Recontextualization and Proverbiality: Pragmatic Analysis of Arabic and English Proverbs

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ARTICLE INFORMATION	ABSTRACT
	Proverbs are a type of idiomatic expressions that are commonly used in everyday spoken language. They concisely and figuratively summarize everyday experiences and common observations (Borowska, 2014, p. 22). The use of proverbs often gives rise to interesting pragmatic processes, including, most notably, recontextualization. Recontextualization is intimately connected to two distinctive features of proverbs, namely, traditionality, and self-containedness. Pragmatically, the meanings and functions of the love proverbs, the focus of this paper, are not totally fixed because the conventionalized meanings and functions associated with these proverbs should be modulated in light of the new context of use. This study will examine 50 proverbs of love (25 in each language) from a pragmatic perspective. The analytical framework employed in the analysis will draw on the concept of implicature and the distinction between utterance-type implicature and utterance-token implicature. In this part, the study will draw on Culpeper and Haugh's (2014) neo-Gricean model. At a higher contextual level, the analysis will follow Linell's (1998) conceptualization of recontextualization's pragmatic process. The analysis showed that upon using a proverb in a new context, the proverb could go through a recontextualization process that might serve two pragmatic functions: illocution shift and foregrounding of didactic content.

1. Introduction

Proverbs are part of everyday spoken language, which concisely and figuratively summarize everyday experiences and common observations (Borowska, 2014, p. 22). They have been transmitted from one generation to another by words until they are recorded and became a treasure of folklore for future generations (Karagiorgos, 1999, p. VII). Such traditional sayings are used in everyday life in order to serve different social functions, such as asserting, warning, advising, and so on. As Oxford dictionary (2003, p. 345) describes them, proverbs are "well-known phrases or sentences that state truth or give advices".

Proverbs of love are types of proverbs often used to show the reality of love as experienced by people and give people advice on how to deal with love. Pragmatically, when dealing with proverbs, one needs to distinguish between two different types of contextual assumptions, namely: the conventionalized context of use and the ad hoc situational context in which the proverbs are used. Due to the conventionalized nature of proverbs, the conventionalized context is often exhausted by the linguistic context (or co-text). However, the situational context is fleshed out by the social and spatiotemporal features of the situation of use.

In this context, the paper aims to understand how the English and Arabic proverbs of love are used across different contexts, i.e., their conventionalized context of use and their possible ad hoc situational contexts. To that end, the paper hypothesizes that proverbs contain conventionally identified illocutions acts e.g., representatives, directives and commissives, but the meaning and functions of these love proverbs may change based on the new context of use. Thus, the meaning of love proverbs is not fixed, and so are the illocutions of these proverbs. The paper proceeds as follows. Section 2 presents the theoretical background.

Section 3 presents data and methodology. Section 4 provides the results. Section 5 presents the main conclusions, and finally, section 6 proposes some suggestions for future studies.

2. Theoretical Background
2.1 Implicature
Pragmatics has always focused on how people interpret the meanings that arise from producing utterances in context, and this clarifies that "an understanding is something we reach or come to" (Culpeper & Haugh, 2014, p. 133). Meaning, in this sense, is conceptualized in terms of cognitive representations. A cognitive representation of meaning is basically "a generalized meaning form" or "interpretation" that can find natural language structures (ibid, p. 84). In this regard, Grice (1967, 1989) formulates an essential observation about speaker's meaning representation into a theory of pragmatic meaning.

Grice (1989) argues that meanings go beyond what is said. Meaning can be "broadly classified as speaker-intended implicatures, that is, meanings that are implied or suggested rather than said" (Culpeper & Haugh, 2014, p. 81). Moreover, Grice, (1989) contrasts what is implicated, either by a speaker or an utterance, with what is said. Such a contrast allows Grice to focus on a certain type of meaning, the meaning which was neither "natural nor conventional in nature", and his main goal was to understand how speakers can mean something (Culpeper & Haugh, 2014, p. 81). Grice divides meaning in to natural and non-natural. It is a natural meaning where a particular sign is causally related to an event or concept, for example, "those clouds mean rain". But non-natural meaning is not exhausted by, linguistic (or word) meaning, but it arises through the speaker having a specific kind of meaning intention (ibid.). Besides, Horn and Ward (2006, p. 3) maintain that, "implicature is a component of speaker meaning that constitutes an aspect of what is meant in a speaker's utterance without being part of what is said". Consider the following example:

1. A. Are you going to Paul's party?
    B. I have to work.

In this example, speaker B implies that s/he cannot go to Paul's party. Although s/he does not mention that s/he doesn't go to the party, and only say s/he has work. So, "I am not going to Paul's party" is the implicature that derives from the utterance "I have to work". Thus, speaker B answers indirectly that s/he can't go to the party (ibid.).

