

Cultural Heritage between Rooting and Continuity: Crossed Views of Pearls in the Emirates

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Article Info	Abstract
Article History Received: September 26, 2020 Accepted: November 08, 2020	<i>This paper examines the ancient cultural heritage of pearling in the Emirates, its reality and potential renewal, according to a sociolinguistic approach. Therefore, if pearling is no longer a central economic activity, as it used to be before the discovery of oil, as well as the economic "nerve" of the UAE society and the hub of cultural activities and expressions in it, it has turned into a cultural symbol and a major component of the Emirati identity throughout history. This rooting allows the questioning of the social process underlying this symbol between the old generation and the new one, based on a deconstructive approach to its various, linguistic and social dimensions. The methodology adopted in this paper is content analysis. The study revealed that the intangible cultural heritage related to pearls is characterized by a richness and density, which are not significantly reflected at the level of cultural transmission between generations despite the cultural policy supporting this heritage and its continuity. This, in turn, sheds light on the importance of the family institution's involvement in this project and the need to ensure the diversification of channels and communicative contact methods with youth.</i>
Keywords Heritage, Pearls, Socio Linguistics, Immaterial Patrimony, Cultural Transmission	
DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.4262957	

1. Introduction

Pearling represents a holistic social phenomenon, to use Marcel Mauss's phrase (1925), as it is an economic activity that determines the quality of crafts, production and cultural expressions, at the interface of the historical, socio-economic, and political dimensions of the Emirates in the period prior to the discovery of oil. Accordingly, the study of this phenomenon requires an interstitial analysis that highlights its complexity, composition, and comprehensiveness. We rely on a sociological study in parallel with a sociolinguistic approach that analyzes language as a natural, current and historical product and uses it as a source for understanding social and cultural relations. In addition, this is what we will apply to the list of names given to pearls in the United Arab Emirates to reveal the social and anthropological nature of these linguistic relations and the extent to which they are used in studying aspects of the civilizational, cultural and economic identity of the Emirati society.

1. The Linguistic Identity of Pearls' Nomenclature

The naming of pearls dates back more than five thousand years and was mentioned in the Bible and the Qur'an as a symbol of idealism and valuable rewards. Pearls were made reference to in the Qur'an several times: « And they will be waited upon by [immortal] youths, [as pure] as if they were pearls hidden in their shells » (Surat Fatir, verse 24), pearls are also associated with gold and silk: « Allah will admit those who believe and do righteous deeds into gardens through which running waters flow, wherein they shall be adorned with bracelets of gold and pearls, and where silk will be their raiment (Surat Al-Hajj, verse 23). Pearls were also linked to beauty and hours: « Like unto Pearls well-guarded » (Surat Al-Waqi'ah, verse 23). They were also associated with the sea: « From them emerge pearls and coral » (Surat al-Rahman, verse 22). These verses and others indicate the defining elements of pearls on several linguistic, functional, value-related, geographic and social levels. On the linguistic level, the word 'lulu' (pearls) consists of two repeated letters ('al-lam' and 'al-hamza') that form two identical syllables in pronunciation and writing, and its singular form 'lulua' is derived from the verb 'la'la' and its pluralis 'lulu' and 'la'li', which mean 'pearl'. The pearl lexically indicates the qualities of luster, radiance, movement, effulgence and light. These qualities share a meaning related to the aesthetic dimension, which inevitably reflects on the material and socio-economic values. The latter form semantic fields related to the pearl's type, size, shape, color, and place of extraction, which produced terminology networks that branched from the specific designation or the root word (pearl) that gave rise to ramifications and labels classified by scholars according to what the aesthetic and physical value of the pearl implies.

