

The concept of “shame” in Arabic: bilingual dictionaries and the challenge of defining culture-based emotions

NADER AL JALLAD
University of Córdoba

Resumen

Este artículo describe un marco teórico a través del cual analizar, entender y describir el sentimiento de ‘vergüenza’ en árabe. Para ello se ha de desarrollar previamente un aparato lingüístico, cognitivo y cultural que dé cabida a la explicación de este sentimiento tan complejo en la cultura árabe. Esta complejidad deriva en problemas de traducción del término. Así se comprueba en la definición que se hace de dicho término en cuatro diccionarios bilingües inglés-árabe y árabe-inglés. Esta comparación pone de relieve la necesidad de definir no solo la emoción ‘vergüenza’ sino todas las emociones en general y aquellos términos culturalmente cargados, mediante una fórmula universal y libre de ataduras culturales. Finalmente, para probar el marco teórico propuesto en este trabajo se utiliza un sistema basada en un metalenguaje semántico natural para tratar de definir todos los términos referidos al concepto de ‘vergüenza’ que se exponen en el presente trabajo.

Abstract

This paper aims at providing a theoretical framework for analyzing, understanding, and describing the emotion of ‘shame’ in Arabic by proposing a specific linguistic, cognitive and cultural apparatus to define the emotion. How Arabic ‘shame’ words are defined in four English-Arabic and Arabic-English bilingual dictionaries is addressed, underlying the need to define emotions, in general, and culture-loaded words, in specific, via a universal language- and culture-free formula. To test the theoretical framework proposed, a Natural Semantic Metalanguage-based system is used to define ‘shame’ words addressed in this paper.

Palabras clave

emociones, diccionarios, lexicología, conceptos culturales, traducción

Keywords

emotions, lexicography, lexicology, cultural concepts, translation

1. Introduction

This paper examines the defining practice in bilingual dictionaries through a comparative analysis of the definitions of ‘*shame*’¹ in four Arabic-English and English-Arabic dictionaries (see references). The analysis reveals the contrasting treatment of the emotion, showing the influence of the theoretical stance towards defining. The ‘*shame*’-encoding constructions in Arabic² are listed and their morpho-syntactic properties are addressed with an emphasis on the correlation between these properties and the meaning of such constructions.

2. Background and Methodology

How to define culture-based concepts, such as emotions, has been extensively investigated (see Luque Durán 2010, 2009; Luque Nadal, 2009, 2010; Pamies 2009, Pamies and Tutáeva 2010; and Al Jallad 2008, 2007). Moreover, emotions and what principles of analysis to use in addressing them have been thoroughly studied (see Wierzbicka 2003, 2001, 1999, 1998, 1995; Goddard 2002, 2001, 1990; Enfield and Wierzbicka 2002; Harkins and Wierzbicka 2001; and Al Jallad, 2009).

There are basic principles of emotion analysis that are adopted by most studies.

Wierzbicka and Goddard, in a wide variety of studies, maintain that emotions should be identified via the use of a neutral simple metalanguage of universal primitives (Natural Semantic Metalanguage, NSM) since they help show the intralinguistic as well as cross-linguistic similarities and differences in emotions. They strongly argue that the English language cannot be used as a metalanguage. Dineen (1990) uses NSM in her analysis of ‘*shame*’ terms in English and Danish. She provides the following definitions of ‘*shame*’ words in English:

¹ ‘*Shame*’ stands for the general concept that covers in its range *shame*, *embarrassment*, *shyness*, *bashfulness* and other ‘*shame*’ variants.

² Arabic in this paper stands for *Levantine Arabic*, which is the dialect spoken in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and Palestine.

| shame | embarrassment | shy |
|---|---|---|
| <i>X was ashamed (of him/herself)</i> -something was happening inside X -the kind of bad thing that happens to people -when they know that they have done something bad -and they do not want other people to know it | <i>X was embarrassed</i> -something was happening inside X -the kind of bad thing that happens to people -when they know that other people are thinking of them -and they do not want this to go on after now | <i>X was shy</i> -something was happening inside X -the kind of bad thing that happens to people -when they see that other people whom they do not know well are thinking of them -and they do not want this to go on after now |

Adopting a similar framework, Harkins (1990) presents a comparative analysis of ‘shame’ in Australian Aboriginal English. Harkins stresses the distinction between “embarrassment” and “shame” in English: one can be “embarrassed” and pleased at the same time by praise, but never “ashamed” and pleased. Moreover, “embarrassment” cannot be triggered without exposure; on the other hand, one would feel “ashamed” even if not observed.

Researchers also argue that analyzing the grammar of emotion terms is essential. For example, Ameka (1990) demonstrates how word order and grammatical relations systematically correspond to differences in meaning in emotion constructions in Ewe³. It is observed that the experiencer of an emotion can be grammatically “packaged” as a subject, object, and dative preposition object with differences in meaning. For example, the experiencer of “uncontrollable physiological experiences” (e.g., sleep, hunger) is always coded as object. However, a subject experiencer is more in control of the emotion. Similarly, in Arabic, whether the experiencer is coded as subject or object indicates how much he/she is in control of the emotion. For example, *Samer* in (1a) is more in control of his *khajal* than *Waleed* in (1b).

³ A Kwa language of West Africa

(1) a- سامر خجل من منى-
sāmīr khijjal min munā
Samer 'shame' from Mon
Samer felt ashamed/embarrassed/ in the presence of Mona.

b- علي خجل وليد-
'alī khajjal walīd
Ali 'shame' Waleed
Ali embarrassed/caused Waleed to feel shame.

Another principle in analyzing emotions is understanding the situation, including how the emotion is triggered and the response to it, as well as the concept of the individual, which cannot be realized without understanding the culture of the language where the emotion word is used. This observation has been confirmed by a variety of studies (e.g., Holland and Kipnis, 1995). This is essentially one of the main arguments of the present paper. For example, it is argued that Arabic 'shame'-scenarios are different in many aspects from those in English, especially in what triggers the emotion. For example, for speakers of Arabic, meeting one's parents-in-law is a common 'shame'-eliciting situation, which is almost hard to believe for an English speaker.

