A Socio-pragmatic Analysis of Taboo Language Using Animal Names in Facebook Messenger in the Jordanian Setting: A Gender-Based Study

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Abstract

The current paper aimed to investigate taboo language using animal names in Facebook Messenger in the Jordanian setting based on the context where it appeared. A total of (100) male and female university students answered a questionnaire devised to examine the way how students use taboo language. It was noticed that "pig" recorded the highest frequency of occurrence comprising (11.59) of the total number of the taboo words followed by "dog" and "bitch". Important differences were observed in the frequency and use of taboo words by male (68.8 %) and female (32.2%) students. The study explained the reasons why such words were deemed taboo in the Jordanian setting taking into consideration the socio-cultural and religious norms of the society. The study also concluded that taboo language was used to express different themes such as humor, relaxation, anger and abuse.

Keywords: Taboo Language, Gender Differences, Themes, Socio-Pragmatic, Facebook Messenger.

1. Introduction

Language undoubtedly plays a major role in social interaction. It is depicted as a basis of linguistic communication. Gumperz (1971, 222) considered language as a form of communication. Language is an essential element of human cultural and scientific progress. It reflects people’s socio-cultural background, feelings, beliefs, thoughts, behavior and viewpoints. Copi stated that (1953, 35) language conveys different functions and is used to communicate thoughts or feelings. Taboo language is part and parcel of culture and human language. The relationship between language and culture is unavoidable. Hymes (1964, 21) and Hudson (1996, 73) illustrated that language is a fundamental part of human culture. Taboo is part of language and culture. Wardhaugh (1986, 229) mentioned that taboo language is associated with culture and is communicated in language.

A considerable number of linguists and anthropologists wrote about and addressed the issue of taboo language including its usage, definitions and functions. Among these are Al-Khatib (1995), Leach (1964), Rathje (2010), Allan and Burridge (2006), Midjord (2013) in addition to other scholars interested in taboo language. Taboo language was examined along with the cultural and social conventions, religious beliefs, attitudes and norms of the community.
Taboo language is a linguistic and cultural phenomenon universally recognized and often used in daily-life conversation. It is culture-specific as it digs deep into the specificity of the society. It is improbable to envisage a language without taboo words around the world. It is worth mentioning that taboo words or expressions abound in every community where members of communities strive to evade using such words or utterances. Roughly, speaking, taboo language is used by males and females differently, but varies from one person to another. It is firmly based on socio-cultural and educational background, age, gender, topic and social context. In other words, it reflects the community. However, it is severely banned to talk about in public. Some researchers assert that taboo language relies on functions, attitudes and reasons behind using it by the community members. It is often related to negative feelings and expresses the functions of fury, displeasure and irritation. On the other hand, taboo language may be used to convey a sense of humor, delight and wonder depending on the context since taboo language is context-specific.

The concept of context is of great importance in this topic as it refers to the situation where utterances take place. Ochs (1979, 5) defines context as verbal and nonverbal language user's beliefs and assumptions of spatial, temporal and social situations. Meanwhile, Bloomfield (1935, 139) refers to context as the situation which makes people utter speech to interact.

There are certain restrictions on the use of taboo language in the Arab and Islamic countries. Our norms, traditions and cultural behavior impose restrictions on the use of taboo language. According to the teachings of Islam, Muslims are prohibited from using taboo language. Muslims are commanded to speak good or keep silent as mentioned in The Holy Quran (Surah QAF, verse: 18) which says:

"ما يلْفِظُ مِنْ قَوْلٍ إِلَّا ﻟَﺪَﻳْﻪِ رَقِيبٌ"

"Man does not utter any word except that with him is an observer prepared [to record]."

"لِيَسَ الْمُؤْمِنُ ﺑِالتَّطْفَانِ، وَلَا ﺍﻟْفَاحِشَ، وَلَا البِذيَّ."

"A believer is not a defamer nor a curser nor coarse nor obscene."

