

## Comparative study of Korean and Arabic (Jordan) Proverbs for Korean Learners

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### RÉSUMÉ

Each society has its own unique proverb, which is used as a guide to life. Therefore, the proverb is a cultural heritage inherited through all generations and reflects the morality, beliefs and traditions of each society and nation. The purpose of this study is to understand the history, ideology, and culture of Arab society and Korean society through a comparative study of common proverbs among living languages in different societies and cultures. The study proverbs is very significance because they reflect people's cultural characteristics, national thought, way of living and lifestyle. This homogeneity and heterogeneity can be understood through a comparative study of proverbs in different societies. This understanding of each other is worthy of a comparative study of the proverbs of the two social languages because it is a good basis to maintain communication and smooth relations with different countries.

**Keywords:** Arab proverb, Korean proverb, comparison, homogeneity, heterogeneity.

### 1- Introduction

*Proverbs and famous words are all the expression of wisdom and lessons in words that the people of the country have taken directly through their lives (Kim Jin-woo 1996: 333).*

In the age when there was no paper to record, proverbs had a strong sense of meaning with the wise words of the ancestors descended into oral tradition. By word of mouth or by record, this tradition of proverbs will be passed down to future generation with eternal history through mankind and will continue in the future.

Without doubt, Arabs have inherited an enormous amount of proverbs from their ancestors. Moreover, They are very fond of proverbs and these proverbs take an important place in their daily lives (McCarus 1956: 31)

Proverbs can be said to describe the way of life and the way of thinking of the people of the country. Therefore, they can be a way to understand tradition and culture. Proverbs in Korean language are defined as the product of universal truth and wisdom obtained from living experiences. A proverb is not only a guideline that suggests the direction of life, but it also has a great power of persuasion and it is said that it has performed the function and the role of the edification which is admonition or awakening.<sup>1</sup> In this article, I will compare Korean and Arabic proverbs with other cultures' and their peoples' way of thinking.

In Korea, people usually use proverbs while talking to each other in their daily life. The sayings are used a lot in stories or novels, drama, movies, newspaper and social media. Because proverbs play an important part in both Korean and Arabic studies, this paper attempts to differentiate between Arabic and Korean proverbs by explaining the social and cultural implication of these proverbs.

### 2- Problem Statement and Methodology

Using proverbs demands a mastery of language and also a profound understanding of the cultural, historical, and social contexts of the people who use these proverbs. This study will compare between the proverbs that are commonly

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<sup>1</sup> Choi Chang Ryol, A Study Of Our Proverbs, P.22

used in Korean and Arabic. Also, this study attempts to figure out how different cultures are reflected in the language of proverbs, and make this its goal. To achieve this goal, I depend on my personal observations and research of Arabic proverbs through teaching special topic lecture and there is a part of the subject which will be about Korean proverbs that I have started since 2016.

## 2.1 The definition of proverbs in both Korean and Arabic

First, the definition of proverbs in Korean is a product of universal truth and wisdom obtained from living experiences. It is not only a guideline that suggests the direction of life, but also has great persuasive power, so it can be said that it has the role and function of an edification which admonishes or awakens the opponent (Choi, Chang-ryeol 1999: 22).

In the Dictionary of Korean Language (Lee Hee-seung, Korean Language Dictionary: 1961) it is defined as the words that have been passed on from one generation to another through history. In the large dictionary of Korean proverbs (Song Jae-sun, 1966, a large dictionary of Korean proverbs), it is possible to define provisionally as a idiom phrase used to describe a fact as a parable. Of course, the idiom of the idiomatic phrases can be added to the syntactic formality of the proverb by adding the idiom of 'concise', and further explanations can be made by further incorporating the terms 'instructional' or 'satirical' can do. But they are merely an extension of the terms 'idiom' or 'metaphor'.

Proverbs are idioms in the form of metaphor, in which the wisdom of the people expresses their life experiences (cited in the 1926 citation). It also expresses the life experience of the people as a phonetic phrase with a symbolic form of concise form used to describe a fact in a parable (Song, Myung Soo, 1989 cited). And that it is a simple, plain and metaphorical idiom for the truths derived from the experience, wisdom, and lessons of life. (Kim Hee-a, 1865).

