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Epitaph in English and Arabic: A Sociolinguistic Perspective

Hanan Aymin Faeq AL-Shamani¹ and Ahmed Mohammed Salih²

Abstract

The study explores the sociolinguistic aspects of epitaphs in English and Arabic. It examines the use of language and its impact on the meaning and interpretation of epitaphs, as well as the cultural and social contexts in which they are used. This genre has received little attention in studies. The research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of language in shaping how the dead are remembered and honored. The study aims to analyze the syntactic and morphological aspects of epitaphs in English and Arabic beside examining the semantic content and use of euphemistic expressions in English and Arabic epitaphs. The study Identifies social factors like gender, age, and status that influence the writing of epitaphs and how the deceased's role in life is portrayed. Finally, the study aims to explore the cultural values and beliefs about death and the afterlife reflected in English and Arabic epitaphs. The study analyzes 26 English and Arabic epitaphs using a sociolinguistic approach, considering linguistic factors like sentence structure and semantics, as well as social variables. The key findings indicate differences in morphosyntactic structures between English and Arabic epitaph, with Arabic marking gender more explicitly. Both epitaphs convey the denotative meanings of their cultural contexts, but Arabic makes more use of euphemisms. Social factors like gender, age, and status are more frequently reflected in Arabic epitaphs compared to English. There are differences in the linguistic cues used for male versus female epitaphs in both languages. The study provides insights into how language reflects cultural and societal norms in funeral rituals.

Keywords: Epitaph, Euphemistic Expressions, Morpho-Syntactic Structure.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, humans have grappled with the inevitability of mortality, seeking ways to immortalize the memories of their departed loved ones. One such timeless tradition that transcends cultures and civilizations is the writing of epitaphs (Bernhardt-Kabisch, 1967:113). These inscriptions, carved on gravestones or memorials, serve as a lasting tribute to the deceased, preserving their legacies and offering solace to those left behind. From a sociolinguistic perspective, epitaphs offer glimpses into the language and communication practices of specific societies or time periods. Epitaph analysis can provide insights into the social hierarchy of a community by examining the symbols and language used which can indicate the status of the deceased or their family (Pearson, 2003: 69). According to Davies (2002: l0l) The Rhetoric of Funerary Rites,' studying epitaphs can be a multidisciplinary pursuit. Davies argues that epitaphs can provide insights into various fields, including linguistics, history, sociology, anthropology, genealogy, and literature. As researchers continue to explore these concise yet profound inscriptions, they not only honor the departed but also unlock a treasure trove of knowledge about the past.

The adopted model in this study is an eclectic one. It consists of two main parts, linguistic and sociolinguistic ones. Linguistically, Quirk, et al (1985) and Aziz's (1989) model where sentence types, tense, active and passive constructions, finite andon-finite verb forms, and apposition have

been conducted. Moreover, Leech's (1981) theory of sense relations, associative type of meaning, and euphemism are used too. In sociolinguistics, Holmes' (2013) social variables and culture analysis are conducted as well. This study aims to Analyze the syntactic and morphological aspects of epitaphs in English and Arabic, examine the impact of semantic content of the interpretation of epitaphs in English and Arabic, and how it affects their meaning. Investigate the use of euphemistic expressions epitaphs and how it varies depending on the social context in which they are used. Identify the social factors concerning gender, age, status that influence in writing an epitaph and how the deceased's role in his life is reflected. Explore the cultural values and beliefs about death and the afterlife reflected in the cultural context of epitaphs in English and Arabic.

¹ Department of English, College of Education for Human Sciences, University of Tikrit, Iraq. E-mail: hananaymin452@gmail.com

² Department of English, College of Education for Human Sciences, University of Tikrit, Iraq. E-mail: ahmed.thanoon@tu.edu.iq

LITERATURE REVIEW EPITAPH AND RELATED TERMS

An epitaph is a brief inscription carved on a gravestone or monument that serves as a written tribute or final message for someone who has passed away. Epitaphs play a significant role in remembering and honoring the deceased through memorials and plaques as they help preserve the memory of loved ones and bring solace to mourners, as noted by Smith (2015). Their purpose is to summarize an individual's life in a few memorable words for future generations, according to Cohen (1999: 78). Traditionally, epitaphs were beautifully worded inscriptions on monuments that paid respect to the deceased by commemorating them and expressing their character and the grief of their death through lyrical rhyme to evoke remembrance and mourning, as Williams (2008:23) discusses. In antiquity, epitaph inscriptions preserved the memory of important community and national figures, referred to as "historical hailers", ensuring their names and achievements would be remembered for generations, as explained by Thorne (2014). A superscription in verse or prose on a tomb, grave or burial briefly declared the deceased's name, age, qualities, status, virtues, fortunes in life, and manner and time of death, according to Camden (1639) as cited in Brunton (2020: 27).

