



A linguistic journey into proverbs: insights into semantic and structural dimensions of cohesion and coherence

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Abstract: *This study presents a comprehensive analysis of the structural and semantic dimensions of cohesion and coherence in proverbial expressions, with a specific focus on colour and number in proverbs in the North Gaza Strip in Palestine. The aim of this research is to provide linguists and sociolinguists with insights into the meanings expressed in proverbial expressions. To achieve this objective, an experimental method was developed, which involved collecting and classifying 78 proverbial expressions into two structural subfields, namely, noun phrases and adjectives, and three semantic subfields, namely, literal, metaphorical, and both. The findings of the structural analysis revealed that the majority of the proverbial expressions were noun phrases, while adjectives were also used. Moreover, the metaphorical subfield had the highest number of proverbial expressions, while the literal and both subfields also had a significant number of expressions.*

Keywords: *Semantics, Cohesion, Coherence, Proverbs.*

1. INTRODUCTION :

language, as a ubiquitous human asset, presents an intriguing and complex domain of human cognition. as a tool for human communication, it facilitates the growth and development of language skills, leading to the emergence of creativity, innovation, and novelty. this, in turn, enables the exchange and transfer of experiences and contributes to the formation of societies. (mhadi & jafari, 2012). a range of terms is used to describe the types of language and vocabularies that exist outside of the mainstream of normal, formal language. these terms signify distinct concepts related to language usage: slang language, colloquial language, argot language, pidgin language, creole language, dialect language, diglossia language, and lingua franca language. according to Leech (1974, p.78), semantics is a fundamental method of inquiry in the study of meaning. As the importance of inquiry continues to grow in social arrangements, so does the need to comprehend it. semantics is also central to scientific inquiry in shedding light on human processes of perception and understanding. these concepts have contributed to the process by which language can rearrange and transfer our understanding of our surroundings. in the field of text/discourse analysis, the concepts of cohesion and coherence play a crucial role in making sense of language. specifically, they are relevant to the interpretation of proverbs. as Pandey (2015) notes, "coherence is everything fitting together well, and it is not something that exists in words or structures, but something that exists in people". coherence is the result of the interpretation of the meaning of the text and depends on the relationship between the audience and the text (tanskanen, 2006)

Proverbs are a form of folklore that conveys non-literal meaning through the use of metaphors or metonymy. They can be further explained, transformed, and abbreviated while maintaining prototypical characteristics, rules, and prosodic features (Gramley & Patzold, 1992). According to Norrick, N, R (1985), proverbs are short, widely-known sentences that embody wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional viewpoints in a metaphorical, fixed, and memorable form. They are passed down from generation to generation. Colloquial language is often identified by the use of slang or idioms and other linguistic features such as subject or auxiliary deletion. According to Schmidt and Richards (1983), colloquial language refers to informal, spoken language that is used in conversations with friends or family members. It is a contrast to formal, spoken, or written language that requires more deliberate thought and consideration. It is important to note that colloquial language is not inherently vulgar or offensive.



Slang refers to the use of highly casual terms and idioms that are not typical in the speaker's dialect or language. Every language has its own set of proverbs and idioms that are not necessarily literary in nature. While the meaning of these proverbs may be unclear, even if we understand the individual words and syntax, it is essential to understand their meaning. Proverbs can be classified according to colour, number, animal, tool, and the human body.

This research aims to analyze numbers and colours in proverbs and expressions structurally and semantically, as it is considered an integral part of our culture. This study delineates the foundational elements of this research by clarifying and explaining the research problem, objectives, questions, and related terms. The purpose of this research is to discover answers to the research question through the application of scientific procedures. The main objective of this research is to classify a sample of proverbs and analyze them semantically and structurally. The current research raises a major question, which is: What is the semantic and structural classification of cohesion and coherence in proverbs? Specifically, we aim to investigate how proverbs achieve semantic and structural coherence and to identify the linguistic features that contribute to this coherence.

2. Study Questions:

The current research raises a major question which is: What is the semantic classification of proverbs in North Gaza Governorate?

The main question can be subdivided into the following

- a. What are the semantic numbers' classifications of proverbs in the North Gaza Governorate?
- b. What are the semantic colours' classifications of proverbs in the North Gaza Governorate?

3. Objectives of The Study:

The main objective of this research is to classify some proverbs and analyze them semantically and structurally; this objective is sub-divided into other objectives these are to:

- a. Analyze the expressions related to the fields of numbers in proverbs semantically.
- b. Analyze the expressions related to the fields of colours in proverbs semantically.