Technological advances have revolutionized people's lives and bombardied them with the language of social media such as Facebook Messenger. This application is widely used as a medium of communication among people. It enabled people to communicate with each other on it through exchanging verbal and nonverbal messages, chatting, sharing pictures as well as movies. In Jordan, people sometimes exchange messages using taboo language. Their taboo language includes animals' names while chatting and messaging. Consequently, the use of animals' names in taboo language on Facebook Messenger by university students has become a common phenomenon in daily-life conversations on Facebook Messenger in Jordan. University students sometimes resort to Facebook Messenger to communicate using taboo language because they can hide behind freely using taboo words or expressions without being observed by others. Ningjue (2010) stated that social media sites including Facebook Messenger provide everybody with a mask through using taboo language.
The scope of taboo language may include words referring to bodily discharge, revolting and sexual expressions (shit) and even names of animals (dog, donkey). Regardless of the behavior and attitudes of the society, students may behave inappropriately during social interaction using taboo language in which animal names are included in their messages depending on the specific social context.

2. Literature Review

2.1. What is Taboo language?

Taboo language as a linguistic and cultural term is considered a forbidden form of communication used differently in all human languages and cultures. For instance, in the Arab countries, it is prohibited to use words related to sex organs or religion such as blasphemous words or any utterances damaging politeness, courtesy, good manners and etiquette rules of the society. Using animal names is also tabooed in the Arab world in general and particularly in Jordan.

The two terms taboo language and swearing may overlap. Swearing is part of taboo language; hence, drawing points of similarity and contrast between these two terms is useful in understanding taboo language. Andersson and Trudgill (1990, 53) describe swearing terms as taboo words used by society members to express emotive feelings and attitudes. Pinker (2010) considers swearing as taboo words referring to animals, religion, gender and body parts such as sexual organs and may be used to express the theme of venting anger. However, not every taboo word is deemed as swearwords. Karjalainen (2002, 18-20) argued that swear words is part of taboo language. Language referring to taboo is swearing. He also maintained that all swearing is taboo, but not all taboo language is considered as swearing. Ljung (2011, 12) noted that taboo language used in swearword does not maintain their literal sense. He added that taboo language is subdivided into two categories: swearing and non-swearing. On the other hand, taboo language used with a literal sense can never be considered as swearwords (quoted in Wulandari 2012, 13). It should be noted that some words when used literally are not viewed as taboo such as Pig depending on the addresser's intention and the context. Taboo language is usually affected by the context. For example, when describing "pig" as a farm animal, it is literally used as a non-taboo word. However, it will be taboo when depicting a person as a pig.

Taboo language derives from the Tongan word 'tabu', revealed by Captain James Cook in 1777 in Polynesia on his first journey to Tahiti (Allan & Burridge, 2006; Freud, 1913/2004, 21). It refers to the cultural norms of societies to be followed to evade undesired utterances. Meanwhile, Kridalaksana (1982: 161) defined taboo language as the prohibition of using some words for the sake of politeness (quoted in Barus et al 2018). Allan and Burridge (2006, 11) defined taboo language as a prohibition of behavior for a certain society at precise time and contexts. Likewise, Wardhaugh (2000, 234) refers to taboo language as the prohibition of any behavior supposed to be harmful to the community members which may lead to worry, shame, or discomfort.