Epitaph, elegy, and epigram are three forms used throughout history to commemorate the dead, express grief, and honour loved ones. While each state has unique characteristics, they all share a common theme of remembrance and reflection. Elegy is a pensive melancholy poem or a poem expresses sorrow for one who has died (Johanson, 2010: 153). Epigram, on the other hand, is initially a brief poem produced for reminder. Sepulchral notes have been short due to the time and expense of engraving and the space restrictions on stones (Scodel, 1991: 50). An epigraph is a line, a verse, a quotation, or a motto at the beginning of a book, chapter or a poem that indicates its theme(Sharmas, 1998: 51).

The Concept of Death In English And Arabic

Dying is an inevitable transition from life to death. Therefore, the opposite of life is death. Since the dead do not come back, there is no way to reconcile. Inscriptions on tombstones and epitaphs in general could be seen as representing the core of the human condition, which is death. Death continues to be one of the biggest taboos in modern societies. As a result, language users find it difficult to discuss death in straightforward. In order to convey death, they turn to metaphorical language. Thus, death metaphors are found in epitaphs (Allan & Burridge, 2006: 135). Death and the afterlife as Shakespeare called ' the undiscovered country ' from which no one returns (Segal, 2010: 2). However, each culture, religion, and legal system have a unique meaning of death and a different definition of when life ends. Since the dawn of civilization, the fundamental fears and uncertainties about the nature and stage of death have impacted cultural production. The same goes for people's ambiguous and anxious attitudes regarding death. (Vidal & Blanco, 2014: 1).

Nearly all Christians believe their afterlife will likely include connection with God, peacefulness, and reuniting with loved ones. Few, however, are formally included in the Christian tradition's canonical resurrection teaching. The immortality of the soul, combined with resurrection in Christianity from the fourth century but is not a significant New Testament doctrine, strongly correlates with many of these beliefs. Americans agree with these criteria to some extent (Segal, 2010: 9). According to Islamic belief, God Almighty is the only one Who gives life, and take the souls back which leads to death. No one else can do that except with a special permission from Him, the Almighty: " Allah take the souls back at the moment of their death ..." (Azumar: 42). As for death (الوفاة), it is the process that takes place when a person is at the moment of death and at the moment of sleep. Hence it is said: He is died تُرفى is always in the passive voice, unlike the matter regarding مات (he died) which is expressed in the active voice, and also in the passive voice (omeet أميت), when the cause of his death is external, such as being killed by a person or a accident, etc. (Al-Asfar, 2020: 20). Lakoff and Turner (1989) examined common euphemisms for death. In terms of root metaphors, "LIFE IS BEING HERE" and "DEATH IS DEPARTURE" come to mind, as well as "passed away" and "was taken from us." However, many religious traditions hold that a person has a soul separate from their physical body and thus literally views death as both a departure and a release. Additionally, the usage may be metaphorical for someone conversant with such a religious system, but it is still founded on the primary metaphor. "DEATH IS THE DEPARTURE OF AN IMMATERIAL SOUL." It is necessary to consider the cultural, religious, and occasionally even political circumstances to comprehend the use of one of these terms (Braman, 2004: 41).

Epitaph in Islam and Christianity

It took a long time for a distinctly Christian epigraphic culture to form, as Cooley (2012: 63-64) demonstrates. The formulae of epitaphs share characteristics with those of paganism, much as Christian funerary art does

when it borrows and modifies the meaning of old motifs like the good shepherd. Because Christian funeral customs and the religious beliefs underpinning them, they are intrinsically linked to Christianity. Christian epitaphs exhibit a combination of epigraphic characteristics shared by non-Christian inscriptions and aspects uniquely Christian in character. The critical point of contention is the structure's designation as an "Islamic" memorial. It is a must to question if it is justified to term this tombstone "Islamic" if the goal is to express something relevant about the formation of Islam. It makes explicit and implicit references to Allah and the Hijri calendar, but it does not mention the prophet Muhammad or any passages from the Qur'an. Although it notes the passing of a Muslim, it does not otherwise have a very Islamic feel (Halevi, 2011: 15)