In Arabic, proverbs have three characteristics: the simplicity of expression, the precision of meaning, and the excellence of the parable (23 :1984 رمضان عبد التواب). In addition, al twab has said that the proverb is a commonly used term referring to the metaphor transition of the first object's state and the second object's state. The original proverb is a metaphor (الميداني :12 :1982).<sup>2</sup> Again, the proverb defines what things are exemplified, that is, likened. If we look at the definitions given above, we can see that all three scholars are paying attention to the metaphoric state of Arabic.<sup>2</sup>

In brief, it is clear that the proverbs in both languages are all analogous to the metaphoric expression that show the spirit of the inherited words, which has emerged from people's life experiences and has been widely used throughout their life. In short, Korean and Arabic proverbs can be defined as the cultural idioms expressed in concise but metaphorical truths derived from people's experiences, wisdom, and lessons.

## 2.2 A Contrast Study of Korean and Arabic Proverbs:

In this paper, we will examine the contrast of the Arabic proverbs with the Korean proverbs in Korean and Arabic. And distinguish the contents' speech, actions and behaviors and so on to see how their linguistic expressions differ.<sup>3</sup>

### 1) Proverbs about speech

[Korean]

가는 말이 고와야 오는 말이 곱다.

Ganeun mali gooaya oneun mali gobdda.

مثل: اللي بيتطالع بي بعين بتطالع بالتنتين

"Do good and good shall follow you"

<sup>2</sup> Kong Ji Hyon, the ninth book, 2005, 8 P.4

<sup>3</sup> In addition to Korean proverbs, Arabic has a commonly used idiom that is used like the proverb. This is because it can be distinguished by expressions, explanations, meanings, etc., that are said like proverbs.

- It means you have to treat the other well so the other also treats you well.

낮 말은 새가 듣고 밤 말은 쥐가 듣는다.

Nat maleun saega deudko bam maleun jwiga deudneunda.

- It means you have to be careful of what you say even if there is no one to listen.

مثل: الحيطان لها ودان

"Walls have Ears"

[Arabic]

مثل: إذا كان الكلام من فضة فالسكوت من ذهب

"Silence is golden"

침묵이 금이다.

Chimmuki geumida.

-It is better to say nothing at all than to say something without thinking.

The above proverbs are an important part of bilingual society as a proverb of warning and advice on words and phrases in Korean and Arabic for "word care". Korean 'the going word has to be pretty do that the coming word would be pretty' which is not only for words but it also goes for actions, meaning you have to treat the other well so they would treat you well.' In Arabic, on the other hand, it means that someone treats others better so the others would treat him/her twice as better and vice versa. And this shows similarities between the Korean proverb and the Arabic proverb in meaning and use.

'Daytime Horses Listen to Birds, Night Horse Rats Listen' in Korean can be said to be a reflection of Korea's nature-friendly residential living culture. It is an environment that is lived with natural sounds (sounds of birds, water, insects, animals, etc.) It can be said that it reflects a poor residential form with trees, dirt and grass leaves that is different from modern residential culture. In Arabic the proverb says 'the walls have ears', so it seems that the residential environment has reflected the modern appearance.

The Arabic saying 'talking without thinking is silver, silence is gold' means that we should not talk without thinking and it resembles the Korean proverb 'silence is gold'.

## 2) Proverbs about actions

Proverbs about actions that give warning or cautious

간에 붙었다 쓸개에 붙었다 한다.

Gane buteota sseulgaee buteota handa.

- It means that you are humiliated to everybody according to your financial circumstances without any reason.

مثل: يمسح جوخ و يهز ذنب

"A dog that shakes its tail will not be hit"

개도 닳새가 되면 주인을 안다.

Gaedo datsaega doemyeon zuyineul anda.

- It's a saying for scolding a person who is ungrateful.

مثل: الكلب حافظ للمعروف

"Loyal as a dog"

기르던 개에게 다리가 물렸다.

Gireudeon gaeege dariga mulyeota.

- It means that the person who helped and blessed suffered damage in return.

مثل: خيراً تعمل شراً تلقى

مثل: اعمل خيراً تلقى شراً اعمل شراً تلقى خيراً (عامية)

"No good deed goes unpunished"

These proverbs are a proverb in the sense of warning that you should be careful about your actions, and you can see

the same situation with the proverb that teaches human manners as guidelines for living.

