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Abstract

Proverbs are celebrated for their analytic accuracy, and their richness echoes human history; hence, they are eligible to receive narrative treatment. Proverbs are especially rich, having examined and recorded many aspects of people's concerns and aspirations. The way we make sense of characters in a hypothetical situation like proverbs relates to our prior knowledge of people we might have known or met. The characterization of family members, more specifically fathers, is especially valuable to gain a better understanding of their role in society as depicted in several proverbs. This study offers a contrastive cognitive stylistic analysis of paternal figures in Egyptian and English proverbs. Using Componential Analysis and Culpeper's characterization model, the research examines the Egyptian proverbs from Ahmad Taymour's book *Colloquial Proverbs* and the English proverbs from the PROMETHEUS corpus, based on their mention of the kinship term *father(s)*. Analysis and results reveal that English proverbs depict fathers as idealized, static figures associated with wisdom, tradition, and moral authority while Egyptian proverbs present a wider emotional and social range, portraying fathers as fallible or absent, often through metaphor, irony, and oppositional dynamics to mothers or daughters. The study finds that Egyptian proverbs encode more vivid and dynamic family relationships. The study highlights how proverbs, as micro-narratives, function as powerful tools for expressing and challenging familial ideologies and roles.

***Keywords*:** componential analysis, proverbs, cognitive stylistics, characterization, fathers

INTRODUCTION

Proverbs are an integral part of culture and ideology, and they function as carriers of communal, shared values. Linguistically, they are unique, compact utterances of inherited wisdom cherished by people through the years. They offer insights into complex sociocultural issues in a brief memorable manner. Thus, the power behind proverbs is indeed in the quick perceptiveness they deliver in an effortless and artistic fashion. According to Mieder (2015), proverbs are short in structure; coined from general observation; and used widely by people due to their sharpness. Once a culture adopts a proverb, it becomes embedded in daily discourse; a part of a society's heritage; and a reflection of its ideology. As Grzybek (2015) notes, proverbs are a part of folklore, a very lively image of society and culture. Due to its importance, the study of proverbs or paremiology has gained scholarly attention because they contribute to social regulation and cultural preservation.

In both Arabic and English, proverbs give insights about familial relations and power. Kinship terms manifest in proverbs because they define social roles and power dynamics between the members of one family. Proverbs about fathers highlight a key role in society as well as their authority and lineage. While there is a general understanding of paternal figures as the moral head of the family's hierarchy, their roles are different from one culture to another and is not fixed. Kinship terms have been under examination using componential analysis (CA), which is a semantic framework that breaks down words into their primary semantic features (Kazeminejad et al., 2022; Geeraerts, 2006; Lyons, 1977b; Nida, 1975). Kinship terms are organized culturally in a way that is well suited for CA (Frawley, 2013; Nida, 1975). To analyze father figures like kinship terms (Leech, 1981; Goodenough, 1965, 1956) and later (Bernard, 2011; Geeraerts, 2006) have proven that CA can offer an the analysis that is sensitive to cultural and societal norms. Fathers are not only semantic entities, but they are also relational figures with a network of connections with other members of the family (Fox, 1983).

The value of proverbs is clear through linguistic choices, and they refine deep cultural patterns that define families of a specific society. These morals are mirrored clearly in kinship terms (Gaby, 2017; Wardhaugh, 1986), especially paternal ones. Alongside CA, which offers the backbone of the present study, the examination of the selected proverbs makes use of Culpeper's (2001; 2002; 2009) cognitive stylistic model of characterization. To shed light on the construction of father figures in both Egyptian and English proverbs, the selected model offers a characterization that comes to life when the linguistic and experiential cues are analyzed to make sense of the selected proverbs. Thus, characters are not just static entities in a text, but they are actively shaped by linguistic phenomena such as metaphor and cultural schema, among many others cognitive phenomena. I argue that this framework is suitable to examine proverbs, as they are considered micro-narratives (Eder et al., 2010). The present study aims to uncover the wisdom proverbs deliver about fathers by examining metaphors, deixis, lexical choices, narration and stylistic tools. Linguistic patterns, from a cognitive stylistic approach, reveal how father figures can be deconstructed through CA to understand proverbs linguistically and culturally in both the Egyptian and English proverbs and societies.

Research Questions

The following research questions guide the present study:

1. How is the *father figure* characterized in the Egyptian and English proverbs as revealed by the application of Culpeper's cognitive stylistic framework?
2. In both cultures, what are the ways of reinforcing or challenging the social role of *fathers*?
3. What are the recurrent linguistic patterns that reveal a contrast in the depiction of *fathers* between the two corpora from the two cultures?

Review of Literature

Componential Analysis (CA)

Semantically, one lexeme can carry significant meaning. "A single word may have a number of quite different senses" (Nida, 2015, p. 1). Componential analysis or CA is a line of linguistic investigation that breaks down basic blocks of meaning one word may encompass these blocks or features are known as semantic components. CA or *lexical decomposition* aims to enact analysis on a word level to extract its core meaning. It illuminates the way speakers relate to the world around them using their cognitive and psychological abilities (Goodenough, 1956). Nonetheless, meaning making is still a challenging process that humans try to decipher, and CA can offer a valuable toolkit. According to CA, "binary opposition" is based on "unmarked neutral" terms (Leech, 1981, p. 113), which is linked to Nida's example of blueness, if there were no other colors, then this particular color would not exists because it occurs in opposition to other colors (Nida, 1975). An ingrained occurrence raises from opposition which is a "positive-negative bias inherent to the semantic opposition itself" (Leech, 1981, p. 114).

While CA can be criticized for its limitation to "neatly organized" lexical choices (Leech, 1981, p. 117), it can be very helpful in kinship terms because they are already systematically organized and used in all languages. Thus, these terms are widely known and accepted by language users. According to Lyons (1977), CA is related to concepts in the human mind rather than fixed terms in the actual world. CA extends analyses on an atomic level for words and our perceptions of them. Therefore, "'man' (construed as the complementary of 'woman') might be held to combine (in the molecular concept "man") the atomic concepts "male", "adult" and "human"; and the sense of 'woman' might be held to differ from that of 'man' solely in that it combines "female" (or "not-male")" (Lyons, 1977, p. 317). CA can offer not only an examination of components of one word, but it also uncovers the relationship between certain words and others (Nida, 2015). Thus, an investigation of kinship terms can receive help from CA.

"Kinship and marriage are about the basic facts of life. They are about birth, and copulation, and death" (Fox, 1983, p. 27). Kinship terms, according to Frawley (2013, p. 138), can be scrutinized through consanguinity, i.e. kinship by common descent or of the same blood, lineality, i.e. an individual's direct ancestors or descendants (whether lineal or collateral), and generation, which is also known as

semantic systems by Goodenough (1956). In line with Wierzbicka (1992), to examine the features of mothers and fathers for example, we must look at the two concepts of first ascending generation and lineality as well. In terms of kinship, the term mother has been extensively studied and assigned features like the: *woman*, *giving birth*, *raising* children, and *single generation*. Interestingly, the word is charged with semantic and social meanings, as mothers, needless to say, play a crucial role in the society and has the responsibility of setting/playing roles (Bakenova et al., 2023).