In this regard, I find Hogbin's study of 'shame' quite revealing though it goes back to the year 1947. The different cultural aspects of *maya* 'shame' in Busama⁴ are fully addressed. The word *maya* sums up the attitude of the people towards any "unorthodox" behavior. Any failure to abide by the rules of custom and tradition evokes 'shame.' The author argues that what causes 'shame' and the response to it differs from one culture to another according to the moral code adopted, but the content of 'shame' is universal. For example, theft in itself is not 'shame'-inducing in this village. As long as one is not found out, it is rather acceptable to steal. Another example is that for the people of Solomon, hiding one's private parts is an act of 'shame' because it draws the attention of others. For the people of Azera, chastity is irrelevant; physical needs should be satisfied in any place at any time.

To sum up, studies show the following principles in emotion analysis: using metalanguage as a powerful comparative tool of analysis, studying the

⁴ A New Guinea village.

grammar of emotions to better understand their meanings and the situation, involving what triggers the emotion and the respond to it, as essential component in the definition of emotions. These principles guide the analysis in this paper.

3. Arabic ‘shame’ -Constructions

In Arabic, ‘shame’ is expressed via the use of a wide variety of lexical items. Each item can indicate more than one ‘shame’ variant. The pragmatics of the situation and the context in which the word is used largely determine which of the variants is appropriate. In line with the theoretical framework adopted in this paper, in Arabic, the grammar of the ‘shame’-encoding constructions⁵ and their meanings significantly correlate, as shown in this section.

3.1. *khajal*

The word *khajal* is used to encode different ‘shame’ variants. In (2), the word *khijil* is an intransitive verb.

- (2) سامر خجل
sāmīr khijīl
Samer ‘shame’
Samer was ashamed/embarrassed.

It can be also used with a prepositional complement without any change in its denotation:

- (3) سامر خجل من منى
sāmīr khijīl min munā
Samer ‘shame’ from Mona
Samer was ashamed/embarrassed of Mona.

⁵ It should be noted that nouns, verbs and adjectives in Arabic are based on roots that are made up of three radicals.

These morphophonemic roots are combined with various prefixes, infixes and suffixes to produce a variety of forms with different, but related, meanings. A single root can be the basis for a number of different words.

It should be noted that in (3), *Mona* is not the cause of *Samer's 'shame.'* She represents the audience in front of which *Samer* experiences the emotion. The causative form of the verb *khijil* is *khajjal*. One is said to have *khajjal* someone, which means to “embarrass” or “put to shame,” as illustrated in (4).

- (4) سامر خجل منى
sāmīr khajjal munā
Samer ‘shame’ Mona
Samer embarrassed/caused Mona to feel shame.

The word *khajal* has three distinct adjectives: *mukhjiil*, *khajlān* and *khajūl*. The adjective *mukhjiil* is used to describe a situation or someone’s behavior as “shameful” or “embarrassing.” It cannot be used in reference to an animate. However, the adjective *khajlān* can be only used with animates to denote a transient experience of “embarrassment/shame” as illustrated in (5). On the other hand, *khajūl* can only denote a personality trait, as shown in (6).

- (5) سامر خجلان
sāmīr khajlān
Samer ‘shame’
Samer is ashamed/embarrassed.

- (6) سامر طالب خجول
sāmīr ṭālib khajūl
Samer student ‘shame’
Samer is a shy student.

Example (7) shows how the noun *khajal* is used as a positive emotion. For native speakers of Arabic, *khajal* is viewed ‘as something good.’ If a child feels it upon meeting strangers, this is considered polite. It reflects the good upbringing of the child.

- (7) الخجل صفة جيدة
al-khajal ṣifah jayyidah
‘shame’ quality good
Shyness/shame is a good quality.

There is a variety of situations that trigger *khajal*. If a student fails to answer a simple question that the teacher asks in front of other students, he/she is expected to feel *khajal*. If the parents of X finds out that X is lying, X is very likely to feel *khajal*. Culturally, *khajal* is sex and age-related. Women and children are expected to experience it more often than men. For example, a woman is expected to feel it if she speaks loudly in public, but a man is not. Moreover, a *khajal* experience for women is expected to be more intense than that for men even if the *khajal* -eliciting situation is the same. For instance, for both young men and women, it causes *khajal* to smoke in the presence of one’s parents. However, the emotion is typically stronger for women in this case.

3.2. *ḥayā*

Similar to *khajal*, *ḥayā* encodes more than one ‘shame’ variant. If someone feels *ḥayā*, he/she can be said to feel “embarrassed,” “ashamed” or “shy.” While some Arabic speakers would agree that feeling *khajal*- but not too much of it- is a good thing, all are expected to agree that *ḥayā* is canonically a good feeling, and the more intense it is, the better. It is ‘good shame.’ I believe that this kind of ‘shame’ is almost missing in English, which makes words like *khajal* and *ḥayā* somewhat challenging to define in a bilingual dictionary, as shown later.

The word *ḥayā* is the nominal form, and its use is illustrated in (8).

- (8) الحياء صفة جيدة
 al-ḥayā ṣifāh jayyidah
 ‘shame’ good quality
 Shyness/having shame is a good quality.

The verb form is *istaḥā*. It can be used intransitively or with a prepositional complement, as illustrated in (9) and (10), respectively.

- (9) سامر إستحى لما شافته منى مشلح
 sāmīr *istaḥā* lamma shafātu munā imshallaḥ
 Samer ‘shame’ when saw-him mona naked
 Samer was ashamed/embarrassed/shy when Mona saw him naked.

- (10) سامر إستحي من منى
sāmīr *istaḥā* min munā
Samer ‘shame’ from Mona
Samer was ashamed/embarrassed/shy in the presence of Mona

The verb form is commonly used as an imperative. The morphology of the verb is slightly changed by replacing the suffix *-a* with *-i* to form the imperative:

- (11) إستحي على حالك
istaḥī ‘alā ḥālak
‘shame’ on yourself
You should be ashamed of yourself.

Contrary to *khajal*, the word *ḥayā* does not have a causative form. However, it can be used in a causative structure. In this case, the verb *khallah* “made” is used, along with some morphological changes to the verb *istaḥā*:

- (12) سامر خلى سليم يستحي
sāmīr khallah salīm yistaḥī
Samer made Salem ‘shame’
Samer caused Salem to feel ashamed/embarrassed/shy.