The following are the entries for taboo words in several dictionaries; LDCE (online): 1a subject/area/word etc. that people avoid because they think it is offensive or embarrassing. 2 not accepted as socially correct. 3 too holy or evil to be touched or used. CED (2000): 1 forbidden or disapproved of...
3 any prohibition resulting from social or other conventions. 4 ritual restriction or prohibition, esp. of something considered holy or unclean. OALD (2000): 1 a cultural or religious custom that does not allow people to do, use or talk about a thing as people find it offensive or embarrassing. taboo words that many people consider offensive or shocking, for example, because they refer to sex, the body or people’s race. Some definitions show that taboo word (quoted in Al-Saidi and Hamdan:2005). Based on the above definition, taboo language is viewed as culture-specific as it digs deep in the norms and religious conventions and values of a society. Al-Saidi and Hamdan (2005) argued that not all taboo words are deemed taboo everywhere since taboo language is culture-bound. Therefore, tabooness is not dirty, unpleasant, offensive and awkward in all contexts for all people. It differs from one culture to another. That's to say, words deemed to be taboo in a certain region and time might not be considered as such in other regions and certain time. In other words, a word spoken by someone in a specific time and place may be considered a taboo word. Otherwise, it is not a taboo word. To sum up, taboo language is a forbidden or prohibited form of language. It consists of verbal or nonverbal abuse, blasphemy, offense, cursing, profanity and slang language generally recognized within a human culture which people experience.

2.2 Animal names in The Holy Quran

The Holy Quran consists of chapters (Surats) and the chapters are further subdivided into verses. The Holy Quran mentioned animals in approximately 200 verses. It also dealt with more than thirty animals including insects and birds as follows: pig, dog, donkey, camel, cow, grasshopper, elephant, whale, frog, sheep, ant, snake, swallow, hoopoe, spider, mosquito, butterfly, flea, mule, and monkey. Furthermore, some Surats of The Holy Quran were named after animals and insects among which are The Cow, The Bee, The Cattle, The Ant, The Spider and The Elephant. Such animals as well as insects were dealt with in The Holy Quran to urge people to speculate on the creatures of Allah (God) and to be thankful to Him and to learn from them. They were also mentioned for their fineness, faithfulness and as gifts to mankind who should be grateful. Islam ordered Muslims not to misuse or harm them. More importantly, animals have not been cursed as they are the creatures of Allah. However, Muslims are prohibited from eating the meat of some animals as mentioned in The Quran (Surah Al-Nahl, verse: 115) which says that:

\[
	ext{إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ وَاﻟْدِمَ وَﻟَحْﻢَ اﻟْﺨِنزَرِ وَمَا أُﻫِﻞَ ﻟِﻐَﻴْﺮِ اﻟﻠﱠﻪِ إِنﱠﻤَﺎ ﺣَﺮﱠمَ ﻋُ}
\]

"He hath forbidden you only carrion, and blood, and swine flesh, and that which hath been immolated to (the name of) any other than Allah……"

2.3. Classification of taboo language

Based on context, some scholars classified taboo language into different types. Al-Haj Eid (2008) divided taboo language into five categories regarding their themes: religious taboo (blasphemous words), social taboo, political taboo, sexual taboo and racial taboo. Andersson and Trudgill (1990, 15) as well as Mukuni et al (2016) further divided taboo words included in swearing into sexual taboo, animal names’ taboo (pig, bitch), religious taboo (God, Jesus), excretory taboo (urine, shit) and social/cultural taboo.
Correspondingly, Ljung (2011, 5-6) classified taboo language into two main categories, swearing and non-swearing to serve several themes as follows: sexual, religious, excretory, sickness, family, demise, and prostitution theme. Meanwhile, Barus et al (2018) divided taboo language into two main types: context-specific and general taboo. On the other hand, Frazer (1913/1980, 318-418) did not categorize taboo language based on context. He divided it regarding its occurrence in daily-life conversations as follows: verbal taboo, personal, sacred persons' names, names of relations, death, gods, kings and common names taboo (quoted in Barus 2018).

2.4. Theoretical Framework

With the aim of studying the taboo language in the Jordanian setting, the researcher found the sociolinguistic and pragmatic theories useful in accounting for the taboo language of certain animal words in the Jordanian society.