Grice (1975) introduces the terms 'implicate' and 'implicature' in order to distinguish between "what the speaker said" (semantic meaning) from "what the speaker implied" (pragmatic meaning). He coined these terms to differentiate them from the verb 'imply' and the noun 'implication' used in logic and semantics.

2.2 Implicit meaning in proverb
Proverbs always contain two kinds of meaning: their literal or primary meaning, and the other is their deeper or implicated meaning. The implicated meaning is not transparent, and listeners, in order to interpret such proverbs, should have social and cultural background knowledge (Lauer, 2000, p. 56). Consider the following English and Arabic love proverbs:

2. Marriage is a lottery.
3. روحان في جسد [Two souls in a single body]

These proverbs' meanings are not fixed but vary according to their contexts of use. The literal meaning of the proverb (2) is that marriage is like a lottery, but its implicit meaning is that marriage has the same characteristics of the lottery, which is based on the luck of the draw. Thus, whether a marriage was successful or a failure depends on luck. Likewise, the Arabic love proverbs have both literal and implicated meaning, as an example (3), its literal meaning is that one person has double souls, which is impossible in the real world, but the implicit meaning is that they are two persons who love each other so much that they cannot be separated. From a semantic perspective, such proverbs are odd, but the implicit meanings they communicate are pragmatically appropriate in the conventionalized context of their use. Thus, each proverb in a particular context has at least "one strong implicature and one explicature" (Toews, 2016, p. 70).

However, the meanings of proverbs are not fixed and they can be changed across different contexts. The speakers may modify the meanings of proverbs in order to become appropriate to their ad hoc context of use. Proverb users may delete, paraphrase, or transfer the proverbs they use to reframe or redefine their situation. (Lauer, 2000, p. 57).

2.3. Recontextualization and proverb use
The concept of recontextualization is based on the concepts of context and contextualization. Context is a basic factor in understanding and interpreting an utterance. It may consist of: (i) "preceding and following utterances and/or expressions" ('co-text'), (ii) "the immediate physical situation", (iii) "the wider situation, including social and power relations", and (iv) "knowledge presumed shared between speaker and hearer" (Cruse, 2006, p. 35). In this respect, Fetzer (2004, p. 4) states that context does not only contain linguistic, but it also includes "cognitive, social and sociocultural" contexts.

On the other hand, Contextualization is "a dynamic-process by which the participants make relevant, or otherwise show, the meaning of the context in their actions and situated interactions" (Gumperz, 1992, p. 39). The theory of contextualization is associated with the name and work of Gumperz (1982, 1992) who defines contextualization as "speakers' and listeners' use of verbal and nonverbal signs to relate to what is said at any one time and in any one place to knowledge acquired through past experience, in order to retrieve the presupposition, they must rely on to maintain conversational involvement and assess what is intended" (1992, p. 230).

In this view, contextualization refers to the interpretation process in which the speakers and listeners are managed when they are engaging in interaction, and contextualization cues are such verbal and nonverbal signs that prompt "contextual presuppositions" (Gumperz, 1982, p. 131).

Linell (1998, p. 86) asserts that all discourses are "contextualized" (they are always built in some actual context), and adds that "when pieces of discourse are taken out of their original context, and used ... in a new context" they are thereby "re-contextualized". Then, he (1998, p. 154) defines recontextualization as "the dynamic transfer-and-transformation of something from one discourse/text in context ... to another" (Linell, 1998, p. 154). The meaning of recontextualized discourse will change when it is occurred in another context. The main examples of recontextualization can be seen in the proverbs that such ancient proverbs live again through the process of recontextualization. Each proverb has a particular context, for instance, Shakespeare's play (1590) "A Midsummer Night's Dream" is love story whose characters (Lysander and Hermia) encounter many troubles in their love because Hermia's father insists that his daughter marries another person. Lysander visited Hermia and told her that "the course of true love never did run smooth", which means that lovers will face many difficulties but together, they can overcome them. This proverb becomes famous and popular in English-speaking communities. Now imagine the same proverb but in another context, for example:

4. Sara: why are you so depressed?

   Peter: I gave up everything to be with her but her family doesn't agree on our relationship.

   Sara: "The course of true love never did run smooth".