The emotion of *ḥayā* is strongly related to social values, norms, customs and traditions. It is almost like a moral power that guides one’s behavior. It is a socially-shaped conscience that monitors one’s actions. Behaving improperly indicates a lack of *ḥayā*. Like *khajal*, it is age- and sex-linked. Women and children are expected to experience it more than men. For example, if a woman wears a revealing dress or goes out with a man who is not her husband or husband-to-be, she is expected to feel it.

What triggers *khajal* usually triggers *ḥayā*. However, *khajal* is more internal, personal and self-oriented. If someone fails to achieve a personal goal, he/she is more likely to feel *khajal* than *ḥayā*. Moreover, while it is not bad to feel *khajal*, especially for children and women, all are expected to feel *ḥayā*. In fact, people are even praised for showing *ḥayā*. In addition, slips of tongue,

physical imperfections and other things that one does not have any control over are more likely to cause *khajal* than *ḥayā*.

3.3. *ḥishmah*

The word *ḥishmah* represents another ‘good shame’ word. To feel or to have *ḥishmah* means to be highly sensitive to ‘shame’-inducing situations. It indicates that the person experiencing the emotion can easily become “ashamed” or “embarrassed.” The use of the noun *ḥishmah* is illustrated in (13).

- (13) الحشمة أهم إشي بالإنسان
al- ḥishmah aham ishī bil-insān
‘shame’ most important thing in human being
Having shame when behaving is the most important thing for people.

Interestingly, the noun *ḥishmah* is morphologically related to the word *maḥāshim* “genitals.” It has been observed there are a number of languages in which the word for “genitals” is the same or related to ‘shame’ words. For example, Lynd (1958) indicates that in German, the word *scham*, which is canonically used to encode ‘shame,’ is part of the compound words that refer particularly to the “genitals.”

The verb form is *iḥtasham*. It can be only used intransitively:

- (14) سليم إحتشم لما عرف أنّ في ناس بلبيت
sālim iḥtasham lamma ‘irif innu fī nās fī il-bayt
Salem ‘shame’ when knew that in people in house
Salem became ashamed/embarrassed/shy when he knew that there were other people in the house.

The adjective is *muḥtashim*. It can only refer to a personality trait. One cannot be *muḥtashim* on one occasion but not on another. However, it should be noted that the adjective *muḥtashimah* is commonly used to describe women who are appropriately dressed according to the rules of Islam, social norms and

traditions. In this case, the adjective does not necessarily denote a personality trait. If a woman is dressed decently on one occasion, she is *muḥtashimah*, but this will not necessarily be always the case.

Like *khajal* and *ḥayā*, *ḥishmah* is recommended and praised. The lack of it causes one to act impolitely. It is also sex-linked, but not age-related. A basic difference between *ḥayā* and *khajal* on one hand and *ḥishmah* on the other is that when a woman is described as having *ḥishmah*, this refers to her being properly and decently dressed. Similar to *ḥayā*, *ḥishmah* is strongly related to behaving properly.

3.4. *faḍḥa*

The noun *faḍḥa* essentially refers to the emotion one experiences when his/her vices, weaknesses or faults are exposed. It is the “shame/embarrassment” caused by being exposed. An essential component of the meaning is the pre-existence of a secret, which is usually kept hidden for a long time, and then it is revealed to the public:

- (15) هذي فضيحة كبيرة ان عرف ان ابوك بالسجن
 hadhī *faḍḥa* ikbīrah in ‘irfu innu abūk bissijin
 this ‘shame’ big if know that father-you in-prison
 This is big shame/a scandal if they know that your father is in prison.

The intransitive verb form is *infaḍaḥ* while the transitive is *faḍaḥa*. The use of each is illustrated in (16) and (17), respectively.

- (16) سامر إنفضح
 sāmīr *infaḍaḥ*
 Samer ‘shame’
 Samer became ashamed/embarrassed because his secret was revealed

- (17) سامر فضح منى
 sāmīr *faḍaḥa* munā
 Samer ‘shame’ Mona
 ‘Samer put Mona to shame/embarrassment through revealing a secret of hers.

However, the negation of the imperative form *tifḍahmā* has a slightly different denotation. If one says it to someone, he/she can be ordering him/her not to reveal a secret, which would make them both- the speaker and the listener- feel “embarrassed/ ashamed.” Moreover, he/she can be ordering him/her not to say something or behave in a certain manner, which would draw attention to them, thus putting them to “shame/embarrassment.”

The word *faḍīḥa* is more other-oriented than self-oriented. The person who experiences *faḍīḥa* does not necessarily feel that what he/she has done is “shameful.” If this person’s deed is not exposed, most likely, this person will not feel any ‘shame.’ However, I should point out that this other- or self-orientation is not meant to be a clear-cut dichotomy applicable to all ‘shame’ words in Arabic. Most of these words are a mixture of both with varying degrees of each.

Any situation that involves the uncovering of a “shameful” action leads to *faḍīḥa*.

If the word is out that X’s father is a smuggler, and he is put in jail for it, this will cause X to feel *faḍīḥa*. Another example is that if X tells everybody that Y’s Ph.D. certificate is fake, Y will experience *faḍīḥa*.

3.5. ‘ayb

The word ‘ayb roughly denotes “shame,” “disgrace” and “dishonor.” Its meaning does not cover “embarrassment” or “shyness.” Like *maḥāshim*, the word ‘ayb can be used to refer to the “genitals,” but it is only used with young children. The use of the noun ‘ayb is illustrated in (18).

(18) سامر تجنب العيب

sāmīr tajannab al-‘ayb.

Samer avoided ‘shame’

Samer avoided shame/disgrace/dishonor.

The verb ‘āb has a different meaning. If one ‘āb someone or something, it means that he/she found fault with something or criticized someone. This does not necessarily cause the one being criticized to feel “shame,” “disgrace” or “dishonor.”

(19) سامر عاب منى
sāmīr ‘āb munā.
Samer criticized Mona
Samer criticized Mona

The word ‘*ayb* has two adjectives: *mu‘īb* and ‘*āyib*. The former is used to describe a situation or a behavior as being “shameful,” “disgraceful” or “dishonorable.” It cannot be used to describe people. However, the latter is used to describe a person as being “shameless,” or willing to do what is “disgraceful” or “dishonorable.”

The noun ‘*ayb* is commonly used with the prepositional complement ‘*alayk* “on you” in an exclamatory sentence addressed to someone who the speaker thinks is behaving in a “shameful,” “disgraceful” or “dishonorable” manner:

(20) عيب عليك! سامر
‘ayb ‘alayk, sāmīr
‘shame’ on you Samer
Shame on you, Samer!

