

The Connotative Meanings of Animal Names in the Algerian Society

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Received on: 29-12-2022

Accepted on: 26-4-2023

Abstract

This study explores the connotative meanings of animal names in the Algerian society. To achieve this objective, a questionnaire containing 20 commonly used animal names in the Algerian society was created to collect data which were analyzed qualitatively. The results show that animal names are frequently used in the Algerian society to connote a variety of meanings based on the context and/or personal thoughts and beliefs of the interlocutors. The findings also show that some animal names are specifically used to describe only males or females, while other animal names are used for both sexes. All in all, the connotative meanings of animal names are related to descriptions of physical appearance, size, and character, and are used to fulfill semantic, pragmatic, and sociolinguistic functions. The use of animal names plays an important role in shaping the Algerian society with its diversities and cultural specificity.

Keywords: Animal names; Denotation; Connotation; Semantic function; Pragmatic function; The Algerian society.

1. Introduction

Throughout history, the connection between humans and animals has been incredibly close, shaping human emotions, values, and language. This association has led to people around the world using animal names to describe one another and assigning positive and negative attributes to those names. As Song (2009, 58) states, animals have played an essential role in our lives, and their behaviors have become familiar to us over time. As a result, we compare certain animal traits to our own. Kövecses (2010, 152) suggests that much of human behavior can be metaphorically understood in terms of animal behavior. By using animal metaphors, people can achieve various functions, such as insulting or praising (Sameer 2016, 134). Thus, it is not unusual for people to refer to humans as animals, such as in the example “What the hell does the silly cow think she is doing?” (Kövecses 2010, 152). Indeed, the close relationship

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* Doi: <https://doi.org/10.47012/jjml.16.1.6>

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between humans and animals has significantly influenced our emotions, values, and language. Thus, we find that most animal-related expressions reflect the cultural values and thought processes of people.

Linguistically, animal expressions serve both semantic and sociolinguistic purposes as these expressions evolved from various factors such as culture, society, human relationships, and cognition (see Al-Haj Eid 2021; Al Salem et al. 2022). Consequently, they bear either positive or negative meanings in different societies (Nakhavali, 2011). Although some animal terms may share cultural connotations across different languages, the cultural background of people determines their unique associations with the same animal term. Hence, animal terms have different cultural connotations depending on one's social background and national conventions (Yinggang and Xuena 2015). Linguists have delved into the cultural and connotative meanings of animal expressions and metaphors used to describe people (e.g., Neisi 1995; Halupka and Radic 2003; Rodriguez 2009; Muhammad and Rashid 2014). However, such research has been limited in the Arab world. Research in the Arabic context has been concerned with the pragmatic functions of language (e.g., Rabab'ah et al. 2020; Alkhalidi and Alghazo 2023) and on theoretical underpinnings of linguistic constructions (e.g., Jarrah et al. 2019; Harb et al. 2022). In the Algerian context, research has mainly focused on speech act realizations (e.g., Alghazo et al. 2021; Benyakoub et al. 2022). Semantic analyses of linguistic expressions are rare. Thus, this study aims to investigate the connotative meanings of animal names used to address individuals in the Algerian society. The study also seeks to determine whether the selection of animal names is influenced by gender, i.e., whether the animal terms are used exclusively to describe males, females, or both. This research aims to answer the following questions:

1. What connotative meanings do animal names hold in the Algerian society?
2. To what extent do these names connote positive or negative meanings?
3. Do these animal names exclusively describe males, females, or both?

2. Theoretical Framework

This study employs the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) as its theoretical framework. As asserted by Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 3), metaphor is an omnipresent aspect of everyday life, present not only in language but also in thought and action, as it arises from our metaphorical conceptual system. Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 3) argue that a metaphor involves understanding one thing in terms of another and that "our conceptual system is largely metaphorical, then the way we think, what we experience, and what we do every day is very much a matter of metaphor." Hence, metaphors play a fundamental role in our existence, and we cannot escape their influence (Lakoff and Johnson 2003). Nonetheless, the use of metaphors and how we interpret them are heavily influenced by our perception and engagement with our surroundings, which are typically culture specific. Therefore, as Lakoff and Turner (1989, 65) suggest, we understand these concepts through their associations and social experiences.

According to Leech (1981, 2), there are two types of meanings: conceptual and associative. The former, which is considered the most crucial aspect of language and communication, has a complex structure comparable to that of syntactic and phonological levels. The latter, on the other hand, extends an expression's pure conceptual content to its connotative meaning or communicative value through

associated references Leech (1981, 12). Connotations can vary from society to society and can refer to the qualities of the referent that are acknowledged due to different views held by different people or societies. Moreover, a connotation relates to the actual experience one has when hearing or using a phrase. Lastly, Leech (1981, 13) emphasized that a connotative meaning is not exclusive to language and is shared by other communicative systems and that, unlike conceptual or denotative meanings, connotative meanings are open-ended and indeterminate.

3. Literature Review

This section provides a review of previous research conducted on the metaphorical use of animal names across different languages and cultures. Nesi (1995) conducted a study to explore the figurative use and connotative meanings of animal names in different cultures through a questionnaire distributed to respondents from 38 different geographic regions. The study found that animal names such as cat, cow, and mouse have various figurative meanings in different cultures, which can pose challenges for language learners and translators when dealing with conventional single-word metaphors. Advanced learners tend to consider the connotations of their native culture when using these words figuratively in English. Additionally, Nesi (1995) discovered that many animal terms can be used to either praise or criticize members of the same linguistic and cultural group, with negative connotations being attributed marginally more than positive ones, depending on the context.

Fontecha and Catalan (2003) conducted a study on the derogation of animal metaphors and concepts and found that the word pairs fox/vixen and bull/cow, as well as their Spanish counterparts, are commonly used to describe people in both English and Spanish. The study revealed that the term fox is often used for men to denote craftiness rather than attractiveness, while the term vixen is only used for women to connote bad temper or cunning. In contrast, when the word fox is used in Spanish, it connotes deception and cunning for both sexes. Additionally, the word pairs bull/cow connote different meanings, including size, strength, aggressiveness, clumsiness, and insensitivity for bulls, and respect, unattractiveness, large size, untidiness, coarseness, and prostitution for cows in both English and Spanish. Overall, the research findings suggest that female term metaphors connote worse qualities than male term metaphors.