1.1. Label and Value

The naming of the types of pearls was linked to their aesthetic and material value. Pearls were classified "as being among the jewels such as diamonds and other precious stones, but pearls differ from other jewels, in that they are the only ones produced by a living animal which is the pearl oyster. Pearls were known as the king of

jewelry” (Jumah Khalifa Ahmad Bin Thabit Al-Hamiri, 2011, 162). The naming of each type of pearl was determined by the shape, size, color, nature and place of its extraction. All these factors represent objective conditions in classifying pearls and controlling their value, quality, price, as well as control over the generation of a list of names whose authors relied on a set of standards and criteria for the significance of the name, as shown in the following table:

eulaVdna eziS ot gnidrocca semaN 'slraeP fo tsiL	
emaN eht fo lraeP	tcepsA stI
Asmani	A dark blue pearl.
ira'qA	A belly-shaped pearl, but more prominent.
mU aniwA	If the pearl was protruding from the oyster.
aldeB ahdiB	Of good quality, but with an irregular shape.
aldeB armaH	Of good quality.
nitaB-lA	lwob eht fo mpottob ehhta sniamer tahw setangised taht epahs cificeps enO
akuB	slraep llams yreV
akublaT	Smooth and opaque and has different shapes and colors.
ssilaJ	A pearl that has a base on which it ‘sits.’
ihahsmeJ	A molar-like pearl
tsasaraj	A type of pearl in the form of a small stone
nuyij	The finest quality pearls.
-lA tabsaH	The pearl second to Al-Dana in size and quality.
akahK	Very small pearls, smaller than the Buka.
-lA arhsahK	The worst kind of pearls.
anaD-lA	The pearl that is large in size and great in value.
anaD-lA iruH	Two pearls of similar color and weight.
injeS	Somewhat opaque with a blue mole, which is olive or round in shape, and sometimes has a sharp protrusion.
ilbaT	Has a drum-like base.
isdA	A pearl that is shaped like lentils.
Fadhih	A flawed pearl that differs in shape from others.
Al-Farida	A pearl of large size, which stands out for its uniqueness.
Fass	A pearl that adheres to the oyster.
Quqli	A type of pearls.
Quluh	Not completely round.
ikuwaK	A name for pearls.
itaibmaK	A fourth-class pearl, irregular in shape.
aruhbaM	A pearl into which seawater seeped.

aluhjaM	A pearl that is covered in scales after its removal from its oyster.
zhgiM hdaibA	A third-class pearl that is irregular in shape.
zhgiM qarzA	A pearl that has an irregular shape.
nayiM	It is pale blue in color.
ihkoN-la	A pearl that resembles a chickpea.
rooN	It is a rare pearl.
meeN neerehS	It is a pearl that is not completely round.
roomeN	A belly-shaped pearl with a small hole in the middle. It is also a pearl in the shape of a bubble.
-lA akkuY	The pearl that is small and completely round.
-lA akkuY nitaB	Semi-round and button-shaped.
-lA akkuy ahdiB	Perfectly round and white.
akkuY armaH	A round rare type.
akkuY itebeN	Round and yellowish.

This table serves to demonstrate how several designations are generated from the term ‘*lulu*’.* Their number exceeds forty names, each name distinguished from others by precise semantic features that determine its material and aesthetic value as well as the degree of quality of the pearl type. The speaker derives the semantic value of the designation from the semantic features common to these names that made him/her classify these linguistic units within a conceptual network that determines the meaning of pearls. Based on what this designation provides in terms of common data in the minds of those interested in pearl fishing, and classifying it according to the value and quality agreed upon in advance, the definitions presented in the above table tend to show how the definition of the name of the pearl expresses its aesthetic value and indicates its material worth. But when we look closely at these definitions, we see indicative data that represent special distinguishing features enabling us to distinguish between each type of pearl, which facilitates comparison and differentiation. This aims to determine the abstract characteristics of each type by deconstructing the significant structural features of each name. This analysis is carried out by comparing the semantic features of each name and isolating its abstract or tangible units that make up its value as related mainly to the degree of its quality. These values will inevitably be taken into consideration by the pearl merchants and buyers.

