



RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Cultural Context and Its Impact on Interpreting the Meanings of Arabic Words: A Comparative Critical Analysis of Dialects

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: Sep 17, 2024 Accepted: Nov 28, 2024	This study aims to explore the impact of cultural context on the meanings of daily-used words in Arabic dialects through a comparative critical analysis of four major dialects: Gulf, Levantine, Egyptian, and Maghrebi. The study adopts an analytical and critical methodology to highlight the semantic differences between commonly used words and how they are shaped by different cultural and social contexts.
Keywords Arabic Dialects Contextual Dictionaries Cultural Diversity Dialect Communication Linguistic Semantics Semantic Differences	
*Corresponding Author: aabdulatif@kfu.edu.sa	The findings reveal that daily-used words carry cultural connotations that reflect the values and social practices of the communities speaking these dialects. For instance, the word "Al-Afiyah" demonstrates clear variations in meaning and connotation across dialects, shaped by the cultural values of each region. The study underscores the importance of understanding cultural context to improve communication between dialects and enhance cultural understanding. It concludes with recommendations for developing contextual dictionaries that account for semantic differences and for integrating cultural context into educational curricula to emphasize this aspect.

INTRODUCTION

The Arabic language is one of the most linguistically rich and diverse languages, branching into numerous dialects that reflect the cultural, social, and geographical diversity across the Arab world. With significant cultural variation in the Arab world, multiple dialects have emerged, leading to substantial differences in the interpretation of words and meanings.

Arabic dialects serve as a living embodiment of the cultural identity of each community; they not only reflect differences in pronunciation and vocabulary but also carry distinct values, traditions, and customs. By studying these dialects, it becomes possible to uncover how historical events and geographical locations have influenced the evolution of dialects and the meanings of words.

This linguistic diversity creates challenges in understanding and interpreting word meanings, as the same words and expressions may carry different connotations between dialects depending on the local cultural context. These variations present significant challenges in several areas:

Daily Communication: Words and expressions may be misunderstood between speakers from different cultural backgrounds. This study raises awareness of cultural diversity, helping individuals understand and respect cultural and linguistic differences, thereby contributing to building more cohesive societies.

Translation: Words may not convey the same meaning in other languages, leading to misrepresentation of the cultural message. This study supports the fields of translation and international communication by providing valuable insights for translators and linguists to accurately convey meanings across different dialects.

Academic Studies: Linguistic studies face challenges in standardizing meanings or providing accurate interpretations. This study contributes to the preservation of linguistic heritage by documenting and analyzing dialects, thus safeguarding them from extinction and maintaining cultural identity.

Language is a fundamental tool for human communication, serving as a reflection of the cultural and social identity of communities. In the Arab world, Arabic is characterized by immense diversity, which is evident in the daily dialects spoken across different regions. These dialects mirror the cultural and social diversity of the region, as the meanings of words and expressions vary from one area to another, highlighting the deep connection between language and local culture (Halliday & Hasan, 1985).

Despite its richness, this semantic diversity sometimes leads to misunderstandings among speakers from different regions. For instance, the word "coffee" refers to the well-known beverage in Gulf and Levantine dialects, while in Egyptian dialect, it signifies a home or meeting place. These variations are not merely linguistic but also reflect profound cultural and social values unique to each community (Firth, 1957).

The importance of studying cultural context lies in its pivotal role in interpreting word meanings and connotations. Daily used words are not mere tools of expression; they are carriers of cultural meanings shaped by traditions and customs. Understanding these words in their social contexts contributes to enhancing cultural understanding among different dialects and reduces linguistic misunderstandings (Al-Ghathami, 2000).

This study gains particular importance amidst the growing need to promote cultural understanding in an increasingly globalized world, where language plays a key role in building bridges between communities.

Research Problem

The research problem lies in the challenges of daily communication, as well as in literary, media, educational, and academic fields, which necessitate an in-depth study to understand how cultural context influences the interpretation of Arabic word meanings.

Significance of Study

This study sheds light on the relationship between language and context, opening new horizons for understanding the semantic diversity of the Arabic language. It assists linguists in developing more comprehensive interpretative models for word meanings, raises awareness of the importance of cultural context in shaping linguistic identity, supports efforts to preserve local dialects from extinction, and enhances mutual understanding and communication among Arab communities by analyzing semantic differences, thereby reducing misunderstandings caused by linguistic variation.

