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Using Poetry to Express Emotions in Arabic and English as a Second Language

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USING POETRY TO EXPRESS EMOTIONS
IN ARABIC AND ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

A Thesis

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

Ahmed Mohammed Alharfi

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Indiana University of Pennsylvania
School of Graduate Studies and Research
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Title: Using Poetry to Express Emotions in Arabic and English as a Second Language

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This study investigated nine Saudi participants' perceptions of expressing the emotion of fear in Arabic and in English. It studied, in depth, potential barriers and opportunities of using poetry to express this emotion. Most participants reported a willingness to express their emotions through poetry writing. This willingness was challenged by the inherited poetry writing rules and by the culturally situated assumptions, such as the notion that poetry writing is an innate gift, poetry writing has rules that should be respected, and the potential difficulties that some students might experience when asked to apply emotional writing. Other challenges that were reported including the lack of English lexical items needed to reflect the participants' emotions in their second language, as well as the lack of previous creative writing activities in language classrooms in both languages. Overall, the findings showed how nine Saudi male English speakers perceived writing poetry as a suggested pedagogical activity in Saudi language classrooms to reposition learners to be the center of the learning/teaching process.