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A Pragmatic Analysis of a Select of Iraqi Proverbs

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ABSTRACT

This research paper is mainly concerned with the analysis of a select of Iraqi proverbs in terms of semantics, pragmatics and implicature. It is then a linguistic study that highlights the true meanings of the respective proverbs. Proverbs are meant to function in many ways within an Iraqi community because they are the latter's product. This paper proves that the Iraqis tend to use very compact, brief and rhetorical speech acts as proverbs and messages having super effects on recipients. A select of Iraqi proverbs are taken into consideration to explain this phenomena and the reason behind the shaping factors of this kind of proverbs. Besides, the Iraqi proverbs mostly tend to use the formal language. Iraqis tend to employ Standard Arabic in their proverbs and in verses of wisdom-oriented poetry—not to mention Quranic verses or excerpts thereof—to cite the wisdom contained therein for the purpose of reforming and guiding people toward what benefits them and their society. This does not, however, imply that Iraqis do not use proverbs in the colloquial dialect; rather, they utilize them when such expressions are impactful within the appropriate context. In this respect, the dissertation is based on Sperber and Wilson's Theory of Relevance, Herbert Paul Grice's theory of the cooperative principle, and Searle and Austen's speech act theory, which aim at explaining the way in which the addressers manage to convey to their recipients their intended message in an implied yet impressive manner.

KEYWORDS: Proverb, Implicature, Pragmatics

1.1 Introduction

A proverb is a brief effective saying intended to express a particular truth about an issue in a certain context and persuade the addressee of a significant fact—for it is of no effect when considered alone or without a context. Hence, a proverb is seen under the umbrella of a speech act; it helps the speech act have its particular effect and significance. Proverbs make use of rhetoric in all its ramifications in order to have the quality of convincing and persuading or effectively expressing a moral lesson—hence, conversational implicatures are embedded in them. They are traditional in that they are transmitted from generation to generation, and they are conventional in that the entire society agrees on their usage in daily conversations.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

This paper tackles the problem that no study has yet explored the shaping factors of the Iraqi proverbs in terms of the extensive use of rhetorical elements and the formal language that encapsulates them. Therefore, this study investigates the reasons behind the emergence of Iraqi proverbs in their current form and content.

1.3 Research Questions

1. Do Iraqi proverbs present absolute wisdom? 2. Are they beneficial for the Iraqi nation? 3. Why are the Iraqi proverbs brief, most effective and persuasive? 4. Do the Iraqi proverbs use, for the most part, formal language? 5. Can Iraqi proverbs be considered the product of civilizations and empires that originated in Iraq, and have they achieved global usage by becoming rooted in later civilizations?

1.4 Research Hypotheses

This paper hypothesizes that the Iraqis tend to use very compact, brief and rhetorical speech acts as proverbs and messages having super effects on recipients. A select of Iraqi proverbs are taken into consideration to explain these phenomena and the reason behind the shaping factors of this kind of proverbs. Besides, the Iraqi proverbs mostly tend to use the formal language. It also hypothesizes that there are particular factors that contribute to the effective understanding of non-literal meanings implied in daily conversational implicatures embedded in the proverbs and the rhetorical elements which make the proverbs effective and easily understandable.

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The study also hypothesizes that the Iraqi proverbs are the reflections of the nation’s aspirations, mindsets, culture, and the nature of man—optimal and otherwise—and the tendency to use the kind of the Arabic

accent suited to the nation's cultural statures: the Iraqis often tend to use formal Arabic language besides the ones formed in colloquial Iraqi language of many and various accents—northern, middle, or southern.

1.5 Methodology

The paper is divided into sections of which section one is an introduction in which the term "proverb" is defined. Section two defines the problem and describes what it is. Section three enumerates the questions posed in relation to the essence of the Iraqi proverbs. Section four shows the respective hypotheses. Section five describes the methods employed when investigating the representations of this study. Section six is considered the body of the paper which encompasses the information required for proving the hypotheses and answering the questions posed. Section eight explores a select of Iraqi proverbs and analyzes them in terms of semantics, pragmatics, and implicature.

A brief account is presented about the concept of implicature and the speech act theory because they help understand the proverbs intended meanings or what kind of meaning are beyond the literal meanings of words. This is quantitative study in that it is a structured research method that collects and analyzes numerical data to find patterns, test hypotheses, and understand relationships between variables. The APA Style is employed in this study.