A person is expected to feel ‘*ayb*, if he/she violates any social or religious rules. More specifically, it is typically associated with breaking rules of decorum and proper behavior. It is ‘*ayb* to interrupt other people while talking. It is also ‘*ayb* not to visit your relatives on Eid Al-Fitir⁷. Another ‘*ayb* - eliciting situation in Arabic is if Y, who is a friend or a relative of X, dies, and X does not pay condolences to Y’s family. One more example is that X would feel ‘*ayb* if Y visits X and X does not offer Y anything to drink. It is rather interesting that Arabs visiting America for the first time find it hard to get used to the fact that they are not expected to be offered something to drink whenever they visit someone. It should be pointed out that one does not feel ‘*ayb* for something that he/she is not responsible for or to blame for.

⁷ This is an Islamic celebration, marking the end of the holy month of fasting, Ramadan.

3.6. ‘*ār*

The noun ‘*ār* denotes a very intense feeling of “shame,” “disgrace” and “dishonor.” Its use is strongly related to the Arab culture. In fact, this is the case with all of ‘*shame*’ variants in Arabic, as has been shown so far. However, I assume that the word ‘*ār* in particular cannot be defined accurately without some understanding of its cultural significance. The noun ‘*ār* can be used with a prepositional complement:

- (21) هذا عار علينا جميعا
 hadhā ‘*ār* ‘alayna jamī’an
 this ‘*shame*’ on us all
 This is big shame for all of us.

The word ‘*ār* does not have a verbal or an adjectival form. However, it has another nominal form. The noun ‘*awrah* refers to the parts of the person that are indecent to expose. According to the rules of Islam, for a man, these parts are those between the navel and the knee. For a woman, all must be covered, except the face and the hands up to the wrists. This is obligatory for men and women when praying or when in public. In this sense, *awrah* is like *maḥāshim* and ‘*ayb*. The three words refer to private parts in general. They differ in specificity.

The use of ‘*ār* is specific and limited to cases of very strong and intense ‘*shame*’ triggered by committing deeds that are in extreme opposition to moral values and social norms. Typical situations that lead one to feel it are betraying one’s country or a single woman committing adultery. It is not unheard of in some rural areas in the Arab world that a father kills his daughter in public because she committed adultery. Moreover, ‘*ār* is quite intense that can cause one to commit suicide. One may put an end to his/her life to escape suffering. This is related to the fact that ‘*ār* is everlasting. No matter what a person does, he/she cannot undo the ‘*ār* that is inflicted on him/her. If someone does something that classifies as ‘*ār*, then dies, this ‘*ār* will be associated with the name of his/her family forever.

Moreover, one feels ‘*ār* for doing things over which he/she has full control. For example, if a woman was raped, and then people knew about it, this would be a *faḍīḥa*, but not ‘*ār* because it was not something that she could be

blamed for. This may sound contradictory with the case of the father, feeling ‘*ār*’ enough to kill his daughter for committing adultery, but it is not. The father feels ‘*ār*’ because he feels fully responsible for what his daughter has done. To his understanding and from his society’s perspective, his failure to educate his daughter properly is the reason underlying her stigmatic deed.

4. Arabic versus English

It is clear that the English emotion of ‘*shame*’ is different from the Arabic concept in various aspects. First, in (22) *Samirah* is the “cause” of *Samer*’s ‘*shame*.’ However, in the equivalent Arabic structure, *Samirah* stands for the audience in the presence of whom *Samer* feels ‘*shame*.’

- (22) a-Samer is ashamed of Samirah.
b-Samer khijil/istaḥāa/min Samirah.

Secondly, there are ‘*shame*’-constructions in English that do not have equivalents in Arabic. One of these is the following:

- (23) John shamed Mary into accepting his invitation.

Thirdly, a significant difference is that in English, there is no kind of ‘*shame*,’ which is praised, recommended, or respect-related as in Arabic. In the American culture, in general, one should not be shy. This may be indicative of a weak personality. From an early age, children are taught to speak their minds openly and freely. Parents make sure to boost their children’s self-esteem through continuous reinforcement, praise and encouragement. Independence and individualism are core values in the American educational system. A typical American child would be considered too aggressive, blunt and perhaps rude by an Arab parent. Similarly, an Arab child would be considered as too shy, insecure, timid and diffident by an American parent.

Generally speaking, appreciating the key differences between the American culture on one hand, Arabic culture on the other in value system, norms, customs and traditions is essential in trying to understand the difference in the way each culture conceptualizes ‘*shame*.’ For example, while values like freedom, individual success, and standing up for one’s rights are highly rated in

America, religion, knowing one's heritage and respecting the elderly are core values for an Arabic speaker. This may help better perceive the concept of 'good shame.'

Accordingly, variations in 'shame'-inducing situations between Arabic and English are quite expected. For example, meeting strangers, talking with relatives, being seen by a relative while in one's swimming suit are 'shame'-triggering in Arabic. It is hard to imagine that any of the above would typically trigger 'shame' in English.

Moreover, in Arabic, 'shame' can be sex- and age-graded. This is not necessarily the case in English. For example, it is hard for an American woman to conceive of the fact that it is 'shame'-inducing for women to speak loudly in public, but not for men, as is the case in Arabic. One 'shame' variant that seems to be specific to Arabic is that of 'ār. The intensity of 'shame' encoded by this word does not have a parallel in English. The word "disgrace" is the closest equivalent, but by no means could be claimed to encode the same emotion.

One of the basic differences is that in Arabic, one cannot experience any kind of 'shame' without knowing or imagining that there are people watching or thinking about him/her as part of the 'shame'-triggering situation. This is not necessarily the case in English. It is true for "embarrassment" but not for "shame." One may feel "ashamed" of something that he/she has done without other people knowing about it. Again, this is related to the difference in culture. The American culture is individualistic while the Arabic culture is collective. For an Arabic speaker, what others say or think about him/her is what really matters. One may not be satisfied with what he/she has done in his/her life, but this does not matter as long as other people think that one is successful. One cannot do anything without thinking of what the family, relatives, neighbors and/or friends would think about one's actions. In general, one's image of oneself is dramatically affected, if not entirely shaped, by the other's image of him or her.