According to genealogy, the person under examination is titled 'ego' (Nida, 1975, p. 33). Thus, the features: ascending generations include 'ancestors', 'parent', 'lineal', and other features in terms of which the words for mother and father are explored. Hence, someone's ancestors include people who existed before them and also involves fathers and mothers, "who are mutually related in such a way that everyone in that group is the father or mother of someone else in the group" (Wierzbicka, 1992, p. 331). Furthermore, the significance of kinship terms and their examination stems from the fact that society is regulated by genealogical ties that define people's relations to each other (Scheffler, 1972). Thus, culture is an integral part in making sense of many words' internal meaning and structure, most importantly, the lexicon around kinship relations (Gaby, 2017).

Hence, the elementary, constant essence of kinship semantics in English contains bases like "self, parent (the relation of parents to children), sibling, *nuncle* (the relation of aunts and uncles to nieces and nephews)., and cousin" as well as the aspect of gender that governs males and females relations within a family (Kay, 1976, p. 1). Because genealogy is universal, all languages around the world include lexicon to address relations of kinship; however, they are not the same in every culture and language (Danziger, 2023). This taxonomy is based on the ascending generation of mothers, fathers, and their siblings. In English the taxonomy then joins together fathers and mothers' sisters to call them all aunts (Denning & Kemmer, 1990). English has a system that does not distinguish between fathers and mothers' relatives. In English, Jackson (2014) makes a classification based on CA, which he divides to gender, generation (ascending or descending). He also uses the element of lineality, which leaves out grandparents. Although they are different from one society to another, families matter greatly in shaping one's life, which is reflected in linguistic systems differently (Wardhaugh, 1986), specially in Arabic and English, which are the two languages relevant to this study.

Specific to the purpose of this study is the CA of *fathers*. A father is related to the self or the ego in relation to specific features. For one, the father is "the name of one's biological progenitor," and he is related to the mother in terms of a contrasting relationship, in which a father is +MALE but the mother is -MALE. The father also has a contrasting relation with the grandfather, although they are both +MALE, they do not share the same generation. The same goes with the son, as they do not share the same generation either, in other words, it is "one ascending generation above ego." The father is also a person who is in "direct line of descent." However, all these kinship terms are +HUMAN and +KINS (Nida, 1975, p. 33). Furthermore, a father does not only play a biological role, but he also offers "watchful care" and

"companionship" (Nida, 1975, p. 34). According to this study, fathers play distinct roles in the two cultures under examination.

CHARACTERIZATION

Cognitive stylistics has dissolved the boundaries between different branches including linguistics and cognitive sciences. This field is rich with potential, as it studies comprehensive linguistic examinations of literary studies. It also focuses on the phases we go through to both generate and make sense of instances of language. In terms of characterization, cognitive stylistics relates linguistic reflections to cognitive ones, offering in the process insights towards the creation or assembly and understanding of characters within a text (Culpeper, 2009). Examining this field of study is crucial in many fields using various lenses. Characters come to life in a text as a result of an interplay between *top-bottom* understanding which stems from the readers' previous knowledge and experience of the world, and another type of understanding called *bottom-up* that is created by cues offered by the text. Therefore, three elements control the process of characterization, and they are "narratorial control, the presentation of self or other, and the explicitness or implicitness of the textual cue." This sheds light on: "narratorial filters (point of view, mind style and the presentation of speech and thought), character indexing (through, for example, speech acts) and inter-character dynamics (through, for example, the manipulation of social relations)" (Culpeper & Fernandez-Quintanilla, 2017, p. 94). It is then clear that characters are the product of a complicated interlinkage or reciprocity between previous knowledge of the world and new cues the text hands to the reader (Culpeper, 2002).

Since characters are essential in understanding fiction, their nature of existence has received much attention from many scholars (see Culpeper, 2001, 2002, 2009, 2014; Culpeper & Fernandez-Quintanilla, 2017; Margolin, 2007; Toolan, 2001; Simpson, 1993). Views to grasp their ontology include semiotics which views them as signs; cognitive approaches which consider them to be illustrations of readers' imaginations; philosophy that views them as conceptualized beings; and other views that argue that characters are not present in our world (Eder et al., 2010). Furthermore, characters occupy not only novels and plays, but also spaces like proverbs, so their examination is of foremost importance. Proverbs are also a product of an intricate interrelation between what we already know about the world and new cues coming directly at us from the proverb.

A proverb is a "folklore unit." Furthermore, "depending on the definition of text, a proverbial sentence can be seen to be a full text in its own right, eventually embedded into a situational context and additional co-text" (Grzybek, 2015, p. 75). Proverbs have their place in the field of paremiology and have been a cornerstone in the study of folklore, yet other disciplines including linguistics have examined proverbs from different angles and offered diverse insights into the nature of proverbs. Moreover, proverbs are often cited by people as a part of commonplace language that exudes sophisticated wisdom. They can also be used on a global scale by many people to express a common or shared value or idea. The development of proverbs is natural and is an essential part of the progression of the society from which they stem. In essence, proverbs are fashioned by one creative person, who "at

some time and somewhere couches a general observation, behavior, or experience into a short complete sentence that subsequently is picked up by others" (Mieder, 2015, p. 28). Some proverbs cannot be traced back to their original creator while others can be with accuracy. Whether we can trace a proverb to its originator or not, they are still a representation of the people who use it. Proverbs include familiar relations, mentioned implicitly or explicitly, most importantly those about fathers, the core of this study. Thus, characterization of personas in proverbs is crucial due to the importance of proverbs in cultures.