The study gains particular importance in the context of globalization and increasing interaction among Arab communities, where understanding linguistic and cultural differences is essential for fostering mutual understanding and collaboration. The significance of the study can be summarized in the following points:

Literature and Literary Criticism: Literary texts reflect local culture through language; understanding cultural context enhances critical interpretations.

Developing Educational Curricula: This study enables educational institutions to design curricula that account for linguistic and cultural diversity, facilitating the learning of Arabic for both native and

non-native speakers. Teaching Arabic effectively requires consideration of cultural context to avoid misunderstandings.

Enriching Linguistic and Critical Studies: The study offers new insights that contribute to advancing linguistic and critical theories regarding the relationship between language and culture. It addresses a knowledge gap concerning the impact of culture on linguistic meanings across different dialects.

Research Questions

The research questions addressed in this study are as follows:

- How does cultural context influence the interpretation of word meanings in Arabic dialects?
- What are the key semantic differences between shared words across various dialects?
- How can literary criticism provide deeper insights into the relationship between culture and language?

Research Objectives

This study aims to:

- Explore the impact of cultural context on the semantics of words in the Arabic language.
- Conduct a critical analysis of vocabulary whose meanings vary across Arabic dialects.
- Highlight the cultural dimensions that contribute to shaping language and influencing its usage.
- Analyze the relationship between cultural context and the use of daily words.
- Examine the semantic differences between shared words in various dialects and link them to the cultural values and traditions of each community.
- Provide practical recommendations to enhance cultural understanding and improve communication among speakers of different dialects.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a critical analytical approach to explore the influence of cultural context on the meanings of daily-used words across four main Arabic dialects: Gulf, Levantine, Egyptian, and Maghrebi. The words are analyzed based on their meanings in everyday contexts, with a comparative analysis of these meanings across the dialects to identify similarities and differences, and to study the role of cultural context in shaping these semantics.

Data Collection

The study follows a systematic methodology to select the daily expressions and words analyzed, ensuring comprehensive and accurate representation of the different dialects. The word selection process includes the following steps:

Focus on Commonly Used Words: The study identifies frequently used words in daily conversations, such as greetings, household expressions, and phrases used in markets and social events.

Targeted Random Sampling: A targeted random sample of words is selected from various domains such as food, health, social relationships, and work. This approach ensures a broad representation of meanings across dialects.

Selection Based on Cultural Contexts: Words with clear cultural connotations and significant semantic variation between dialects are prioritized. For example, words like “coffee” (qahwa) and “well-being” (al-‘afiyah) are included as they exhibit substantial cultural divergence.

Review of Linguistic and Field Sources: Linguistic sources, including previous studies, are reviewed to identify words with evident semantic differences. Field observations and social discussions supplement the list of words.

Critical Analysis

The analysis applies theories of literary and linguistic criticism to examine the relationship between language and culture. It involves:

- Comparing word meanings based on their usage in different contexts.
- Identifying similarities and differences in word semantics across dialects.
- Analyzing the evolution of word meanings under the influence of traditions and cultural practices.

Evaluation and Recommendations

Evaluation: The study provides analytical results that enhance understanding of language and its semantic dimensions.

Recommendations: Propose educational and cultural tools to improve mutual understanding between dialects. Suggest practical measures to foster communication among speakers of different dialects.

Tools for Data Collection

The study relies on:

- **Analysis of Daily Words:** Based on general cultural knowledge.
- **Socially Common Examples:** Extracted from general social communication within Arabic-speaking communities.

Methods of Data Analysis

The study employs two primary methods of analysis:

Comparative Analysis: This method is used to compare daily words across different dialects, identifying similarities and differences in semantics.

Example: The word “al-‘afiyah” signifies health in Gulf dialects, while in Levantine it refers to food.

Contextual Analysis: This focuses on examining words in their various social contexts, highlighting the influence of cultural environment and local traditions on the development of word meanings.

Geographical Scope of the Study

The study is limited to four main geographical regions: the Arabian Gulf, the Levant, Egypt, and North Africa (Maghreb).

Study Limitations

Focus on Commonly Used Words: The study primarily examines words and expressions commonly used in daily interactions, which may exclude less frequently used words or those associated with specialized contexts.

Limited Geographical Scope: The study focuses on four main dialects (Gulf, Levantine, Egyptian, and Maghrebi), which may not fully represent the semantic diversity of other Arabic dialects, such as Yemeni or Sudanese.

Cultural Context Shifts: The study encounters challenges related to the impact of globalization and modern social transformations, which have altered the meanings of some words or eroded traditional connotations in certain dialects. Further research is needed to understand these changes.

