells us about some of the animals capitalized upon in SA and TA, it does not tell us anything about the evaluation that may be culturally inferred from the proverbs under study. The rest of this sub-section will be devoted to the positive and negative evaluation of animals (eight proverbs), positive evaluation of cultural desirables (6 proverbs), and negative evaluation of cultural undesirables (31 proverbs). Thus, it seems that at least two-thirds of the proverbs show a negative evaluation of human behaviors and characteristics through the choice of animals and the target concepts conceptualized.

The positive and negative evaluation of animals in proverbs is done through a contrast between two animals, where one receives a positive and the other a negative evaluation in both dialects. To conceptualize the target concept of *boastfulness*, both SA and TA show preference for

the *horse* over the *mule* in (1) in the Appendix, whereby the former is evaluated positively and the latter negatively. In (34), *boastfulness* is conceptualized in SA using the *camel* positively and another unmentioned animal negatively while in TA the *ram* is held in high esteem because the *ewe* boasts about its *rump*, which wins it low esteem. In (2), *responsibility* in both dialects is conceptualized in *bull* and *rat* terms, whereby the bull is profiled as a victim and the rat is held to be a victimizer in spite of its smaller size as compared to that of the bull. In (10), the same principle applies even though both dialects use different animals to conceptualize *hard work and idleness*. In SA, the *ant* is seen favorably because of its perseverance and the *camel* is seen unfavorably because it reaps in idleness the yield of the ant's sweat. In TA, the ant is seen favorably because of its perseverance and the cicada is seen unfavorably because of its idleness. In (18), in the concept of *discipline* the *dog* and the *cat* are evaluated negatively in SA and TA, respectively, because they are shown as targets of human violence while the *leopard* in SA is evaluated more positively. To conceptualize the concept of *intelligence*, the *eloquent chick* is evaluated positively in SA while the *donkey* is evaluated negatively in TA in (23) because it needs to be prodded to react. In (38), a *baby camel* enters into a *losing competition* with a giant *camel* in SA, and a *red dog* enters into the same competition with a *red bull* in TA. In both dialects, the former is evaluated negatively while the latter is evaluated positively.

The proverbs in the category of positive evaluation of cultural desirables speak high of animals. In (8), the concept of *satisfaction* is conceptualized through the *monkey* perceived as a *gazelle*, which, by virtue of the positive place of the *gazelle* in the Arab culture, bestows a positive evaluation of the *monkey* in both dialects. In (5), *accountability* is conceptualized in terms of a *sheep* hanging by its own leg. Because *accountability* is a positive concept which presupposes assuming responsibility for one's acts, the *sheep* is not evaluated negatively. In (9), the concept of *recognition* is conceptualized in *horse* terms, whereby horses are evaluated positively. In (32), *stimulation* is conceptualized in *lion* terms, whereby the *lion* is evaluated positively owing to the positive association of the *lion* with courage and temerity in the Arab culture. In (33), *self-defense* is conceptualized in terms of *uromastyx* (SA) and *cat* (TA). Since *self-defense* is a positive concept, *uromastyx* and *cat* are evaluated positively. In (44), the concept of *leadership* is conceptualized using *camels* as knowing and showing their way, which evaluates them positively.

So far, animal names are mostly evaluated positively. However, many animal names are associated with cultural undesirables, and are, therefore, critical of negative behaviors. Because there are over 30 cases to deal with in this category of negative evaluation, only some of them will be analyzed to gain space. In (7), *self-interest* uses the *dog*, which, in spite of the connotation of loyalty to the owner, remains at least partly negative in SA and TA. A dog is not kissable, but becomes so temporarily to serve a purpose. In (3), two physical features of the *camel* have been capitalized upon, its hump in SA and the crookedness of its neck in TA to conceptualize *blaming* others for defects they may have. From an anthropomorphic perspective, these physical features in camels are seen as physical defects in humans that happen to have them. Accordingly, they also acquire a negative dimension in camels. The negativity of *blaming* can be seen through the generic-level information: Someone does something wrong but does not see it in their own behavior; this very someone blames the others for the defect they themselves have. In (16), *opportunity for*