In their study, Halupka and Radić (2003) examined the use of animal names in the Serbian language as both metaphors and vocatives, and how they are used to address people in both abusive and affectionate ways. The study was conducted among 100 linguistics students who were given a questionnaire with 40 animal names to assess their connotations. The findings revealed that these animal names are primarily used as human invectives, although a few vocatives are also used as diminutives to express affection. Moreover, the transfer of animal names to humans is driven by several thematic factors, such as appearance, eating habits, intelligence, and character. Interestingly, Halupka and Radić (2003) found that animal names are also used in positive contexts, motivated by the addressor's affectionate feelings towards the addressee, especially when the appearance of an animal is involved.

Rodriguez (2009) aimed to compare the figurative use of animal names for women in English and Spanish. The study revealed that women are often referred to as bitches, chickens, and vixens in both languages, which correspond to the categories of pets, farm animals, and wild animals. The use of animal names for women as pets conveys negative connotations of ugliness, promiscuity, or cruelty in both languages. However, the use of pet names may also refer to domesticity. The portrayal of women as farmyard animals in both English and Spanish varies in terms of praise and abuse. In contrast, the use of animal images depicting wild creatures show a clear imbalance in terms of abuse, with "crow" being used in both languages to connote an old or ugly woman. Overall, animal metaphors are frequently employed in both English and Spanish to degrade social groups considered inferior or marginal (Rodriguez, 2009).

In a study by Nakhavali (2011), the meanings and uses of animal names in proverbs were examined in both Persian and English. The study revealed that animal expressions play a significant role in the semantic and sociolinguistic functions of a society, reflecting their way of thinking and cultural peculiarities. However, translating them from one language to another can lead to misinterpretations due to cultural or communicational differences. Additionally, it was found that animal expressions are heavily influenced by culture, society, and human relations, and may hold different values and connotations across linguistic societies. For instance, the owl and crow have more semantic importance in English and other languages than in Persian, making them more productive in those languages. Ultimately, animal expressions serve as a reflection of individuals' and society's beliefs, cultural backgrounds, social behaviors, and roles.

Aliakbari and Faraji (2013) conducted research on the metaphorical system of a local Kurdish dialect, focusing on the use of animal metaphors in order to explore their cultural significance in spoken discourse. Their approach involved collecting and analyzing animal expressions used to praise and degrade physical and behavioral characteristics in the Khezeli dialect of Ilam, Iran, over a period of three years. By scrutinizing spoken language and oral poetry, they created a corpus that represented the dialect. The researchers found that animal expressions used to describe men's physical and behavioral characteristics tend to be more wild than domestic and more degrading than praising. Their study also demonstrated that animal appearance, size, physical characteristics, and body parts are often transferred to humans. Additionally, the researchers observed that animal names were associated with both organ descriptions and overall body appearance. Ultimately, the study's conclusion emphasized the importance of recognizing that the types of animals used, their connotations, and interpretations may be culture-specific and misunderstanding them can result in miscommunication.

Yinggang and Xuena (2015) examined the cultural significance of animal-related terms in both English and Chinese. The researchers demonstrated that animal terms can have similar or identical connotations in both languages. For example, a meek person is referred to as a mouse in Chinese, while in English, the words chicken, rabbit, and pigeon are all used to describe timid people. Furthermore, while a horse in English represents strength and robustness, an ox symbolizes the same in the Chinese culture. Due to different cultural contexts and aesthetic preferences, the same animal word in two cultures can have opposing connotations. For instance, the word dog in English represents people's loyal pets, whereas

in Chinese, it carries a negative connotation. Similarly, fish in English is associated with negative things and people, whereas in Chinese, it is a symbol of wealth.

In conclusion, to understand the cultural implications of animal-related terms, people must broaden their knowledge of different cultures. This section reviewed previous research on the metaphorical and connotative meanings of animal names used to describe the physical and behavioral characteristics of humans in terms of animals. Notwithstanding, the findings of these studies would be used to compare and reinforce the current study's findings.

4. Methodology

4.1. The Participants

The participants are 37 Algerian students, some specializing in English and others in mathematics; they were PhD students at the University of Jordan in Jordan and MA students at the University of Bejaia in Algeria at the time of data collection. They are 12 males and 25 females, ranging in age from 24 to 26 years. All participants speak one or more of the Algerian dialects, with 29 speaking Algerian Arabic, 7 speaking Berber, and 1 speaking both Algerian Arabic and Berber. This group of participants is made up of students from various regions of Algeria with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, with 13 from the east, 11 from the center, 8 from the west, and 5 from the south of Algeria. In order to elicit the different connotative and cultural meanings each name has when used to describe the physical and behavioral features of people, the participants were given a questionnaire containing a list of 20 animal names most commonly used connotatively in the Algerian society.

4.2. Instrument

In this study, a questionnaire was used to collect responses regarding the connotative meanings attached to animal names in the Algerian society. The questionnaire is comprised of two parts: The first asks about demographic information such as gender, age, level of education, and region, and the second contains a list of the most commonly used animal names in the Algerian society to metaphorically describe people. This list includes 20 wild and domestic animals classified as mammals, birds, insects, and reptiles within the same category. The participants were requested to add as many connotative meanings as they could next to each animal name in the list. The questionnaire was distributed via email to 37 Algerian PhD students at the University of Jordan and MA students at the University of Bejaia in Algeria, with the goal of eliciting the study's required data. It should be noted that the target was first to reach 50 participants, but the final number of participants recruited was 37.