Reliance on General Cultural Knowledge: By relying on general cultural knowledge, the study might overlook individual uses or words that are specific to particular contexts and less commonly encountered.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Cultural Context in Linguistic Studies

The concept of cultural context refers to the social, historical, and geographical factors that influence language use and understanding. Linguistic studies emphasize that words are not merely linguistic symbols; they carry meanings shaped within the cultural framework of communities. Firth (1957) highlighted that meanings can only be understood within the context in which words are used, a concept known as the "contextual theory." This perspective was further supported by Halliday and Hasan (1985), who introduced the concept of the "socio-linguistic system," demonstrating that context adds a social dimension that makes language richer and more complex.

In the Arab world, Abdullah Al-Ghathami (2000) explored cultural context through the lens of cultural criticism, explaining that words and expressions reflect cultural patterns that embody societal traditions and prevailing values. This underscores the importance of understanding language as a mirror reflecting the identity of communities.

Daily Dialects as a Cultural Phenomenon

Daily dialects in the Arab world are a clear manifestation of cultural and social diversity. These dialects are not merely tools for communication but also expressions of the values and customs deeply rooted in each community. Al-Mansouri's study (2006) examined the impact of cultural context on understanding literary texts, noting that social values and cultural practices significantly shape meanings.

For example, in daily contexts, the word "Al-Rouh" (the soul) carries multiple meanings: in the Gulf, it refers to life; in Egypt, it means "a beloved person"; and in the Levant, it denotes "the self." This diversity reflects the cultural differences in how concepts and values are perceived (Halliday & Hasan, 1985).

Previous Studies

Previous research has addressed the topic of cultural context from various perspectives:

Al-Ghathami (2000): This study explored cultural criticism as a tool for analyzing linguistic texts from a cultural perspective, emphasizing that language is a cultural product that reflects prevailing social values.

Al-Mansouri (2006): Titled "Cultural Context and Text Analysis," this study examined the factors influencing readers' comprehension of texts, such as time, age, culture, and experience. It highlighted how these factors, linked to cultural context, affect the interpretation of word meanings and expressions in Arabic texts.

Al-Ayeb (2016): Titled "Cultural Context and Its Role in Meaning Production and Text Interpretation," this research delved into the role of cultural context in producing meaning and directing text connotations. Drawing on both Arabic and Western studies, it provided examples from Arabic poetry to illustrate how cultural context influences the interpretation of meanings.

Al-Daba' (2020): Titled "Context and Contextual Dictionaries in Arab Culture," this study reviewed the concept of context, its types, and theories, with a focus on contextual dictionaries in the Arabic language. It explored their role in teaching Arabic to non-native speakers, providing examples of contextual dictionaries and demonstrating how they can be used to understand the varying meanings of words based on cultural context.

While these studies emphasize the significance of cultural context, this research focuses on a different dimension by examining the daily-used words in practical contexts across different dialects. Despite the valuable insights provided by previous studies, there remains a clear research gap concerning

the everyday words used in daily life. This study aims to fill this gap by critically analyzing words commonly used in social contexts across different dialects.

Research Gap

Despite the wealth of research on cultural context, most studies have concentrated on literary texts or formal language. There is a notable lack of studies that focus on daily-used words in Arabic dialects and their connection to cultural and social contexts. This study seeks to address this gap by analyzing the words used in everyday life within four major dialects.

Summary of Literature Review

The literature review concludes that cultural context plays a crucial role in shaping the meanings of words, whether in literary texts or daily life. Previous studies underscore the importance of context in determining semantics but reveal a lack of focus on daily dialects. This study offers a unique contribution by aiming for a deeper understanding of how culture influences language in everyday contexts.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is based on the interrelation between language, culture, and context, emphasizing their connection from linguistic and critical perspectives. This section provides a detailed explanation of key concepts, offers a scientific background on the subject, and ties them to previous studies.

The framework focuses on three main areas:

- Cultural context in linguistic studies, encompassing the evolution of the concept of context and its impact on language.
- Arabic dialects as a cultural mirror, through a comparative study of various dialects in the Arab world.
- Literary criticism as an analytical tool, highlighting its role in interpreting texts through cultural context.

The Concept of Cultural Context

Cultural context refers to the environment in which words and expressions emerge, deriving their meanings from societal customs, traditions, values, and religion. It is a central element in interpreting word meanings, as it determines how language is used and understood. Cultural context consists of three main dimensions:

Social Dimension: This includes societal values and traditions that influence the interpretation of words.

Example: The word “family” reflects varying societal values in urban versus rural communities.