2.4.1. Sociolinguistic Theory: Gender-differences concerning taboo language

The term sociolinguistics refers to the study of language regarding the social context used in society (Hudson 1996, 4). Sociolinguistics attempts to bridge the gap between language and society. It is concerned with studying taboo language with regard to the social context together with gender, politeness, age, culture, behavior and attitudes of the speaker. In other words, it attempts to examine how social norms are reflected in language based on culture. Concerning gender, there are gender differences in the use of taboo language between both men and women as they speak in different ways in terms of sentence and word choice. Holmes (2001, 150) argued that the linguistic forms used by men and women differ in all speech communities due to socio-cultural behavior. She added that women are politer than men and both genders use different language forms. Women’s language is distinguished by super-polite forms such as euphemisms, indirect requests and avoidance of using taboo words (Holmes 2001, 286). Sociolinguists argued that there are several motives affecting human speech communities such as age, gender in addition to the socio-cultural motives behind this sociolinguistic phenomenon. Many scholars such as Tannen (1990) supported Holmes’ viewpoint that women are more well-mannered than men. As far as politeness is concerned, politeness theory, initiated by Brown and Levinson in 1978, highly emphasized that there are discrepancies in the way cultural behavior is recognized. Politeness theory dictates that people use polite expressions during communication to mitigate their language. Brown and Levinson (1978) adopted negative and positive politeness strategies in daily –life communications to convey messages.

2.4.2. Pragmatic Theory

Pragmatics refers to the actual use of language in a specific context. It depends on how an addressee says a message and how an addressee in a context interprets it. Context plays a fundamental role in interpreting linguistic utterances. Context is the setting in which an expression takes place. Through context taboo language is expressed and is considered taboo or non-taboo. Pragmatically speaking, context plays a major role in interpreting the meaning of an expression. That is why addressees should
scrutinize the connotative meaning of utterances. In taboo language, connotation plays an integral part in understanding meaning. "Connotation refers to an idea suggested by a word in addition to its main meaning" (OED). Denotation refers to the "act of naming something with a word; the actual object or idea to which the word refers" (OED). Denotative meaning refers to a narrow meaning; meanwhile, connotation digs deep into the hidden meaning. For example, literally, the word "fox" denotes a type of untamed animal with fur and tail, but non-literally it may connote a person as cunning. Therefore, the connotative meaning is influenced by social factors such as age, gender, the context of situation, society and politics. It cannot be separated from denotative meaning (quoted in Gao 2008).

2.5. Related Studies

2.5.1. Taboo language in Arab Countries

Al Khatib (1995) examined the phenomenon of linguistic taboo in the Jordanian setting. He sought to bring the linguistic taboo into focus by examining it regarding its relationship with the social context where it is used and the socio-cultural factors influencing it among which are education, age, setting and topic. The study was investigated in the light of different theoretical orientations that had recently been developed by sociolinguists and anthropologists, including Hymes, Halliday, Fishman, Leach, Frykmann and Lofgren. Several processes were carefully taken into consideration involving the creation, development, violation and replacement of taboo words. The study retained that such processes were conditioned by the sociological parameters examined simultaneously with the cultural conventions of the community. The study concluded that the socio-cultural factors play a crucial role in deciding when to use the linguistic taboo in the Jordanian Society. Likewise, Muili (2018) conducted a study on taboo language in Jordan. The researcher collected the taboo words uttered by the Jordanian community considering the context, degree of its acceptance and prestige in the Jordanian community. The study found that this acceptance of taboo words differ based on several factors such as environment, age and gender. The study also found that the religious motive was the most dominant for controlling people from uttering taboo words, followed by the social motive. Qanbar (2011) examined the linguistic taboos in the Yemeni community dividing them into two categories: context-specific taboo words and non-taboo words based on several factors such as education, gender, age and socio-cultural factors influencing its usage with the social context where the linguistic tabooes is used in addition to the cultural one???. He also investigated several classifications of linguistic tabooes in the Yemeni setting as well as the strategies Yemenis adopt to evade through various kinds of replacement of taboo words with more suitable words such as euphemisms, jargons, metaphoric expressions and antonyms. The researcher classified taboo words into two categories: context-specific taboo words and non-taboo words. In Algeria, Ghounane (2012) explored taboo language and euphemisms in the attitude of Tlemcen speakers towards taboo issues such as death and sex and their euphemistic replacements. The study sought to develop a better understanding of these sensitive issues and attempted to provide evidence that some linguistic words are used due to psychological and socio-cultural factors. It also investigated the reasons that enhance euphemistic replacements. It demonstrated that there are euphemistic words that stand for a rich
expression of Algerian varieties in general and Tlemcen dialect in particular. The paper proved that sex was the most frequent taboo issue, while death was also held with care in the Algerian speech community. Al Dilaimy and Omar (2018) investigated the taboo language of Iraqi Arabic speakers concerning the linguistic, religious and socio-cultural connotative meanings in verbal and nonverbal discourse. The researchers found that using taboo words in the Iraqi society is more frequently used in verbal than nonverbal discourse. The paper also concluded that the employment of impolite terms characterized the core of linguistic tabooeness in the study.