1.6. Review of Related Literature

Proverbs make use of rhetoric in all its ramifications in order to have the quality of convincing and persuading or effectively expressing a moral lesson—hence, conversational implicatures are embedded in them. They are traditional in that they are transmitted from generation to generation, and they are conventional in that the entire society agrees on their usage in daily conversations. Therefore, it is a common-sense usage and experience. For example, the Arabic proverb ["البركة في البكور" (Al-barakatu fil-bukoor)] which reads in English as "the early bird catches the worm," which implies that there is a blessing in rising early, or those who rise early can get a blessed sustenance. This is widely used by people

insofar as it is related to the life of man; it envisions the belief that starting the day early is conducive to good fortunes as far as the respective efforts are concerned. The proverb further translates to "Whoever starts early, their sustenance/provision starts early for them" ("من بكّر بكّر عليه الرزق"), which implies that when one works early one gets the rewards early.

It can be indicated that proverbs are short yet wise statements, being the product of a long-term experience crystallized into brief sayings encompassing literal, implied and rhetoric aimed at persuading the addressees of a particular significant idea, advice or proposition, or compliment. They are easy to remember because they are circulating among people. They are persuasive in that they are rhetorical due to the fact that their meanings are more than what their individual words may literally mean, and at the same time they have already been seen and experimented as being reliable: the hearer of them can read and understand what is beyond words.

Hence, they are based on human experience and express certain truths that are believed to be true. For example, the proverb "the early bird catches the worm" is very effective and persuasive, giving a diversity of meanings, and it is applicable to a diversity of daily situations. Despite writing many and various books and articles, a study of this kind, a comparative study of proverbs is considered something new and will add significant yet intelligent discussions to the respective field of study—linguistics.

From the semantic sense the Arabic proverbs get their illocutionary force (sense) when they are based on situational contexts that involve place, time, recipients' schemata and contemporary events and people. For example, what was said two or three centuries ago may or may not be applicable to present-time situations.

The true meaning of the proverbs in general is revealed through the semantic perspective that shows the illocutionary force along with the perlocutionary effect, which are encompassed within the situational context, including the participants, the event and its setting. The proverb explicates the hidden cultural wise saying which may provoke keen mental discernment, sound judgment, and guiding wisdom

conducive to effective advice that describes, warns, diagnose, construct, which give meanings beyond the literal words.

Proverbs are usually formed by means of indirect speech acts to expose life lessons about the many and various everyday situations. Proverbs bridge the gap between literal meaning and the planned, intentional, calculated, and designed pragmatic function. "Those who were ashamed are now dead" (اللي استحو ماتو) is an Egyptian proverb which cannot be interpreted unless one resorts to the historical, social, moral and cultural background that has already paved the way for its appearance. Thus, in unfamiliar proverbs, context plays an important role in resolving ambiguities experienced when examining abstract concepts" (Katz and Ferretti, 2001). The unsaid message in that proverb is thusly only understandable when the cultural and historical contexts are explained. The historical and social context of this proverb unfolds the story telling of a public bath (hammam) burning down and the ashamed naked people died because they preferred not to come out naked. Hence, the survivors were those who were shameless and came out naked (Saeed, 2021).

Most importantly, it is generally accepted that various cultures share human experiences due to the fact that human nature is tremendously almost the same all over the worlds and in all ages—past, present and the future. To add, people of any culture have their own way of thinking which should be taken into consideration and meticulously examined for the analysis of their proverbs. Hence, moral values cannot be exempted from the realm of the interpretation of proverbs: "Every nation's proverbs are a valuable part of its culture. Nations' cultures may vary, but they all have the same ways of using their surroundings to develop new proverbs that mirror their lives" (Ibrahim, 2022).

1.7 The Significance of the Study

This study is very beneficial for students of the English language, researchers and scholars interested in disciplines considered under the umbrella of linguistics such as translation, pragmatics, discourse analysis, applied linguistics and other respective disciplines. Besides, this study provides translators with valuable insights into the interpretation of proverbs, which frequently feature in politicians' public discourses. It

can be inferred from the literature available in this regard that studies concerning the analysis of contrastive pragmatics as far as the study of the Iraqi proverbs is concerned are limited. Hence, this study enriches the pragmatic aspects of linguistics and provides new insights into the conversational implicatures embedded and hidden in the proverbs that are not meant to provide literal meanings; rather, they provide meanings beyond the words forming them.

