

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

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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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