Religious Dimension: This pertains to the influence of religious beliefs and practices on word connotations.

Example: Words such as “halal” (permissible) and “haram” (forbidden) carry specific meanings in Islamic contexts.

Historical and Geographical Dimensions: These refer to how language and word meanings evolve over time and across geographical locations.

Example: The word “dar” may mean “home” in some dialects and “neighborhood” in others.

The Relationship Between Language and Culture

Language is not merely a tool for communication but also an expression of culture. Words inherently carry meanings derived from the cultural contexts in which they are formed. The relationship between language and culture can be summarized as follows:

Language as a Reflection of Culture: Language mirrors the cultural values and practices of a society.

Example: The use of terms related to hospitality in Gulf dialects, such as “alsana” (refinement) and “alfanjal” (coffee cup) (Aljazeera, 2017).

Culture as a Source of Word Meanings: Words are influenced by local culture, leading to variations in interpretation.

Example: The word “desert” holds different symbolic meanings in Arabic literature compared to other cultures (UNESCO, 2020; Aljazeera, 2021).

Cultural Dynamics: Language evolves with societal changes and the influence of other cultures.

Example: The incorporation of foreign words into local dialects due to colonization or globalization.

Linguistic Context vs. Cultural Context

Linguistic context refers to the meaning a word acquires based on its position in a sentence, whereas cultural context adds a deeper layer of meaning derived from the surrounding environment. The relationship between the two can be distinguished as follows:

Linguistic Context: This depends on syntactic and linguistic structures.

Example: The word “eye” may refer to a human body part or a water spring, depending on the syntactic context (Alukah, 2018).

Cultural Context: This relies on the cultural circumstances in which a word is used.

Example: The word “eye” is used in Arabic poetry to symbolize beauty or vigilance (Al-Barkawi, 2016).

The Concept of Dialects and Their Cultural Role

Dialects are linguistic variations that arise within a parent language due to cultural, geographical, and social influences. They play a significant role in expressing the identity of a community and can profoundly affect the interpretation of word meanings. Differences between dialects often create challenges in understanding words and expressions, highlighting the necessity of studying the impact of cultural context on meanings.

The reasons for the emergence of dialects include:

Geographical Influence: Geographic isolation leads to the development of local dialects.

Cultural Influence: Local values and customs shape how words are used.

A comparison of Gulf, Levantine, and Maghrebi dialects reveals key differences:

Gulf Dialects: Characterized by vocabulary tied to the desert and Bedouin life.

Levantine Dialects: Incorporate expressions influenced by neighboring cultures.

Maghrebi Dialects: Reflect influences from Amazigh and French languages.

Literary Criticism and the Relationship Between Culture and Language (Oweid, 2024)

Literary criticism is an essential tool for understanding texts within their cultural contexts. Literary critics analyze texts from a cultural perspective, aiding in the deeper interpretation of words and expressions.

Cultural Criticism: Focuses on studying texts in light of the cultural environment in which they were produced.

Example: Analyzing a pre-Islamic poem to understand the prevailing social values.

Cultural criticism emerges as an effective tool for analyzing cultural differences and their impact on language. It aids in interpreting literary texts and understanding cultural contexts more deeply, contributing to the development of educational and reference tools that enhance understanding between dialects (Jaghboub, 2015).

Social Criticism: Highlights the impact of social classes and dominant values on language use.

Example: Words like “guest” and “generosity” in Arabic literature emphasize cultural values (Al-Azhari, n.d.).

Linguistic Deconstruction: Focuses on analyzing words and their multiple meanings based on cultural contexts.

Example: The word “love” in Arabic literature encompasses meanings ranging from spiritual passion to physical desire (Ibn Manzur, 2003).

Summary of the Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study highlights the profound interaction between language and culture, emphasizing the central role of cultural context in shaping word meanings. By integrating the concepts of cultural context, dialects, and literary criticism, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the cultural impact on the Arabic language, contributing to the advancement of linguistic and critical studies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Presentation of Results

The findings reveal that daily-used words carry different and varied meanings across the four studied dialects (Gulf, Levantine, Egyptian, and Maghrebi). These differences are not merely linguistic but also reflect the cultural values and social customs shaped by specific historical and geographical contexts (Halliday & Hasan, 1985).

Tables (1) and (2) provide examples of words with multiple meanings in the Gulf, Levant, Egypt, and the Maghreb, along with examples of expressions that hold distinct cultural symbolism.