닭 쫓던 개 지붕 쳐다보 듯 한다.

Dag jjodden gae jibung chyeodabo deut tanda.

- It means that what I've been trying to do is going back to failure or when I am struggling with others but still fall behind.

مثل: العين بصيرة والايدي قصيرة

"The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak"

In Korean the proverb is expressed with the theme of animals (chicken) and the roof, whereas in Arabic it is expressed with parts of the bodies, it says that what the eyes can see and what the arm is too short to reach. Therefore, both proverbs have the same meaning but show contrast in expression.

### 3) Human existence:

[Korean]

사람 나고 돈 낫지 돈 나고 사람 낫나.

Saram nago don nachi don nago saram nanna.

- Even though money is precious, it cannot be more precious than a person.

مثل: هين فلوسك ولا تهين نفوسك

مثل: يا ماخذ القرد على ماله يروح المال وبضل القرد على حاله

"What comes easy won't last"

호랑이도 제 말하면 온다.

Horanido je mal hamyeun onda.

- It is said when you talk about someone and they appear, it means you should not talk carelessly about someone who is not there.

مثل: ابن الحلال عند ذكره بيان

مثل: جنبنا سيرة القط اجي ينط

"Wolf at the door"

The proverb "The man came before money, would the money come before the man" is emphasizing that the human being is the most important thing in human society. In other words, it is an expression that expresses the meaning of advice and warnings about human respect and it can be seen that Korean and Arabic have the same expression.

In the Korean proverb, 'Tiger also comes when the talk is about him' is expressed with the metaphor of an animal called 'Tiger'. However, in Arabic, it is used as a straightforward expression to say that the person comes when you say their name.

[Arabic]

مثل: الجار قبل الدار

"Ask about your neighbor before you choose your house"

먼 친척보다 가까운 이웃이 낫다.

Meon chincheokboda gaggaen yiusi nata.

The content of the advice is that in life you have to respect the neighbors who are nearest to you through your life. This content can be said to be the starting point of ultimately making the human society peaceful, valuing the existence of neighbors, which can be said to be the most basic unit in the lives of the members of society.

### 4) Patience and hard work

[Korean]

서당 개 삼 년이면 풍월을 읊는다.

Seodang gae sam nyeonimyeon punguoleul eumneunda.

- Even if you are an ignorant person, you have a long time with a person who has been informed, and you will have a naturally occurring opinion.

مثل: التكرار يعلم الحمار

مثل: التكرار يعلم الشطار

"Repetition teaches the fury"

열 번 짝어 안 넘어가는 나무 없다.

Yeol beon jjikeo an neomeoganeun namu eobdda.

- It means that if you continue to strive constantly, you will eventually get it.

مثل: الزن على الودان أمر من الشحر

"Squeaky door gets the grease"

천리 길도 첫 걸음으로 시작된다.

Cheoli gildo cheot geoleumeuro sijakdoinda.

- No matter how big it is, it starts from a small thing at first.

مثل: طريق الألف ميل يبدأ بخطوة

"A journey of a thousand miles begins with a simple step"

한 술 밥에 배 부르라.

Han sul babe bae bueurya.

- you cannot expect a big achievement at first. You cannot expect a big effect with a little bit of power.

مثل: مشوار الألف ميل يبدأ بخطوة

"A journey of a thousand miles begins with a simple step"

쥐 구멍에도 별 뜰 날 있다.

Jwi gumeongedo byeu ddeul nal yidda.

- It is said that there is a day when good life can burst even in the life which is very hard.

مثل: نقائلوا بالخير تجدوه

"If you search for good, you will find favor"

In the Korean proverb, the animal 'dog' is expressed as a metaphor. This is expressed in an exaggerated way that even if it is an animal, it can follow speaking if it repeatedly listened to something. In the Arabic proverbs the meaning is expressed directly and speaks of the effect of learning, it means that when you keep reading, you become smarter.

The proverb above expresses in Korean the natural theme using a 'tree'. No matter how big a tree is, if you keep hitting it will go over. In Arabic, however, the expression is used only as an Egyptian dialect and it is directly expressed.<sup>44</sup>

'The way of a thousand mile starts with the first step' and 'are you telling me to be full with a spoonful of rice' is used to express the same meaning and content in both Korean and Arabic.