1.8 The Analysis of a Select of Iraqi Proverbs

1.8.1 Introduction

Iraqi proverbs are the products of two ancient civilizations with roots stretching back thousands of years—civilizations that have exerted influence beyond their own borders and engaged with other cultures, distinguished by their prominence and standing among nations. It is for this compelling reason that these proverbs were selected for this study:

Cross-cultural communication is based on being able to understand the different ways that people from different cultures interact with each other. In addition, it is supposed to come up with some recommendations that can help people from different cultures communicate better with each other. As a society's cultural practices and linguistic patterns shape the way people think, act, and communicate with the outside world, they also shape the way people think, act, and communicate with each other. (Ahtif1, Nilotpala, 2022, p. 7)

Literal and implied meanings contribute to the analysis of proverbs in general and the Arabic ones in particular which are attained by means of linguistic and cognitive procedures. Rhetorical figures like irony, contrast, simile, metaphor, paradox and the like of them in this category are involved in those procedures. Besides, a wide variety of contexts are retrieved to fully understand the moral or wisdom a proverb might suggest, not to mention the importance of comprehending tangible experiences by examining abstract concepts.

The Iraqi people use proverbs of advice that reflect their prudence relating to man's experience and life such as their relations as well as to significant concepts such as patience, learning, caution, which mirror their mindsets as far as their culture is concerned. For example, they concentrate on the prudent choice of friends, unpretentiousness, modest behavior, and acting cautiously:

Beyond linguistic functions, they serve as valuable tools for teaching morals, strengthening arguments, and preserving cultural heritage. By integrating proverbs into everyday interactions, individuals can enhance their communication skills and contribute to the transmission of collective wisdom. (Kizi, 2025, P. 125)

1.8.2 A Select of Iraqi Adverbs of Advice

- "الف صديق ولا عدو واحد" (One thousand friends, and not a single enemy). This proverb can be interpreted as a piece of advice and warning as well, meaning it is quite vulnerable that one having a single enemy able to disrupt the safety and peace of mind which a thousand of friends may afford. The exact lesson to be inferred from this proverb is that the truthfulness of actions made by a thousand people to work on behalf their friend, which is related to the moral and psychological fact that negative behavior and harms should be dealt with urgent actions conducive to positive results and beneficial representations, instead of one enemy that may cause destruction.

The societal tendency of the thousand friends and their commitments impose the principle that one should avoid any action that may cause harms to others. The lesson to be pragmatically got is to primarily avoid the escalation of conflicts and advocate boosting compromise, reconciliation and survival strategy in a society that is, to a great extent, interrelated, interdependent, and linked. Furthermore, to confront one enemy requires a high price on many levels, and therefore one should prefer compromise over enmity and at the same time maintain friendship with as many friends as one can.

From the socio-linguistic perspective, proverbs preserve rich historical exciting subject matters navigated by the Iraqis in their tribal, social and political relationships and disputes as well by consciously or unconsciously hiding representations related to commands, criticism, reproach and the like of them behind

a curtain of metaphors and implicatures., or statements related to culturally and historically actions deeply rooted in their minds due to their generational impact. In doing so, their actual personality, what they truly feelings whatsoever remain hidden. Hence, the aforementioned proverb concerning friendship and enmity, one can truly learn how many sentences are employed to pragmatically interpret it:

Proverbs are also valuable for their ability to express complex ideas in a few words. They eliminate the need for lengthy explanations, making speech more efficient and direct. A single proverb can encapsulate an entire lesson, making it easier for the listener to grasp the intended message. For example, "Actions speak louder than words." clearly emphasizes the importance of deeds over mere promises. Instead of elaborating on the difference between words and actions, this proverb instantly conveys the idea in a concise and universally understood manner. (Kizi, 2025, p. 125)

Moreover, proverbs of advice urge people to be patient and to have sound mental ability to form an opinion or pass formal judgment about people and things and important situations in a manner that exposes them as having clear, intelligent, objective, and wise mentality, a mentality able to distinguish the right from the wrong, the good from evil, and the white from the black metaphorically speaking, a mentality capable of separating truthfulness from fakeness or the good from the bad, so that they appear to be prudent and confidential people able to give sound judgments and decisions— rash, spontaneous, or impetuous —concerning serious as well as simple matters. To add, they advocate that the behavior of people should be made against impulsive behavior conducive to sudden actions based on whims and emotions and done without previous planning or considering serious consequences. Besides, Iraqi proverbs of advice encourage people to listen to truthful statements instead of empty compliments.