In such an interaction, Sara's use of the proverb redefines the context by using a speech act conventionally associated with a specific context, i.e., the Shakespearean play. Sara's use of this proverb can be considered recontextualization, whose aim is to redefine the context of their conversation to offer an emotional support to Peter. This recontexualization allows this proverb to "come alive" again. Thus, recontextualization in proverb use is an inevitable pragmatic process that redefines the context of use and enriches the meaning of the proverb, with more locally contextual information. Indeed, using any proverb in real communication has a recontextualizing effect and conveys two types of implicit meanings: utterance-type meaning, associated with the proverb's conventionalized context of use, and utterance-token meaning, associated with the ad hoc context in which the proverb is recontextualized.

3. Data and Methodology
The paper analyzes 50 proverbs of loves in Arabic and English (25 from each language). These proverbs are collected from different Arabic and English proverbs collections and dictionaries. Analyzing data from different languages (Arabic and English) aims to rule out the possibility that the recontextualizing effect may be attributed to cultural norms associated with proverb usage.

Methodologically, the analysis will distinguish between speech act potentials and contextualized speech act. The analysis will employ the distinction between utterance-type implicature and utterance-token implicature to illustrate the difference between the two types of speech act. In this respect, the study will draw on Culpeper and Haugh's (2014) model representing a recent development of neo-Gricean theory of implicature, which is mainly based on Grice (1975). At a higher contextual level, the analysis will follow Linell's (1998) conceptualization to show how the process of recontextualization will turn the speech act potential epitomized in proverbs into a fully-fledged speech act with social and communicative values. Ultimately, the analysis will show how recognising these contextualized speech acts can be attained through the move from the utterance-type implicature to utterance-token implicature triggered by these proverbs in context.

4. Results
4.1 Proverb use and recontextualization
Recontextualization is an essential pragmatic feature of love proverbs in English and Arabic. Recontextualization is intimately connected to two distinctive features of proverbs, i.e., traditionality (see Meider, 2004) and self-containedness (see Borowska, 2014). Traditionality and self-containedness make the contextual assumptions expressed by the proverbs easily accessible. These easily accessible contextual assumptions can be transferred and manipulated, when the proverb is used in a new discourse in

order to perform different pragmatic functions. These pragmatic functions include: first, illocution shift which involves using the proverb to perform a speech act different from the one performed in its conventionalized context and second, foregrounding the commonality of the didactic message conveyed by the proverb.

4.2 Illocution shift

A proverb is taken out of its original conventionalized context and utilized in a new and different context through recontextualization. Each love proverb has a specific historical background or context, but when this proverb is used in a new context, the proverb will carry along some of its conventionalized context of use to the new context, and thereby re-contextualize the discourse in which it is used. In this case, reusing proverbs across context can reframe the new context of its use. Consider the following examples:

5. Love is blind.

The proverb above is an ancient Greek proverb that an English poet and author G. Chaucer (c. 1390) first used in his 'The Merchant's Tale'. Later on, it is used by Shakespeare (1591) in his play 'Two Gentlemen of Verona'[2], which made this proverb famous and popular in English-speaking communities. Its origin context is as follows:

(Two Gentlemen of Verona Act II. Scene I. 61)
Valentine: I have lov'd her ever since I saw her, and still I see her beautiful.
Speed: If you love her you cannot see her.
Valentine: Why?
Speed: Because Love is blind.

In this context, this proverb implies that people cannot notice the faults of their beloved because they fall in love.
Now consider the recontextualizing effect of the same proverb when used in another context in the following real-life example taken from a website[3]:

6. "Kerry: Did you hear that Miranda is dating Gavin?
  Christine: Yeah, I was shocked!
  Kerry: Miranda is so gorgeous. She could be a supermodel if she wanted to.
  Christine: Yeah, I don't know why she's dating Gavin. He's not attractive at all.
  Kerry: Maybe he has a lot of money.
  Christine: I don't think so. I think he's unemployed.
  Kerry: Huh. Well, I guess love is blind".

As seen in example (6) above, the proverb was transformed from its original context to a new one. In this new context of use, both interlocutors are surprised of Miranda is dating Gavin. At the end of this little conversation, the proverb 'love is blind' is used. In order to understand what the proverb in this context means, one needs to assign sense and reference to this conventionalized form, i.e., the proverb. The co-textual information helps the audience identify that the term 'love' distinctively means affection and relation between a man and a woman (rather than other type of love), and specifically refers to the relationship between Miranda and Gavin. The pragmatic processes of sense assignment, which involves lexical narrowing (Carston, 2002, p. 324), and reference resolution then give rise to an implicature that helps the hearer recognize the indirect speech act performed by this proverb. In this context of use the proverb is interactionally used as an act of concession, which is a commisive speech act, because it commits the speaker to a specific state of affairs, i.e., conceding that Miranda and Gavin can be in love, because love knows no boundaries. Thus, in this example, the speech act performed by the proverb, commisive, totally differs from that performed in the original context of the proverb, i.e., representative, yet it still carries the same form and essential meaning.