Types and Features of Epitaph

Epitaphs go beyond as being a mere announcement of demise; rather, they serve as evidence of how humankind views mortality. Tombstone inscriptions are unquestionably very diverse, and this diversity is precisely where much of their value lies. Epitaphs are a hybrid genre, much like obituaries, in which publicity and information coexist with objectivity and passion. There are two types of epitaphs: informative and opinion. Informative epitaphs are objective inscriptions that provide basic information (such as the name of the decedent, the dates of birth and death or the age at death). Opinion epitaphs are private and intimate funeral texts in which feelings and emotions, as well as social and political concerns, play a significant role. The table below lists the qualities of both types of epitaphs (García et al., 2013: 205). When it describes the traits and deeds of the honourable man, an epitaph honouring the deceased is rightly regarded as the noblest and pure form of praise. Private virtues are unquestionably just as deserving of this honour as public ones, and the titles of a good citizen, friend, or father amply justify being inscribed on brass or marble. A decent man's tomb can partially fill the void left by his absence and, by encouraging respect for his memory, serves as a stand-in for the opportunity to learn from and emulate him. Epitaphs can be viewed as a way for the living to communicate with the deceased or a means of giving serious instructions (Pettigrew, 1857: 18-19). Unquestionably, an epitaph ought to be brief as Scodel (1991: 2) has mentioned because of space limitations and expense, and the time involved in inscribing a monument, and portray feelings with beauty and tenderness. An epitaph should contain everything that expresses love, sadness, faith, hope, resignation, and purity. It should be relevant to the buried person and should not take too long to be remembered. Its purpose is to preserve important memories and arouse empathy in the viewer. Honest and sincere sorrow is never talkative. It should refer to the common fate of all in communicating solace and warning and instruct people to look up from the cemetery to a higher plane of existence (Pettigrew, 1857: 25-26).

RESEARCH METHOD AND DATA ANALYSIS

the research method in this study is qualitative method, namely analyzing of twenty six English and Arabic epitaphs (thirteen of each). Data collection techniques are carried out by actual visits to the cemetery and taking pictures of the various tombstones. The researcher analyzes epitaphs using two level of Analysis Grammatical Level and Social Level. The first level implies a Morpho-syntactic and Semantic analysis, while the second level carries the analysis of social factors with euphemisms and cultural analysis. Epitaphs are analyzed depending on the adopted model. Finally, the last section is about results stated and discussion.

Samples of Analysis **English Data Analysis** Sample 1



This gravestone's epitaph which is documentary one is taken from Evergreen cemetery in The United States – Arizona. This grave marker is a dual one which stands for a husband and his wife as it is stated in its textual component:

"LIVE ALL YOU CAN"

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PROFESSOR ROBERT EMMETT TINDALL 1/2/34 - 7/15/13 LINDA BROWN LYNN 7/15/43

Grammatical Level

Morphological Analysis

There is no gender morpheme in this epitaph.

Syntactic Analysis

The sentence "LIVE ALL YOU CAN" is an imperative Minor sentence consisting of a finite verb "LIVE" which is in the base form indicating present simple tense in active form, an elliptical subject implied as the reader or listener "you", and an object the noun phrase "ALL YOU CAN". The sentence does not have a specific subject, indicating that it is a general statement applicable to anyone. The sentence is a directive or command urging the listener or reader to live their life fully. It is also possible that the sentence can be interpreted as a suggestion or advice rather than a command. There is no apposition in this epitaph.

Semantic Analysis

The associative meaning of "LIVE ALL YOU CAN" can be explored through its philosophical implications. For example, the sentence can be seen as advocating for a hedonistic lifestyle. Alternatively, it can be interpreted as a call to action for individuals to pursue their passions and maximize their time on earth. The denotative purpose is straightforward: it is a directive to live life to the fullest extent possible.

The sense relation in this epitaph is a *partial synonym*. The verb "live" can be interpreted as being partial synonymous with "enjoy" or "experience." The phrase "all you can" acts as an intensifier that emphasizes the importance of living life, to its fullest.

Social Level

The epitaph 'LIVE ALL YOU CAN' has been used on the tombstones of two individual Professor Robert Emmett Tindall and Linda Brown Lynn. The choice of this epitaph may reveal insights into the deceased's social context and personal values.

Gender: The imperative verb 'live' suggests a sense of agency and empowerment in the sentence' LIVE ALL YOU CAN'. This language use may be associated with masculine speech styles prioritizing assertiveness and independence. This epitaph does not explicitly indicate gender. However, 'you' which is gender-neutral suggests a universal message not specific to any particular gender.