- Likewise, the proverb "أقعد أعوج وأحجي عدل" (Sit crooked, but speak straight) is to give the advice that the priority is made to saying the truth or to be righteous even if the circumstances and surroundings are poor and flawed. A practical wisdom can be provided by the inference of that proverb, which is a piece of advice advocating that the speaker should utter truthful, logical, and above all polite statements.

The following proverbs are essential Iraqi wisdoms considered to be guidance embedded in daily conversational speech acts to be linguistically and pragmatically interpreted:

- "امشي شهر ولا تعبر نهر" (Walk for a month and don't cross a river [in a rush]). Here is the notion that one is advised not to spontaneously and abruptly decide to take decisive steps over going through inevitable serious and dangerous action—perhaps fatally and deadly—a plan, or an action taken in advance that may lead to regret, or a feeling of sadness, disappointment, or remorse about a past mistake or missed opportunity. Furthermore, a proactive action may further lead to serious aftermaths. In consequence, though the literal meanings of the words of this proverb point to a physical path and a quicker way of fulfilling a task, its connotations are seen to be tremendously great when interpreted from the pragmatic perspective.

However, the English proverbs having the same value, purpose, meaning, or effect as this adverb of advice are as follows:

- "less haste, more speed," which is a proverb meaning that advises people to take their time and be careful and do things with less haste, for a little delay helps them to achieve a task quicker and in an efficient manner. The speaker expresses himself paradoxically to give the advice a more powerful effect. The pragmatic meaning is that "less haste" is conducive to safety.

- "Look before you leap" and "Haste makes waste," meaning that one should consider the situation before taking any risky or irreversible decisions to do anything; decisions that cannot be changed, undone, or returned to its original state

- "Measure twice, cut once," which is a proverb originated in the profession called carpentry, which advocates precision and twice checking. This proverb is applied to all situations requiring the precise and cautious measurement of valuable items, to avoid any error that could lead to catastrophic financial losses.

- "انطي الخبز لخبازه حتى لو ياكل نصه" (Give the bread to the baker, even if he eats half of it). This proverbs advises people to rely or count on qualified professionals because they are experts superior and

incomparable, matchless, unequalled, peerless, unrivaled, and nothing to compare them, and on top of that it is okay if their services requires a half portion of the product they are dealing with.

The exaggeration indicated by taking half of the product is to intensify and emphasize the importance of the professional and at the same time it is a means of persuasion. From the pragmatic perspective, the proverb advocates the right person should take the profession equal to their merits. Moreover, from the sociolinguistic and communicative perspective, the proverb directs people to distribute responsibilities on the basis of merit, skills and experience instead of cost-reduction. This proverb finds its counterpart in the English proverbs such as "Give the job to the person who does it best" or "Leave the shoemaker to his trade," or "Horses are courses." («أعطِ العمل لمن يتقنه»، أو «دع الإسكافي لمهنته»، أو «لكل مقام مقال»). Here is the importance of hiring professionals or specialists as much as they demand.

- "اسأل مجرب ولا تسأل حكيم" (Ask someone with experience rather than just a wise man). This proverb implies that when facing a problem one should consult an experienced man rather than a wise man, for lived experiences outdo theoretical advice. Pragmatically, the value of the proverb lies in guiding the listener to seek realistic, practical solutions from those who possess "wisdom born of practice," rather than relying solely on "wisdom born of reflection and theory."

- "الما يعرف تدابيره، حنطته تاكل شعيره" (He who does not know his management, his wheat will eat his barley).