4. Literature Review:

Abdullah Saad Aldera (2016). Cohesion in Written Discourse: A Case Study of Arab EFL Students The participants in the present study are selected from the Department of English, Najran University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The study's objective is to discover and resolve the mindset and organizational issues that Arab students have when writing essays in English. This involves carrying out an inquiry into the written output of students in order to offer valuable insights that can assist L2 (second language) teachers in Saudi Arabia in recognizing the significance of the mechanics of writing as a demanding aspect of teaching discourse. The analysis mainly and primarily focuses on the organization of thought and mechanics of writing discourse in accordance with the texts usually prescribed for students in their undergraduate education. The results suggest that the learners are not proficient in using language skills and basic writing techniques.

The concepts of semantic cohesion and coherence are fundamental to the field of discourse analysis and linguistics, as they pertain to the interrelatedness and unity of discourse components. The objective of this literature review is to examine the diverse definitions and applications of semantic cohesion and coherence in the existing scholarly literature. Specifically, the review aims to provide an overview of the theoretical underpinnings of these constructs, the varied strategies implemented to measure these constructs, and their implications for different fields of study. The concepts of semantic cohesion and coherence are deeply rooted in the theoretical frameworks of discourse analysis, linguistics, and cognitive psychology. Cohesion, as defined by Halliday and Hasan (1976), pertains to the grammatical and lexical connections that bind together the various elements in a text. On the other hand, coherence refers to the overall meaning and logical progression of a text as perceived by the reader or listener. According to van Dijk and Kintsch (1983), coherence arises from the mental process of constructing a mental representation of the text. They posit that coherence is achieved by integrating various propositions, which are linked by causal or other logical relationships.

Approaches to Measuring Semantic Cohesion and Coherence

Various methods have been developed to measure semantic cohesion and coherence in texts. One approach involves manual coding and analysis, where human coders annotate texts based on predetermined criteria for cohesion and coherence. For instance, in a study by Pohl et al. (2018), human coders rated essays based on their coherence, using a rubric that considered factors such as the logical organization of ideas, the use of transitions, and the integration of information. This method allows for a more nuanced and fine-grained analysis of the textual features that contribute to



semantic cohesion and coherence. Another approach is to use computational methods, such as Latent Semantic Analysis (LSA), which measures the semantic similarity between words or phrases based on their co-occurrence patterns in large corpora of texts (Landauer & Dumais, 1997). Computational methods offer a more efficient and scalable way of measuring semantic cohesion and coherence, particularly when dealing with large volumes of text. Other computational methods used to measure semantic cohesion and coherence include coherence models and discourse parsers. Coherence models are algorithms that estimate the degree of coherence in a text by analyzing the relationships between its components (Barzilay & Lapata, 2005). Discourse parsers, on the other hand, are automated programs that parse texts into their constituent discourse segments and analyze their relationships (Hirschberg & Manning, 2015). These methods have been applied in various fields, such as natural language processing, education, and psychology, to analyze and evaluate texts.

Relevance to Various Fields

The study of semantic cohesion and coherence has significant implications for various fields. In the field of education, for instance, research has shown that the coherence of student essays is positively associated with their grades and overall writing proficiency (Pohl et al., 2018). This finding highlights the importance of teaching and assessing writing skills that promote coherence and effective communication. In psychology, studies have demonstrated that the coherence of narratives is linked to individuals' psychological well-being and the coherence of their life stories (McAdams et al., 2001). This suggests that coherence is not only a feature of texts but also a reflection of individuals' sense of identity and personal narratives.

In the field of natural language processing, semantic coherence models have been shown to improve the accuracy of text classification tasks (Barzilay & Lapata, 2005). This demonstrates the practical applications and potential benefits of studying semantic coherence and its underlying mechanisms. Additionally, Martin and White (2005) proposed a framework for analyzing the structure of texts based on the concept of "genre." They argued that different genres of texts have different structures and that an understanding of these structures is essential for comprehending the texts. Their model of genre analysis focused on the way in which texts are organized and how they achieve their communicative purposes. This highlights the importance of considering the genre and context of a text when analyzing its semantic cohesion and coherence.