floating is conceptualized using the *camel* in SA and the *cow* in TA. Both the camel and the cow are depicted as fallen. When the camel and the cow are in this position, people with knives in hand will be ready to remove their skin. Negativity here comes from having a knife in hand to skin a pitiful animal, thus revenging the self on this animal. The generic-level information is: Someone has power and authority over weaker people; when they fall into disgrace or disrepute, weaker people take this opportunity to revenge themselves on them. In (36), *self-overestimation* is conceptualized through the donkey (SA) and the dog (TA). The *donkey* is evaluated negatively as dull, stupid, and stubborn in SA and TA as well. However, if on top of that the donkey is lame and acting haughtily, the donkey is overestimating the self. Likewise, if a *dog* aspires to have anthropomorphic features such as a pair of trousers, the *dog* is overestimating the self. The generic-level information for (36) is: Someone has low performance; when they try to outperform, they fail.

Conclusion

The current article has adopted a cultural linguistic approach to proverbial discourse, combining cognitive linguistics, Boasian linguistics, ethnosemantics, and the ethnography of speaking. In addition, it has offered a case study in zoomorphism where each proverb in SA and TA includes one or more animal names, which strongly testifies to the metaphoric basis of these proverbs. As spelled out in the methodology section, SA has more animal proverbs than TA. Table 2 shows that where SA uses animal names in proverbs, TA uses other means to metaphorize target concepts in its proverbs.

Table 2: Sample of SA animal proverbs vs. TA non-animal proverbs

	Saudi animal proverbs	Tunisian non-animal proverbs
1	جيعان جوع القملة براس الأقرع. (He is as hungry as a louse in a bald head.)	عريان يسلب في ميت. (A naked person is dispossessing a corpse.)
2	الجمال ما ينخ من بطيخة زيادة. (A camel does not collapse from an extra melon.)	الغريق ما يهمو مطر. (A drowned person does not care about rain.)
3	اللي بيغى العسل يصبر على قرص النحل. (He who wants honey should show forbearance with bee stinging.)	إلي يحب اللولو يسهر الليل كلو. (He who desires pearls stays up all night long.)
4	ثوري خبيث العمل في بلادي وزين لمن يستعيه. (My bull is malicious in my country and nice with whoever borrows it.)	فلان قنديلو يضوي كان علبراني. (His lamp only lights on strangers.)

The findings of the article include the fact that SA and TA may use the same animal names but with a different focus. As spelled out in sub-section 4.3., although the categories of dog, donkey, and cow, for instance, exist in both physical environments, their distribution and importance is different. There are also categories with minor importance that are not shared by both dialects. For instance, the *uromastix*, *grasshopper*, and *puppy* are more used in SA proverbs while the *owl*, *frog*, and *fish* are somehow more used in TA proverbs. But this does not mean that all these do not exist in the physical environments of both dialects; they do. However, the fact that they might be used in

one or the other sub-culture means that they are experientially targeted for one feature that is likely to be mapped onto human behavior and characteristics.

The classification of proverbs in SA and TA into totally overlapping (13.3%), partially overlapping (35.6%), and totally different proverbs (51.1%) has revealed the latter to be more dominant. Both Saudis and Tunisians are heir to the Arab-Islamic culture. But does this mean that they are expected to think and conceptualize their experience in the same fashion? The answer is more likely to be negative. It seems that belonging in two speech communities and the existence of different artifacts in these two sub-cultures determines the language-culture interaction. If we judge the proverbs which show linguistic and cultural differences (choice of animal name), we may venture that Nida's ecological culture has a lot more to do in the pairs of proverbs under study. Indeed, the nature and frequency of animals are different in SA and TA because ecological culture is slightly different in the two sub-cultures. Owing to this difference, we can reiterate with Whorf (1956:212) that "we cut nature up, organize it into concepts, and ascribe significances as we do, largely because we are parties to an agreement to organize it in this way – an agreement that holds throughout our speech community and is codified in the patterns of our language."