2.5.2. Taboo language in non-Arab Countries

Barus et al (2018) examined the taboo language in the culture of Karonese from a linguistic anthropology perspective. The study discussed the definition of taboo language and discussed it lexically in connection with performance, indexicality, and participation. The study demonstrated that the taboo language in the culture of Karonese was categorized into two main categories: context-specific taboo words derived from non-taboo words such as body organs, animals and supernatural entity, as well as words pertaining to social and physical defects such as diseases, demise, and murder; the second category included general taboo words such as swearing and unmentionable words. The swearing words consisted of excrement or filth, sexual organs, death, animals, diseases and prostitution; meanwhile unmentionable words contained filthy words concerning sex organs and activities in addition to addressing relatives and members of families and relatives. In another study, Ahmad et al (2013) explored the taboo language in the Pashtoon community regarding their connection with the social context. The study also investigated several classifications of tabooness in the Pashtoon community and the strategies adopted by their speakers to evade the use of such words through diverse kinds of substitution of taboos with more satisfactory words such as using jargon, euphemisms and metaphoric words. The paper explained the reason of considering such words as taboos in society. The tabooess in the Pashtoon community was also classified into two types: general taboo words and context-specific taboo words. Ningjue (2010) studied the taboo language in chatting rooms of both genders focusing on points of similarity and contrast between men and women. The data were selected in the context where they occurred and analyzed based on their functions and frequencies.

The study seems to conclude that both genders use taboo language on the Internet differently. Males use more taboo words than females do. Males' taboo words are bigger than female's.

3. Aims and Research Methodology

This socio-pragmatic study aims to examine the use of taboo language through animal names by Jordanian university students in Arabic-text-based chat in Facebook Messenger with reference to the Jordanian community's beliefs, norms and behavior. It also aims to investigate points of similarities and contrast in male and female taboo language. The ethnographic method was adopted in collecting the study corpus since it is considered as the most reliable approach in data collection of daily-life communication.
A mainly qualitative approach was followed in this paper. It is considered as a contribution to descriptive studies in socio-pragmatics. It examined the reasons for influencing this socio-pragmatic phenomenon. In particular, this paper attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What animal names do students regularly use in taboo language in Facebook Messenger?
2. How do students use animal names: literally or metaphorically?
3. Who employs more taboo words: males or females?
4. Why do students habitually use them in Facebook Messenger?

3.1. Sample, data collection and analysis methods

3.1.1 Sample and data collection

The main source of data was taboo language using animal names by Jordanian university students in Arabic –text-based chat in Facebook Messenger. The study sample consisted of one hundred male and female university students. They were purposefully chosen from Jordanian universities to be the sample of the corpus of the study. The respondents were requested to answer the questions.