5. Findings and Discussion

This section is divided into three parts. In the first part, we report the connotative meanings of mammal names used to describe people in the Algerian society. The second part reports on the connotations of birds, insects, and reptiles names that are commonly used in Algeria. The third presents a discussion of the major findings reached in this study.

5.1. The Connotations of Mammal Names

1. Fox ($\theta\alpha\zeta\lambda\alpha\beta$, $ak\zeta\epsilon\beta$)¹ and Wolf ($\delta i:b$, $u\zeta en$)**Table 1:** The connotative meanings of Fox and Wolf in the Algerian society

Animal Name	Connotation				Gender			
	Positive	Negative	Both	Total	Male	Female	Both	Total
Fox	02	24	11	37	20	02	15	37
	5.4%	64.9%	29.7%	100%	54.1%	5.4%	40.5%	100%
<i>Meanings</i>	Smart, intelligent, clever, cunning perceptive, tricky/ sneaky, deceived, crafty, dishonest							
Wolf	09	24	04	37	22	00	15	37
	24.3%	64.9%	10.8%	100%	59.5%	00	40.5%	100%
<i>Meanings</i>	Intelligent, smart, wise, strong, tricky, deceived, malicious, vicious, dishonest							

The fox and wolf are both wild animals. Despite being from the same family, they differ in many ways, including size, behavior, and hunting method. However, they are also used to connote and describe people in the Algerian society. Analysis of the data shows that the fox ($\theta\alpha\zeta\lambda\alpha\beta$, $ak\zeta\epsilon\beta$ in Berber) is used more negatively to describe the behavioral characteristics of people, with 64.9% of the participants believing that it is used to describe a tricky or sneaky, deceiving, dishonest crafty person. 29.7% of respondents believe it has both positive and negative connotations depending on the situation, context, and behavior they want to describe, and only 5.4% use it positively to describe someone who is smart, intelligent, cunning, and perceptive. Furthermore, more than half of the respondents (54.1%) agreed that it is used to describe men rather than women, while 40.5% confirmed that the animal's name was used for both males and females in their regions and cultures.

Similarly, the name wolf ($\delta i:b$, $u\zeta en$) is used negatively when describing people metaphorically throughout Algeria. The majority of participants (64.86%) used it to describe someone who is tricky, deceiving, malicious, vicious, dishonest, and crafty. In comparison to the name fox, the name wolf has a more positive connotation (24.3%); it is used to describe intelligence, wisdom, strength, and life experience. Finally, only 10.8% of those polled used it to describe both positive and negative aspects of human nature. However, the majority of participants (59.5%) confirmed that they use it to describe males, while 40.5% said they use it to describe both genders. These findings show that there is a variation in the use of both fox and wolf to describe the physical and behavioral characteristics of humans in the Algerian society. The reason for this variation is due to the country's Arab, Berber speech community's cultural, linguistic, and geographical differences.

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2. Lamb (xaru:f izimer) and Sheep (naʕza: θixsi)

Table 2: The connotative meaning of Lamb and Sheep in the Algerian society

Animal Name	Connotation				Gender			
	Positive	Negative	Both	Total	Male	Female	Both	Total
Lamb	11	23	2	36	20	01	15	36
	30.6%	63.9%	5.5%	100%	55.5%	2.8%	41.7%	100%
<i>Meanings</i>	Weak/with weak personality, naïve, stupid, funky, polite, kind/over kindness, innocent							
Sheep	11	25	01	36	06	15	15	36
	29.7%	67.6%	2.7%	100%	6.6%	41.7%	41.7%	100%
<i>Meanings</i>	Funky, weak personality, naïve, stupid, easily manipulated, calm, innocent, polite, kind and timid.							

Lamb and sheep are domestic animals that are herded in most Algerian regions. According to the data analysis, these farm animals are frequently used to metaphorically describe people. It was discovered that the name lamb is used to describe a person with a weak personality, funky, naïve, and stupid (63.9%). As a result, this animal is used negatively to abuse or degrade others. However, 30.6% of participants said they use it affectionately to describe positive human characteristics such as politeness, kindness, innocence (for women and children), and calmness. Furthermore, the analysis revealed that the name sheep is more commonly used to describe males (55.5%), with approximately 41.7% of participants using it to describe both genders. Like lamb, sheep has a more negative connotation in the Algerian community. With a percentage of 67.6%, it connotes a weak personality, and a naïve, stupid, and or easily manipulated person. However, it has a positive connotation in some cases (29.7%). When used for a child or a woman, it is used to describe innocence, politeness, and calmness. It is also used metaphorically to describe a calm, polite, and timid man or woman. In contrast to the name lamb, sheep is used metaphorically to connote women with the percentage of 41.7%. Similarly, approximately (41.7%) of participants stated that they use it to describe politeness, calmness, and timidity in both males and females. Finally, it is used (6.6%) to describe a man's negative behavior, such as those with a weak personality or those who are easily manipulated by others (e.g., by their wives). This demonstrates variation in the metaphorical use of animal names by the Algerian community, which is influenced by social, cultural, and linguistic factors, as well as the specific thoughts of language users and the semantic and pragmatic conventions existing in each region of Algeria, because people from the four points of the country (east, west, center, and south) think differently because they are influenced by different cultures and have different traditions. Finally, these animal names are used as terms of abuse rather than terms of endearment.

3. Horse (hisa:n, aʕuðiw) and Donkey (hima:r, ayyul)

Table 3: The connotative meaning of Horse and Donkey in the Algerian society

Animal Name	Connotation				Gender			
	Positive	Negative	Both	Total	Male	Female	Both	Total
Horse	28	03	06	37	23	00	15	37
	75.7%	8.1%	16.2%	100%	59.5%	00	40.5%	100%
<i>Meanings</i>	Strength, speed, dignity, health, elegance of man. Offensiveness to describe bad girl							
Donkey	00	34	03	37	02	00	35	37

	00	91.9%	8.1%	100%	5.4%	00	94.6%	100%
<i>Meanings</i>	Stupid, stubborn, idiot, tolerant. patient and hard worker.							