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About the Authors:

Sami Ben Salamh is currently an Assistant Professor of English and linguistics in the Department of English Language and Translation at King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia where he teaches translation, linguistics and English language skill courses. His research interests include phonology, metaphors, translation, and English for specific purposes.

Zouheir A. Maalej is currently a retired professor of cognitive linguistics. He published in several journals, and contributed many book chapters. He presented talks at many conferences, and edited a book (2005) and co-edited another (2011). His research interests include critical metaphor analysis, cognitive psychology, cognitive linguistics, and critical discourse analysis.

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Appendix: Animal proverbs in SA and TA.

Types	Generic scene	Target concepts
Totally overlapping proverbs	1 SA:!! قالوا للبعغل من أبوك؟ قال: الحصان خالي!! (They asked the mule: who is your father? He told them: the horse is my maternal uncle) TA: قالو للبعغل شكون بوك، قاللهم الحصان خالي (They asked the mule: who is your father? He told them: the horse is my maternal uncle)	Boastfulness
	2 SA: تحفرها الفئران وتطيح فيها الثيران (The rats dig it, and the bulls fall into it.) TA: فتحوها الفيران وطاحوا فيها الثيران (The rats opened it, and the bulls fell into it.)	Responsibility
	3 SA: الجمل ما يشوف سنامه The camel does not see its hump. TA: الجمل ما يراش عوج كرومتو (The camel does not see the crookedness of its neck.)	Blaming others
	4 SA: اللي يحط راسو في النخالة تتقبه الدجاج (He who puts his head in bran will be perforated by hens.) TA: اللي يلعب بالنخالة تفر عسو الدجاج (He who meddles with bran will be shattered by hens.)	Self-humiliation
	5 SA: كل شاة معلقة بعرقوبها (Each sheep is hung by its own leg.) TA: كل شاه تتعلق من كرعها (Each sheep is hung by its own leg.)	Accountability
	6 SA: الحمار القصير زي الجحش كل من جاء يركبه (The short donkey, like a colt, is ridden by whoever intends to.) TA: البهيم القصير اللي يجي يركب عليه (The short ass is ridden by whoever intends to.)	Simplemindedness
Partially overlapping proverbs	7 SA: كان لك عند الكلب عازة قل له يا سيدي (If you need something from the dog, call it my master) TA: بوس الكلب في فمو حتى تقضي حاجتك منو (Kiss the dog in the mouth till you get what you want from it.)	Self-interest
	8 SA: القرد في عين أمه غزال (In his mother's eyes, the monkey is a gazelle.) TA: القرد في عين بوه غزال (In his father's eyes, the monkey is a gazelle.)	Satisfaction
	9 SA: الخيل من خيالها (Horses recognize their riders.) TA: الناس تعرف الناس والخيل تعرف ركابها (People know each other, and horses recognize their riders.)	Recognition
	10 SA: تجمع النملة ويأكل الجمل (The aunt collects and the camel consumes.) TA: الفرزيط يزمر والنميلة تعمر (The cicada shrills and the ant stores.)	Hard work vs. idleness
	11 SA: فم باسم ما يدخله ذباب (Flies cannot enter a smiley mouth.) TA: الفم المغلوق ما تدخله ذبابة (A fly cannot enter a closed mouth.)	Silence vs. talkativeness
	12 SA: اربط الحمار جنب الفرس يا تعلم يا فرس (Tie down the donkey beside the horse; it either learns or kicks.) TA: أربط البهيم حدا البهيم إذا ما علمه النهيق يعلمه الشهيق	Negative learning