Related Studies

A number of studies have examined the structural richness and cultural specificity of kinship terms, especially in relation to semantic structure (Al-Khawaldeh et al., 2024; Pericliev, 2014; Dhayef & Alhussaini, 2010). Al-Khawaldeh et al. (2024) argue that the universal use of kinship terminology is the result of their unique internal structure as well as the communicative role they play in language use. Upon examining English and Arabic proverbs, the study found different preferences of the use of proverbs for every language. While there are universal aspects of proverbs, there are unique aspects in each language that reflect diversity. Their study based on proverbs highlighting the ideological portrayals of women in Jordanian proverbs reveal that women can be depicted in both lights; positive and negative, but negative representation are more ubiquitous. Gender roles influence power and domination in society, which is reflected in the study of proverbs. The study highlights that proverbs perpetrate an inferior role of women. Pericliev (2014) finds that methods of application of componential analysis have problems, one related to dependable definitions and the other is related to solving issues related to these definitions. His research introduces software developed to examine kinship terms. The program offers dependable, simple models applied to Serbo-Croatian vocabulary of kinship. The program was able to build simple yet effective methods which were applied to twenty different languages. As for Dhayef and Alhussaini (2010), they traced Arabic's kinship terms. Blood Kinship terms are classified into three categories: parents (mothers and fathers) and their descendants (son, daughter, grandson, and granddaughter); brothers and sisters and their descendants (nephew: son of brother, niece: daughter of brother, nephew: son of sister, niece: daughter of sister); uncles and aunts (paternal uncle, paternal aunt, maternal uncle, maternal aunt, paternal male cousin, paternal female cousin, maternal male cousin, maternal female cousin). In Arabic, marriage also accounts for kinship terms like father-in-law, mother-in-law, brother-in-law (brother of the husband is different from the sister's husband) sister-in-law (brother's wife and husband's sister). The differences between kinship terms in different languages and cultures are clear. This is clear in a pair of languages like Arabic and English. An ideal example is the distinctions between paternal and maternal uncles, aunts, and cousins in Arabic, which does not exist in English. There is also a relation between two men marrying two sisters and two women marrying two brothers. These affinal relationships are also collateral between the same generation in relation to the ego. As for Jones (2010), the study aims to shed light on the evolution of the study of kinship terms. This study highlights the borrowed aspects of kinship, which often uses aspects from genealogy. Furthermore,

the study of kinship mirrors other fields in linguistics such as phonetics, syntax, and semantics.

A significant body of research has investigated how proverbs across cultures encode gendered assumptions, frequently privileging male authority while marginalizing female voices (Shadeed & Khalil, 2024; Altohami, 2023; Rani & Ranjha, 2020; Shi & Zhang, 2017; Rasul, 2015). Shadeed and Khalil (2024) examine the representation of males and females in English in contrast to Palestinian proverbs, concentrating on negative characteristics. This study implemented Fairclough's (1989) three-dimensional model to scrutinize the selected proverbs. The study maintains that the image of women in both English and Palestinian proverbs is negative and *distressing*. Both cultures uphold a male-controlled society that stigmatizes and harms women. Altohami (2023) focuses on the portrayal of the *wife* in a study of gender in Egyptian and American corpora. The results of the study highlight that the American proverbs have missed some aspects that are well covered in the Egyptian proverbs, which is a result similar to the present study. Also, the study found that wives are represented negatively in the Egyptian corpus and in a way that stigmatizes them.

According to Rani and Ranjha (2020), proverbs offer portrayals of identities and relations of power between men and women. Their research examines the representation of men and women in English proverbs and the relationship between the two. The study applied the 3D model of Fairclough (1989). They arrived at the conclusion that many proverbs use derogatory sentiment when describing women but use the opposite approach with men. The study also maintains that power is always held by men. According to Shi and Zhang (2017), proverbs in English are highly sexist. They offer an insight to a culture that gives a comparatively inferior status for women. Sexism sweeps in linguistic forms including proverbs. The study claims to offer insights into the English-speaking world and the west in general. Rasul (2015) examines gender and language role in proverbs, especially highlighting the different power dynamics between genders. The data focuses on English and Urdu proverbs to reveal the different gender roles in these two different societies. The study focuses on women portrayal and stereotypes perpetuated by users of the two languages. The study concludes that both English and Urdu show women as inferior to men. They are less smart, and they are only appreciated due to their beauty.

METHODOLOGY

Proverbs are examined in this paper to characterize the *paternal figures* in a curated corpus of Egyptian and English proverbs. Using CA to break down the term *father*, the present study makes use of Culpeper's (2001, 2002, 2009) cognitive stylistic model of characterization as its main framework.

Research Design

The present study adopts a research design that is: qualitative, contrastive, and corpus based. The study extracts proverbs from two distinct cultures and languages: Arabic and English, with the aim of examining the kin term *father* to offer a characterization of paternal figures in both corpora. The analysis combines CA, to break down the features of the term, with Culpeper's cognitive stylistic framework to make use of his characterization model. This aim of the study is to characterize father

figures as depicted in the two corpora, using the stylistic tools presented by Culpeper (e.g., metaphor, deixis, evaluative language, mind style and inter-character dynamics).

Data Selection

The study aims at analyzing all the proverbs in two corpora that reference the word 'father(s)' explicitly. The two corpora are: *Colloquial Proverbs* by Ahmed Taymour Pasha (Taymoor, 1949), which is a seminal work that collected and explained over 3000 proverbs spanning everyday wisdom and cultural values in the Egyptian society in the early 20th-century. As for the English corpora, it is extracted from the PROMETHEUS corpus (Özbal et al., 2016), which is an annotated collection of over 3000 English tagged proverbs. The kin term of father is referenced seven times in the English corpus and twenty-three in the Egyptian one. The rationale for the selection of the study of proverbs is that they are culturally significant (Grzybek, 2015; Mieder, 2015); the most frequent kinship term in both corpora; and they offer insights into a certain society in a specific time. These insights offer an examination of characters, as proverbs are ideologically potent. Since fathers are significant kinship figures and the ones mentioned the most in the two corpora, they are well-suited for the present study's purposes, as they are represented significantly differently across the two cultures. The selection of Egyptian and English proverbs offers a contrastive linguistic comparison that reflects different but rich traditions.

Framework

This paper applies the model of characterization by Culpeper (2001, 2002, 2009); a framework that perceives of texts as a construct that comes to life as a result of an interplay between textual cues and readers' inferences. For the purpose of characterization, metaphor, deixis, evaluative language, and inter-character dynamics are applied. These dynamic characters can be examined through point of view, deixis, evaluative language, metaphors, and lexical choices that shape the roles of kinship in proverbs and society. This model is especially applicable to proverbs because while they are brief, they contain characters, context, and roles. By analyzing these layers that form proverbs, father figures are best understood as depicted in the two selected cultures.

Procedure

The analysis is executed in the following phases:

1. I conducted a semantic analysis of kinship terms across bilingual corpora of proverbs using a combination of frequency analysis and network-based visualization. The Arabic texts were first normalized to account for orthographic variation, including the unification of character forms and the removal of diacritics. For English, a simpler preprocessing step was applied by converting all text to lowercase. Arabic proverbs were tokenized using the CAMeL Tools tokenizer, and lemmas were extracted through morphological analysis to ensure lexical consistency in finding kinship terms. Frequency analysis was then performed, whereby kinship terms were counted across both corpora. In the Arabic dataset, term frequencies were based on lemma-level matches, while in the English corpus, frequencies were calculated through

direct substring matching. To enable cross-linguistic comparison, Arabic kinship terms were grouped under their corresponding English equivalents. These frequencies were then visualized in a bilingual bar chart, which presented side-by-side counts for each category across both languages. Additionally, I constructed co-occurrence networks to capture the relational structure among kinship terms. In these networks, nodes stand for individual kinterms are scaled by their frequency while edges denote co-occurrence within the same proverb and are weighted according to the number of co-occurrences. For Arabic, proper display of labels was ensured through text reshaping and bidirectional rendering using the arabic_reshaper and python-bidi libraries. This integrated approach identified both the prevalence and contextual clustering of kinship concepts within and across the two linguistic traditions. Figure 1 shows the kinship term *father* is the most frequently used, justifying its centrality in the study.