While donkeys are used to represent hard work and patience in many cultures, including the Berber culture, they are also used as an insult by many. The table above depicts the various connotations of the two animal names in the Algerian society and culture. Although they are members of the same family, they have different meanings when used metaphorically to describe people's physical and behavioral characteristics. According to the findings of the study, 75.7% of participants used the word horse positively to describe a person's strength, speed, health, and dignity, while 16.2% said they used it both positively and negatively depending on the context or gender of the referent. Only 8.1% of people said they use horse negatively to describe people. It is used negatively to describe a man who is arrogant and offensive. When applied to females, it is also used to denote a bad girl. Furthermore, the majority of the participants confirmed that it is used to describe males, with 40% saying that it is used positively to describe men's physical and behavioral characteristics, and negatively to describe females as bad girls. On the other hand, donkey is used more negatively (91.9%) in the Algerian culture than a horse, despite the fact that they belong to the same family. As a result, most people use this animal name in an insulting or humiliating manner. As a result, it is used negatively to connote a stupid, stubborn, or idiot person. However, 3 of the participants (8.1%) used it to describe a patient and hard worker. Finally, nearly all participants (94.6%) agreed that this animal name is used to describe both males and females.

4. Lion (ʔasad, izem)

Table 4: The connotative meaning of Lion in the Algerian society

Animal Name	Connotation				Gender			
	Positive	Negative	Both	Total	Male	Female	Both	Total
Lion	37	00	00	37	37	00	00	37
	100%	00	00	100%	100%	00	00	100%
<i>Meanings</i>	Brave, strong, powerful, leader, noble, heroic and handsome man							

Historically, a lion (ʔasad, izem or ʔahras in Berber) is said to be the king, the most powerful in the animal kingdom. The table above confirm this connotation as all of the participants (100%) agreed that the term lion is used positively to describe both physical and behavioral characteristics of humans in the Algerian society. As a result, the name lion (ʔasad) is used metaphorically by Algerian speakers, both Arabs and Berbers, to describe someone who is extremely strong, powerful, and brave. It is also used to connote a leader, as well as to portray a heroic and handsome man. Finally, 100% of the participants agreed that the animal's name lion is used to describe the male's behavioral and physical characteristics. However, it is important to note in this study that the female name lioness (/labuʔa/, /tasda/ in Berber) is also used to describe women in the Algerian society as smart /ʃatera/ in the western regions of Algeria, while it is used to describe beauty and attractive women in the Berber (Kabyle) culture and regions in Algeria's east, such as Bejaia, Thizi-Ouzou, and Bouira.

5. Dog (kalb, aqju:n/ aydi in Berber)

Table 5: The connotative meaning of Dog in the Algerian society

Animal Name	Connotation				Gender			
	Positive	Negative	Both	Total	Male	Female	Both	Total
Dog	02	31	03	36	00	06	30	36
	5.6%	86.1%	8.3%	100%	00%	16.7%	83.3%	100%
<i>Meanings</i>	Aggressive, evil impolite, talkative, despicable, and bad person, faithful person							

A dog (kalb, aqju:n / aydi in Berber) is considered a man's best friend in many cultures, and is used to protect houses and people. Furthermore, this domestic animal is well known for their loyalty to humans, but when used metaphorically to describe people, it mostly has a negative connotation. In Algeria, for example, the animal name dog is widely used negatively to describe people. As a result, the above table shows that 86.1% of people use it abusively as an insult. It is also used to describe someone who has bad manners, or in another word, a person who is impolite, evil, aggressive, and talkative. Only 8.3% of respondents indicated that it is used for both positive and negative connotation, and only 5.6% said it is used positively to connote faithfulness. Finally, most participants (83.3%) agree that both men and women are metaphorically represented by it, while (16.7%) say it is only used to describe females who are impolite and have bad manners.

6. Gazelle (yaza:l, tayzalt in Berber)

Table 6: The connotative meaning of Gazelle in the Algerian society

Animal Name	Connotation				Gender			
	Positive	Negative	Both	Total	Male	Female	Both	Total
Gazelle	37	00	00	37	00	52	30	37
	100%	00%	00%	100%	00%	59.5%	40.5%	100%
<i>Meanings</i>	Beautiful child or woman, attractive elegant, active woman, Innocent woman or child. Describe handsomeness and speed when used for man.							

A gazelle (yaza:l, tayzalt in Berber) is one of the wild animals; it is used metaphorically in many poems and stories to symbolize the beauty of women, speed, and agility. These cultural connotations are confirmed by the above table, which shows that all the study participants (100%) confirmed the above-mentioned claim and agreed that it has a positive connotation. When used to describe a female or a young child, it connotes beauty and innocence. It is also used metaphorically to describe an elegant and active woman, whereas when used to describe a male, it connotes handsomeness and speed. In this regard, most participants (59.5%) stated that it is more commonly used to describe the physical characteristics of women. However, 40.5% of participants confirmed that they use it metaphorically to describe the physical appearance of both males and females.

7. Cow (baqara, θafunast)

Table 7: The connotative meaning of Cow in the Algerian society

Animal Name	Connotation				Gender			
	Positive	Negative	Both	Total	Male	Female	Both	Total
Cow	00	37	00	37	00	29	08	37
	00	100%	00%	100%	00%	78.4%	21.6%	100%
<i>Meanings</i>	Over-weight, ugly, stupid, impolite, slow, and exploited person or greedy							

A cow (baqara, tafunasθ in berber) is a domestic or farm animal. It has long been the primary source of food and income for many families around the world. Despite its great utility for people, it is viewed negatively in the Algerian society. As a result, the above table shows that 100% of the Algerian participants use this animal name abusively to describe people's physical and behavioral characteristics. According to the data analysis, both males and females use the term cow to describe someone who is overweight, fat, and ugly, or who eats a lot. It is also used to describe a stupid, impolite, or slow person. Most participants (78.4%) agreed that this animal name is used metaphorically to describe women, while (21., 6%) confirmed that it is used for both males and females. Alternatively, in the Berber Kabyle regions in the east of Algeria, "lumb θu:r, agndu:z" are also used for males in the Algerian society to describe an impolite, aggressive, uncivilized, and barbaric man.