3.1.2 Data analysis

The data were categorized and compared in terms of their frequencies and percentages. A socio-pragmatic approach was employed to analyze and tabularize the data to explain their socio-pragmatic functions and to reach the conclusions. A questionnaire was designed as a method for gathering and analyzing the corpus to find out the most recurrent taboo language used by both genders in addition to the reasons influencing this phenomenon. It included three questions: animal names used as a taboo language, reasons for using taboo language as well as whether or not respondents mean what they say. See Appendix (A) for the questionnaire.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1. A Sociopragmatic Analysis of Taboo Words in the Jordanian Culture

The study sample contained (26) animal names and (604) taboo utterances. The results revealed that taboo language using animal names in Facebook Messenger in the Jordanian setting is purposefully employed and express socio-pragmatic functions. Animal names used in taboo language are stated in accordance with their percentages and frequencies as shown in Table (1). They are coded as follows in a descending order from the highest to the least frequent animal names found in the data: pig 11.59%, dog 9.93%, bitch 8.28, donkey 8.28, bull 6.79, cow 6.62, elephant 5.79, ant 4.97, cat 4.97, dolphin 4.14, bear 3.31, hyena 3.31, chameleon 3.15, snake 3.15, scorpion 2.15, crow 1.82, owl 1.66, rabbit 1.32, mouse 1.32, cockroach 1.16, mosquito 1.16, sheep 0.83, goat 0.83, octopus 0.50, parrot 0.50.

It is worth mentioning that there are several animal taboo words commonly used in the Jordanian setting, but not stated in this study. See Appendix no (1).
Table (1): Frequency, Percentage and Metaphorical meaning of taboo words Used in Animal Names in the Jordanian Setting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Literal Meaning of Animal Name (in English)</th>
<th>Literal Meaning of Animal Name (in Arabic)</th>
<th>Metaphorical Meaning of Animal Name</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pig</td>
<td>ﺧﻨﺰﻳﺮ</td>
<td>A cuckold; an impure or evil person</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>11.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Dog</td>
<td>ﻗﻠﺐ</td>
<td>A dirty or harmful person</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>9.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bitch</td>
<td>ﻗﻠﺒﻪ</td>
<td>A prostitute; a moralless woman</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>8.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Donkey</td>
<td>ﺣﻤﺎر</td>
<td>A stupid person</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>8.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Bull</td>
<td>ﺛﻮر</td>
<td>A rash type; stubborn</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>6.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Cow</td>
<td>ﺑﻘﺮة</td>
<td>A silly woman; overweight woman</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>6.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Elephant</td>
<td>ﻓﻴﻞ</td>
<td>An overweight man</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>5.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Turtle</td>
<td>سﻠﺤﻔﺎة</td>
<td>A slow and lazy person</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Cat</td>
<td>ﺑﺲ</td>
<td>A fearful and shy person</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Dolphin</td>
<td>ﻧﺎﻗﻔﻴﻦ</td>
<td>An overweight person</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>monkey</td>
<td>ﻗﺮر</td>
<td>An annoying or ugly person</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Hyena</td>
<td>ﺿﻌﺐ</td>
<td>An ugly woman</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Chameleon</td>
<td>حﺮﺒﺎﻳﺔ</td>
<td>A person who changes his/her opinions and beliefs based on situations</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Snake</td>
<td>ﺗﺤﻴة</td>
<td>A deceitful or evil person</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Fox</td>
<td>ﺛﺎﻟﻎ</td>
<td>A cunning person</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Scorpion</td>
<td>ﻋﻘﺮب</td>
<td>An evil-minded person</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Crow</td>
<td>ﻏﺭﺎب</td>
<td>A bearer of bad news</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Owl</td>
<td>ﺑﻮﻣﺔ</td>
<td>A person of bad omen</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Rabbit</td>
<td>اﺮﻧﺐ</td>
<td>A cowardly person</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Mouse</td>
<td>ﻓﺎر</td>
<td>A scared person</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Cockroach</td>
<td>ﺟﺮﺻﻮر</td>
<td>A disgusting person</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Mosquito</td>
<td>ﺖﺎﻣﻮس</td>
<td>A dull and irritating person</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Sheep</td>
<td>ﺧﺮﻮف</td>
<td>An easily-led person</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>lizard</td>
<td>ﻣﻠﺤﻴﺔ</td>
<td>A harmful person</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Octopus</td>
<td>اﺧﻄﺒﻮط</td>
<td>An inquisitive person</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Parrot</td>
<td>ﺑﺒﻐﺎء</td>
<td>A talkative person</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>604</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table (1) answers the first and second questions of the study concerning animal names regularly used as taboo language. All of the respondents replied that all animal names are metaphorically used to express certain socio-pragmatic functions, which answers the second question regarding whether students
use animal names literally or metaphorically. Timothy (1999, p. 95) explained that people metaphorically use animal names as taboo words because it is an emotionally powerful medium to get rid of depression and form an identity through speech. Based on Table (1), the pig recorded the highest frequency of occurrence comprising (11.59%) of the total number of the taboo words gathered. This high amount of occurrence may be attributed to the fact that the pig stands for a cuckold or impure person in the Jordanian and Muslim setting. It should be noted that animal names are not described as taboo words when talking about animals since animal names are here being used in their natural setting. However, depicting a human being as an animal is tabooous. For example, when describing someone like a pig, it is - in this context- regarded as a taboo and abusive word. The Jordanian society like any foreign society uses taboo words that are considered abusive. Jordanians call an impure person or someone whose close relatives such as daughter, sister, wife or mother who have been having sexual intercourse with another man as pig. This is because pigs are one of the top animals that mate with their siblings. The word pig has been mentioned five times in five verses in The Holy Quran (Surah Al–Maeda (The Table Spread), verse: 60)) which says that:

"فَلَمَّا أَنفِقَهُمْ لَمَّا خَلَفْنَاهُمْ مِّنْ لَعْنَةِ اللَّهِ وَغْضَبٍ عَلَيْهِ وَجَعَلَ مِنْهُمْ الْقَرْدَةَ وَالْخَنَازِيرَ وَعَبَدَ الطَّامُعَ وَأَوْلَى، أَوْلَى ذَٰلِكَ نَحْزَنُ مِّنْهُ وَأَوْلَى أَنْفُسَهُ وَأَوْلَى مَثَلُهُ ﺑِنَاطِرٍ ۛ أَوْ لْحَمٍّ خَنزِيرٍ فَإِنَّهُ رَجُسٌ"  

"Shall I inform you of [what is] worse than that as penalty from Allah? [It is that of] those whom Allah has cursed and with whom He became angry and made of them apes and pigs and slaves of Al–aghut. Those are worse in position and further astray from the sound way.

The pig has also been mentioned in The Holy Quran (Surah Al–Anaam (The Cattle), verse: 145)) which says:

"أَوْ لْحَمٍّ خَنزِيرٍ فَإِنَّهُ رَجُسٌ"

"for indeed, pig meat is impure"

So, addressing someone in Facebook Messenger as a pig is generally abusive and invokes the image of a cuckold, cursed and impure person.

The dog also recorded the second highest frequency of occurrence comprising (9.93%) of the total number of taboo words collected. It is also addressed to an impure person who is harmful. It has been dealt with The Holy Quran five times: four times in Surat Al-Kahf (The Cave) and the fifth in Surat Al-Araaf (the Height) verse (176) which says that:

"لَوْ نَزَّلْنَا لَأَنفِقُوا بِهَا وَلَكُمْ أُخْرَىٰ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ وَاتَّبَعُوا مَوَاةً فَمُثَلَّ النَّاسِ كَمَثَلَ الكَلَبِ إِنْ تَحْمَلُ عَلَيْهِ بَلَّطَ أَوْ تَشْكُرُهُ بَلَّطَ ۛ ذَٰلِكَ مِثْلُ الْقُوُمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآياتِنَا ۛ فَأَفْقَضَصَ الْقُصُصَ لَعْلَمٍ يُتَفَكُّرُونَ."