Age: The most straightforward way to estimate age from an epitaph is to look for birth and death dates. Thus, by mentioning the birthdate (1/2/34) and death date (7/15/13) on the gravestone of Professor Tindall, one can infer that the deceased 'ROBERT' is an old man at the time of his passing. Another clue is the use of the title "Professor" which suggests a level of education and experience that may be associated with an older individual. Linda's epitaph provides her name and birthdate but does not include a date of death which means that she is still alive at the time of writing the epitaph. Age is critical for choosing the epitaph (Live all you can), which stands as a wisdom from old, experienced individuals, thus age can be manifested in the text of epitaph. Status: The inclusion of the full name and title of Professor Tindall suggests a high level of respect and deference, which may reflect his perceived social status and authority. However, the inclusion of Linda Brown Lynn's name without a title or honorific may suggest a lower level of social status or power. Without any additional context or information, it is difficult to infer Linda's social role or her accomplishments or contributions.

The title "Professor" given to 'ROBERT' suggests that he has held an academic position. His professional title suggests that this is an essential aspect of his identity and significant achievement.

Address Forms: The epitaph combines address forms, including second person pronoun, full names and a title. Using the second person pronoun "YOU" creates a sense of direct address and personal connection with the reader, making the message more impactful. The full name is used in formal form for both ROBERT EMMETT TINDALL and LINDA BROWN LYNN. These address forms differ from traditional Western naming conventions, typically including a first, middle initial, and last name. The use of the title "Professor" for Tindall indicates that he has held an academic position, likely in a university setting. The absence of a title for Lynn suggests that she is not a public figure, nor she has held a notable position.

Euphemism: The epitaph "LIVE ALL YOU CAN" is a common expression encouraging people to live life to the fullest. It is not necessarily euphemistic but a way of softening the impact of death by such uplifting message.

Cultural Analysis: 'LIVE ALL YOU CAN' has an influence on society. It motivates individuals to pursue their life and embrace chances in order to accomplish their aspirations. This message holds significance beyond experiences. It reflects broader cultural values that emphasize the importance of pursuing one's passions, taking risks and living life authentically.

The simplicity and brevity of this phrase contribute to its memorability and impactful, allowing it to resonate with a wider audience. The use of capital letters with white color is to attract the reader and to emphasize the idea of epitaph. The background is black so that it makes the white color bright and condensed. The epitaph is written with white color which stands for purity and innocence.

Sample 2



This gravestone's epitaph which is mixed between documentary and opinion one is taken from Evergreen cemetery in Arizona - The United States. This headstone is an individual one which stands for a child as it is stated in its textual component:

Angel on earth, now angel in heaven, our baby we love, Francis Glenn Ballard Born – July 29. 1949 Died – December 21, 1959

Grammatical Level

Morphological Analysis

"Angel on earth, now angel in heaven, our baby we love" does not contain any gender marker that could bring to light the deceased gender. 'Angel' and 'Baby' which set forth in the epitaph can be indicate both male and female.

Syntactic Analysis

Epitaphs are a commonly used to honour and remember loved ones who have passed away. The language and structure (The wording and format) of epitaphs differ based on cultural and religious influences. This particular epitaph acknowledges the deceased as an "angel" who has now become an "presence, in heaven."

The epitaph's sentence, which is a minor non-sentence, is made up of two phrases and one clause that are separated by commas. The first phrase, 'Angel, on Earth' is a noun phrase sentence. The second phrase, 'now angel in heaven' is also a noun phrase.

The clause 'our baby we love' is an independent clause. The possessive pronoun 'our' indicates that the deceased was a beloved family member. The pronoun 'we' signifies that it is the family members who are grieving and expressing their love, for the deceased. The verb 'love' indicates the strong emotional bond between the family members and the deceased. The whole clause function as a supplement to the preceding clause. 'Born' and 'died' function as the predicate of the

The shift from past tense to present tense in the second phrase - "now angel in heaven" - marks the child's transition from life to death and suggests a belief in an afterlife and the child's continued existence as an angel in heaven.

Semantic Analysis

The epitaph uses powerful metaphors and imagery to convey deep emotions and meaning. By using the term "angel" it evokes notions of purity, innocence and divinity. The contrasting phrases ", on earth". in heaven" contribute, to a feeling of transition and transformation.

The epitaph is intended to convey a sense of sadness and grief, while also celebrating the life of the person who has passed away. It holds powerful emotional impact for those who read it invoking emotions such as love, grief and optimism. The epitaph serves as a reminder that even though our loved ones are no longer with us, their memory and spirit live on.

Within This Epitaph There Are Sense Relations That Can Be Observed As Follow: Antonymy

The terms 'earth' and 'heaven' have contrasting meanings symbolizing states of existence and representing opposite (reverse) type of antonymous. The juxtaposition of "earth" and "heaven" brings attention to the shift, from life to death and the belief that the deceased is now in a better place. 'Born' and 'Died' are another pair of Antonymy that is found in this epitaph and it represent a non-gradable type.