	(Tie down the donkey beside the donkey. If it does teach it braying, it teaches it inhalation.)	
13	SA: الناموس والذبان ما يخلي أحد ينام: (Mosquitoes and flies leave no-one have some sleep.) TA: الذبابة ما تقتلش أما تدور الخلايق: (The fly does not kill but it makes you want to throw out.)	Annoyance
14	SA: لو فيه خير، ما خلاه الطير (If it were of any good, the birds would not have spared it.) TA: البومة لو كان فيها خير ما تخلفها الصيادة: (If the owl were of any good, hunters would not have spared it.)	Undesirability
15	SA: قالوا لأبو الحصين مين يشهد لك؟ ذيلي!! They asked the fox: "Who is your witness?" "My tail," he replied. TA: قلو شكون شهدت يا ذيب قلو ذيلي: (He asked him: Wolf, who do you ask as witness? It told him: My queue.)	Bias
16	SA: إذا طاح الجمل كثرت سكاكينو (If a slain camel falls, many knives appear.) TA: البقرة اللي تطيح تكثر سكاكينها: (Many knives appear for a slaughtered cow.)	Opportunity for gloating
17	SA: اللي ينفرض من الحية، يخاف من الحبل: (He who is bitten by a snake becomes afraid of topes.) TA: ألي تلسعو الحناش يبات يستخايل: (He who is stung by snakes spends the night hallucinating.)	Learning from scare
18	SA: اضرب الكلب يستادب الفهد: (Hit the dog to discipline the leopard.) TA: اضرب القطوسة تترى العروسة: (Hit the cat to discipline the bride.)	Control
19	SA: البس يحب خناقه (The cat loves the one who oppresses it.) TA: الكلب ما يموت كان على خانقو: (The dog hankers only after its oppressor.)	Bad companionship
20	SA: صار للكلب بيت وماشية وعزبة وحاشية (The dog came to have an abode and cattle, and a manor and body guards.) TA: حتى الكلب بنفتو وحكتو برطل: (Even the dog puts drugs in his nose, and has a pound-tin of drugs.)	Bizarreness
21	SA: الطول طول نخله والعقل عقل سخله (He is as tall as a palm tree and his mind is that of a she-goat.) TA: الطول صااية والعقل عجروجة: (The height is plenty and the mind is that of a small bird.)	Thoughtlessness
22	SA: يا شين السرج على البقر (How ugly the saddle is on cows' backs!) TA: سرج ذهب على بهيم أعور: (A golden saddle on a one-eyed donkey.)	Paradox
Totally different proverbs	23 SA: الكتكوت الفصيح من البيضة يصيح: (An eloquent chick shouts right in the egg.) TA: الفهيم من غمزه والبهيم من همزه: (The intelligent person understands from a wink and the donkey needs to be prodded.)	Intelligence
	24 SA: وش عود البقر رقي الطوايا (What makes cows accustomed to climbing up big mountains?)	Dwarfing