8. Pig (xinzi:r, haluf/ilef)

Table 8: The connotative meaning of Pig in the Algerian society

Animal Name	Connotation				Gender			
	Positive	Negative	Both	Total	Male	Female	Both	Total
Pig	00	35	01	36	13	00	23	36
	00%	97.2%	2.8%	100%	36.1%	00	63.9%	100%
<i>Meanings</i>	Dirty with bad smell, stubborn, naughty, and without dignity, or a greedy person making noise. Also used to describe alcoholic man. For Berber used to mean strong and isolated person.							

The pig (xinzi:r, haluf and ilef in Berber) has long been a symbol of fertility in many Western cultures. However, in Muslim countries, such as Algeria, this animal name has a negative connotation. According to the results of the above table, almost all the participants (97.2%) use the name pig to describe a dirty, smelly person or a greedy person eating a lot while making annoying sounds, or a snorer. It is also used metaphorically to describe a stubborn, naughty person or someone who lacks dignity. Furthermore, it is culturally used to refer to an alcoholic person like when saying "he drank like a pork or a pig "jereb ki lehalu:f". Additionally, the findings reveal a cultural variation in the interpretation of the meaning of pig when applied to Algerians. Alternatively, and in addition to all these negative connotations, Berber speakers of Kabyle use it positively to mean strength when used for males and negatively to metaphorically describe an isolated person for both genders (e.g., Imanis am y-ilef ihiz "alone like an isolated pig"). Finally, 63.9% of people used the name of this animal to describe both males and females. However, 36.1% of participants stated that they only use it metaphorically to describe male strength or an alcoholic person.

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5.2. The Connotation of Birds Names Used in Describing People in the Algerian Society

9. Eagle (nasr, lvβaz) and Owl (bu:ma, bururu)

Table 9: The connotative meaning of Eagle and Owl in the Algerian society

Animal Name	Connotation				Gender			
	Positive	Negative	Both	Total	Male	Female	Both	Total
Eagle	29	00	00	29	25	00	04	29
	100%	00%	00%	100%	86.2%	00	13.8%	100%
<i>Meanings</i>	Powerful, brave, enthusiastic, determined, strict and rigorous smart person. Sharp and good sight or vision. Strong personality. Handsomeness for male.							
Owl	00	35	00	35	04	10	21	35
	%	100%	00%	100%	11.4%	28.6%	60%	100%
<i>Meanings</i>	Pessimistic, isolated, ugly, and evil person. Someone who brings bad news. A person staring rudely to others. Sleepless person.							

The eagle is one of the predators which is considered to be a symbol of wealth and victory for many cultures, including the Arab countries of the Middle East and North Africa. Even though the eagle is a dangerous prey and predator, many people in North Africa, particularly Algeria, use its name positively to describe people metaphorically. Thus, according to the data shown in the table above, most of the Algerian participants (86.2%) use the animal name to describe males. As a result, it is used to describe males who are brave, powerful, smart, and enthusiastic, as well as to connote males who are determined, rigorous, and have a strong personality. Furthermore, the animal's name eagle describes man's beauty. On the other hand, approximately 13.8% indicated that they use it for both males and females; in this context, it is used to describe both men's and women's good sight and bravery. For example, in the Kabyle Berber society, the female name of an eagle, "tasiwant", is used to describe a smart woman with good sight, as in "frafent wa-alen-is am tasiwant" which means "she has good or sharp sight like an eagle." Furthermore, the data analysis revealed that, while the owl invariably has a negative connotation in the Algerian society. As a result, all participants (100%) stated that they use the word owl negatively to signify people's behavior. Furthermore, more than half of them (60%) said they use it for both males and females, while the remaining said they only use it with females. According to the data, it is used to describe a pessimistic male or female. It is also used to describe ugliness in both genders and to connote an evil woman. Finally, the word owl implies a sleepless person, as well as a male or female staring rudely at others. It can be stated that the existing variation in the connotation of the animal expressions eagle and owl is due to differences in thinking and cultural peculiarities in Algeria.

10. Hen (dadʒa:dʒa, θayazit), Pigeon (ħama;mah, iθβir) and Partridge(ħidʒl, θaskurθ)

Table 10: The connotative meaning of Hen, Pigeon, and Partridge in the Algerian society

Animal name	Connotation				Gender				
	Positive	Negative	Both	Neutral	Total	Male	Female	Both	Total
Hens	00	29	03	02	34	00	05	29	37
	00%	85.3 %	8.8%	5.9 %	100%	%	14.7%	85.3%	100%
<i>Meanings</i>	coward person, weak personality, non-greedy person, naive, person sleeping early, talkative, noisy person A person with low weight.								
Dove or Pigeon	35	00	00	00	35	00	29	06	35
	100%	00%	00%	00%	100%	00%	82.9%	17.1%	100%
<i>Meanings</i>	Beautiful, elegant, pure, polite, woman light or white skin, peaceful person, handsome man								
Partridge	24	00	00	00	24	00	17	07	24
	100%	00%	00%	00%	100%	%	70.8%	29.2%	100%
<i>Meanings</i>	Beauty, handsomeness, elegance, fitness and politeness Short, cute woman								

Hen in Berber is a female chicken which plays an important role in human life; many people all over the world, particularly in Algeria, rely on it as a source of food. Despite its importance and benefit to humans, the name hen when used metaphorically is given a negative connotation. According to the above table, Algerians use the name hen to connote a negative meaning. Most participants (85.3%) use the animal's name to degrade others, while (8.8%) use it both negatively and positively depending on the context, and (5.9%) said they are neutral (they do not associate neither negative nor positive connotations with the name). As a result, the word hen is also used to describe a cowardly person with a weak personality, as well as a talkative person. As a result, most respondents (85.3%) stated that they use it connotatively to describe both sexes (male and female). However, (14.7%) confirmed that they only use with females. To summarize, the findings show that the term hen is used negatively in Algerian society to metaphorically describe both males and females.