Metaphor

The mention of an "angel", in this inscription symbolizes the innocent purity, innocence, and goodness of the departed child. By referring to the child as an "angel on earth" it signifies that they brought happiness and joy during their time on Earth. Furthermore describing them as an "angel on heaven" suggests that they have now found peace and relief, from any pain or suffering. These metaphors are frequently employed in funerals or memorials to offer solace and comfort to those mourning their loss.

Social Level

Gender: The interpretation of gender cues in language can be complex and nuanced, especially concerning metaphors. In the phrase "Angel on earth, now angel in heaven, our baby we love," it is difficult to infer the gender of the baby without additional context since the expression 'angel' could refer to male or female individual.

Age: The epitaph provides clues for determining the age of *Francis Glenn Ballard*. However, there are a few possible indicators that can be explored.

Using the term 'baby' suggests that Francis Glenn Ballard was likely a young child at the time of his death. Mentioning dates or birth/death years makes it easy to determine a specific age for Francis Glenn Ballard.

Status: 'Baby' and 'angel are two indicators of the child status.

Address Forms: This epitaph contains informal address forms, (angel and baby) are forms that used in this epitaph, These are often terms of endearment used between friends or family members.

Euphemisms: There is no euphemism used in the epitaph. This epitaph contains no explicit euphemisms. However, it is common, in many cultures to refer to a loved one as an 'angel,' which can be considered a euphemistic way of referring to death. "Angel on earth, now angel in heaven" is a phrase commonly used to describe the passing of an individual. It serves as a way to soften the pain of the loss conveys a sense of hope and spirituality.

Cultural Analysis: The epitaph reflects cultural beliefs and values surrounding death and the afterlife. The term "angel" suggests a belief in a spiritual realm beyond physical existence. "Angel on Earth" and "Angel in Heaven" have different meanings and evolved across cultures. In some culture 'Angel in Heaven' is used to describe someone who has passed away and believed to have ascended to heaven.

The phrase implies that the person was good and virtuous and is now in a better place, much like an angel. In religious contexts, 'Angel on Earth' can refer to a belief that angels walk among us in human form, carrying out God's work. On the hand 'Angel in Heaven' suggests the idea that angels reside in heaven and fulfill Gods wishes. the word 'angel' suggests a belief in an afterlife and a hope for a reunion with the loved one. This belief can be found in religions, including Christianity.

This epitaph has engraved on a tombstone of gray color. This color always associates with death and symbolizes the end of live, though it has integrated with light gray (Mixed with white) to give the sense of innocent and comfort since the deceased is a little child.

Arabic Data Analysis



Sample 1

This gravestone's epitaph is taken from Álusha cemetery in Salah Ad-Din province - Iraq. This grave marker (headstone) is an individual one that stands for a mother as it is stated from its textual component: My mother is the first homeland and the last exile

the pilgrim Wadha Nouri Hazza

Passed away $2021\12\22$

Grammatical Level

Morphological Analysis

The following epitaph will be analyzed morphologically to determine the markers that determine gender(Morphologically marked):

The suffix "ة" in "الحاجة" indicates that the deceased is a female. It is a feminine marker in Arabic.

The suffix "توفيت" in اتوفيت" indicates that the deceased is a female. It is a feminine marker in Arabic.

Syntactic Analysis

The sentence "My mother is the first homeland and the last exile" is a nominal sentence. It's a declarative major sentence. This simple sentence structure makes a statement consists of a subject and a predicate. The predicate comprises two clauses, The first clause is 'the first homeland', while the second clause is 'and the last exile'. Using the word 'and' creates a sense of continuity between the two clauses.

"Al-Hajja (the pilgrim) Wadha Nouri Hazza" is a major nominal declarative sentence, it is an apposition that functions as the predicate of the omitted subject of the sentence (this is the grave) which is omitted due to the small size of the tombstone (for curtailment) and the subject is already known. Passive voice indicates by the minor non-sentence which is the verb phrase "passed away" that is a finite verb in passive past tense indicating that the action has already occurred.

Semantic Analysis

The epitaph 'My mother is the first homeland and the last expatriate' implies a few sense relations:

Metaphor

The epitaph employs a metaphorical device. The speaker compares their mother to a homeland, suggesting that their mother is a place of comfort and familiarity, where they belong. 'homeland' also used as a metaphor for one's roots or identity. Using the word 'last' in the second clause creates a sense of finality and loss, emphasizing the idea of a departure from one's homeland.

Antonym

The phrase 'first homeland and last exile' contrasts two opposing ideas. The speaker's mother is both their home and their departure point, suggesting that the mother is both a source of comfort and a reminder of the pain of leaving. 'first' and 'last' represent reverse antonymous relation while 'homeland' and 'expatriate' denote non-gradable antonymy.