	<p>بات ليلة مع الجران صبح يقرقر (It spent a night with frogs, and so it woke up croaking.)</p>	
25	<p>SA: أربع شالو جمل و الجمل ما شالهم: (Four men lifted a camel but the camel did not carry them.) TA: السردوك عشيه عام ما يعشيكش ليلة: (Feed the rooster a whole year and it will not feed you one night.)</p>	Incapability
26	<p>SA: الذيب ما يهرول عبث (The wolf does not scurry in vain.) TA: ما ثماش قطوس يصطاد لرّبي (There is no cat which hunts for God's sake.)</p>	Self-interest
27	<p>SA: لا بد صياد الفهود ينصاد (A leopard hunter will be hunted, indeed.) TA: الثور النطاح لا يموت إلا منطوح (A butting bull will die of a butt.)</p>	Suffering the same fate
28	<p>SA: أنت أخي وأنا أخوك إلى عند كري الجمل (You and I are brothers, unless there is money involved.) TA: حوت يأكل حوت و قليل الجهد يموت: (Fish will eat fish, and powerless people will die.)</p>	Self-help
29	<p>SA: العنز تسرح و التيس في الدار (The she-goat is grazing and the he-goat is home.) TA: في الزمان المعكوس، الذنابي تولي روس، ويسكت المنيار و يتكلم الخنفوس (In this queer epoch, queues become heads, birds become silent, and bugs start talking.)</p>	Paradox
30	<p>SA: أرقابها عوج الجمال (The camels' necks are crooked.) TA: ذيل الكلب حطوه 40 عام في قصبه طلع أعوج (The dog's queue was left for 40 years in a bamboo stem and came out crooked.)</p>	Defects
31	<p>SA: ما على الذيب من ضراط النعجة (What is a ewe's farting to the wolf?) TA: كلب ينجح على طيارة: (A dog is barking at a plane.)</p>	Disinterestedness
32	<p>SA: خليك سبع يا سبع (Be a lion, lion!) TA: كون صيد وكوني (Be a lion and devour me.)</p>	Stimulation
33	<p>SA: ضب و لمست عكرتو (An uromastyx that has been touched at its tail.) TA: حتى القطوسة تخيش على روحها (Even the cat scratches to defend itself.)</p>	Self-defense
34	<p>SA: عمو جمل (His paternal uncle is a camel.) TA: تتفخر النعجة بلية العلوش: (The ewe boasts about the ram's rump.)</p>	Boastfulness
35	<p>SA: جراد يأكل حيه ميتته (A grasshopper eats up its own dead ones.) TA: الفلوس ما ينقر كان عين خوه (The chick only pecks its brother's eye.)</p>	Rivalry-Envy
36	<p>SA: ما يجي الغنج الا عند الحمير العرج: (Lame donkey, yet acting haughty.) TA: حتى الكلب يعملولو سروال</p>	Self-overestimation

	(Even the dog is made a pairs of trousers.)	
37	SA: ما يخمج الماء إلا أخس البقر (Only bad cows spoil water.) TA: فار ينجس خابية (A rat pollutes a big jar.)	Filth
38	SA: لا تزاحم الزمل وانت حويشي Do not compete with giant camels if you are a baby camel. TA: الكلب الأحمر يحسب روجو من العجول (A red-skinned dog thinks of himself as part of the family of bulls.)	Losing competition
39	SA: الذيب ما يسرح بالغنم (A wolf does not take the sheep to pasture.) TA: يعلق العصبان في رقية القطوس (It is hanging meat in the cat's neck.)	Wrong decision-making
40	SA: نقول له ثور يقول أحلبه (We tell him, "It is a buck" and he says, "I will milk it.") TA: معيز ولو طارو (They are indeed goats even if they fly.)	Asking for the impossible
41	SA: عنز الشيوخ نطاحة (The she-goat of the tribe's sheikh is a butting one.) TA: قبل ما تضرب الكلب اعرف اشكون سيدو (Before you beat a dog, you should know about his master.)	Scaring
42	SA: رب جريوك ياكلك (After you generously feed your puppy, it devours you when grown). TA: بالي تربي الأفاع لرقبتك (He who raises snakes will have them round his neck.)	Ungratefulness
43	SA: الجمال تتعارك وجملنا بارك (The camels are fighting and our camel is squatting.) TA: اللي ما يلقي ما يعمل يشد القطاطس بكويهم (He who has nothing to do cauterizes cats.)	Misbehavior
44	SA: توريك الجمال دريها (Camels will show you their path.) TA: البيل تمشي على كبارها (Camels follow their elders.)	Leadership
45	SA: عنز بدو طاحت في مريس (A Bedouin she-goat that unexpectedly found soaked dates.) TA: كلب وطاحت عليه جردقة (A dog on whom falls a loaf of bread made of barley.)	Opportunism

ⁱ <http://www.startimes.com/?t=20315280>; https://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/قائمة_أمثال_حجازية

ⁱⁱ https://ar.wikiquote.org/wiki/%D8%A3%D9%85%D8%AB%D8%A7%D9%84_%D8%AA%D9%88%D9%86%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A9%D8%A8