

Environmental and Cultural Impacts on Idioms' Formation in English and Arabic Languages

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ABSTRACT

Language is more than just a tool for communication; it's a reflection of a culture's values, history, and way of life. English and Arabic environments are different from many aspects; history, climate, geography, culture, and lifestyle. This fact undoubtedly left a great impact on formulating the idioms. In the UK and particularly Britain, as it origin of English, the environmental factors have clear impact in the way most English idioms were formed as mentioned bellow. On the other hand, Arabic environment with dessert as dominant component of it actually has an impact, in addition, to Bedouin lifestyle, Arabic culture way in reflecting their values by storytelling. The investigated idioms indicated that, both English and Arabic idioms reflect their environments and cultures in their idioms.

Aim: This paper aims to investigate environmental impact on idioms; by focusing on how people form the idioms in their languages. Various factors and values of a concerned community were represented in their idioms. The paper focuses on English and Arabic environments and idioms as examples not a limitation.

Methodology: To make the investigation and comparison; the writer collected data from secondary sources. The data and numbers were collected from official and semiofficial sources. The sources described and mentioned the factors that have an impact, and the writer supported them by given examples from both languages.

KEYWORDS: environmental – idioms –cultural - Arabic.

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"Language is the heart within the body of culture" *Bassnett (1992:23)*

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to highlight impact of environment and culture on how people forming idioms in their languages. Nowadays, we can say that the interaction between humans and wild animals in nature and domestic animals raised close to humans has a significant impact on social life (Yilmaz 2007a).

The bond between animals and humans has continued to exist, changing in size and quality, from the beginning of humanity to the present. In the early ages, the simple approach of hunting its food and protecting it from predators left its place to economic gains and social sharing with the domestication of the dog for the first time. The meanings attributed to animals in the historical process, the definitions made with a humanoriented approach, have been the determinants of the attitude and point of view towards animals (DEGraziz 2006).

GEOGRAPHICAL FACTOR

According to Wikipedia, the climate of the UK is generally temperate; although significant a local variation occurs, as a result of altitude and distance from the coast. Average of rainfall varies from 3,000 mm (118.1 in) in the Scottish Highland down to 553 mm (21.8 in) in Cambridge, and the UK is agricultural intensive land as general.

HISTORICAL FACTOR

As a matter of fact, and according to bret.org.uk, for many years, British people have the reputation of being pet lovers. There are many reasons; historically, Britain was the first country in the world to start a welfare charity for animals. This spirited concern to rescue and preserve the dignity of animals led the formation of the society for prevention of cruelty to animal. This charity was pleased to attain a royal status by her majesty Queen Victoria in 1840.

Britain and in general UK are known the biggest home for dogs lovers, more than half the population in the UK is known to have dogs. 52% of dogs' ownership making 7.3 million dog owners makes the population of dogs in the UK equal to the human population. The UK is a nation of dogs' lover; as stated in <https://chefwoof.co.uk/blogs/news> : " Brits affairs love with dogs isn't new. From Queen Victoria's beloved Spaniel to Winston Churchill's Bulldogs, dogs have always been part of British culture. Working dogs like Collies and Terrier have been essential on farms for centuries, and today have transitioned worker to companions.

Social factor:

Kayabasi and Yilmaz (2022) states: "people reveal their social status in various ways. Pets can reveal the social status of individuals. Everyone in society has some social status. Social status; It can be defined by income, education, occupation, physical appearance and access to social power. A person's location can also be determined by their leisure activities, clothing, and consumption preferences".

Pets as social norms and life style in UK:

According to <https://www.ipetnetwork.co.uk>, 13.5 million household (36%) owning dogs, it is clear that the UK has a deep fondness for man's best friends. Dogs have earned their places as one of the most popular pets, not only for their loyalty, but also for companionship they offer. Whether it's talking a walk in the park or curling up by the fire, dogs are integrated members of the family for many.

For closing closely behind are cats, with 12.5 million (29%) owning one, cats have long been a symbol of independence and mystery, with their elegant and sometimes aloof personalities making them an ideal choice pet people looking for affectionate pet.

While dogs and cats dominant, other types of pets are gaining traction in the UK household as well, indoor birds (1.5 million, 3%), domestic fowl (1.3, 1.6%), rabbits (1 million, 1.6%), and horses and ponies (700,000, 1.5%). As per the ownership statistics above demonstrate, pets are no longer just a source of companionship- they became a lifestyle choice. Households than ever before are welcoming a variety of animal into their homes, ranging from traditional pets like dogs and cats to more unconventional pets such as reptiles and domestic fowl.

To sum up, the UK historical, geographical, cultural, and life style factors contribute in forming the idioms in English language. Language and culture are closely related, in addition, to the surrounding environment such as heavy rainfall, water resources, ice, and wide vegetation played a vital role in shaping idioms in English culture.