Social Level

According to Holmes, language is a critical factor in establishing and maintaining social relationships and can be used to express one's identity. In this case, using the word "homeland" to describe the speaker's mother presents a strong emotional connection to their family.

Gender: From a sociolinguistic perspective, using the term 'mother' highlights the significance of family and motherly duties typically linked to femininity, it implies that women are traditionally associated with motherhood and caregiving role.

Age: The use of the term 'Hajja' before the deceased's name suggests that she was an elderly women. Additionally, the term 'mother' implies that the deceased was a mother and the speaker is one of her children which reinforces the assumption of her age.

Status

The phrase 'My mother is the first homeland and the last expatriate' is a poetic expression highlighting the importance of the deceased's role as a mother and her relation with her children. This suggests that the deceased was highly valued within her family. The phrase also stresses the deep bond between a mother and her child and the loss and displacement felt by those left behind. 'homeland' is often associated with a physical place or country.

Using the word "mother" strongly emphasizes maternal status as a married women who has children.

The use of the term 'pilgrim' which precedes the deceased's name indicates a level of religious devotion and status within her community.

Address Forms

The term "Hajja" is a honorific title given to Muslim women who have successfully completed the pilgrimage to Mecca and is a term of respect for older women in general.

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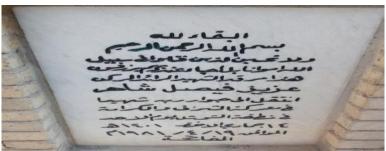
The second address form used in this epitaph is the kinship term "mother" First, middle and last name are mentioned in this epitaph.

Euphemism: Arabic epitaphs often use euphemistic expressions to comfort family and friends during a difficult time. 'passed away' نوفیت' is used as a way to soften the blow of death and comfort to those who are grieving the loss of a loved one."

Cultural Analysis: Arabic epitaphs have evolved, reflecting changes in culture and society. In the past, epitaphs were often simple, focusing on religious themes and the afterlife. However, modern epitaphs are more personal and often include expressions of love and gratitude for the deceased. Arabs often use themes of home and homeland to provide a sense of comfort and belonging for their loved ones. These themes are deeply rooted in Arab culture, where the concept of home is highly valued and cherished.

Whereas, motherhood is highly valued and respected, mothers are often referred to as a homeland, this epitaph 'My mother is the first homeland and the last expatriate' indicates that one's mother is one's true home, and even after death, one remains an expatriate, meaning that the love and connection to one's mother transcends physical boundaries. The whole epitaph is written in black color which is used as symbol of loose and mourning on a marble grave marker.

Sample 2



This gravestone's epitaph is taken from Al-khayzran cemetery in Baghdad-Iraq. The headstone which is a documentary one with some additional information, is an individual one which stands for a martyr as it is stated in its textual component:

"To Allah we belong, and to Him we shall return.

With the name of Allah the most Gracious the most Merciful

Think not of those who are killed in the Way of Allah as dead. Nay, they are alive, with their Lord, and they have provision. This is the grave of the martyr, Staff Major Aziz Faisal Shaher, who moved next to his Lord as a martyr on Sunday, 14 Jumada al-Akhir 1401 AH (corresponding to April 19, 1981), in the battle of honor and dignity in the Shush region. Al Fatiha"

Grammatical Level

Morphological Analysis

Arabic is one of the languages that distinguish between male and female through some additions (affixes) at the beginning or end of the word as a prefix or suffix. The adjective (the martyr) is written in masculine form since the feminine form of this adjective is by adding (5) at the end of it.

Syntactic Analysis

In this epitaph, the sentence (this is the shrine of the martyr staff major Aziz Faisal Shaher) is a declarative major nominal sentence. The statement entails facts related to the deceased "Aziz Faisal Shaher".

The nominal sentence consists of The adverb' this ' is the subject of the sentence and 'The grave of the martyr staff major Aziz Faisal Shaher قبر الشهيد الرائد الركن عزيز فيصل شاهر is the predicate. The predicate consists of a noun phrase, with 'grave عنه' as the head and 'the martyr, staff martyr Aziz Faisal Shaher', as the modifiers. The descriptive phrase includes a series of adjectives and nouns that indicate the rank and name of the dead.

The epitaph contains several aspect markers that convey information about the timing and nature of the related events. The verb ""moved" is, in the past tense, which shows that the martyr's death has already occurred. The preposition "next to his Lord" indicating where the martyr's soul is after death. The adjective as a martyr" describes how the martyr died. The verbal clause indicating through the sentence (moved next to his God) which is a declarative major sentence. (moved) is a finite verb, indicating tense (past tense), gender, person and number (third person singular) written in active form.