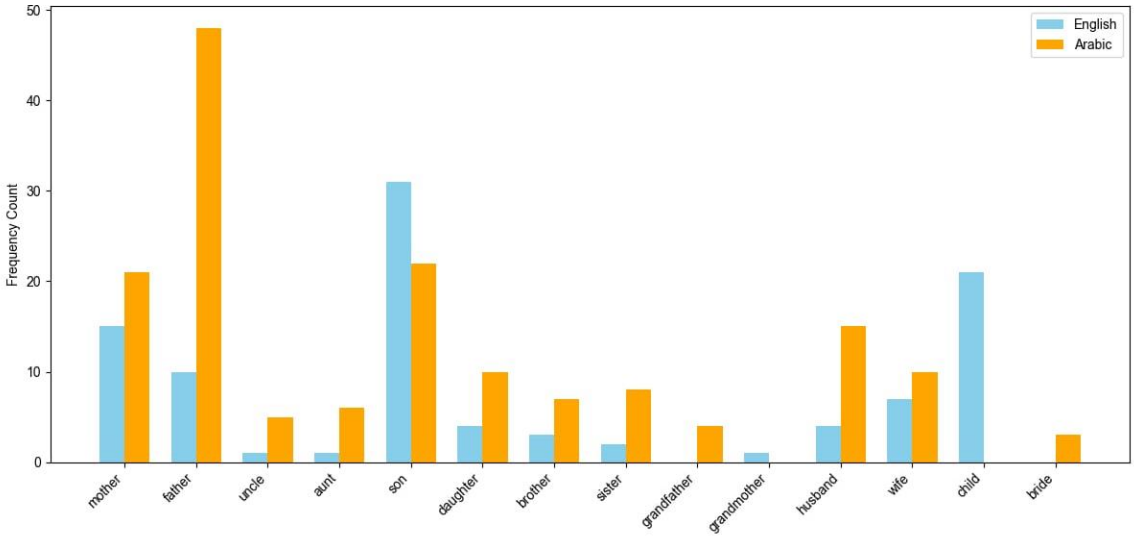

FIGURE 1.KINSHIP TERM FREQUENCY COMPARSION. ENGLISH VS ARABIC.

2. Analysis sections and tables: The analysis is divided into three sections; one that is shared between the two corpora, one specific to the Egyptian proverbs, and a third specific to the English corpora. The analysis is presented in tables containing the proverbs, which are thematically tabulated in nine tables.

3. Thematic coding: Proverbs are grouped on the basis thematic categories based on shared motifs. These themes are Nepotism, Inherited Roles, Identity, Moral Burden, Paternal Authority, Failure to Fulfill Familial Duty (Fathers towards daughters), Failure to Fulfill Familial Duty (Fathers towards sons), Failure to Fulfill Familial Duty (Children towards Fathers), and Tradition. The themes are chosen based on careful reading across the selected proverbs in the two corpora.

4. Characterization: Each proverb is analyzed using Culpeper's (2001, 2002, 2009); framework using different linguistic tools like lexical choices, deixis,

evaluative language, metaphor, and schemata, and based on the selected term of father based on CA.

5. Findings and conclusions: This section offers findings based on the three research questions mentioned earlier.

ANALYSIS

i. Themes shared between the Arabic and the English proverbs:

TABLE 1

THEME OF NEPOTISM

Proverb(s)	
English proverb 1	He whose father is judge goes safe to trial.
Arabic proverbs 1 & 2	اِكْمِن أَبُوكْ جِنْدِي دَايِرْ تِهِز وِسْطَكْ. اِكْمِن أَبُوكْ سَنْجَقْ دَايِرْ فِي حَل شَعْرَكْ. *Just because your father is a soldier/pasha, you think you can shake your hip/let your hair down?*

The Egyptian and English proverbs share similar themes, and the first one under examination is nepotism. **Error! Reference source not found.** includes proverbs with one lexical item in common: *father*. However, the Egyptian proverbs use colloquial, informal language, and they employ theatrical, metaphorical prose that results in the conceptual metaphor: INHERITED POWER IS BODILY DISPLAY. The conceptual metaphor, which makes sense of one domain on the basis of another (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), is vivid because it uses the source domain of public display which is related to bold, shameless performance to bring to life the target domain of unearned privilege and nepotism. Thus, the physical movement of shaking one's *hip* or وسط is mapped into the public display of power, and this visible performance highlights the more abstract notion of power abuse. However, the English proverb uses formal and institutional nouns like *judge* and *trial* to show power, using the semantic field of court. In all proverbs, the son is the beneficiary; a person who is safe because of his father's merit. Sometimes the son occupies the semantic role of the actor/agent, but there is a stark difference between the lexical choice of *go* in the English proverb and دايِر *(going around)* in the Egyptian proverbs. The Egyptian proverbs use bald lexical choices to express a proud public display, unlike the English proverb. Moreover, the deictic center, which anchors speakers in time and space (Segal, 1995), is vastly different in the proverbs of the two languages. In English, the deictic center moves away from intimacy because it uses the third-person, which makes it more of a universal fact and less of a reprimand, unlike the Arabic proverbs, which use the second-person pronouns to show proximity and as a result scolding. While both cultures perceive the situation as unjust and biased, the

English proverb carries neutral feelings or implicit negative appraisal. However, the Egyptian proverbs express clear negative appraisal, which explains how speakers evaluate and assume stances to construct personas from texts (Martin & White, 2007) because they criticize inappropriate actions that include dancing تِهز وِسْطَكْ or letting one's hair down حَل شَعْرَكْ. All proverbs criticize a deviation from society's norm, as being the son of a *judge* or a *soldier* جِنْدِيshould mean having discipline and respect for the law and not the opposite. This disrupts a social or role-based schema, which engages people emotionally towards the theme at hand. The Egyptian proverbs also reveal the mind style of frustrated speakers who state as a fact in a declarative speech act that nepotism has infiltrated society.