Here, it is significant to note that the tone can also share the process of determining the illocutionary and perlocutionary effect of the proverb when addressed to somebody—the actual effect, consequence, or reaction that a spoken sentence has on a listener's feelings, thoughts, or actions. This proverb's function is to warn and give a moral lesson about bad thinking and deciding the steps needed to fulfill an aim before doing any respective action—planning what, how, and when to achieve it, or choosing what to finish first, pointing out the exact goal and the tools needed to fulfill it, or deciding an order of tasks. This is a familiar exemplum to persuade, frighten, convince or inspire somebody. Furthermore, the proverb implies that poor planning and bad money management and lack of skills can cause the individual big losses. Mistakes

can destroy one's assets completely. Besides the role of advice, the proverb warns people to manage their money and life with care and smart thinking and spending money properly.

On the other hand, he who does not apply what that proverb advocate, one may lose their wealth, and therefore the proverb can be regarded as a piece of advice to be smart with money, plan ahead, and avoid waste. Hence, it is a bit of advice calling for thinking soundly, planning carefully and meticulously, and caring for not wasting money. However, this proverb is a mix of agriculture and personal properties. From the linguistic point of view, the proverb consists of an active and conditional clause, and its pragmatic effect is conducive to a stark of warning against mismanagement and bad thinking, planning and mindset. It is also a warning against doing something dangerous without caring about the risks or the bad results of your actions.

1.8.3 A Select of Iraqi Proverbs of Warning

On warning and threats are many and various Iraqi proverbs which align with significant meanings underlying fundamental principles, criticism whose function is to carefully estimate the value, significance, or quality of something which typically involves the process of determining how it is successfully adequate and will exactly be accomplished as it must. The essence of this kind of proverbs generally depend on the use of metaphors relating to odd creatures such as scorpions, stray animals like dogs and donkeys, snakes, and stones as well. Hence, they are indirectly addressed in human communications so as to warn and threat. For example, the following proverbs can explicate this kind of adverbs:

- "الدَّهَر إِذَا أَقْبَل بَالِك تِسْلَم، وَإِذَا أَدْبَر خَلِّيك بِالسَّلِم" (When time is on your side, be cautious. When it turns against you, seek peace), which means that power and fortune may be lasting for a specific period of time; that is to say, the proverb revolves around the notion that actions, deeds, ideas and observations may soon come to their end immediately after their beginning. Thus, this kind of proverbs strongly advises, persuades, or encourages and even urges somebody not to be arrogant or boastful during times of prosperity. People are to withdraw a demand, claim, or stance—especially in the face of opposition—or to admit that somebody

was wrong and/or defeated so as to protect themselves in times of crises in order to keep themselves safe from injury, harm, damage, or loss. When using proverbs as these, they encapsulate themselves within a shield in order to defend, safeguard their entity against threats and dangers. Pragmatically, this proverb revolves around the vicissitudes of time, adapting to circumstances, and enduring adversity.

- "ان اقبلت باض الحمام على الوتد وان ادبرت بال الحمار على الاسد، اشرح المعنى البراغماتي" ("If fortune smiles, a dove lays its eggs on a tent peg; if fortune turns its back, a donkey urinates on a lion." Explain the pragmatic meaning.). When luck is on one's side, even impossible or fragile tasks succeed. Linguistically and pragmatically, miracles happen easily, and everything works in one's favor without heavy effort. When luck abandons you, even the strongest, smartest, or most respected people lose their status and face disrespect from the lowest or most foolish elements of life. in short, worldly success and failure are temporary and unstable. Success does not mean you are permanently invincible, and failure does not erase your true worth.

- "حَذَار مِن العَاقِل لِيَمَا غِضِب" (Beware of the level-headed person when he is angry). This proverb implies that prudent and wise people are very dangerous when they are made angry whose aftermaths cannot be predicted and treated. Furthermore, the level-headed person meticulously behaves when punishing those who hurt him. This is an indirect warning against those harming a prudent person who will put them in a dangerous situation.

- "الْلِي يْلَعِّب البَزُون، يْتْحَمَّل خَرَامِيشَه" (Whoever plays with a cat must bear its scratches). This is a direct warning against people engaging with dangerous one who may commit unpredictable and malicious deeds that will inevitably result in serious harms. Another pragmatic interpretation shows that dealing with people lacking intelligence or reason is something risky, difficult and tricky. Otherwise, one should accept ill-treatment. This is like one says "if you play with fire, you get burned." (من يلعب بالنار، يحترق.).