To summarize, there are basic differences in the semantics, grammar and cultural aspects of 'shame' between Arabic and English. Such differences should be considered in providing bilingual definitions of 'shame' words. Some bilingual dictionaries are examined later to show if and how much of these differences are captured.

5. Definition of 'shame:' Culture and Dictionaries

In this section, the definition of Arabic 'shame' words in four bilingual dictionaries is examined, with a focus on the cultural component in the meaning of these words and the degree to which these dictionaries capture this essential aspect in their definitions. Furthermore, the definitions provided are evaluated based on the analysis given above.

5.1. *khajal*

Lane (1968) defines *khajal* as "He was, or became, confounded, or perplexed, and unable to see his right course, by reason of shame." (705) More or less, the same definition is provided for the different forms of *khajal*. Based on the discussion of the uses of *khajal* above, it is obvious that the word "shame" does not capture all of its denotations. The words "embarrassment" and "shyness" can further explain the meaning of *khajal*. In fact, the word "shy" is probably the closest equivalent to the adjective *khajūl* since both refer to a personality trait. Lane stresses the fact that one feels *khajal* "in consequence of a deed that he had done" (705). This is rather inaccurate, for one can feel *khajal* "in consequence of a deed" that someone else has done. Moreover, it is not always the case that it should be "in consequence of a deed." One may feel *khajal* upon hearing something, being in the presence of people of the opposite sex, and being in certain situations that do not necessarily involve a "deed." It is somewhat interesting that Lane attempts to draw a distinction between *ḥayā* and *khajal*. He states that *khajal* "has a more particular significance than" *ḥayā*. This is vague, and is in need of elaboration.

Wehr (1979) provides a detailed definition of *khajal*, along with separate definitions of each formal variant of it. He draws a valid distinction between *khijil* and the causative *khajjal*. The former is defined as "to become embarrassed, to be ashamed of (s.th. or to face s.o.), be abashed (by s.th.)" (265). The latter is defined as "to shame someone, embarrass someone, put to shame" (265). The two definitions capture the fact that *khajal* is not only "shame," as Lane pointed above. The wide range of 'shame' variants is appropriately indicated in the definition of the noun *khajal*, as "shame, bashfulness, diffidence, timidity, shyness, abashment, disgrace, ignominy" (265). However, I tend to disagree that "disgrace" and

“ignominy” can be viewed as *khajal*. These words encode a stronger, more intense experience of ‘shame’ that is not denoted by *khajal*. In addition, it is not obvious why Wehr chooses to drop the word “embarrassment” in defining the noun. He also fails to draw the distinction between the two adjectives *khajūl* and *khajlān*, explained above, and he, rather implicitly, indicates that *mukhjl* is used to describe inanimates by using the words “shameful” and “disgraceful” since these words cannot be used to describe people.

Wortabet and Porter (1954) briefly define *khajal* as being “ashamed,” preferring not to use any other equivalent. However, they provide the word “blush” as one of the uses. Blushing is one of the ways to physically express ‘shame,’ which needs to be pointed out as a part of the meaning, but it is by no means an independent meaning of the word. They also do not clarify how the various forms differ. On the other hand, Wortabet and Porter provide the word “modest” in defining the adjective *khajūl*. This is insightful. It partly captures the fact that *khajal* can be a ‘good shame’ word. This is rather ignored by Lane and Wehr.

Ba‘albaki (1984) uses *khajal* to define a variety of English words, including the various forms of “shame,” “shyness,” “bashfulness” and “modesty.” However, he does not use it in defining “embarrassment,” which is a possible equivalent to *khajal*.

5.2. *ḥayā*

Lane (1968) uses the words “shame,” “shyness” and “bashfulness” in defining the noun *ḥayā* and the verb *istaḥā*. I argue that the word “embarrassed” should be used in defining the verb. In trying to convey the ‘good shame’ sense of *ḥayā*, Lane states that *ḥayā* means “honest shame, or prudence, or modesty,” “a shrinking of the soul from a foul conduct” (682), which partly captures this use of *ḥayā*. However, it is not clear what is meant by “honest shame.” Upon asking some native speakers of English, they all agree that they have never used or heard of the expression “honest shame” before.

Wehr (1979) defines *ḥayā* as “shame, diffidence, bashfulness, timidity, shyness,” and the verb *istaḥā* as to become “ashamed,” “embarrassed,” “bashful” and “shy” (256). Again, this definition does not encode ‘good shame.’ However, in defining the adjective *mistaḥī*, the word “modest” is added to the

list of words used in defining the noun and the verb. This word partly covers this sense of *ḥayā*.

Wortabet and Porter (1954) use the words “shame,” “ashamed” and “modesty” in defining the noun, verb and adjective form of *ḥayā*, which is rather inadequate. The use of the words “shy” and “embarrassed” can provide a better definition in the sense that they show more the range of uses that *ḥayā* has. In the English-Arabic section of Wortabet and Porter, *ḥayā*, in all of its forms, is used to define “shy,” “shyness,” “ashamed,” “shamefaced,” “timidity,” “modesty” and “modest.” However, *ḥayā* is not used in defining “shame” or “bashful.” It is rather confusing that in defining *ḥayā* from Arabic to English, “shy” and “shyness” are not used while in defining “shy” and “shyness” from English to Arabic, the word *ḥayā* is employed.

Ba‘albaki (1984) uses *ḥayā* in defining many English ‘shame,’ and ‘shame’-related words. Of these are “ashamed,” “ashamedly,” “shyly,” “shyness,” “bashfulness,” “shame,” “modesty” and “modest.” However, for no obvious reasons, he chooses not to use it in defining “embarrassment.”

5.3. *ḥishmah*

Lane (1968) defines *ḥishmah* as “anger, shame, shyness, bashfulness” (577). He points out that there is some debate whether it means only “anger” or “anger and shame.” As a native speaker of Arabic, I find it hard to associate *ḥishmah* with “anger.” Moreover, I propose that *ḥishmah* is not “shame, shyness, bashfulness” per se. Having *ḥishmah* makes one sensitive to what triggers “shame,” “embarrassment” or “shyness.” Thus, if one has *ḥishmah*, he/she easily becomes “ashamed,” “embarrassed” or “shy.” The verb *iḥtashama* is defined to be “affected with “shame, shyness, and bashfulness” (576). All of the above definitions of *ḥishmah* fail to account for the fact that *ḥishmah* is a ‘good shame’ word. Furthermore, Lane does not list the word *maḥāshim* “genitals,” and he does not make any reference to the adjective *muḥtashimah*, which is commonly used to describe women who are appropriately dressed according to the rules of Islam and Arab social norms and traditions.