TABLE 2

THEME OF INHERITED ROLES

	Proverb(s)
English proverbs 2 & 3	Like father, like son. A son should begin where his father left off.
Arabic proverbs 3, 4 & 5	ابْن السَّايِغْ اِشْتَهَى عَلَى ابوهْ خَاتِمْ. *The goldsmith's son covets a ring from his father.* قَبْلْ مَا شَافُوهْ قَالُوا: حِلْوِ الْقَوَامْ زَيَّ ابُوهْ. قَبْلْ مَا وِلْدُوه قَالُوا: عَرِيضِ الْقَفَا زَيَّ ابُوهْ. *Before she gives birth to him, they said: "broad necked like his father."* *Before they saw him, they said: "He's as good as his father."*

The theme of inherited roles is clarified in **Error! Reference source not found.**, which applies the same register as in **Error! Reference source not found.**; the English proverbs are more formal while the Egyptian ones are less formal in tone, which is clear in lexical choices like عَرِيضِ الْقَفَا *broad necked*, which offers a negative appraisal as a result of using a damaging physical stereotype. Moreover, the English proverbs strip the son from his agency; he is either being described or is following his father's footsteps. For example, the verbs *begin* and *left off* mean there is a contrast between the father and the son. The father is the initiator while the son only follows his father's path regardless of his own opinions and desires. The same inherited behavior or sense of continuity is detected in the Egyptian proverbs. It draws the image of a son who *wishes* a ring from his father ابْن السَّايِغْ اِشْتَهَى عَلَى ابوهْ خَاتِمْ, and the other two proverbs only give a physical description. The English proverbs encapsulate a sense of general truths, and the Egyptian ones follow a similar path offering social

commentaries and public opinions, which reveals aspects of both the father's and the son's character. The social obligation manifests in the modal verb *should* in the English proverb to signal a moral expectation. Foregrounding or deviation manifest in English in the repetition of *like* in the proverb *Like father, like son.* Similarly, in the Egyptian proverbs, there is a rhyming scheme that plays a role in the memorability of the proverbs due to its musicality, which is clear in شَافُوهْ and ابوه. The proverbs also activate a familial inheritance schema of prescripted roles. Like the earlier theme of nepotism, these proverbs show a metaphorical use in the Arabic proverbs rather than the English ones. For instance, the *broad neck* description is figurative language that leads to a characterization of both the newborn and his father to have brutishness and simplemindedness. The proverbs in English and Arabic create a similar metaphor which is INHERITED IDENTITY IS OBJECT TRANSFER. They map between the physical act of object transfer into the abstract notion of inherited role or social obligation. The idea is very expressive due to the use of the *ring* خاتم. These proverbs across both cultures conceptualize the identity of the son as something transmitted or passed down from the father, which is clear in the use of third-person deixis, which highlights the transferability of their actions and identities. A significant reading is the father's place in society affects the baby even before birth.

TABLE 3

THEME OF IDENTITY

	Proverb(s)
English proverb 4	It's a wise child who knows its own father.
Arabic proverbs 6, 7 & 8	اِللِّي مَا يِعْرَفْ أَبُوهْ اِبْنْ حَرَامْ. *He who doesn't know his father is a bastard.* أَسْأَلْهْ عَنْ أَبُوهْ يِقُولْ لِي: خَالِي شعِيب. *I ask him about his father, he replies: "My uncle's name is Shu'ayb"* أَبُوكْ مَا هُو أَبُوكْ، أَخُوكْ مَا هُو أَخُوك. *Your father is not your real father; your brother is not your real brother.*

Error! Reference source not found. connects the two cultures in the theme of identity. Again, the lexical choices include *father*, *child*, *uncle*, and *brother*, and they all +kin and +male. The English proverb suggests that the knowledge about someone's father or roots can be ambiguous, the proverb also leaves the gender unknow due to the use of the gender-neutral noun *child*. The choice of *wise* and *knows*

denotes a cognitive effort, rather than clarity about one's origin and identity. The Arabic counterpart uses language that is lexically loaded with moral and social condemnation, which is clear in the use of the word *bastard* اِبْنْ حَرَامْ. The Egyptian proverbs signify a confusion and a relational failure of the knowledge of one's father and the lack of identification of one's origins. The verbs used in the selected proverbs are *know* or *be*, and these verbs are either cognitive verbs related to awareness and mental access in defining identity or existential verbs that suggest instability or falsehood in relation to one's father. They are static or non-dynamic verbs that suggest a lack of agency (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). However, an intriguing use of the verb *know* takes place in اِللّي مَا يِعْرَفْ أَبُوهْ اِبْنْ حَرَامْ. While the verb is static, it still reflects someone's negative treatment of their father and equates this ill treatment with not knowing the father at all. This proverb disrupts the schema of honor; normally, people know their fathers. This loss of kinship roles, especially in the Arab world is very harmful to social standing. A striking parallelism is clear in the Arabic proverb أبوك ما هو أبوك، أخوك ما هوأخوك that holds a rhetorical power emphasizing the loss of certainty of kinship roles. The proverbs are direct and literal, but they still hold a figurative language and other implied meanings, especially with the mention of the uncle's name, which is ironic to use a metonym to denote concealed paternity and unstable social identity. This group of proverbs gives rise to the conceptual metaphor PATERNITY IS CERTIFICATE, which maps the knowledge of one's father into a seal of societal approval.

TABLE 4

THEME OF MORAL BURDEN

Proverb(s)	
English proverb 5	The sins of the father shall be visited upon the children.
Arabic proverb 9	مَا تِفْعَلُه الْآبَاءْ مِخَلَّفْ لِلْأَبَـْنَاءْ. *What fathers do is left for (inherited by) the children.*

The proverbs in **Error! Reference source not found.** reflect a shared value: children inherit the moral burden of their fathers. The English proverb carries more metaphorical weight than the Egyptian one. The use of the noun *sins* and the phrasal verb *visited upon* makes the lexical choices more religious, implying divine retribution. In both languages, the kinship terms used are *fathers* and *sons*, but in the Arabic version there is no focus on negative outcomes or *sins*, and the tone is neutral and foretells positive or neutral inheritance for the children from their fathers, using the neutral term مِخَلَّفْ. The English proverb holds negative appraisal unlike its Arabic counterpart. In both cases, fathers are agents or actors who leave behind a legacy for their children who are the opposite of actors (more patients in terms of semantic roles) in both proverbs. However, in the English version, the passivity is starker. There is another epistemic modality here, there is a universal belief that fathers' actions will

always follow their offspring. A biblical schema is activated, which gives rise to the metaphor of INHERITED SIN. The source domain is clear in *visited upon*, which depicts a visit as an external visitor coming to inflict punishment. The target domain is the suffering of children because of the actions of their fathers. The Arabic version is literal and procedural; what fathers do affect their sons.