Table 1: Examples of Words with Multiple Meanings Across Dialects

Word	Meaning in Gulf	Meaning in Levant	Meaning in Egypt	Meaning in Maghreb
'Afiyah	Health	Food	Fire	Strength
Qahwa	Symbol of hospitality	Café	Coffee drink	Coffee drink
Kousha	Not used	Not used	Wedding platform	Oven
Rouh	Life	Soul	Beloved person	Morale/spirit

Table 2: Examples of Expressions with Different Cultural Symbolism

Expression	Meaning in Gulf	Meaning in Levant	Meaning in Egypt
Yislamu	Thank you	Thank you	Not commonly used
Allah Ya'teek Al-'Afiyah	Wishing health and well-being	Thank you for the food	Not commonly used
'Ala Rasi	Expression of respect	Same meaning	Not used

Observations on the Results

The word "Afiyah": In Gulf dialects, it signifies health, reflecting the importance of health as a social value. In Levantine dialects, it refers to food, highlighting its association with hospitality and social gatherings. In Egyptian dialects, it denotes fire, derived from its colloquial use associated with household stoves.

The word "Rouh": This word shows significant semantic variation across dialects. In Gulf dialects, it refers to life, while in Egyptian dialects, it symbolizes a beloved person (Al-Daba', 2020).

The word "Qahwa": The findings highlight cultural differences in the interpretation of coffee. In Egyptian dialects, it is used to describe a gathering place or home, whereas in Gulf and Levantine dialects, it refers to the well-known beverage.

DISCUSSION

The Impact of Cultural Context on Word Meanings

Cultural context is one of the strongest factors influencing the semantics of words in language, granting them additional meanings that extend beyond their literal definitions. Words are used within specific contexts shaped by social, religious, historical, and geographical factors, leading to variations in their meanings across communities and dialects.

The findings confirm that cultural context plays a pivotal role in shaping the meanings of daily-used words. Words are not merely tools of communication; they also reflect deeply ingrained societal values (Al-Ghathami, 2000).

For instance: The connotation of the word "Afiyah" in Levantine dialects highlights the cultural emphasis on hospitality, whereas its meaning in Gulf dialects emphasizes health as an individual value.

Key Aspects Highlighting the Impact of Cultural Context:

Variation in Meanings Based on Cultural Environment

A. Geographical Influence: Geographical location significantly shapes the meanings of words in Arabic dialects. For example: The word "Dabbah" refers to any animal in Levantine dialects, a camel in Gulf dialects, and a donkey in Maghrebi dialects.

This diversity reflects the connection of words to the geographical environment and daily life of the community (Farouk, 2018).

B. Traditions and Customs: Cultural contexts rooted in traditions influence word interpretations. For instance: The word "guest" in Gulf dialects symbolizes hospitality and is considered a core social value. In urban contexts, it may carry a more practical meaning as a transient visitor.

C. Social Influence: Social conditions reshape word meanings within each community. For example: The word "honor" in traditional societies is tied to moral and familial values, whereas in urban settings, it may denote professional integrity.

The word "house" refers to a physical home in Levantine dialects, but in Gulf dialects, it can mean a tribe.

Religious Influence on Word Meanings

Religion is one of the most significant cultural elements impacting language and word meanings. Examples include:

Words with Religious Origins: "Zakat" in Islam denotes a religious obligation paid to the needy. In a general context, it may refer to charity or financial assistance.

Words Derived from Religious Texts: "Khayr" (goodness) in a religious context refers to virtuous deeds or good intentions, while in a social context, it may signify material benefits or general advantages.

Vocabulary Related to Religious Practices: "Sawm" (fasting) in Islam signifies abstinence from food and drink during a specific period. In general culture, it may mean abstinence from anything.

Differences in Word Meanings Across Dialects

Cultural context significantly impacts the meaning of words in each dialect. Examples include:

'Afiyah: In Gulf dialects: Refers to health. In Levantine dialects: Refers to food. In Egyptian dialects: Sometimes refers to fire or strength.

Qahwa (Coffee): In Gulf dialects: Associated with hospitality and considered part of heritage. In Levantine dialects: Refers to a social gathering place (café). In Maghrebi dialects: Used exclusively to denote the beverage.

Nakhwa (Chivalry): In Iraqi and Gulf dialects: Represents generosity and gallantry. In Levantine dialects: Used less frequently but carries similar meanings.

Multiple Meanings of a Single Word Based on Context

Cultural context can add multiple meanings to a single word depending on its usage. Examples include:

Ain (Eye): Refers to the organ of sight. In Arabic literature: Symbolizes beauty or vigilance. In dialects: Used to denote a water spring.