Pigeon or dove (ħama;mah, iθβir) is a bird that is known to be a symbol of peace, love, and honor; it was also used as a messenger in the past to exchange messages. As a result, this animal has retained its value and is used positively in the Algerian society to describe people's physical and behavioral characteristics. According to the data analysis, all the participants used the name pigeon or dove to describe others positively. It is used to describe a woman's beauty and elegance, or a man's handsomeness. It is also used to describe someone who is polite, pure, and peaceful. Additionally, it is used metaphorically to describe a woman with light, fair skin. According to the collected data, 82.9% said that in their regions, the name pigeon or dove is used metaphorically to describe a female, while 17.1% said it is used to describe the beauty or handsomeness of a female or male. Finally, two of the participants stated that they never use this name to describe someone, which can be attributed to a lack of cultural knowledge about the metaphorical use of animal names. Furthermore, in some Berber regions, such as Kabylie, the name partridge (ħidʒl, θaskurθ) is used instead of dove or is used interchangeably to describe the same characteristics.

Partridge (ħidʒl, θaskurθ) is another class of birds that holds great significance in the Algerian society, particularly in the Berber Kabyle society; it is regarded as a symbol of beauty, and many families

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have named their daughters "Sekoura." According to the table above, this animal name has a positive connotation in the Algerian society. This animal is used in the same way that a dove is used to describe female beauty or male handsomeness. It also metaphorically describes elegance, female fitness, and courtesy for both sexes. Finally, this animal is widely used by Berber speakers to describe a short, cute woman or girl. Overall, the findings revealed that the term hen is used negatively to describe both males and females in the Algerian society, while both pigeon and partridge are used to denote mostly females.

11. Beetle (xunfusa, "Axunfs in Berber »)

Table 11: The connotative meaning of Beetle in the Algerian society

Animal Name	Connotation				Gender			
	Positive	Negative	Both	Total	Male	Female	Both	Total
Beetle	05	24	00	29	02	12	15	29
	17.2%	82.8%	00	100%	6.9%	41.4	51.7%	100%
<i>Meanings</i>	Ugly and dirty person, someone with tiny, small body, hard working.							

The beetle is an insect that is peaceful. However, it is perceived negatively in the Algerian society. The beetle is commonly used to describe people with a negative connotation. According to the data analysis, most participants (82.8%) use the name beetle negatively or abusively to describe both males and females. Essentially, 51.7% said they use it to describe both males and females, while 41.4% said they use it to describe an ugly or dirty woman or girl. Finally, 6.9% said they use it to connote a man. In a nutshell, it connotes ugliness, dirtiness, and someone with a tiny, small body. On the other hand, it is worth noting that in some regions of Algeria, particularly in the country's east, some participants indicated that they use it positively (17.5%) to indicate a hard worker. However, the insect's name the beetle is more loaded with negative meanings when used metaphorically to describe the physical appearance of someone, either male or female, as when saying the following popular proverb "kul xanfu:s ħin imu ya:al" which means that "every beetle in the eyes of his/her mom is a gazelle" which is used to refer to ugliness of the person.

12. Chameleon (ħirba:?, taθa)

Table 12: The connotative meaning of chameleon in the Algerian Society

Animal name	Connotation				Gender			
	Positive	Negative	Both	Total	Male	Female	Both	Total
Chameleon	00	37	00	37	00	17	20	37
	00%	100%	00%	100%	00%	45.9%	54.1%	100%
Meaning	Hypocrite, liar, malicious, double-faced person							

Chameleon (ħirba:?, taθa in Berber) is a reptile that is known to change color depending on its surroundings. People noticed the animal's powerful ability and began to relate its traits to describe people's characteristics. The analysis revealed that chameleon is used negatively among Algerians, with 100% of participants using it to describe the negative behavior of others. 54.1% of participants said they use it to connote the behavioral characteristics of both sexes, while 45.9% said they do not. To summarize, the name chameleon is used metaphorically to connote an evil, malicious and lying person

who shows the opposite of what he feels about others, as well as a double-faced person who changes his behavior and opinion to serve his benefits.

13. Scorpion (ṣaqrab, ṯiyirḍemt) and Snake (afṣa, leṣṣa, azrem)

Table 13: The connotative meaning of scorpion and snake in the Algerian Society

Animal Name	Connotation				Gender			
	Positive	Negative	Both	Total	Male	Female	Both	Total
Scorpion	00	37	00	37	00	25	12	37
	00%	100%	00%	100%	00%	67.6%	32.4%	100%
<i>Meanings</i>	Tricky, dangerous, jealous, malicious, treacherous, deceitful person Hypocrite, vicious, telling lies about the others or having bad intentions toward others							
Snake	00	35	00	35	02	19	14	35
	00%	100%	00%	100%	5.7%	54.3%	40%	100%
<i>Meanings</i>	Tricky, dangerous, treacherous, hypocrite person, someone with malicious intentions, jealous and manipulator.							

Scorpions (ṣaqrab, ṯiyirḍemt) and snakes (ḥayah leṣṣa, azrem) are described as the most dangerous animals on earth. When used metaphorically to describe people's characteristics, both animal terms are found to be similar in connotative meanings. Thus, in Algeria, the names are used to describe people negatively metaphorically. Based on the collected data, all the participants agreed that scorpion has a negative connotation and is used to describe both sexes (males and females), but it is most commonly used to describe females' negative behavior. 67.6% of the participants use it only to describe a woman or a girl, while 32.4% use it to describe both sexes, females and males. As a result, as shown in the table above, the participants demonstrated a variety of behaviors that can be described metaphorically using scorpions. Furthermore, scorpion is used to denote trickery; a dangerous, jealous, malicious, or treacherous person, as well as a hypocrite vicious person who lies about others and has bad intentions toward them (evil side).