TABLE 5

THEME OF PATERNAL AUTHORITY

Proverb(s)	
English proverb 6	Father knows best.
Arabic proverb 10	جَا الْخَرُوفْ يِعَلِّمَ ابُوهِ الرَّعْيْ. *The lamb came to teach its father how to graze.*

Error! Reference source not found. depicts fathers as strong, knowledgeable figures of authority. While the English proverb uses straightforward lexical choices with assertive declarative phrasing, the Egyptian counterpart uses animal imagery to evoke a vivid metaphor. The contrast in the lexical choices between *lamb* الْخَرُوفْ and its *father* ابُوهِas well as the choice of the verb *teach* يِعَلِّمَ highlights naivety and presumption in the character of the lamb/son. GRAZING IS LIFE EXPERIENCE is a conceptual metaphor showing *grazing* as parallel to any action that a young person aims to teach to a wiser older person/father. While in the English proverb the father is the subject and point of departure of the proverb, in the Arabic version he is not. The same meaning applies to both proverbs; fathers have more knowledge and wisdom than their sons. The agency of the lamb is a mockery of his naivety. Deixis in both proverbs makes use of the third-person pronouns because they apply to anyone much like the present tense that applies to all times, which stresses generational hierarchy and an enduring fact that does not change with time. The English version uses the high epistemic modality of certainty, and the Arabic proverb hints at deontic modality to imply fathers should not be disrespected. The father image is positively appraised in both proverbs, with the son being criticized in the Arabic proverb. The inappropriate teaching of the lamb to his father disrupts the schema of paternal wisdom resulting in this irony of tone we hear in the Egyptian proverb. However, the English proverb activates the paternal authority schema without distortion. Nature and grazing appear in the Egyptian proverb, which brings to life how the environment around them looks like. Unlike the English proverb, the entire proverb is an extended metaphor with a lamb symbolizing a younger person and the grazing symbolizing the skills of life. In English, the proverb is less metaphorical, but they both reinforce the same ideology and value. This metaphor also highlights the lamb/son's mind style as an unaware, arrogant, and disrespectful person.

ii. Themes unique to the Arabic proverbs

TABLE 6

THEME OF FAILURE TO FULFILL FAMILIAL DUTY (FATHERS TOWARDS DAUGHTERS)

Arabic proverbs 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16
الأبَ عَاشِقْ والأمُ غَيْرَانَةْ والبِنْتْ حَيْرَانَةْ. *The father is in love, the mother is jealous, and the daughter is confused.* الْأمُّ تْعَشِّشْ والْأبَّ يْطَفِّش. *The mother builds the nest, and the father causes (children) to flee.* الْبَايْرَهْ أَوْلَى بِبِيتْ أَبُوهَا. *The spinster has more right to her father's house.* رُحْت بِيتَ ابُويَا اسْتَرِيح، سَبَقْنِي الْهَوَا والرِّيح. *I went to my father's house to rest, but the wind got there before me.* جِيتْ بِيتَ ابُويَا أَرْتَاحْ قَفَلُوا فِي وشي وتوهوا الْمُفْتَاحْ. *I came to my father's house to rest; but they locked the door in my face and intentionally lost the key.* أَبُويَا وَطَّانِي وجُوزِي عَلَّانِي. *My father brought me down, and my husband lifted me up.*

Error! Reference source not found. presents a group of proverbs unique to the Egyptian culture, and they address fathers as shelters, or lack of paternal shelter to be more precise. The lexical choices of these proverbs are all either voiced by woman or about women. The father here is either opposed to the mother, which they differ in terms of CA in being male or female, but there are more differences than biological ones. The first proverb implicitly tackles marital infidelity and its effects on the mother and by extension her daughter, however, the daughter seems to be the most affected, described as puzzled or confused حَيْرَانَةْ. The second proverb uses terms that indicate a very negative influence of fathers at home while mothers have a very calming inviting effect, highlighted in the two rhyming verbs تْعَشِّشْ and يْطَفِّش. The two verbs create the conceptual metaphor HOME IS A NEST, in which welcoming mothers are mapped into the source domain of chicken and fathers are mapped into the source domain of repelling children/chicks. In the rest of the proverbs, the lexical choice of the *house* بيت indicates hostility, which is heightened by words like *wind* الْهَوَا والرِّيحْ, *intentionally lost the key* وتوهوا الْمُفْتَاحْ, etc.

When the father is mentioned as an actor he acts as an aggressive, invasive, or destructive figure. The mother in contrast is mentioned to indicate an active, constructive figure. While women are the active speakers who head towards their fathers' homes, they are either met by the elements or by implying the residents of the house lock them out. She is acted upon and feels rejection, vulnerability, and limitation of choices. In these proverbs, metaphors like FATHER'S HOUSE IS SAFETY, REJECTION IS A LOCKED DOOR, CLOSURE IS BETRAYAL arise and open a very clear but sad window into the mind style of these women. They expect shelter and support from their fathers, and instead they find total abandonment. The same limited options are highlighted in the proverb that bans *unmarried* women, more specifically spinsters الْبَايْرَهْ, from being anywhere but their father's house. The first three proverbs position the family members away from the deictic center as the third person pronouns are used. This indicates a consensus in the Egyptian society in relation to these issues. The last two proverbs use the first-person pronouns to center women in the middle of the family space or paternal home, yet they are displaced. The women's proximity to their father's houses exposes an emotional distance because they cannot get inside the family home. Modality in all proverbs indicate a high level of obligation to follow these social norms that set women to be dependent but also sometimes abandoned. In these proverbs, fathers are negatively evaluated while their daughters are depicted as passive, confused, and rejected. There is a deviation in the structure of the proverbs to indicate emotional displacement. The proverb الأبَ عَاشِقْ والأمْ غَيْرَانَهْ والبِنْتْ حَيْرَانَهْ creates a parallelism in the three states of the three family members to highlight a stark imbalance in the familial roles caused by the father. The proverbs are metaphorical with images like *nesting*, *windy homes*, and *locked doors*, which creates an intense image that metaphorizes internal and external forces that disrupt their daughters' lives. In the proverb أَبُويَا وَطَّانِي وجُوزِي عَلَّانِي the speaker is a woman relating herself to two kinship terms: husband and father. While both are +MALE, they are completely different to her. The use of the lexical choices وَطَّانِي versus عَلَّانِي clarify a mindstyle of a woman disappointed in her father, who only found proper treatment and prestige in society when she left his household. Her words create the metaphor EMOTIONAL STATE IS A PHYSICAL ORIENTATION, making use of the directions up and down to demonstrate her point of view.

TABLE 7

THEME OF FAILURE TO FULFILL FAMILIAL DUTY (FATHERS TOWARDS SONS)

Arabic proverbs 17, 18, 19, 20, 21
أَبُوكْ خَلِّفْ لَكْ إِيهْ؟ قَالْ: جِدْيْ ومَاتْ. *What did your father leave you? He said: A buck that died.* قَالْ: يَا ابُويَا شَرَّفْنِي. قَالْ: لَمَّا يْمُوتِ اللِّي يِعْرَفْنِي. *He said: 'Bring me honor, father.' He replied: 'I will when everyone who knows me dies.'*

إِنْ مَاتْ أَبُوكْ وِانْتَ صْغَيَّرْ عَلِيكْ بِزَرْعِ الْبَاقْ شِعِيرْ.
If your father dies while you're young, sow the left land barley.
أَبُوكْ مَا خَلِّفْ لَكْ، عَمَّكْ مَا بِدِّيكْ.
If your father left you nothing, don't expect your uncle to give you anything.
قَالُوا: يَا اللِّي أَبُوكْ مَاتْ مِ الْجُوعْ. قَالْ: هُوَّ شَافْ شِيءْ وَلَا كَلْشْ.
They called me out: 'You whose father died of hunger.' I replied: 'Did he ever see/find anything to eat but he didn't eat it?'.