Bayt (House): Refers to a home in the material sense. In some dialects: Refers to a tribe or family.

In Arabic poetry: Refers to a verse of poetry.

Rouh (Soul): Means the self or inner being. In some dialects: Used to mean "go" or "leave."

Historical Influence on Word Semantics

Historical Evolution of Meanings: Words evolve over time influenced by cultural shifts. For example: "Sayyarah" (car): Historically referred to a caravan, but in modern times it denotes a vehicle.

Colonial Influence: Some words changed due to the incorporation of foreign languages. Examples include:

- "Banyo" (bathtub): Borrowed from French.
- "Satal" (bucket): Influenced by Turkish dialects.

Symbolic Words in Literature and Popular Culture

Symbolic Expressions: Arabic literature is rich with words carrying strong cultural symbolism. For example:

- "Horse" in pre-Islamic poetry symbolizes pride and strength.
- "Night" often denotes sorrow or anticipation in Arabic literature (Ibn Manzur, 2003).

Popular Proverbs: Proverbs carry specific meanings tied to cultural contexts. For example:

The proverb: "The eye sees, but the hand is short" expresses helplessness yet may also reflect deeper social circumstances. Table (3) illustrates examples of popular proverbs and their cultural analysis.

Table 3: Examples of Popular Proverbs and Their Cultural Analysis

Proverb	Translation	Region	Cultural Analysis
"Ally ma ya'rif al-saqr yeshwih"	"He who doesn't know the falcon cooks it"	Gulf	Highlights the importance of expertise and knowledge.
"Hott rasak bayn al-rouos"	"Put your head among the heads"	Levant	Encourages adapting to circumstances.
"Ally haddar al-'afreet yusarfuh"	"He who summons the demon must dismiss it"	Egypt	Reflects the importance of taking responsibility.

Globalization's Impact on Word Meanings

Introduction of Foreign Terms: Globalization has introduced new vocabulary that has become integrated into local dialects. Examples include: The words "computer" and "internet", which have become common across all Arabic dialects.

Reshaping Meanings: Traditional words are acquiring new meanings in the modern era. For example: The word "thaki" (smart) now refers to smart devices (e.g., smartphones), in addition to its traditional meaning of being intelligent.

Summary of This Section

The impact of cultural context on word meanings highlights the dynamic nature of the Arabic language and how it interacts with its surrounding environment. A deep study of this influence contributes to a better understanding of linguistic diversity and helps enhance communication between different Arab communities. It also underscores the importance of documenting these cultural differences to preserve linguistic heritage and develop educational and reference tools that consider these variations.

Similarities and Differences Between Dialects

Arabic dialects reflect the cultural, geographical, and social diversity across the Arab world. Although they share a common linguistic root, the differences between these dialects reveal deep cultural variations that affect the meanings and usages of words. This critical comparison seeks to analyze these differences and explain the cultural and social factors that have led to them, focusing on practical examples from various dialects.

Despite the semantic differences, the results also reveal similarities between dialects in terms of using certain words to refer to shared social concepts.

Factors Affecting Dialect Differences

Geography: The geographic environment shapes the daily life and linguistic needs of each community. Example: The word "al-Bir" (well): In rural areas, it refers to a primary water source. In urban areas, it may be replaced with terms like "khazan al-miyah" (water tank).

History: Shared history, colonization, and cultural interactions with other peoples have left their mark on dialects. Example: The word "OK" has become widespread across most dialects due to English influence. Additionally, French words like "ascenseur" (elevator) are widely used in Maghrebi dialects.

Social Culture: Social values, customs, and traditions determine the usage of vocabulary. Example: The word "Nakhowa" (chivalry): In the Gulf and Iraq, it refers to generosity and gallantry. It may be less common in the Levant or Maghreb.

Differences in Word Meanings Across Dialects

Words themselves can carry completely different meanings across dialects due to cultural variations. For example:

'Afiyah: In Gulf dialects: Refers to health. In Levantine dialects: Refers to food (used in the context of "Yislamu ideik 'ala al-'afiyah" – Thank you for the food). In Egyptian dialects: May refer to fire.

Qahwa (Coffee): In Gulf dialects: Symbolizes hospitality. In Levantine dialects: Refers to a social place (coffee shop). In Maghrebi dialects: Simply refers to the coffee beverage.

Kousha (Platform): In Maghrebi dialects: Refers to an oven. In Egyptian dialects: Refers to the wedding platform (used for the bride and groom during a wedding ceremony).