Lexical semantic analysis enables us to fine-tune the structural features of each of the pearl names and to identify the differential features characteristic of the value of each type along with its abstract and tangible properties (Pikabea, 2008, 16). Bernard Pottier (1974, 61-62) claims that this type of semi-analysis is based on a phonological analysis that identifies common and different points for each phonological unit. These names acquire their significance within a nominal network that allows us to define their semantic entity. The value meanings of the name can be obtained through information related to each name and type such as shape, color, size, weight, function and use. In order to define all the minimum semiological units for each noun, we must take into account the lexical or grammatical type under which the classification of the lexical unit falls, i.e. is it a noun, an adjective, or types of different phrases (Rastier, Cavazza and Abeillé, 1994, 49). The basic and secondary characteristics must be taken into account when analyzing the names and qualities of pearls so that we can control their value and quality as is the case in the following table:

Table of analysis of some pearl names

*See; GUILBERT, Louis. (1975). La créativité lexicale. Paris, Larousse.

Name	Shape	Size	Color	Value
inamsA	-	-	+	+
anaD-IA	+	+	+	+
adiraF-IA	+	+	+	+
nayiM	-	-	+	-
isadA	+	+	-	-
accuY-IA	+	+	-	-
ahdiB accuY	+	-	+	+
armaH accuY	+	-	-	+
rooN	-	-	-	+
itebeN accuY	+	-	+	-

The meaning of each noun consists of minor semiotic components, and in order to realize this meaning, it is necessary to understand these semiotic components and know their formative meanings :« This analytical approach has enabled semanticists to adjust the precise components of terms by adopting contrastive rules that analyze the quantity of meanings contained in each term / word using contrasting symbols.(+) and (-) are used to distinguish between the common and different connotations » (Khalifa Al-Missaoui, 2015, 133). This analytical approach enabled us to control the necessary and distinguishing features of each type of pearl mentioned in the above table. We randomly chose this sample of names to highlight the relationship of naming to value and to reveal the semantic components the speaker relied on in developing the names of the types of pearls. Accordingly, we discovered the set of characteristics that were adopted in determining the name of pearls and their value. There are some names that depended on the prominent features in them, which we referred to with the sign (+), and there are some names that depended on the sign (-), and the value and type of pearl were determined based on the degree of presence or absence of these two signs.

It became clear from this table that there are types whose name depends on color and value only, while there are other types that depend on the shape, size, color and value, and there are varieties that rely on the value only or the shape and value. This tells us that the naming of each type of pearl is inevitably formed by the presence or absence of these basic yet discriminatory formative features, in addition to the commercial and economic function it performs.

1.2 Naming and Function

In any language, a nomenclature is usually associated with the function it performs in social communication and what it entails in terms of human relations based on establishing laws that regulate the methods of interaction and communication between the concerned human group, which is, in this case, represented by pearl merchants and those interested in pearl fishing. Pearls, as an important source of wealth for Gulf and Emirati people in particular, have led to the creation of a vital environment that influenced the socio-economic sphere with a set of nomenclatures and expressions that has represented a lexical and idiomatic asset, a fact that enables us to control the laws governing the functioning of the relationships between members pertaining to this group at the social and economic levels.

1.2.1. Nomenclature and Lexical Richness

The naming of pearls and their use as a source of economic wealth resulted in the production of a lexical terminological richness related to this linguistic field, which reveals to us the relationship between the name and the job that in turn determines the nature of the social relations linking those working in this field.