(in the battle of honour and dignity in the Shoushal region) في معركة الشرف والكرامة في منطقة الشوشل' The prepositional phrase modifies the verb' انتقل', indicating the location and circumstances of the martyr's death. The adverbial phrase (Sunday, 14 Jumada al-Akhirah 1401 AH) refers to the specific day of the martyr's death. The noun phrase 'الموافق' (corresponding to) is followed by the date '19/4/1981', meaning the corresponding Gregorian date.

Semantic Analysis

The epitaphs language evokes emotions, Conveying a sense of martyrdom and heroism. The phrase "Do not think of those who have been killed in the way of Allah, as dead. They are alive with their Lord receiving sustenance" is a quote, from the Quran (2;154) that highlights the concept of martyrdom and life after death. The inclusion of the word "martyr" further strengthens this notion.

The epitaph of Aziz Faisal Shaher beautifully commemorates his courage and selflessness, as a martyr in the fight for honor and dignity. Overall, this inscription serves as a tribute, to Shaher's bravery and unwavering dedication to his cause. The use of the term "martyr" emphasizes his sacrifice and deep devotion to his beliefs while the phrase "beside his Lord" alludes to his faith and profound spiritual commitment. By mentioning the location and date of his passing, the epitaph provides historical context that further amplifies its significance.

Sense Relations Typically Involve the Semantic Relationship Between Words Or Concepts Within A Sentence Or Text.

Antonymy

The verse of Quran contains an example of Antonymy which is a "relationship of opposition" between words, such as with "dead" and "alive" in the Qur'an verse as a type of Non-gradable Antoymy.

Synonyms

The verse also contains an example of near synonyms which are expressions that are more or less similar. In Islamic culture, martyrdom is considered a great honour and a way to attain paradise. The word martyr repeated twice to convey the sense of death, so the two concepts martyrdom and death could be seen as near synonyms.

This epitaph is meant to remind believers that death is not the end but rather a transition to a new life in the afterlife.

Metaphor

The terms "dead" and "alive" are employed metaphorically to convey the concept of an existence beyond death. The word "receiving" suggests a flow of nourishment and support. The reference to the battle of honour and dignity suggests that the battle was fought for a noble reason and that Aziz Faisal Shaher was a hero who died defending his country and his people's honor and dignity.

In (He moved next to his Lord) the sense relation of Metaphor can be recognized. Metaphor is a form of figurative language which involves describing something in term of another thing. Instead of using the verb died, the verb phrase moved next to acting as moving from one life to another. life likened to a journey and death is the end of that journey where the deceased move from it to another life, even the Qur'an quotation carries out this fact, the martyrs are treated as alive not a dead. So the word chosen to describe his death was moved - as moving from one life to another or from one station to another-.

Social Level

The social level of this epitaph shows a great deal of knowledge about language functioning, social interactions in a community, and how people express and construct aspects of their social identity through their language.

Gender: In Arabic language, gender is typically indicated by using masculine and feminine word forms. In this epitaph, the usage of adjective masculine forms like" major" and "martyr" further reinforces the notion that the individual in question was indeed male.

Âge: Taking the language indicators found in this epitaph into account, we can deduce that the individual who passed away was probably a middle-aged or older military officer with a high rank at the time of his death.

Status: The epitaph of Aziz Shaher pays tribute to a martyr who lost his life in a battle fighting for honor and dignity. The epitaph suggests that the deceased was motivated by his faith to fight in the battle.

The staff major, which is a rank in military, shows the deceased status and contribution to his country that has been represented through his sacrifice in defense of his country in the battle of honor and dignity, and even the name of the battle, added to the high status of the deceased, as he died in the defense of the honor and dignity of his country.

The verse, from the holy Quran, holds symbolism within culture. It serves as a messages of condolence and comfort for the family of the deceased, emphasizing the value of sacrifice and martyrdom within traditions.

Address Form: Address forms and titles used in the epitaph provide insights into the age, social status, military rank, and religious beliefs at the time of death.

The dead, Just like the living, have an identifying identity, which is their own grave. Therefore, the tombstones contain the names of the deceased in commemoration of them by mentioning their names and any information that pertains to them. Epitaph In English and Arabic: A Sociolinguistic Perspective

First, middle and last name are mentioned as identification of the deceased so family members, acquaintances, friends and loved ones can easily distinguish the grave from the rest.