Error! Reference source not found. shows that the paternal failed support continues, but these proverbs lead us to examine them from male perspective. In these proverbs, the father figure is dead, leaving nothing behind, and in many cases not even honor or good name. The lexical choices used around the father are either *death* or *hunger* أَبُوكْ مَاتْ مِ الْجُوعْ, suggesting absence, neglect, or failure. The fathers are agents of absence with the verb *died* leaving nothing for the passive recipients, the sons. The evaluation of both the father and the son characterizes them as helpless people who only have survivalism as their tool, with the sons indicating moral and emotional disappointments at their father's legacy. These proverbs mostly activate the father as a provider schema and then disrupts it with his inability to support his sons with money or honor, emphasizing the lack of support from another family member: the uncle clear in the proverb أَبُوكْ مَا خَلِّفْ لَكْ، عَمَّكْ مَا بِدِّيكْ. Like previous proverbs, these ones use metaphorical language which sheds light on the environment in which people utter those proverbs, evoking farming images from *barely* شعير and a *goat* جِدْيْ, which are vegetation or animals existing naturally in the Egyptian villages. This proverb evokes the conceptual metaphor of life EXPERIENCE IS VEGETATION in which doing something without a lot of effort because you cannot afford it is clarified by the source domain of barely, which is a crop that farmers can plant easily in an exhausted land. The son left behind by his father is the weak land in this proverb. The collective conceptual metaphor offered by these proverbs is FATHER IS A ROCK. Unlike the usual support of fathers, in these proverbs, the fathers are impoverished and shameful. The proverbs offer mind style of speakers who accept these dire shortcomings from their fathers, especially in the utterance هُوَّ شَافْ شِيءْ وَلَا كَلْشْ which accepts and even justifies the father's condition.

TABLE 8

THEME OF FAILURE TO FULFILL FAMILIAL DUTY (CHILDREN TOWARDS FATHERS)

Arabic proverbs 22, 23

رَاحِتْ تَاخُدْ بِتَارَ ابُوهَا رِجْعِتْ حبْلَهْ.
She went to avenge her father's murder but came back pregnant.
جِينَا نْسَاعْدُهْ فِي دَفْنَ ابُوهْ فَاتْ لِنَا الْفَاسْ وِمِشِي.
We came to help him bury his father, but he has left us the axe and left.

Error! Reference source not found. tackle failure but this time it stems from children towards their fathers. The lexical choices of verbs like *avenge* تَاخُدْ بِتَارَ and *bury* دَفْنَ indicate strong actions with emotional and moral weight. They also result in a contrast between the action and the outcome, which characterizes children as failing in an ironic way. While the daughter seems to start out with the agency of a person seeking revenge, the result undermines her role and reflects reversed and unintended consequences. The same can be applied to the son in the second proverb, while *leave* فَاتْ is a verb that gives him agency, this action only expresses getting out one's responsibility. Both the son and the daughter lack responsibility and sometimes honor. The irony in the two proverbs offer negative evaluations of the characters involved, the daughter who should keep her honor is socially disgraced, and the son is irresponsible and exploitative. The deviation from expectation is enormous, especially in the first proverb. This activates the schema of honor and revenge, but then the failure to fulfill that role disrupts this schema. Not only did she not avenge her father, but she is also pregnant حبْلَهْ. The metaphors created here also come from the environment in Egypt, especially the use of the word *axe* الْفَاسْ, which is a farming tool present around people in that space. Thus, equating responsibilities and upholding them with carrying and using an axe. The conceptual metaphor here is FAILURE IS DEFILEMENT and ABANDONING RESPONSIBILITY IS LEAVING THE DEAD UNBURIED. These metaphors draw a very colorful scene that condemns children's failure towards their fathers. The metaphor objectifies responsibilities or obligations (target domain) by using the mental image of an embryo or a dead body (source domain).

iii. Theme(s) unique to the English proverbs

TABLE 9:

THEME OF TRADITION

English proverb 7
What was good enough for our fathers is good enough for us.

The theme of tradition is elucidated in **Error! Reference source not found.**. In this proverb, the lexical choices compare *fathers* to their *children*. The adverb *enough* triggers a comparison; these children are not willing to step out of their father's legacy. This grants fathers authority even after they pass away. The use of the verb *be* decreases the children's agency and only describes a status quo. It also denotes a lack of initiative and an attitude of blindly following tradition. This also

clarifies the speakers' belief that following tradition is required, which shows a deontic modality that means they must follow in their fathers' footsteps. While the adjective *good* is used, the proverb is negatively evaluated because it characterizes the speakers as lacking innovation and living in the past. This proverb activates the schema of *fathers are authority* and does not challenge or disrupt it. It clarifies the mindstyle of speakers who view/characterize themselves as loyal descendants who cannot or do not want to deviate from habit. Moreover, the use of the person pronouns *our* and *us* signals proximity to a comfortable deictic center, which is further intensified in the change of tenses in the relational verb be from *was* to *is,* which signals an unchanging reality.

DISCUSSIONS AND FINDINGS

This section addresses the research questions posed earlier. It also comes in response to the reviewed studies section, which provides a solid foundation for understanding the semantic structures of kinship terms, the gendered ideologies encoded in proverbs, and the cognitive mechanisms behind characterization. However, these works focus on isolated linguistic phenomena or general gender representations without offering a detailed contrastive examination of *paternal figures*. Additionally, while prior research acknowledges cultural variation in kinship conceptualization, few studies apply a combined componential and cognitive stylistic approach to uncover how fatherhood is socially and metaphorically constructed across languages. Building on these gaps, the present study integrates insights from previous research and applies them specifically to proverbs referencing fathers in Egyptian and English corpora, allowing for a deeper understanding of paternal characterization and its cultural underpinnings and offering comprehensive answers to the study's research questions.

Research Question 1

How is the father figure characterized in the Egyptian and English proverbs as revealed by the application of Culpeper's cognitive stylistic framework?

By applying the selected characterization framework, paternal figures are constructed as a central symbol and as the head of the hierarchy of the household and familial relations. Similar to the findings of Al-Khawaldeh et al. (2024), the two cultures differ in their characterization of fathers. While the English proverbs offer a universalizing detached angle, they do not seem to offer context or imagery for the father figure. The father is mostly framed positively as a fixed and constant moral compass. He is a foundational character whose legacy and tradition reinforces a clear lineal responsibility. In Egyptian proverbs, the father's characterization comes to life through an active dialogue situated in a specific society and environment and evokes intense emotions. Egyptian proverbs present characterization using figurative language, humor, rhyme, embedded sentence structures, and irony. As per Culpeper's inter-character dynamics, we gain insights into the characterization of sons as well through their fathers and sometimes mothers, daughters, and uncles. Fathers are characterized through mockery, criticism, or stereotyping. Thus, the father is not a private figure but rather a social construct, which is clear through the lexical choices, metaphors, and other linguistic tools used in the analysis. Both cultures centralize fathers, yet in the English corpus, fathers are more positively appraised and

characterized as morally ideal and a figure that sets up norms and customs. However, Egyptian proverbs place fathers under social scrutiny and depicts them as flawed characters that are under pressure from society but not always do they succeed to fulfill their duties as expected by their family and society, which is a finding that comes in contrast with many previous studies (see Shadeed & Khalil, 2024; Altohami, 2023; Rani & Ranjha, 2020). Furthermore, the two cultures are summarized in one sustained metaphor, which is FATHER IS ANCHOR, one that successfully or unsuccessfully safeguards the family.