4. Methodology:

This study was conducted in the North Gaza Governorate in Palestine and focuses on the semantic and structural analysis of colours and numbers in proverbs. The researchers collected 78 proverbs and analyzed each item structurally and semantically. The structural classification divided proverbs into two subfields: noun and adjective phrases. The semantic classification divided proverbs into two subfields: literal and metaphorical. To collect data for this research, the researchers used three tools: observation, an interview, and an analysis card specifically designed for this study, enabling the researchers to categorize the collected items semantically and structurally. Analyzing colours and numbers in proverbs semantically and structurally required an analytical descriptive research approach, which was considered the most appropriate method for this study.

5. The Structural Analysis:

The following figure classifies colours and numbers in proverbs structurally, which is divided into 2 subfields: noun and adjective phrases.

Figure 1: Shows Structural Field Analysis of Colours and Numbers in Proverbs





Noun Phrase:

The researchers collected 60 (76.92%) items that were considered phrases. The following table shows some examples of proverbs that deem noun phrases.

Table 1: Shows some examples of proverbs that deem noun phrase

No.	Item	Translation	Type	
			Number	Colour
1.	خمسة في عين الشيطان	Five in the eye of the devil. (Said when fear of envy).	✓	
2.	ابن الاربعين من الكاملين	Son of the forty days is fully grown (said to children when days are forty days).	✓	
3.	القرش الابيض في اليوم الأسود	A penny saved is a penny gained		✓
4.	اذا حبيبك ثور البس له احمر	If your beloved bull wear red .		

Adjective:

The researchers collected 18 (23.08%) items that were considered as an adjective. The following table shows some examples of proverbs that are considered an adjective.

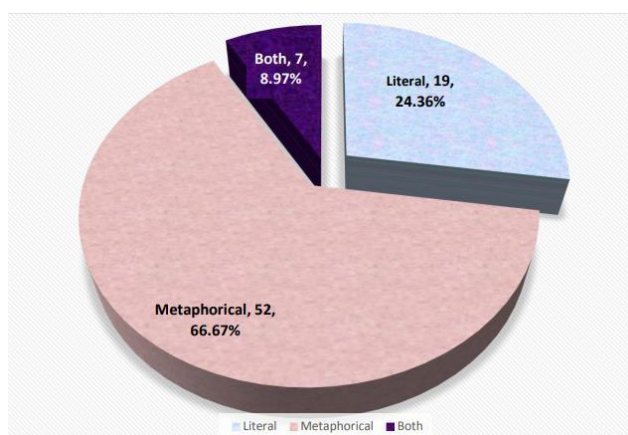
Table 2: Shows some examples of proverbs that are considered an adjective

No.	Item	Translation	Type	
			Number	colour
1.	العرق يرد لسابع جد	Origin is given to the seventh grandfather.	✓	
2.	جاهل بيرمي حجر في بير مية (ميت) عاقل ما بطلعوه	If an ignored throws a stone in the well, a thousand wise men will not be able to fetch it.	✓	
3.	ما لقيوش في الورد عيب قالو احمر الخدين	If you hate something, his/her beauty will be a defect to you.		✓
4.	خبي قرشك الابيض لليوم الاسود	Save your money for a rainy day.	✓	

Semantic Analysis:

The following figure classifies colours and numbers in proverbs semantically, which divide into 3 subfields: literal, metaphorical, and both.

Figure 2: Shows semantic field analysis of colours and numbers in proverbs





Literal Meaning:

The researchers collected 19 (24.36%) items that were considered literal meanings. The following table shows some examples of proverbs that are considered literal meanings.

Table 3: Shows some examples of proverbs that considered as literal meaning

No.	Item	Translation	Type	
			Number	colour
1.	احذر النساء قبل العشرين واطرکهم بعد الاربعين	Beware of women before they reach twenty and leave them after forty.	✓	
2.	بنت ستة سنتوها وإذا ما قعدت دلوها	If a girl reaches six months and doesn't sit, she needs to be pampered.	✓	
3.	لبس الاسمر احمر واضحك عليه	Wear the dark man red and laugh at it.		✓
4.	سمرا نغشاة ولا بيضا ودفشة	Fair and lovely better than white and naughty.		✓

Metaphorical Meaning:

The researchers collected 52 (66,67%) items that were considered metaphorical meaning. The following table shows some examples of proverbs that are considered metaphorical meaning.