Challenges Resulting from Cultural Context

Cultural context plays a significant role in shaping the meanings and usage of words across different Arabic dialects. However, this cultural variation leads to several challenges that impact communication, translation, education, and linguistic research. This section discusses the major challenges arising from cultural context and their effects on various aspects.

Challenges in Inter-Dialect Communication

Linguistic Misunderstandings: The differences in word meanings between dialects can lead to communication difficulties among Arabic speakers. For example: The word "ghada" (lunch) in the Gulf refers to the midday meal, while in Morocco it means "tomorrow". The word "dabbah" in Levantine dialect refers to a gas canister, while it means camel in Gulf dialects (Al-Arabi, 2021).

Communication in Multicultural Environments: In countries with cultural diversity like the UAE or Lebanon, where multiple dialects are spoken, understanding the cultural context of word meanings can sometimes be challenging. For example, expressions like "Yislamu" (thank you) in Levantine dialect may be misunderstood by Gulf speakers due to lack of familiarity.

Media Challenges: Using a specific dialect in media can make content less understandable for non-native speakers of that dialect. For instance, using Egyptian dialect in Arab dramas can make some expressions unclear to viewers from the Maghreb region.

Challenges in Translation

Cultural Divergence in Word Meanings: Words carry different meanings depending on the cultural context, making their translation difficult. For example: The word "'afiyah" translates to "health" in Gulf dialects but "food" in Levantine dialects.

Literal vs. Interpretative Translation: Literal translations often fail to convey the cultural meanings embedded in words, leading to distorted meanings. For example, translating “Nakhwa” (chivalry) literally doesn’t reflect its deeper cultural significance related to courage and generosity in Gulf culture.

Conveying Cultural Expressions: Some expressions carry cultural symbolism that cannot be easily translated. For instance, the phrase “Hatt ra’sak bayn al-rouos wa qul ya qata’ al-rouos” (Levant) expresses adapting to circumstances, which may be difficult to convey to non-Arabs without explanation.

Challenges in Education

Teaching Arabic to Native Speakers: Local dialects influence the understanding and learning of Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). For instance, using colloquial words in education may cause confusion between the meanings in MSA and in the dialect.

Teaching Arabic to Non-Native Speakers: Cultural variation complicates the teaching of vocabulary that carries multiple meanings. For example, the word “bayt” (house) means “home” in MSA, but in some dialects, it also refers to “family” or “tribe”.

Curriculum Development: Current curricula often focus only on MSA, leaving learners unfamiliar with the nuances of local dialects. Including examples from local dialects in teaching materials could help learners better understand linguistic diversity.

Challenges in Literature and Literary Criticism

Analyzing Literary Texts: Literary texts written in local dialects may carry meanings that are hard for readers outside the cultural context to understand. For example, using Egyptian dialect in Naguib Mahfouz’s novels makes them harder to grasp for non-Egyptians.

Cultural Interpretation of Texts: A reader from a different culture might misinterpret literary works due to a lack of understanding of the cultural context. For instance, Mahmoud Darwish’s poems, rich with Palestinian symbolism, might be interpreted differently by readers unfamiliar with Palestinian culture.

Documenting Dialects in Literature: Popular literature written in local dialects faces challenges in preserving linguistic heritage. Efforts to document and analyze dialects in literary works are essential for preserving these cultural and linguistic treasures.

Challenges in Documenting and Studying Dialects

Lack of Systematic Documentation: Many Arabic dialects lack precise documentation that reflects their semantic differences. For example, there are very few dictionaries dedicated to local dialects, compared to those available for MSA.

Cultural Erosion: Some words and expressions tied to local cultural contexts are disappearing over time. For example, traditional Bedouin words are no longer used in daily life.

Research Challenges: Studying dialects requires significant time and effort due to the vast diversity in meanings and vocabulary.

Challenges in Understanding Cultural Identity

Distortion of Cultural Identity: Globalization has led to cultural blending, affecting the traditional meanings of certain words. For example, the word “asala” (authenticity) has increasingly been used in a symbolic sense rather than referring to tangible cultural heritage.

Cultural Conflicts: Some dialects are considered less prestigious, leading to the marginalization of certain cultures. For instance, Maghrebi dialects are often seen as unintelligible in the Mashreq region, leading to limited representation in the media.

Globalization's Effect on Linguistic Diversity: The influx of foreign words into dialects has impacted native terms. For instance, using "T-shirt" instead of "qamis" (shirt) in certain dialects.

Recommendations to Address the Challenges

Creating Comprehensive Contextual Dictionaries: A comprehensive contextual dictionary for different dialects can enhance understanding and bridge gaps in communication.