Contrary to Lane, Wehr (1979) focuses on the good sense of *ḥishmah*. He defines it as “modesty, decency, decorum.” He also uses “shame, bashfulness, timidity and diffidence” (210). In defining the verb and the

adjective, essentially, the same words are used. The word “embarrassment” is ignored. However, *maḥāshim* “genitals” is listed. Unlike Lane, Wehr does not refer to “anger” at all in defining *ḥishmah*.

Though brief, I think that Wortabet and Porter’s (1954) definition of *ḥishmah* as “reverence and modesty” (60) is insightful. It partly captures what is argued for above; namely, that *ḥishmah*, the noun, is not “shame,” “shyness” and “embarrassment,” but it is rather an emotion that one has that makes him/her more liable to feel these emotions. Using Wortabet and Porter’s definition, it is possible to say that if one has “reverence and modesty,” then he/she is more likely to feel “embarrassed.” However, the two words “reverence and modesty” are not adequate to capture the whole denotation of *ḥishmah*. In their English-Arabic section, Wortabet and Porter use *ḥishmah* only in defining “modest,” “modesty” and “decency.” Similarly, Ba’albaki (1984) uses it only to define “modest,” “modesty,” “decency” and the adjective “prudish.” This does not only highlight the good sense of *ḥishmah*, it also lends support to the alternative definition of *ḥishmah* proposed above. I should point out that none of the four dictionaries refers to the imperative form *iḥtashim* that is commonly used in Arabic, as explained above.

5.4. *faḍīḥa*

Lane (1968) defines *faḍīḥa* as “a state of exposure of the vices, faults, or evil qualities or actions of a man” (2410). This exposure triggers “shame” and “disgrace.” Similarly, the transitive verb *faḍāḥ* is defined as exposing someone’s “vices,” “faults” or “evil qualities or actions”; thus, put him/her to “shame.” The adjective *mafḍūḥ* is not listed. Unfortunately, although Lane stresses the notion of “exposure” in defining *faḍīḥa* in all of its forms, he indicates that *faḍīḥa* could mean simply “shame,” “disgrace” or “ignominy.” It has been shown above that the use of this ‘shame’ word in Arabic always indicates the revealing of a secret or the “exposure” of an “evil” that leads to “shame” and “disgrace.”

Wehr (1979) defines *faḍīḥa* as “exposure, humiliation, mortification, debasement, degradation, disgracing, dishonoring” (840). He also uses the words “infamy,” “scandal” and “ignominy,” which, I think, appropriately highlights the basic component in the meaning of *faḍīḥa*, i.e., “exposure.” This is even better

done in defining the verb *faḍaḥ* as “to disclose or uncover someone’s faults or offenses, expose” (840). He also refers to *faḍīḥa* as the state of “divulging secrets” and “unearthing shameful things” (840). Nevertheless, like Lane, Wehr maintains that *faḍīḥa* can mean simply the word “shame.” The adjective *mafdūḥ* is defined as “covered with shame, exposed, compromised, humiliated, shamed, disgraced, dishonored, disgraceful, shameful” (840). What is quite confusing is the use of the last two words: “disgraceful” and “shameful.” The adjective *mafdūḥ* can only describe people. However, in English, the words “shameful” and “disgraceful” can never describe people. They can only refer to things, situations, or people’s behavior.

Wortabet and Porter (1954) do not list any adjective forms. They define the verb as “to divulge, disgrace” and the noun as “disgrace” (250). Although the use of the word “divulge” is quite telling, the definition as a whole is inadequate. I do not think that using one word; in this case, “disgrace” can capture the meaning of *faḍīḥa*. In the English-Arabic part of their dictionary, Wortabet and Porter use *faḍīḥa* only in defining the words “infamy” and “ignominy.” Ba‘albaki (1984), on the other hand, uses it only in defining the adjective “shameful.”

5.5. ‘ayb

Lane (1968) does not account for the ‘shame’ use of ‘ayb at all. He focuses on its other meaning, which is remotely related to its ‘shame’ use. He defines ‘ayb as “a fault, an unsoundness, a defect, an imperfection, a blemish, or something amiss” (2206). The verb is defined as to find “fault” with. There is no reference to the use of ‘ayb to refer to “genitals” as well.

On the other hand, Wehr (1979) along with listing the use stressed by Lane above, he indicates that ‘ayb can also mean “shame” and “disgrace.” In addition, he refers to the common Arabic exclamatory expression “‘ayb ‘alayk!” that can be translated as “shame on you!” or “You ought to be ashamed!” He defines the adjective *mu‘īb* as “disgraceful” and “shameful,” implicitly indicating its inanimate use.

Similar to Wehr and unlike Lane, Wortabet and Porter (1954) acknowledge the ‘shame’ use of ‘ayb. It is defined as “shame” and the adjective *mu‘īb* as “shameful.” In their English-Arabic section, ‘ayb is used in defining

"shameful," "disgrace" and "dishonorable." Conversely, Ba'albaki (1984) does not use 'ayb in defining these words. In fact, he does not use it at all in defining any 'shame' word in English.

5.6. 'ār

Lane (1968) defines the noun 'ār as "a disgrace, a shame, a thing that occasions one's being reviled" (2208). This definition is rather lacking. As it has been explained above, 'ār indicates an intense emotion of "shame" and "disgrace." An Arabic speaker would understand what it means to say that someone has committed suicide because of his/her 'ār, but for an English speaker, I think it would be hard to imagine that someone may commit suicide because he feels "shame" and "disgrace." The addition of the word "intense" to the definition above would capture more the denotation of 'ār, but by no means can it serve as an exact equivalent. Another aspect of meaning that Lane's definition fails to capture is that if someone feels 'ār, he/she feels fully responsible for what caused 'ār, as explained above. Moreover, in some other parts of his definition, Lane seems to equate 'ār with 'ayb. This is inaccurate since 'ayb is socially, religiously, morally and even at an individual level is less intense than 'ār. For instance, if someone utters a taboo word in public, this would be 'ayb. This would never be considered as 'ār. On the other hand, if someone betrays his/her own country, this is definitely 'ār. Calling it 'ayb would be a far-fetched euphemism.