Table of Names Distribution by Job [†]	
Al-Serdal	The commander of the ships' fleet, he takes the decision about the departure and return of the fleet, owing to his extensive experience at sea.
Al-Nukhatha	The captain of the ship, whose decisions about everything from the beginning of its voyage to its end is to be obeyed without any objection
Al-Majdami / Muqaddami	The one who sits at the bow of the ship and sometimes replaces the nokhatha
sawahG-IA	A person who dives to extract oysters and shells from the sea
Al-Seeb	The diver's helper, he is responsible for the safety of the diver. This man holds a rope tied to diver. If the diver moves the rope, the seeb pulls it back quickly.
Al-Sukuni	The man who holds the 'sukun', meaning the 'helm' of the ship.
Al-Radeef	Boys, between the ages of 10 and 14 who perform some chores.
Al-Tabab	A very young boy who helps on the ship's deck by pouring tea, shucking oyster and doing light chores.

Aljalasa / Alallasa	The men who intervene in any emergency that might occur as far as the diver is concerned, but who do chores like shucking oysters.
Al-Neeham	The vocalist on the ship who chants poems in a melodious voice and wishes good health and peace for sailors.
hkabaT-IA	Someone who cooks food and makes tea.
bootiK-IA	The person who writes down everything that needs to be written, the most important of which is what a diver collects, he then offers a recapitulation at the end of the day.

Several designations emerged from the profession of pearling, which were associated with jobs that formed a lexical and semantic field through which tasks were distributed to each person the nature of whose job was determined based on the development of a designation that expresses the functional role each member of the ship's crew performs. These functions and roles assigned to them resulted in the production of a network of precise terms that reflect the social reality of this professional group and reveal the nature of the interconnected relationships linking them.³ These are hierarchical relationships governed by status, value and role, which contributed to the formation of a lexical richness that enables us to understand the nature of these functions and the interrelationships between those concerned.

There is no doubt that language is a social production linked to a network of relationships and meanings that, in some way, express the social, historical and economic dimensions of those who use it, "as words or terms are of no less importance than documents, given the fact that they are a product of this society" (Khalifa Al-Missaoui, 2015, 153) The study of this network of semantic relationships implied by these terms associated with pearls, their collection and exploitation, enables us to determine the social identity of the society in which pearling originates, and reveals to us a stage of its history and way of life. They are designations bearing witness to the historical stages that the Gulf and Emirati society went through in its connection with pearls. On the other hand, the lexical field of jobs associated with diving and pearling reveals an integrated social organization based on a precise division of labor and roles according to age, status and skills. These roles do not exclude the cultural dimension. Rather, it is part and parcel of the system, as we find the « neeham » who declaims poetry about pearls and pearling, and intones invocations and prayers for fishermen. This is an affirmation that pearling is a « holistic social phenomenon » and the focus of economic, cultural and social activities that contribute to establishing a social organization based on the principles of sharing (working in the same sector) and social hierarchy (according to role and status). In the wake of the major economic and social transformations that occurred in the Emirati society, changing its social structure, and the negligence of various traditional crafts and professions, the question arises about the fate of the lexical richness and artistic and cultural productions related to the pearl heritage and its position among the contents of transmission between the generations.

2- Lexical Richness and Its Social Implications

The systematic semantic and contextual linguistic examination of the lexical/ terminological code that we presented in the previous tables, leads us to define the historical stages that have been associated with the phenomenon of pearling and its transformation into an economic wealth. Society uses these terms because they are specifically needed in the social environment.

The naming of pearls and its derivatives is linked to the two dimensions of use and production in terms of the search for social identity and economic value. These designations are loaded with communicative and use features that represent a stage in society's history as well as patterns indicative of its ways of life, the formation of its culture and the building of its civilization. The designations and terms that we included in the previous tables can be analyzed within a network of linguistic, historical and anthropological concepts that enable us to investigate the formative data through which we determine the cultural and social features of both their producers and users. Through their prevalence and frequent use in society, these terms contribute to providing an idea about the nature of cultural relations prevailing during each stage of its history. It has been shown that the terminological dictionary and cultural expressions related to pearls, such as what is known as Nabati poetry, each reveals the extent to which societal imagination and language are linked to the environment and its characteristics. This link facilitated the distinction between cultural groups in the UAE society, such as for example the differentiation between « people of the sea » and « people of the desert » which hugely differ in terms of lifestyle and ways of living.