Research Question 2

In both cultures, what are the ways of reinforcing or challenging the social role of fathers?

In terms of social roles, fathers are depicted in both cultures as carriers of legacy and power. For the English corpus, and in line with Rani and Ranjha (2020) and Shi and Zhang (2017), a father is a traditional patriarchal figure; he offers guidance and wisdom, and he also leaves behind an inherited status. These proverbs depict this society as one that values traditions and loyalty to the past with the aim of persevering collective father/male identity. In relation to Culpeper, they activate a static mind style, where the nature of fathers is fixed and accepted and in this society; deviation rarely occurs. As for Egyptian proverbs, this patriarchal depiction is more dynamic and even aggressive. Those proverbs depict a fractured society in which fathers can be ambiguous, absent, which leaves negative, enduring effects for their family and society. While fathers are particularly important ideologically in the Egyptian society, they can still be unreliable from the point of view of those who created those proverbs, which revisits Shadeed and Khalil's (2024) emphasis of a male dominated society to affirm that males too can have vulnerabilities. While the father can be a provider and a protector, his absence can still disrupt these societal roles. These proverbs can reshape society's understanding of fathers and can foreground a shocking character failure. In comparison to mothers, fathers are more rigid and absent, which says much about the realities of gender in this society, in which mothers keep the household together. Thus, fatherhood depiction in these proverbs is not erased but rather revised through the examination of inter-character tension revealed by the relation between fathers and other family members. Thus, while the English proverbs offer a stable notion of the role of father figures, the Egyptian ones question them and offer a diverse function of fathers within their society challenging the top-bottom understanding that readers/hearers bring as they attempt to interact with the selected corpora. Many members of the family like mothers, sons, daughters, uncles, and the society at large is abandoned by the disrupted role of the father. This flawed characterization of fathers comes in alignment with Altohami's (2023) findings of stigmatization of many kinship figures in proverbs.

Research Question 3

What are the recurrent linguistic patterns that reveal a contrast in the depiction of fathers between the two corpora from the two cultures?

Tone and metaphor show a stark contrast between the Egyptian and the English corpora. The Egyptian proverbs are rich in metaphor and ironic in tone, which is reinforced by the use of colloquial language, which echoes the stylistic divergence

in the form and function clear in the findings of Al-Khawaldeh et al. (2024). However, the English proverbs are more literal and abstract. These linguistic differences offer a unique paternal characterization for each culture. In the English corpus, biblical schemas were sometimes evoked, which adds gravity to the message or the moral of the proverb. Sometimes the Arabic proverbs are presented thematically with less linguistic formality. With different stylistic choices, proverbs offer different lenses for each culture. The theme of honor and shame is treated only in the Egyptian proverbs, in which the schema is disrupted and ridiculed. Honor is fragile and precarious, and everyone in society is asked to avenge it. However, numerous factors, including those related to gender, can undermine and disrupt honor. We rarely perceive gendered consequences in the English corpora like the Egyptian one. The heavy deictic reliance on first-person pronouns in the Egyptian corpus creates an intimate voice of narration which is central to constructing relatable characters. The English corpora, however, uses the third person voice more often to offer generalized statements that keeps characters at a less intimate space and offers a universal, enduring image of fathers. The linguistic patterns differ greatly and so are the image and characterization of fathers across the two cultures. The linguistic choice in the Egyptian proverbs makes up for a more colorful, metaphorical image of society. While Shi and Zhang (2017) focused on sexist sentiment in English proverbs, the present paper highlights that paternal portrayals, though less overtly gendered, are embedded in and criticized in important discourse like proverbs. This research also downplays the sexism highlighted in studies that attributed negative stereotypes only towards women, as per Rasul (2015), stereotyping and negative portrayal can be directed towards male figures as well as clear in the present study, especially in the Egyptian corpus.

In conclusion, the present study showed that both cultures perceive the father figure as a culturally significant character, yet the linguistic choices have painted two distinct images. The paternal figures are positioned differently because in English, fathers are presented as less dynamic while in Arabic they are multi-layered and flawed. Thus, the Egyptian version supplies a more emotional characterization of fathers than the English one. The study revealed that proverbs show condensed cultural codes, wisdom, and an interplay between language, identity, and power, which is clear by examining the selected proverbs from a linguistic lens.

Limitation and Future Research

The present study offered a contrastive analysis of paternal figures in selected proverbs from the Egyptian and English corpora. However, several limitations emerged; thus, prospective directions for future research arise. While the Egyptian corpus included twenty-three proverbs with explicit mention of *father(s)*, the English dataset only mentions the same term seven times. Although this may appear to skew the findings, this is not based on faulty selective sampling, but it is due to the contrasting nature of the two societies, cultures, and corpora. The study tackled all instances of the term in the two bodies of texts despite the imbalance. Whereas this numerical disparity might seem like a limitation, it is culturally revealing of the Egyptian society, which shows a deeper investment in fathers' depiction and role. The

second limitation is related to recency and stems from the selection of an early 20th-century compilation of proverbs and its historical relevance. However, Taymour's *Colloquial Proverbs* remains a seminal work in Egyptian paremiology. The book is a collection of over 3,000 proverbs, including explanatory notes. The study has a folkloric nature, which makes it more impactful to resort to the selected book; the manuscript is still relevant in contemporary discourse. However, this limitation can be addressed in future research by incorporating more recent compilation of proverbs, which can open the door for a diachronic approach to the representation of fathers in proverbs, which can shed light on the evolution of proverbs and their value in different societies. The third limitation is basing the study on fathers only. This is due to the substantial number of proverbs that reference the rest of the family members, which cannot be adequately addressed within the scope of a single study. However, other kinship terms are present and noticeable in this paper, as fathers come in opposition to mothers, sons, daughters, etc. and do not appear in a vacuum. The multifaceted characterization of father figures offers insights into the complex dynamics between paternal figures and other family members. Thus, future studies would benefit from an extension of the analysis to compare fathers to mothers (and other kin) to offer a more comprehensive account of other aspects of familial relations and characterization in proverbs. The study acknowledges these limitations to affirm its transparency in method and to highlight a fertile ground for future research of kinship, characterization, gender, and family dynamics.

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