Similarly, Wehr (1979) defines 'ār using the words "shame," "disgrace" and "dishonor." This definition has the same problems that Lane's definition has which are addressed above. In their English-Arabic section, Wortabet and Porter use 'ār in defining the English 'shame' words "disgrace," "shame," "dishonor," "ignominy" and "infamy." Ba'albaki (1984), however, uses 'ār in defining "mortification" and "ignominy" "infamy" and "dishonor." He does not use it in defining "shame." This is insightful since these words, especially the first three, indicate an intense experience of "shame," which makes them a closer equivalent to Arabic 'ār. One aspect of meaning that none of the dictionaries highlight is that the 'shame' of 'ār is everlasting.

6. Defining '*shame*' in Arabic

In this section, I propose definitions of the '*shame*'-encoding constructions in Arabic addressed in this paper. These definitions are based on all that have been discussed above. The '*shame*' words listed are defined using a NSM-based defining system.

khajal

- 1-X feels *khajal*.
- 2-Something is happening inside X that makes X feel not comfortable.
- 3-This is because something happened to X that is not necessarily bad.
- 4-X thinks that other people are thinking about X because of what happened.
- 5-People may think that it is rather good that X feels this way.
- 6-X wants this feeling to stop.

This definition captures the '*good shame*' aspect of *khajal*. However, the use of the word "may" and "rather" in line (5) implies that *khajal* is not necessarily viewed as '*good*.' Moreover, in line (2), the moderate intensity of the emotion is reflected by using the words "not comfortable" instead of "bad" or "very bad" that will be used in defining other words. This also follows from the fact that what causes the emotion is not "necessarily bad," as indicated in line (3).

ḥayā

- 1-X feels *ḥayā* .
- 2-Something is happening inside X that makes X slightly uncomfortable.
- 3-This is because something happened to X that is not necessarily bad.
- 4-X thinks that other people are thinking about X because of what happened.
- 5-People think that it is good that X feels this way, and X feels the same.
- 6-X does not necessarily want this feeling to stop because X knows that this feeling may stop X from doing bad things.

This definition shows that ḥayā is a ‘good shame’ word. The experiencer is aware of this. This is why he/she may feel only “slightly” uncomfortable and may not necessarily want the feeling to stop. Moreover, it is clearly indicated that people think that it is good, as shown in line (5).

ḥishmah

- 1-X feels *ḥishmah*.
- 2-Something is happening inside X that makes X slightly uncomfortable.
- 3-This is because something happened to X that is not necessarily bad.
- 4-X thinks that other people are thinking about X because of what happened
- 5-X cares a lot about what people think of X and what X does.
- 6-People think that it is very good that X feels this way, and X feels the same.
- 7-X likes to feel this way always because X knows that stops X from doing bad things.

This definition illustrates how *ḥishmah* is probably the best example of ‘good shame.’ Words like “very good,” (6) “likes” and “always” (7) support this fact. Moreover, line (5) captures the fact that when one feels *ḥishmah*, he/she becomes more sensitive to ‘shame’-triggering situations since he/she cares a lot about what others think of him/her; thus, becomes more likely to feel other ‘shame’ variants.

faḍīḥa

- 1-X feels *faḍīḥa*.
- 2-Something is happening inside X that makes X feels bad.
- 3-This is because something happened to X that X does not necessarily think is bad.
- 4-X knows that other people are thinking about X because of what happened.
- 5-People think that what happened is bad.
- 6-What happened is kept secret for a while, then it is revealed.

- 7-X is not necessarily responsible for what happened.
- 8-X wants this feeling to stop.

The use of the word “knows” instead of “thinks” in line (4) indicates that for one to feel *faḍīḥa*, something must have happened, and people must know about it.

‘ayb

- 1-X feels ‘ayb.
- 2-Something is happening inside X that makes X feels bad.
- 3-This is because something bad happened to X.
- 4-What happened is often something said/done opposite to what people think should be said/done.
- 5-X knows that other people are thinking about X because of what happened.
- 6-X wants this feeling to stop.

In this definition, line (4) implies the strong association of ‘ayb with rules of decorum and proper behavior, as shown above. However, the word “often” indicates that this is not always the case. Moreover, describing what happened as “bad” (3) implies that both the experiencer and other people consider what happened as “bad.”

‘ār

- 1-X feels ‘ār.
- 2-Something is happening inside X that makes X feels very bad.
- 3-This is because something very bad happened to X.
- 4-X knows that other people are thinking about X because of what happened.
- 5-X wants this feeling to stop and will do anything to stop it.
- 6-X thinks that people will never forget what happened.
- 7-X thinks that X is fully responsible for what happened.

It is clear that the words “very bad” in (2) and (3) indicate the intensity of this emotion.

The willingness of X to do anything to stop this feeling captures the fact that the experiencer may commit suicide or just disappear, leaving his/her

country. Line (6) implies that the effect of this emotion can be everlasting. Moreover, the experiencer feels fully responsible for what happened, which is partly why this emotion is so intense.

7-Conclusion

To improve bilingual definitions of emotion words, the findings of this paper need to be taken into consideration. Using a simple language, as well as avoiding language-specific terms, can solve the problem of inexact and, sometimes, misleading equivalents. Describing the grammar of the emotion word, albeit briefly, can provide helpful information about its meaning and how it is comparatively different. Providing culture-based examples that illustrate the use of the word, as well as, indirectly, showing what triggers the emotion, and possibly, the response to it can be quite insightful.