Like the scorpion, a snake has a negative connotation in the Algerian society. All participants agreed that it was used to describe people's bad manners. According to the data collected in this study, 54.3% said they use this animal name as a metaphor to describe female bad behavior, whereas 40% confirmed that they use it with both sexes, and only 5.7% of male participants said that they only use it with males. In conclusion, both the scorpion and the snake are used similarly to metaphorically describe people. This is also evident in the connotative meanings expressed by the use of these animals, as well as in the addressee's sex. This led to the idea that Algerian populations are affected by the danger of these animals and use them metaphorically to describe and address people with bad manners.

5.3. Discussion

The current study looked into the connotative meanings of animal names in the Algerian society when they are used to describe people. According to the analysis presented above, the Algerian participants indicated that they use animal names to address and describe people metaphorically. As previously stated, the list of the most used animals in the Algerian society was divided into four major categories to aid in the analysis and discussion process in this study. Accordingly, the findings of this

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study indicate that Algerians mostly use animal names to describe people negatively rather than positively. As a result, in the analysis of the first category, mammals, the eleven animals studied were found to connote more negative than positive meanings. For example, fox and wolf are more negatively used to describe deception and craftiness. Furthermore, the analysis demonstrates that these two animal names have a positive connotation related to cleverness, wisdom, and strength for the wolf. This finding is consistent with what Fontecha and Catalan (2003) found in their study: The fox is used to describe craftiness and cleverness in Spanish. Furthermore, the findings revealed that these animal names are more commonly used to describe males than females.

Similarly, lamb and sheep are used negatively to describe both stupid and naïve males and females, but sheep was more attributed to males than lamb, which was equally used for both sexes. Furthermore, the two animals are sometimes used positively to describe a polite person or a young child. Whereas horse and donkey have different connotations, the first is used to describe strength, speed, and health, and though it is sometimes used to describe good health and speed of women, it still connotes or describes more, males. Unlike donkey, which is an insult for both sexes (male and female), it is more commonly used negatively to describe stupidity; however, in some eastern regions, such as "Kabylie," it is also used to describe patience and hard work.

When used metaphorically to describe people in the Algerian society, gazelle and lion, on the other hand, have a positive connotation. The first is used more for females to describe beauty, elegance, and attractiveness, but it can also be used to describe a handsome man. In contrast, the name lion is only used to describe a handsome and strong man. Furthermore, in the Algerian society, the animal names dog, cow, and pig have negative connotations. Cow is a derogatory term for an overweight, stupid, impolite woman. That is similar to what Fontecha and Catalan (2003) discovered, namely that a cow is used to describe a size of fat woman, while dog is an insult term used to metaphorically describe people's bad behavior. Finally, pig is used negatively to describe a dirty male or female or an alcoholic man, it also has a positive connotation in the Kabyle Berber community, where it is used to describe a man's strength. As for birds, five names were investigated. Three of these animal names were metaphorically used to describe the positive features of people in the Algerian society. These names include Eagle which is symbolic of a good sight for both males and females, but it is used more to connote a handsome, brave and powerful male. Dove and partridge are more commonly used to describe the beauty and elegance of a woman, though they can also be used to describe a handsome man. Aside from these two animal names, not everyone in Algeria uses them; in some regions, such as the west, center, and south, the name dove or pigeon is used, whereas in the east, such as Kabyle and the Berber region, the name partridge is used. In the Algerian society, hen and owl have a more negative connotation. It is used to describe a pessimistic, evil male or female for the owl, and it is used to describe a talkative, noisy person or a non-greedy person for both sexes. Finally, in the Algerian society, all reptiles and insects have a negative connotation. Beetle is used to describe an ugly person, and chameleon to describe a double-faced person. They are used for both males and females, whereas snakes and scorpions are used to represent people who are tricky, dangerous, jealous, malicious, treacherous, and hypocritical. Though they are used for both sexes, they

have a more feminine connotation in the Algerian society. All in all, the participants' answers demonstrated that each animal has more than one cultural or personal connotation in the Algerian society.

To conclude, the results indicate that there exists a variation regarding the use of animal names to describe the physical and behavioral features of humans in the Algerian society. The reason for this variation is related to the cultural, as well as, linguistic and geographical variations existing in the country with Arab and Berber making up the speech community. People's perceptions also played a role in each connotation. According to Aliakbari and Faraji (2013), animal expressions can reveal individual or social thoughts. The findings also revealed that animal names in the Algerian society are more degrading than praising, and are used to describe aspects of appearance, size, physical characteristics, and behavioral characteristics by transferring animal features to humans. According to the study, animal terms in the Algerian society are used to denote more female poor qualities than male, except for gazelle, dove, and partridge.

6. Conclusion

The current study has focused on the connotative meanings of animal names in the Algerian society. It has been discovered that animal names are widely used in the Algerian society to connote various meanings depending on context, social environment, and individual thoughts and beliefs; this has led to the idea that most animal connotations developed from culture, society, human relations, and people's thoughts. Also, the findings show that animal names in the Algerian society have more negative connotations, especially when used to describe females; however, the findings also show that some animals have positive connotations. Furthermore, some animals are only used to describe males or females, while others are used to describe both sexes. Overall, the connotative meanings of animal names used in the Algerian society to describe physical appearance, size, and character serve semantic, pragmatic, and sociolinguistic functions. These expressions play an important role in shaping the Algerian society with its diversity; they reveal the country's way of thinking and cultural peculiarities. For future research, a replication of this study with more than one group of participants from different age ranges will be necessary to arrive at comparative data that takes age as a variable into account when interpreting and connoting animal names used to describe people in the Algerian society or other societies. It is also possible to conduct a gender-based study to see how males and females use animal names differently. Finally, it is worth investigating the connotative meanings of animal names in the Algerian society, taking into account historical, religious, social, and cross-cultural developments.