In this sense, the recontextualization process allows the proverb 'love is blind' to 'come alive' again to serve a different pragmatic function than the one associated with its conventionalized context of use. Such recontextualizing process conveys two kinds of implicit meanings; first, an "utterance-type meaning", i.e., the conventionalized meaning of the proverb, and an "utterance-token meaning" that this proverb is used as a commissive speech act (Culpeper & Haugh, 2014). As clarified previously, utterance-type meaning is the meaning which is conveyed by utterances. Thus, 'love is blind' means that people cannot notice the faults of their beloved. In sum, utterance-type meaning involves "short-circuited implicatures", whereas in

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[2] (Speake, 2007, p. 315)
[3] https://writingexplained.org/idiom-dictionary/love-is-blind

utterance-token meaning one needs specific contextual knowledge to implied the meaning of 'love is blind'. It means that utterance-token meaning contains particularized conversational implicatures (Culpeper & Haugh, 2014).

Such recontextualizing effect is not associated with the example above only; it is rather common pragmatic phenomenon in both English and Arabic, as shown in the examples 7 and 8 respectively:

7. Absence makes the heart grow fonder.
8."الزواج قسمة و نصيب" [Marriage is a lottery].

The proverbs above assert the truth or value of love. In example (7) represents the fact that 'when a person is far away, you will realize how much you love him/her'. Thus, it has a representative illocution. Example (8) asserts the traditional Arabic opinion that marriage's success and failure are predetermined by luck and fate. It also has a representative illocution. However, these proverbs' illocutions may change based on the new context of use and the speaker communicative needs, as shown in example 9 and 10 respectively.

9. Daughter: Mom, I think I'll skip this year's summer vacation.
   Mother: Why would you want to do that?
  Daughter: Well, I just started dating Chad, and I think it would hurt our relationship if I left for a few weeks.
   Mother: The fact that you haven't been dating long is a good reason not to miss out on a trip to Europe. I think it
will be good for your relationship. Also, you know what they say. "Absence makes the heart grow fonder"![4]

Under this condition, the mother uses the proverb "Absence makes the heart grow fonder" to advise her daughter that if she leaves Chad for days, he will miss her and it will be an excellent way to increase his affection. According to Searle (1969)'s classification of illocutionary acts, "absence makes the heart grow fonder", in this context, is a directive speech act, because it is used to advise and persuade the daughter to come with her.

Similarly, Arabic love proverbs may influence by different contexts and may present different illocutionary forces. Consider the conversation below:

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الاب: (في حيرة) اسمع يا بني ان ابنتي لا تزال صغيرة و هي ترغب في اكمال دراستها**.**

احمد: انا لم امانع سيدي**.**

الاب: (قاطبا حاجبيه) يا بني ان "الزواج قسمة و نصيب".

    Ahmed: I would to marry your daughter. I consider this a great honor for me to be your son-in-law.
    Father: (perplexed) Listen, son, my daughter is still young and she wants to complete her studies.
    Ahmed: I do not mind, sir.
    Father: (pulling out his eyebrows) Son, "marriage is a destiny".

In this example, the father employs the proverb "الزواج قسمة ونصيب" to reject the suitor's request. In this context, the proverb is not used as a representative speech act, but rather as a commissive speech act of refusal. The speech act of refusal is often performed in response to other speech acts, i.e. offers, invitations, suggestions and requests. This speech act indicates that one is not willing to do something and as such committing himself to a specific state of affair. This example shows that proverbs with representative potentials can be used to perform face-threatening illocutions like rejection, requests etc.

4.3 Foregrounding the didactic message of proverbs
Using proverbs in interaction does not necessarily change the illocutions they conventionally perform. These proverbs can be used to perform their conventional speech act potentials in order to foreground the didactic messages associated with these proverbs, which eventually enhances their argumentative function. Consider example below:

11.