- "يَا مِسَوّي العَمَايِل، احْذَر مِن الخَمَايِل" (Oh doer of deeds, beware of the dark corners). Here is the implication that he who does bad things should be responsible for the consequences or retribution sooner or later. It is

addressed to individuals who act righteously or friendly in public but plot, gossip, or sabotage others in private.

– "اللي إيده بالماي مو مثل الي إيده بالنار" (He whose hand is in the water is not like he whose hand is in the fire). This is a proverb of warning that warns people not to give false advice to those confronting actual difficulties; they could not understand things unless they experience them. Hence, empathy and judgment are implied in this proverb. Pragmatically, this proverb is often said to critics or advisors who give easy solutions from a place of comfort, without facing the actual danger or hardship themselves.

In consequence, the Iraqi proverbs of warning are characterized by rhetorical elements such as metaphor and empathy that appeal to emotions and foster persuasion: "Their metaphorical nature makes them effective tools for capturing attention and leaving a lasting impression. A well-placed proverb can reinforce a statement, making it more persuasive and memorable" (Kizi, 2025, P. 125). They linguistically function as an order, official instruction, or a guide addressed by authorities telling people of how they should fulfill their aims. When decoding proverbs of advice, one can realize that they require socio-pragmatic deciphering so as to comprehend their true illocutionary power. Apart from the literal translation, everyday conversational Iraqi speech acts warn people of hidden dangers, hardships and difficulties, not to mention actions that are meant to trick, mislead, or lie to other people, which make someone believe something that is untrue and be unaware of the aftermaths of unwise behavior.

1.8.4 A Select of Iraqi Proverbs of Criticism

Proverbs of criticism are employed to socially correct the kind of behavior that is not accepted by the community or to publicly criticize somebody without injuring dignity or making immediate retaliation. They are satirical, ridiculous, cynical and humorous whose aim is correcting unaccepted social ills: "Thus, proverbs explicate the truth and experience of our grandfathers when directed for criticism. Few proverbs were used by writers to criticize, mimic and reprint their personalities" (Hassan, 2022).

From the pragmatic point of view, proverbs of criticism can be considered tools of face-saving to express disapproval, vent the feel of anger, frustration, or discontentment with the intention not to violate the

codes of honor. In this category of proverbs, metaphors, implicatures, irony—situational and verbal—implicit directives, pun, and other rhetorical devices are used to suit the requirements of the respective situation. The following is a breakdown of widely used Iraqi social and historical proverbs expressing criticism:

"اِدعي عَلى وَلَدي وأَكرَه مِن يِقول آمين" (I curse my own child, yet I hate whoever says 'amen' (agreeing with the curse). This proverb is a familial and tribal one, and points to an internal criticism at the time the criticism of the outsiders is considered socially unacceptable and an offensive one. The colloquial phonology and lexicon set a structure of a sharp contradiction between two expressions, the one points to the person's curse on the part of the son which points to frustration, while the other points to defensive enmity against the third party that tries to join the father in his attempt to curse his son. The father's criticism is both satirical on the part of the son and protective against the third party that tries to support the father's criticism.

However, the proverb addresses a significant rhetorical device that is paradox, for when agreeing with the father's curse is to boost the latter's frustration and disappointment; but, the utterance shows a semantic contradiction; from the pragmatic point of view, the first expression is a speech act expressive of annoyance and disciplining, but the second expression is a direct warning marker towards hearers, a verbal acoustic single which the speaker employs to direct them, which shows a shift in the conversation resulting in new speech limiting the discourse to unexpected perlocutionary effect.

On the other hand, from the prospective of Grice's conversational implicature, the speaker has flouted the latter's maxim of quality relating to conversation. In doing so, the speaker implies in his unsaid message that the ties of blood and loyalty to the clan override the spoken message. Hence, social distance has been created by the proverb, for the outsider's consent relating to the curse forms a threat to the unit of the speaker's family and its positive face, and this is what is called as the politeness and face-threat. The outsider's alignment is thusly rejected, for his virtual agreement can be regarded as an inimical intrusion.