References

- AL JALLAD, N., 2008. "The concepts of *al-halal* and *al-haram* in the Arab-Muslim culture: a translational and lexicographical study." *Language Design*10, pp. 77-86.
- AL JALLAD, N., 2007. "The concepts of *al-jihad*, *al-Hijab*, and *al-shahid* in the Arab-Muslim culture and language: a lexicological and lexicographical study." In J. D. Luque Durán and A. Pamies (eds.), *Interculturalidad y Lenguaje I*, pp. 109-119.
- AL JALLAD, N., 2009. "The semantic concept of 'shame' in the Holy Qur'an," in J. P. Monferrer-Sala y Á. Urbán (eds.), *Sacred Text. Explorations in Lexicography*, pp. 81-106.
- AMEKA, F., 1990. "The grammatical packaging of experiences in Ewe: a study in the semantics of syntax." *Australian Journal of Linguistics*. 10, pp. 139-181.
- BA'ALBAKI, M., 1984. *Al-Mawrid: A Modern English-Arabic Dictionary*. Beirut, Lebanon: Dar El-lim Lil-Malayan.
- DINEEN, A., 1990. "Shame/embarrassment in English and Danish." *Australian Journal of Linguistics*. 10, pp. 217-229.
- ENFIELD, N.J. and A. WIERZBICKA, 2002. "Introduction: The body in the description of emotions." In Enfield, N.J. and A. Wierzbicka (eds.), *The Body in Description of Emotion*, pp.1-25.
- GODDARD, C. and A. WIERZBICKA, 2008. "Universal human concepts as a basis for

- contrastive linguistic semantics.” In *Current Trends in Contrastive Linguistics*, Gómez González, M., J. L. Mackenzie and E. M. González Álvarez (eds.), pp. 205–226.
- GODDARD, C. and A. WIERZBICKA, 2007. “NSM analyses of the semantics of physical qualities: *sweet, hot, hard, heavy, rough, sharp* in cross-linguistic perspective”. *Studies in Language*. 31:4, pp. 765–800.
- GODDARD, C., 2002. “Explicating emotions across languages and cultures: a semantic approach. In S. R. Fussell (ed.), *The Verbal Communication of Emotions: Interdisciplinary perspectives*, pp. 19-53.
- GODDARD, C., 2001. *Hati*: A key word in the Malay vocabulary of emotion. In J. Harkins and A. Wierzbicka (eds), *Emotions in Crosslinguistic Perspective*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, pp. 171-200.
- GODDARD, C., 1990. “The lexical semantics of ‘good feelings’ in Yankunytjatjara.” *Australian Journal of Linguistics*. 10 (2), pp. 257-292.
- HARKINS, J., 1990. “Shame and shyness in the Aboriginal classroom: a case for practical semantics.” *Australian Journal of Linguistics*. 10, pp. 293-302.
- HOGGIN, H., 1947. “Shame: a study of social conformity in a New Guinea village.” *Oceania*. 17, pp. 273-289.
- HOLLAND, D. and A. KIPNIS, 1995. “American culture models of embarrassment: In J. Russell, J. Fernandez-Dols, A. Manstead and J. Wellenkamp (eds.). *Everyday Conceptions of Emotion*, pp. 181-202.
- LANE, E., 1968. *An Arabic-English Lexicon*. Beirut, Lebanon: Librairie Du Liban.
- LUQUE DURÁN, J. D., 2010. “Alusión, intertextualidad y juegos del lenguaje. La explotación del Diccionario Lingüístico-Cultural del español para la creación de textos argumentativos.” In Mellado, Carmen; Buján, Patricia; Herrero, Claudia; Iglesias, Nely (eds.), *La fraseografía del S. XXI. Nuevas propuestas para el español y el alemán*. Berlín: Frank and Timme, pp. 149-168.
- LUQUE DURÁN, J. D., 2009. “El diccionario intercultural e interlingüístico y su aplicación a la traducción de culturemas”. In Ortega Arjonilla, E. and Marçalo, J., *Lingüística et Tradução na Sociedade do Conhecimento*. Universidade de Evora, pp. 188-199.
- LUQUE NADAL, L., 2009. “Los culturemas: ¿unidades lingüísticas, ideológicas o culturales?” *Language Design* 11, pp. 93-120.
- LUQUE NADAL, L., 2010. *Fundamentos teóricos de los diccionarios lingüístico-culturales. Relaciones entre fraseología y culturología*. Granada: Educatori.
- LYND, H., 1958. *On Shame and Search for Identity*. New York: Harcourt.
- PAMIES, A., 2009. “Metáforas libres y metáforas lexicalizadas.” In Luis Luque Toro (ed.), *Léxico español actual II*. Venezia: Ed. Cafoscarina, pp. 229-238.
- PAMIES, A. and TUTÁEVA, K. 2010. “El árbol como referente linguo-cultural y su

- huella fraseo-paremiológica." In Mellado, Carmen; Buján, Patricia; Herrero, Claudia; Iglesias, Nely (eds.), *La fraseografía del S. XXI. Nuevas propuestas para el español y el alemán*. Berlin: Frank and Timme, pp. 169-190.
- WEHR, H., 1979. *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz.
- WIERZBICKA, A., 2003. "Emotion and culture: arguing with Martha Nussbaum." *Ethos*, 31, pp. 577-600.
- WIERZBICKA, A. and J. HARKINS, 2001. "Introduction." In J. Harkins and A. Wierzbicka (eds.), *Emotions in crosslinguistic perspective*, Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, pp. 1-34.
- WIERZBICKA, A., 1999. *Emotions Across Languages and Cultures: Diversity and Universals*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- WIERZBICKA, A., 1998. "Sadness' and 'anger' in Russian: the nonuniversality of the so-called 'basic human emotions'." In A. Athanasiadou and E. Tabakowska (eds.), *Speaking of Emotional Universals*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, pp. 3-28.
- WIERZBICKA, A., 1995. "Everyday conceptions of emotion: a semantic perspective." In J. Russell, J. Fernandez-Dols, A. Manstead and J. Wellenkamp (eds.), *Everyday Conceptions of Emotion*. Dordrecht: Kluwer, pp. 17-47.
- WIERZBICKA, A., 1994a. "Emotion, language, and cultural scripts." In S. Kitayama and H. R. Markus (eds.) *Emotion and Culture: Empirical Studies of Mutual Influence*. Washington: American Psychological Association, pp.133-196.
- WIERZBICKA, A., 1994b. "Conceptual issues in the study of emotions." In J. Russell (ed.) *Everyday conceptions of emotion: an introduction to the psychology, anthropology and linguistics of emotion*. Dordrecht: The Netherlands: Kluwer, pp. 17-47.
- WIERZBICKA, A., 1992. "Talking about emotions: semantics, culture and cognition." *Cognition and Emotion*. 6(3/4), pp. 289-319.
- WIERZBICKA, A., 1990. "The semantics of emotion: *Fear* and its relatives in English." *Australian Journal of Linguistics*, 10(2), pp. 359-375.
- WORTABET, J. and H. PORTER, 1954. *English-Arabic and Arabic-English Dictionary*. New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co.