أَحْبِبْ حَبِيبَكَ هَوْناً مَا عَسَى أَنْ يَكُّونَ بَغِيضَكَ يَوْماً مَا

[Loving the one you love is an easy matter. It may be that one day he will be the one you hate.]
This saying is taken from the Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) hadith. As he said:

أَحْبِبْ حَبِيبَكَ هَوْناً مَا عَسَى أَنْ يَكُّونَ بَغِيضَكَ يَوْماً مَا، وَأَبْغِضْ بَغِيضَكَ هَوْناً مَا عَسَى أَنْ يَكُّونَ حَبِيبَكَ يَوْماً مَا

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[4] https://writingexplained.org/idiom-dictionary/absence-makes-the-heart-grow-fonder

"Loving the one you love is an easy matter. It may be that one day he will be the one you hate. Hating the one who hates is an easy matter, It may be that one day he will be the one you hate"[5]

The pre-Islamic Arab poet (Nimr Ibn Tulb) also expressed the same idea by saying:

أَحْبِبْ حَبِيبَكَ حُبّاً رُوَيْداً --فَقَدْ لا يَعُولُكَ أَنْ تَصِرما

وأبغِضْ بَغِيضَكَ بُغْضاً رُوَيْداً -- إذا أنْت خاوَلْتَ أَنْ تَحكُما[6]

This proverb means 'do not share your secrets with your lover, as s/he may change his/her affection someday'. Although this proverb communicates a conventionalized message, the meaning of a proverb is not firmly fixed as it may be changed across contexts. The speaker may modify the meaning of a proverb in order to become fit to his/her context of use. Consider the following example, in which the recontextualization process does not affect the illocution conventionally performed by the proverb but it highlights its didactic message for argumentative purposes:

12. امير: سمعت انك تعرفت على صديق جديد في عملك؟

علي: نعم, انه انسان جيد و خلوق و ساعدني كثيرا في عملي. انا ممتن له جدا.

امير: و لكن لا تتحمس كثيرا. هل تتذكر ما فعل جلال بك؟! أَحْبِبْ حَبِيبَكَ هَوْناً.....

علي: نعم، لقد تغيرت من ذلك الوقت.

Amir: I heard you met a new friend at work?

Ali: Yes, he is a good person and he helped me a lot in my work. I am very grateful to him.

Amir: But don't get too excited. Do you remember what Jalal did to you?! Loving the one you love is an easy matter.....

Ali: Yes, and I have changed since.

By using the proverb in example (12), Amir wants to advise his friend that never truth people easily because they may be changed one day. He has taken out the proverb from its original context and put in a different context to convey his intended meaning (don't trust your new friend) in an indirect way. In this conversation, Ali and Amir share contextual knowledge about the proverb (اخْبِبْ حَبِيبَكَ هَوْناً مَا عَسَى أَنْ يَكُونَ بَغِيضَكَ يَوْماً مَا) because Ali understood what Amir wants to say through the use of the proverb and he implicates that he is worried about him and wants to give advice. This proverb in such a context highlights the fact that putting too much trust in a new friend is traditionally known mistake, as cited by the Arabic proverb.

The proverb performs a directive speech act in both, its conventionalized context and its ad hoc context of use. Yet, this does not mean that this needs no pragmatic enrichment to move from the utterance-type implied meaning, associated with the conventionalized context of the proverb, to the utterance-token implied meaning, which arises in the context of this interaction. This is because understanding the particularized conversational implicature still requires adequate reference resolution, i.e. that the word حبيب here refers to new friend, and "lexical narrowing" (Carston, 2002, p. 324), i.e. that the phrase احبب هونا specifically means ' not to trust him too much'.

3.2 Result Discussion
In both datasets, the analysis shows that the use of love proverbs in new contexts, i.e., recontextualization, may serve two pragmatic functions. The first of these functions is the illocution shift which involves using the proverb to perform a speech act different from the one performed in its conventionalized context and second. The illocution shift can be used to mitigate the face-threat of the original speech act potentials conventionally associated with the proverbs. The second pragmatic function of recontextualization is to foreground the didactic message conveyed by the proverbs, which eventually reinforces their argumentative load.

5. Conclusions
Based on the results of the analysis, some significant points have arisen. The study leads to a number of conclusions. First, in both languages, regardless of the cultural differences, the proverbs of love were found to carry conventionalized message and ad hoc context of use. Thus, the meaning of proverbs is not fixed as the illocutions of these proverbs may change based on the new context. Second, the analysis showed that upon using a proverb in a new context, the proverb could go through a recontextualization process that might serve two pragmatic functions: illocution shift and foregrounding of didactic content. The

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[5] https://sunnah.com/adab/57/6
[6] Sulaiman bin Salih Al-Khurashi (1428, p. 58)

former function was mainly used to mitigate the face-threat of the original speech act potentials conventionally associated with the proverbs. The latter was employed to reinforce the argumentative loads of the proverbs. Last, the analysis shows that understanding how proverbs are used in interaction needs pragmatic enrichment, which involves moving from the utterance-type meaning (the conventionalized context) to the utterance-token implied meaning (the context of use). This pragmatic enrichment facilitates the interpretation of speaker's intention.

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