In this epitaph, the deceased is referred to as a martyr (religious term) and the mention of his death in a battle also suggests a certain level of heroism and sacrifice," "الرائد الركن" (the staff major), indicates that he held a rank in the military which typically requires several years of experience (attaining this rank as a result of the promotions he has received and the scientific courses he has obtained). This shows how social considerations affect language choice.

Euphemism: The epitaph uses religious language which serves as a way to soften the impact of death, *the martyr* is used euphemistically instead of using *the dead*. The Qur'an verse comforts the deceased's family and community and reinforces the belief that the deceased sacrifice was noble and worthwhile.

"Moved to be with his Lord, as a martyr" could be seen as an euphemism indicating someone has died. It is a common way of referring to death in many cultures and can be seen as a way of softening the blow of the loss.

Cultural Analysis: Making reference to a verse from the Quran symbolizing the culture and its religious convictions. The verse, that discusses the notion of individuals who pass away while serving God not being seen as dead, on the contrary as alive and cared for by God. This verse is frequently recited during funeral prayers serving as a reminder of the faith in life, after death and the dedication of those who perish while serving God.

In epitaphs, the use of white and black colors can create a sense of balance and contrast, drawing attention to the most important elements of the text.

White Color

In epitaphs, white color is often used to symbolize purity, innocence, and peace. It is also associated with mourning and grief, as it represents the absence of life and the emptiness left behind. In this gravestone it's used as the background of the epitaph.

Black Color

Black color is commonly used in epitaphs to represent death, mourning, and remembrance. It is associated with the darkness and finality of death, as well as the weight of grief and loss.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Here is a summary of the key findings from the analysis of English and Iraqi Arabic epitaphs:

English Epitaphs

Use only verbal sentences, with a mix of declarative major sentences and minor sentences (irregular/non-sentences). Verbs are in past tense, with passive voice used to highlight the deceased.

Contain no gender markers, so the deceased's gender is rarely specified.

Reflect associative meaning through sense relations like synonymy, antonymy, and metaphor.

Show gender differences, with male epitaphs focused on accomplishments and female ones on familial roles.

Vary in length and use of address forms based on the deceased's age, with older people getting more elaborate epitaphs. Use address forms like names, titles, and descriptive phrases to identify the deceased.

Sometimes use euphemistic language to soften the impact of death and are generally more subtle and less religious.

Reflect the cultural context and evolving social norms. Epitaphs of twentieth century tend to be personal/emotional in their styles and commonly use black, white, and gray colors as symbols of death and mourning.

Arabic Epitaphs

Use both nominal and verbal declarative sentences, often in passive voice to emphasize God's control over life and death. Contain gender markers in verbs, nouns, and adjectives.

Use associative meaning through sense relations like synonymy, antonymy, and metaphor.

Reflect traditional gender roles, with women described as virtuous and men as brave.

Vary in length and use of address forms based on the deceased's age, with more for older people.

Use extensive address forms like names, titles, and descriptors.

Widely employ euphemisms and Quranic verses to soften the impact of death.

Strongly reflect Arab Islamic culture and beliefs, including Quranic quotes, Hijri calendar, and concepts like martyrdom and commonly use black, white, and green colors, which have Islamic symbolic meaning.

CONCLUSIONS

Here is a summary of the key conclusions from the analysis of English and Arabic epitaphs:

Textual Analysis

English and Arabic epitaphs differ in their morpho-syntactic structure. Arabic epitaphs use a mix of verbal and nominal sentences, while English epitaphs use more verbal sentences, ranging from major to minor. Passive voice is common in Arabic epitaphs and also found in English epitaphs.

Declarative sentences are the most common form in both English and Arabic epitaphs.

Gender Representation

English is a gender-neutral language, with gender inferred only through certain nouns/pronouns.

Arabic is a gender-biased language, with gender explicitly marked through verb conjugations.

Semantic Meaning

Both English and Arabic epitaphs convey denotative and social/community meanings through textual and discursive strategies. Metaphor is a common sense relation found in both.

Social Analysis

Representing Age and Gender

Age and gender are more frequently indicated in Arabic epitaphs through address terms.

Linguistic cues differ for male vs. female epitaphs in both languages.

Reflecting Social Status

English epitaphs reflect the deceased's social status through phrases indicating family/occupational roles. Arabic epitaphs always reflect the deceased's social status through honorific titles.

Use of Euphemisms

Arabic epitaphs widely use euphemistic expressions related to death and the afterlife. English epitaphs do not contain overt euphemisms but use positive phrasing.

Cultural Reflections

English epitaphs emphasize individual achievements, while Arabic ones highlight family and social status. Arabic epitaphs reflect Islamic beliefs and cultural norms, such as using Quranic verses and not naming women. Color symbolism is used in epitaphs to create mood and draw attention.

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