Cultural Sensitivity in Translation: Training translators to understand the cultural context of words can improve the accuracy of translations, especially through interpretative translation rather than literal translation.

Educational Curriculum Development: Including examples from local dialects in curricula can familiarize learners with linguistic diversity and facilitate understanding of the language in its cultural context.

Documenting Dialects: Research projects should be developed to document words and expressions tied to cultural contexts, preserving linguistic heritage.

Critical Literary Analysis: Literary critics should analyze texts from a cultural perspective, highlighting how cultural context influences the meanings of words.

Conclusion of this Section: The challenges arising from cultural context highlight the complexity of the Arabic language and its interaction with its environment. Overcoming these challenges requires collaborative efforts between linguists, literary critics, translators, and educators to develop educational and communicative tools that promote cultural understanding between different Arab communities.

Practical Applications of the Results

Daily words reflect a part of the cultural identity of each region, highlighting how a community interacts with its environment and social conditions. For example, in Morocco, the use of the word "Afiyah" to mean comfort highlights the social value placed on peace and tranquility (Al-Mansouri, 2006).

The critical comparison between Arabic dialects demonstrates the depth of cultural and linguistic diversity in the Arab world. The differences in word meanings show how cultural context shapes language and influences its use. This study provides a deeper understanding of these differences, contributing to enhanced cultural understanding and underscoring the need for further research into the relationship between language and culture in various contexts.

The results of this study can be used to develop contextual dictionaries for different dialects, enhancing understanding among Arabic-speaking communities. The findings also emphasize the need to incorporate cultural context studies into educational curricula to improve cultural understanding between dialects (Al-Daba', 2020).

Summary of Results and Discussion

The results demonstrate that daily words are not only tools for communication but also carriers of cultural and social connotations that reflect local identity and values. The discussion highlights the importance of cultural context in understanding and interpreting these words, emphasizing the need for further studies that focus on the relationship between language and culture. The study calls for collaboration between researchers and cultural institutions to develop policies that support linguistic identity while respecting cultural diversity.

The key findings can be summarized in five points:

- Cultural context is an essential factor in shaping the meanings of words in Arabic dialects.
- Variations in word meanings reflect cultural diversity but present challenges in communication and education.
- Cultural criticism provides a valuable tool for understanding the impact of cultural context on language.
- Cultural diversity in the Arab world enriches the Arabic language but requires efforts to document semantic differences.
- There is a need to develop educational curricula and dictionaries that account for the cultural contexts of each dialect.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of this study, the following practical and academic recommendations are proposed to improve understanding of cultural context and its impact on daily words in Arabic dialects:

- Create Digital Dictionaries that focus on daily words and explain the different cultural contexts associated with each word. These dictionaries can enhance translation between dialects and improve cultural understanding.
- Integrate Cultural Context Studies into Arabic Language Curricula to help learners understand the semantic diversity of words across dialects.
- Develop Training Courses that focus on daily dialects for non-Arabic speakers, explaining their cultural dimensions.
- Conduct Similar Studies that include additional Arabic dialects, such as Yemeni, Sudanese, or less-represented Maghrebi dialects.
- Expand Research to examine the impact of globalization on changing meanings of daily words.
- Develop Machine Translation Tools that consider the cultural contexts of various dialects.
- Apply Findings in Media to improve content targeting a wide Arabic-speaking audience.
- Organize Cultural Workshops aimed at educating the Arab public about the cultural and semantic diversity in different dialects.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the importance of cultural context in interpreting the meanings of daily words across Arabic dialects. The findings demonstrate that everyday words are not just tools for communication but serve as a direct reflection of the cultural and social values of each region. The semantic differences between dialects not only reflect linguistic diversity but also emphasize the nature of the interaction between communities and their cultural environments.

For example, the word “Afiyah”, which refers to health in the Gulf and food in the Levant, illustrates how words are shaped by the prevailing needs and values of different societies. These differences make understanding cultural context essential for a deeper comprehension of language and for enhancing communication among speakers of different dialects.

The study also emphasizes the need for further research in this area, focusing on other daily words that may carry multiple meanings. Additionally, the results underscore the importance of developing educational tools and contextual dictionaries that take into account the semantic diversity of dialects.

In conclusion, this study reflects the close relationship between language and culture, where everyday words are an integral part of the cultural identity of Arabic-speaking communities. This research can contribute to improving understanding and communication between Arabic-speaking

communities and open the door for further studies that enhance our understanding of the relationship between language and culture.

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