المعاني الضمنية لأسماء الحيوانات في المجتمع الجزائري

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الملخص

يركز هذا البحث على المعاني الضمنية المرتبطة بأسماء الحيوانات في المجتمع الجزائري، ولتحقيق هدف الدراسة، صُممت استبانة تحتوي على 20 اسماً شائعاً للحيوانات في المجتمع الجزائري، وأجري تحليل نوعي للبيانات التي جُمعت، وأظهرت النتائج أن أسماء الحيوانات تستخدم استخداماً متكرراً في المجتمع الجزائري للإشارة إلى مجموعة متنوعة من المعاني حسب السياق والبيئة الاجتماعية والأفكار والمعتقدات الشخصية للمحاورين. وقد وجد أن بعض أسماء الحيوانات تستخدم فقط لوصف الذكور أو للإناث، في حين استخدمت أسماء أخرى لوصف كلا الجنسين بصورة عامة، وتستخدم المعاني الضمنية لأسماء الحيوانات لوصف المظهر الجسدي والحجم والشخصية في المجتمع الجزائري لتحقيق الوظائف الدلالية والبراغماتية واللغوية الاجتماعية، حيث تلعب هذه التعبيرات دوراً مهماً في تشكيل المجتمع الجزائري بتنوعه وإظهار طريقة التفكير فيه.

الكلمات المفتاحية: أسماء الحيوانات؛ المعنى الضمني؛ المعنى الدلالي؛ الوظيفة الدلالية؛ الوظيفة التداولية؛ المجتمع

الجزائري.

Endnotes

¹In what follows, the name of each animal in English will be followed by its name in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), then the Algerian Berber name for said animal.

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Appendix 1 Questionnaires

The following questionnaire is part of a study investigating the connotative meaning of animal names in the Algerian society. Please, give the connotative meaning of each animal used to describe people in the Algerian society using your personal, cultural and linguistic knowledge. All the information you provide will be kept strictly confidential and will be used only for academic purposes. Thank you for your cooperation.

Note:

- The animal names are given in English, Arabic, Berber and French
- Feel free to use any language you want to express yourself and give the exact connotations of the animal names used as address forms.

Part one: Demographic Information

Gender: Male Female

Age:

Level:

Your native language.....

Region: a. East b. West c. Center d. South

Part Two: please would you like to answer the following questions appropriately

1. Fox (ثعلب, akʃeβ, renard)

What does this animal name connote in your language/ culture?

Is it used positively or negatively?

Which sex is described by this animal name?

- a. Male b. Female c. Both

2. Wolf (ذئب, ufen, loup)

What does this animal name connote in your language/ culture?

Is it used positively or negatively?

.....

Which sex is described by this animal name?

- a. Male b. Female c. Both

3. Lamb (خروف / izimer, Agneau)

What does this animal name connote in your language/ culture?

.....

Is it used positively or negatively?

.....

Which sex is described by this animal name?

- a. Male b. Female c. Both

4. Dog (الكلب aq3un, Chien)

What does this animal name connote in your language/ culture?

.....

Is it used positively or negatively?

.....

Which sex is described by this animal name?

- a. Male b. Female c. Both

5. Gazelle (غزال, tayzalt, Gazelle)

What does this animal name connote in your language/ culture?

.....

Is it used positively or negatively?

.....

Which sex is described by this animal name?

- a. Male b. Female c. Both

6. Lion (الاسد, izem, lion)

What does this animal name connote in your language/ culture?

.....

Is it used positively or negatively?

.....

Which sex is described by this animal name?

- a. Male b. Female c. Both

7. Sheep (نعجة, 0ixsi, brebis)

What does this animal name connote in your language/ culture?

.....

Is it used positively or negatively?

.....

Which sex is described by this animal name?

- a. Male b. Female c. Both

8. Horse (الحصان, a3u0iw, Cheval)

What does this animal name connote in your language/ culture?

.....

Is it used positively or negatively?

.....

Which sex is described by this animal name?

- a. Male b. Female c. Both

9. Donkey (حمار, ayyul, Âne)

What does this animal name connote in your language/ culture?

.....

Is it used positively or negatively?

.....

Which sex is described by this animal name?

- a. Male b. Female c. Both

10. Cow (بقرة, 0afunast, vache)

What does this animal name connote in your language/ culture?

.....

Is it used positively or negatively?

.....
Which sex is described by this animal name?

- a. Male b. Female c. Both

11. **Pig** (خنزير, lehaluf/ilef , cochon)

What does this animal name connote in your language/ culture?

.....
Is it used positively or negatively?

.....
Which sex is described by this animal name?

- a. Male b. Female c. Both

12. **Hen** (دجاجة, θayazit, poule)

What does this animal name connote in your language/ culture?

.....
Is it used positively or negatively?

.....
Which sex is described by this animal name?

- a. Male b. Female c. Both

13. **dove** (حمامة, iθβir, colombe)

What does this animal name connote in your language/ culture?

.....
Is it used positively or negatively?

.....
Which sex is described by this animal name?

- a. Male b. Female c. Both

14. **Eagle** (نسر, lνβaz, Aigle)

What does this animal name connote in your language/ culture?

.....
Is it used positively or negatively?

.....
Which sex is described by this animal name?

- a. Male b. Female c. Both

15. **Owl** (البومة, bururu, Hibou)

What does this animal name connote in your language/ culture?

.....
Is it used positively or negatively?

.....
Which sex is described by this animal name?

- a. Male b. Female c. Both

16. **Partridge** (الحجل, θaskurθ, Perdrix)

What does this animal name connote in your language/ culture?

.....
Is it used positively or negatively?

.....
Which sex is described by this animal name?

- a. Male b. Female c. Both

17. **Beetle** (خنفساء, Axunfs, Scarabée)

What does this animal name connote in your language/ culture?

.....
Is it used positively or negatively?

.....
Which sex is described by this animal name?

- a. Male b. Female c. Both

18. **Scorpion** (العقرب, θiyirθemt, Scorpion)

What does this animal name connote in your language/ culture?

.....