In the Korean proverb, "The Sun is in the Rat Hole," the Korean proverb expresses objects such as animals, objects, sunshine, and nature, is just like a spoonful of rice in the nature of using objects in expression. It is the same in Arabic in terms of meaning that no matter how hard it is someday something good will come. Both languages, however, both express an encouragement of hope and courage.

[Arabic]

مثل: ابعده عن الشر وغنيله

"if you search for evil, it will find you"

Stay away from the evil and sing it away. (고생 끝에 낙이 온다: Gosaeng ggeute naki onda)

مثل: الصبر مفتاح الفرج

"Patience is the key to relief"

<sup>44</sup> The expression that is only in Egyptian dialect is expressed the same in Jordan.

Patience is the key to happiness. (인내는 미덕이다: yinaeneun mideokida)

In contrast to the straight-forward Korean expression, 'the end of suffering is happiness', in the Arabic language the word 'suffering' is expressed as a metaphor for 'evil' and the word 'song' is expressed as a metaphor for 'happiness'. So It can be said that it has a different expression system from Korean.

In Korean proverbs, 'perseverance' is used as 'virtue' and 'bravery' is used as 'key to happiness' in Arabic.

### 5) Others:

[Korean]

옷이 날개다.

Osi nalgaida.

- By decorating, people can look different.

مثل: لبس المكثفة بتصوير ست النساء

مثل: لبس البوصة تبقى عروسة

"You can have anything you want in life if you dress for it"

칼로 물 베기.

Kalo mul baigi.

- A few moments after fighting, the fighting is solved and no hard feelings remain between the two people.

مثل: ينفخ بإربة مقوبة

"Beating a dead horse"

시간이 금이다.

Sigani geumida.

مثل: الوقت كالسيف إن لم تقطعه قطعك

"Time cuts like a sword"

The proverb, 'Clothes is a wing', is expressed using objects like a 'wing' as other proverbs using things and animals. Because animals have wings, they symbolize special beauty. On the other hand, in Arabic, it is expressed as a straight expression rather than a figurative expression. In the Arabic expression a poor person looks good if they wear good clothes. But it can be said that both expressions are the same in terms of meaning.

'Hit water with a knife' is a proverb that expresses the theme of nature and objects like water. The expression is a life's advice to reconcile quickly and reconcile human relationships.

The proverb "Time is gold" in Korean means to think of time as precious as money or gold. On the other hand, in Arabic, 'time' is expressed as 'sword'. This means that if you do not make use of a given time, the time will harm you. You can tell the difference of nuance by expressing it in the meaning of warning.

[Arabic]

مثل: العقل زينة

"The mind is the most powerful tool a human possesses"

(호랑이에게 잡혀가도 정신을 차리면 산다.)

مثل: القرد في عين أمه غزال

"The Monkey in the Eyes of His Mother is a Gazelle"

No matter how ugly you are a beauty in your mother's eyes.

(콩깍지가 씩이다)

مثل: القرد بعين أمه غزال

A monkey thinks her son/ daughter is beautiful.

مثل: احفظ قرشك الأبيض ليومك الأسود

"Save it for a rainy day"

If you save what you have when it is many or when you are happy you can use it again when it is hard. (있을 때에 아껴 써라)

مثل: العين بالعين والسن بالسن

"An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth" (그대로 갚는다)

مثل: البعيد عن العين بعيد عن القلب

"Out of sight, out of mind"

مثل: من يغرق يتعلق بعود قش

"Grasping at the straw"

مثل: طب الجرة على تمها بتطلع البننت لأمها

"Like mother like daughter". (父傳子傳: 부전자전)

مثل: عصفور باليد ولا عشرة على الشجرة

"A bird in hand is worth two in the bush"

When you are not sure the things you already have are the most important(새가 나무에 열 마리 있는 것보다 내 손에 한마리 있는 것이 좋다.)

مثل: إن غاب القط لعب الفار

"When the cat is away, the mice play"

If there is nothing holding you back you do as you please. (고양이가 없으면 쥐가 대장이 된다.)

مثل: دجاجة حفرت على رأسها غفرت

مثل: من حفر حفرة لأخيه وقع فيها

"He who digs a pit for others falls in himself"

If someone digs a hole for his brother he falls in it instead. (누워서 침 뱉기)

مثل: وين ذانك ياجحا

"Why take the long path?"