As avoidable results, we saw tenths of English idioms related to such environment, including without limitation:

1. It rains cats and dogs.
2. Cats eat your mouth.
3. When cat is away, the mouth will play.
4. At night, all cats are grey.
5. Let the cat out of the bag.
6. Let sleeping dogs lie.
7. Every dog has its day.
8. Curiosity killed the cat.
9. Hold your horses.
10. Kill two birds with one stone.
11. More cry little wool.
12. Birds of feather flock together.
13. A bird in hand is worth two in push.
14. Break the ice.
15. Every cloud has a silver lining.

On the other hand, the dessert harsh environment has left great impact on the Arabic culture and ancient lifestyle that affected forming and using idiomatic expressions in the language.

Geographical factor:

As <https://seewadirum.com/> mentioned, the Arabian Desert's vastness is staggering, encompassing roughly 2.3 million square km (900,000 sq mi), it is the largest in Asia and the fifth on the world. This immense arid region stretches from shores of Red Sea in the west to the Persian Gulf in the east.

The most iconic feature of the Arabian dessert is undoubtedly its vast sand seas. The Arabian Dessert climate is characterized by extremes.

Scorching sun, high temperatures, scarce rainfall, and relentless wind define this arid region.

The Arabian Dessert's harsh climate and limited resources might seem like an impossible habitat for most animals. Camels often regarded as "ships of the dessert", are famous for their ability to store fat in their humps for energy, not water, and can significantly store water in their specialized stomachs.

LIFESTYLE

The Arabian Dessert's harshness has fostered a unique way of life for nomadic communities. For thousands of years, the Bedouin people have roamed the dessert, herding camels, goats, and sheep, and following seasonal pattern of rainfall and vegetation growth.

CULTURAL FACTOR

The Bedouin culture is rich in tradition with strong emphasis on hospitality, honor, and tribal loyalty. Their poetry and storytelling traditions have been passed down through generations, capturing the beauty and challenges of desert life. While some Bedouin communities have adopted more modern lifestyles, their legacy continues to shape the cultural identity of the Arabian Desert. In following part I will examine some idioms from Arabic language by means of transliteration and explanation of their meaning under them.

1. "La nagata li wala jamal fiha" (لا ناقة لي ولا جمل فيها).
{I have nothing to do with this}.
2. "Ma hakaza tawradu alebil ya Sa'ad" (ما هكذا تورّد الإبل يا سعد).

{An advice to someone, who is managing a matter in a wrong way}.

3. "*Estanwagu aljamal*" (استنوّق الجمل).

{It uses for a person when became a weak or humble}.

4. "*Aljamal la yara ea'wijaj ragabathu*" (الجمل لا يرى إغوجاج رقبته).

{It uses for a person who doesn't admit his own disadvantages}

5. "*Albab yafwit jamal*" (الباب يفوّت جمل).

{It uses for a person to leave if he doesn't accept what others agreed upon}.

6. "*Algawl ma galat Khuzam*" (القول ما قالت خُزام).

{It uses when someone put an end to long debate or dispute} it has been taken from Arabic storytelling culture.

7. "*Gata'at Juhaiza qwl kul khatib*" (قطعت جُهيزة قول كل خطيب).

{It uses for when someone brought the factual news about something} it has been driven from the Arabic heritage and storytelling.

8. "*A'ad bekhofei Hunain*" (عاد بخفي حنين).

{Came back empty handed with disappointment sense} it has been taken from an old story in Arabic cultural history.

9. "*Man ra'a Hadhn fagad anjad*" (من رأى خضن فقد أنجد).

{When someone saw indications of sure results} is has been taken from the local geography Hadhn is a mountain when it appears that means you almost reached Najd area.

10. "*Alwagtu kalseifi*" (الوقت كالسيف).

{Time like a sword} indication of fastness, it may correspond English {time flies!}.

DISCUSSION

The above English idioms represent a sample collected as examples (with total (15) to be investigated. As mentioned earlier; owing the domestic animals as lifestyle for English people, in addition to historical use in farms as history explored. The above mentioned idioms indicate the environmental dominant on the idioms; (8) idioms out of them have lexical items represent natural environment prevail in the area, such as dogs, cats, and tree, (2) of them contain lexical items refer to other kind of animals, (3) of them contain elements of a resourceful nature such as bird and trees, (2) of them reprint lexis of rainy weather like cloud, ice, and water.

On the other hand, (10) Arabic idioms indicate the impact of the Arabian Desert on forming idioms. Half of the examples uses a camel and main element in forming the idioms in different ways. The rest of them show the impact of the Bedouin life style and Arabic writing style in storytelling as the proud of Arabic heritage and cultural values.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Generally speaking, idioms are not just linguistic expressions, but also reflect deep insights of geography, history, and cultural values. The surrounded environment plays a vital role in how language and various expressions formed and used in peoples' daily communication. This paper limited to English and Arabic languages, but the writer encourages others to investigate some other language for more studies.

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