Table 4: Shows some examples of proverbs that considered as metaphorical meaning

No.	Item	Translation	Type	
			Number	colour
1.	دنيا دوارة يوم بايدك وعشرة بالصحارة	What goes around comes around.	✓	
2.	المتعوس متعوس لو علقوا مية فانوس	The unlucky would never meet luck even if he meets it in the street.	✓	
3.	لولا سلامك غلب كلامك لخليت الذبان الازرق يسمع طقاطيق عظامك	If your greeting proceeded not your word, you would have heard your bones breaking.		✓
4.	الي ما بيقدر على الحمرا وعليقها يخلي من طريقها	If you cannot meet the red headed requests, you should leave her alone.		✓

The research presents findings and analyzes the collected data on numbers and colours in proverbs. Furthermore, the researchers provide graphs and tables that illustrate the findings.

6. CONCLUSION:

In this study, we conducted a structural and semantic analysis of cohesion and coherence in proverbs focusing on the use of colour and number in the context of the North Gaza Governorate in Palestine. The results of our analysis revealed that certain numbers and colours were used to express specific emotions. For instance, the numbers seven, four, and five were used to express exaggeration, while the colours black and dark brown were used to convey darkness and ugliness, although they were occasionally used to express fairness and beauty. Findings were concentrated in two areas: the structural and semantic analysis of cohesion and coherence in proverbs. The analysis revealed that the majority of proverbs fell under the category of metaphorical expressions. Furthermore, the study demonstrates the importance of



examining the structural and semantic components of proverbs in order to gain a better understanding of their meaning and significance.

Theoretical Contribution

The present study makes several theoretical contributions to the field of linguistics and discourse analysis. Firstly, it provides a detailed analysis of the structural and semantic aspects of proverbs, specifically focusing on the use of colour and number in the context of North Gaza Governorate. This is significant as it sheds light on the ways in which these linguistic features are employed in the creation and interpretation of proverbs and how they contribute to the overall meaning and significance of these expressions. Secondly, the study contributes to our understanding of the role of cohesion and coherence in proverbs. By analyzing the structural and semantic components of these expressions, we gain insight into the ways in which they are constructed and how they function as cohesive and coherent units of communication. This is important as it provides a framework for examining the use of cohesion and coherence in other forms of discourse and highlights the unique features of proverbs in this regard. Thirdly, the study contributes to our understanding of the cultural and social significance of proverbs. By examining the use of colour and number in proverbs in the context of North Gaza Governorate, we gain insight into the cultural beliefs and values that these expressions reflect. This is important as it highlights the ways in which language is used to convey cultural knowledge and understanding and underscores the important role that proverbs play in the transmission and preservation of cultural heritage.

Practical contribution

This study has several potential practical applications. Firstly, the analysis of proverbs could be useful in language teaching and learning. The study of proverbs can help students to develop a deeper understanding of the cultural and linguistic context in which the language is used, and to gain insight into the ways in which language is used to convey meaning and values. Additionally, the study of cohesion and coherence in proverbs can be applied in the field of translation. The analysis of the structural and semantic aspects of proverbs can aid in the translation of these expressions into other languages, and help translators to convey the intended meaning and cultural significance of the proverb in the target language. Finally, the study of proverbs can have practical applications in the fields of communication and advertising. By understanding the ways in which proverbs are constructed and the cultural and social values that they reflect, advertisers and communicators can create more effective and culturally appropriate messages that resonate with their target audience.

7. Recommendations for future research :

There are several recommendations for future research. Firstly, future studies could expand the analysis to examine the use of other linguistic features in proverbs, such as sound patterns and word order. This would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the structure and meaning of proverbs.

Secondly, future studies could explore the use of proverbs in other cultural and linguistic contexts to compare and contrast the similarities and differences in the use of linguistic features and cultural values.

Thirdly, future studies could examine the use of proverbs in different types of discourse, such as political speeches or advertising, to gain insight into the ways in which proverbs are used to convey specific messages and values.

Finally, future studies could explore the use of proverbs in different age groups and social classes to determine if there are any differences in the use, interpretation, and significance of proverbs across different societal groups.

8. Limitations :

There are several limitations to this research that should be acknowledged. Firstly, the analysis was limited to the use of colour and number in proverbs in the context of North Gaza Governorate of Palestine and may not be generalizable to other cultural or linguistic contexts. Secondly, the sample size was relatively small and may not be representative of the entire population of proverbs in the North Gaza Governorate. Therefore, caution should be exercised when generalizing the findings of this study.

Thirdly, the analysis was limited to the structural and semantic features of proverbs and did not take into account other contextual factors that may be relevant to the interpretation and meaning of proverbs, such as the speaker's intention, the audience, and the situational context.



Finally, the analysis was limited to the use of proverbs as a form of spoken discourse and did not take into account the use of proverbs in written discourse, such as literature or poetry. This may be an area for future research.

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