In comparison with the desert society, the maritime community was characterized by greater cultural openness, the practice of trade, the intensive participation of women in economic activities, and important migratory movements. These factors affected the language and the dialects used, as it was influenced by different dialects and languages: Arabic, Oriental, Moroccan, Persian, Hindi, Turkish, Bengali, Pakistani, Filipino and Thai. The idiomatic and rhythmic diversity that predominates as far as the names of pearls are concerned along with the designations related to those working in the field of diving, fishing and trade, mimics and reflects the diversity

and multiplicity that characterize the demographic configuration in its mixing between Arabic dialects and hybrid languages.

3- Pearls in Social Memory and Transmission between Generations

In a manner reminiscent of Jacques Berque, some spontaneous anthropological discussions with a group of young people in the Emirates about the continuity of the heritage of pearls went to refute the idea that this heritage has been handed down in an optimal fashion to the younger generation in terms of linguistic depth and the density of the idiom. These discussions revealed that the significance of pearls is limited to their importance during the history of the Emirates and the fact that pearl fishing preceded oil extraction as an economic activity. Our interlocutors, a group of 15 young men and women, between the ages of 18 and 30, with whom we spoke individually in unguided interviews, were not able to name more than two types of pearls, namely « Al-Dana » and « Al-Yukka ».

M.K., one of the young men whom we interviewed, pointed out: “Personally, my grandfather was Nokhatha. We are from the people of the sea. Nakhida means a captain. He used to say: ‘I will marry my daughter to whomever brings me two Danas.’ Danas are best variety of pearls. Now, the area of his authority has shrunk to the family sphere. »

In addition to his social prestige during the period associated with pearling in the history of the Emirates, al-nokhatha » is considered in the modern period as being at the forefront of the names and functions that appear in the collective memory of the young generation. With the exception of the «Tawash», whose task was, according to one of our interlocutors, to evaluate the « piece, » meaning the pearl, and classify it, no other job title was mentioned.

On the other hand, our interviewees expressed their awareness of the existence of poems, proverbs and a rich oral culture that revolves around diving, fishing and pearls, but they did not learn anything about it and are not versed in it. One interviewee commented that « these names and words ceased to exist and died. They are only found in history books. The most important reasons for the erosion of memory related to pearls among young people is that they derive their knowledge of it incidentally from documentary films and on the occasion of some visits to museums or while attending cultural events. Pearls do not represent a topic that families transmit from one generation to another, with the historical elements, practices, culture and symbols it evokes. However, the indications that pearls have been restored to their symbolic and cultural status are numerous, and are especially evident through cultural policies and a clear national will to preserve the pearl’s heritage and the tradition of diving.

Conclusion

The history of the pearl is obviously rich in culture, symbols and meaning for all communities that devoted their lives to pearl fishing and trade. Even if it has been surpassed by the oil industry, natural pearl fishing is now recovering its prestige among the Arab Emirates. Recently, several countries are seeking for different ways to revive the ancestral practices that represents elements of self-identification.

The material dimension of the pearl-related heritage is preserved and its revival is intensively guaranteed through cultural activities and major initiatives such as the establishment of museums, a farm for cultivating pearls, and the maintenance of the historic Al Fahidi neighborhood in Dubai, which was established by pearl merchants in the late nineteenth century. In addition, the diving tradition was promised with revival and continuity. However, the need to nurture the intangible heritage related to pearls, especially the oral one, is most urgent considering the richness and depth revealed by the linguistic analysis. These conclusions confirm the need to motivate families to integrate the intangible heritage associated with the history of pearling into the implications of intergenerational transmission. It also highlights the role of cultural institutions in thinking about communication methods and solutions that are more accessible to young people through which they convey elements of this heritage and heavily rely on digital communication channels.

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