From the linguistic point of view, the speaker presents a contradictory structure in juxtaposing his right with a strong instinctive, defensive, and protective strategy against outsiders in general. Pragmatically speaking, the hearers are to be blamed in case they overstep boundaries, warning them that criticizing a tribe or a family is something exclusive, legal, moral and natural entitlement of their self-worth and personal identity.

- "اللي ما يلوح العنب يگول حامض ماريده" (He who cannot reach the grapes says they are sour, I don't want them). Linguistically, here is an agricultural proverb or metaphor of a negative projection on the part of the speaker to clarify the kind of behavior of somebody who is showing good moral values, but acting in a way that he has none. The pragmatic role of this proverb is conducive to an illocutionary act of projecting strong disapproval and making fun or ridiculing in an unkind way to show contempt in a tone that is disrespectful.

Moreover, the speaker criticizes the situation where a flawed person pretending to have potentialities and at the same time, they pretend not to have the will to practice them due to, they pretend, some unjustifiable reasons. The proverb serves as an indictment of the invalidity of their pretension.

1.8.5 A Select of Iraqi Proverbs of Mockery

The Iraqis prefer to use metaphors when ridiculing someone's behavior. Enormous metaphors are used in the Iraqi proverbs in an attempt to hide the direct meaning because directness may injure the feelings of the hearers or the respective addressed person. Furthermore, the following rhetorical devices are also employed to make the statements very effective: irony and cynicism that are used to illustrate the oddness and absurd aspects of bad situations. This can be explicated in the following proverb:

- "إِشْ بِيدَجْ يَا كَرْعَة، غَيْر تْمَشْطِينِ الْگَرْعَة" (What ؟can you do, bald woman, other than comb the other bald woman's hair?). Pragmatically, this shows the mocking tradition of the Iraqi proverbs. This is sarcastically used to specify the helplessness and the absence of options. It implies that one lacking something is unable to provide that something to others. In other words, if one cannot help oneself, one cannot help others.

This leads to mentioning the Iraqi proverb "فاقد الشيء لا يعطيه" (The Iraqi proverb: "One cannot give what one does not possess.").

The bald woman cannot achieve any possible and futile endeavor as far as combing her hair is concerned. From the semantic perspective, one should possess something in order to give it to somebody else. The respective proverb shows that when someone could not even help themselves should let alone others; this is to mock someone interfering in an issue or situation where they have neither the ability nor the means to provide a solution, and any help used up is fully drained and it is not appropriate in the right situation.

The linguistic interpretation is based on the rhetorical question contained in proverb and irony as well, and at the same time the bald woman represents a visual image of a girl trying to fix the hair of another bald girl so as the action in question becomes useless, pointless, or ineffective. This is reminiscent of another popular Iraqi proverb: "وقع الحافي على العاري " (The barefooted one fell upon the naked one"), meaning both persons, the barefooted and the naked are very poor and unable to help each other in case one of them asks for the help of the other.

Conclusions

It can be concluded that the Iraqi proverbs present absolute wisdom in that they are characterized by a high level of persuasion, being meticulously and rhetorically formed. They are the product of a long-term heritage. It is the kind of heritage that is generational; it has been transformed from generation to generation that renders it precise and deeply meaningful, serving as a highly impactful rhetorical device.

Iraqi proverbs are highly practical, as they have been tested in real-life situations; their essence aligns with the lived experiences of the Iraqi people. Educated Iraqis tend to use proverbs formulated in formal, elegant language, as most Iraqis are educated due to awareness campaigns and efforts to eradicate ignorance and illiteracy that have prevailed in the country since liberation from foreign occupation, not to mention the nature of the Iraqi individual who loves culture and learning for a better life. This does not mean that the Iraqi citizen does not use proverbs expressed in the common vernacular; nevertheless, this

language remains close to Standard Arabic in much of its vocabulary. Even uneducated Iraqis use phrases from the Holy Quran as proverbs—and it is evident that the language of these proverbs is exemplary Classical Arabic.

Iraqi proverbs touch upon various facets of Iraqi life; indeed, they transcend this to reflect a universal character, stemming from multiple civilizations that predated others by millennia and serving as the traditional legacy of five empires that once ruled the world—a history that fostered cultural interaction with diverse peoples. Consequently, the culture of Iraqi proverbs cannot be overlooked in this context.

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