Deciding to take the hard way even if there is an easy way,

مثل: ياما تحت السواهي دواهي

"All that glitters is not gold "

The outside and the inside are different.

مثل: طنجرة ولقت غطاها

"There is a lid for every pot"

When you find a good friend or a good relationship partner. (어울리는 두껍이 필요한 냄비.)

مثل: شحاد وبتشرط

"A choosy beggar"

You give money to a beggar and they ask for more. (물에 빠진 사람 건져주니까 보따리 내놓으라고 한다)

Most of the Arabic proverbs above have the same meaning as Korean proverbs. The parts that are different are as follows.

In Arabic, the expression "daughter resembles mother" indicates the importance of maternal education. In Korean, however, it reflects the paternal-centered society in the expression of "subversion". While in Arabic it can be found that the sociality of most of Arabs is emphasized as "mother-centered education".

The Arabic proverb in the sense of 'I found a good friend or mate' was a peculiar point in that it was likened to a 'pot', and expressed it with the word cap that fit well with the pot. In Korean, when expressing friends, it is expressed with the word 'together', and when expressing a marriage partner, it is expressed with the word 'house collective'. In other words, in Korean the talk is about two of the same thing like 'there is a pair of houses', and in Arabic 'pot' is expressed as a metaphor and the word 'lid' is used to express its other half.

According to what is said above, in Korean, there are more expressions comparing nature and animals than in Arabic. It can be guessed that Korea was a relatively environmentally friendly living environment. In the educational

part, motherhood education existed in the Arab countries, so if you were a mother-centered educationalist, you could see the preference of the son as a patriarchal paternal society in Korea.

### 3. Conclusion

As a result of the above explanations, it was common to express the words of nature in the proverbial expression in Korean metaphorically. Also it can be said that it reflects the images of Korean traditional society because In other words animals, objects, and nature are metaphorical in the expressions.

In Arabic, on the other hand, the study could find many things that are deeply meaningful in the expressions as if they were poetic expressions. And the part that reflects the traditional social life part is the same as the proverbial expression in Korean.

Therefore, in order for people living in different social cultures to communicate, it is necessary to understand the ideas, history, culture, and traditions reflected in language.

Also quoting an appropriate proverb in a conversation is an important factor in understanding the other person first and then being able to exert great power in persuading and understanding them.

The following are suggestions for effectively understanding these proverbs.

1. Approach through media such as newspaper advertisement
2. Approach through drama or movie
3. Approach to Proverbs in Situations
4. Approaches to use visual materials such as paintings and cartoons

The purpose of this paper is to briefly describe the desirable ways of understanding the proverbs that contain the traditions, societies, and thoughts of the society.

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## دراسة تقابلية لأمثال اللغة الكورية والعربية (الأردن)

لي جونغ اي \*

### ملخص

الغرض من هذه الدراسة فهم تاريخ وأيديولوجيا وثقافة كل من المجتمع العربي والمجتمع الكوري من خلال الدراسات المقارنة حول الأمثال المشتركة بين اللغات الحية في المجتمعات والثقافات المختلفة، كل مجتمع له الأمثال الفريدة الخاصة به التي تستخدم بوصفها دليل للحياة، لذلك يعتبر المثل هو تراث ثقافي موروث من خلال جميع الأجيال، ويعكس الأخلاق، والمعتقدات والتقاليد لكل مجتمع وأمة، لذلك يمكن القول أن المثل له قيمة الدراسة؛ لأنه يمكن أن يخبرنا عن الخصائص الثقافية للناس، والفكر الوطني، وطريقة العيش وأسلوب الحياة، ويمكن فهم الاختلافات بين الشعوب أو التماثل بينهم من خلال دراسة مقارنة للأمثال في المجتمعات المختلفة، وهذا الفهم لبعضنا البعض يستحق دراسة مقارنة للأمثال لغتين من مجتمعين مختلفين؛ لأن فهم الأمثال أساس جيد للحفاظ على التواصل والعلاقات السلسة مع مختلف البلدان.

**الكلمات الدالة:** أمثال عربية، أمثال كورية، مقارنة، اختلافات، تماثل.

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