"Had it been Our will We would have raised with it, but he clung to this earthly life and succumbed to his fancies. His likeness was that of a dog, whether you chase it away or let it alone it pants. Such is the example of a nation who belie Our signs. Recount to them these narratives, in order that they reflect.". Also, Prophet Mohammed, peace be upon him, prohibited Muslims from owning a dog at home except for hunting purposes. He said, "Angels do not enter a house in which there is a dog or there are pictures. "In another saying, Prophet Mohammed said, "When a dog licks a
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utensil belonging to anyone of you, (the thing contained in it) should be thrown away and then (the utensil) should be washed seven times, using sand in the first instance." Both Islam and Judaism consider the dog as ritually dirty, infected and evil. Therefore, it is offensive to call someone a dog. Correspondingly, the bitch (8.28) is not only impure and unclean, but also stands for a woman who suffers from a decline in the standards of personal morality. The bitch also stands for an adulterous woman who gets money by engaging in sexual activity.

The donkey ranked third, representing (8.28%) of the overall number of the taboo words. The donkey has been mentioned in The Holy Quran in Luqman Surah verse (19) which says:
"Walk modestly and lower your voice; the most hideous of voices is the braying of the donkey."

Calling someone a donkey in Facebook Messenger is extremely insulting according to the Arab culture in general and Jordanian culture in particular because it arouses in them the feelings of a low achiever, foolish or uneducated person. For example, Jordanians do not like to mention the word donkey in their social gatherings as it is a slanderous word. They refer to it as " that with long ears". Some people even refrain from riding donkeys.

The bull ranked fourth with (6.79%). Although the bull is a symbol of masculinity, stamina and fertility, it represents wrong-headedness and inflexibility. Culturally speaking, it is said to a stubborn, reckless, rash type and unbending person. Similarly, the cow ranked fifth and constituted (6.6%) of the data collected for the study. It is used for slander and is said of an overweight and silly woman. Paradoxically speaking, a dairy cow is uttered of a female employee who has a fixed monthly salary and is sought by males for marriage. The elephant formed (5.79%) of the taboo words. It is the biggest wild animal. A Surah (chapter) in The Holy Quran was named after the elephant entitled "The Elephant". The Surah, verse (1), highlights the power of the elephant in verse (1) which says:
"Have you not seen how Allah dealt with the companions of the Elephant?" It has also been mentioned in the Bible representing God of good fortune and blessing. Though it is sacred in India and symbolizes power, patience and wisdom, it has negative connotations in the Jordanian setting. It embodies ugliness and unlovable nature. It is addressed to an ugly and overweight man like the word cow for an obese woman. It is an affront to a man's personality to be called an elephant. The turtle (4.97%) denotes slowness and laziness. It depicts a real portrait of a sluggish, slow and lazy person who always comes late. Ironically, when someone repeatedly comes late to appointments or meetings, he is depicted as a turtle. The cat(4.97%) and the turtle have the same number of percentages. The cat is usually a domesticate animal kept indoors. It is unlike the dog as it easily misses its owner. Therefore, it is considered as dishonest. It is also a shy and fearful animal as it does not interact with people like the dog. It is said to a shy person who is afraid of talking before people or a fearful person who easily get frightened. The dolphin (4.14%) is a huge sea animal that has a playful and peaceful nature. It is said to an overweight person. The monkey (3.31), the hyena (3.31), the chameleon (3.15) and the snake (3.15)
approximately have the same percentage. The monkey is an ugly animal and is associated with irritating nature. It has been mentioned in The Holy Quran to describe cursed people who became apes (see above). The word monkey said to an ugly or troublesome person who has an annoying behavior and distracting nature. The hyena is one of the ugliest and fierce animals living on the leftovers of other animals. It is spoken of an ugly woman who has unattractive appearance. The chameleon is a reptile that resembles a lizard. It can alter its skin to have the appearance of things around it. A person who alters their beliefs, opinions and behavior based on certain situations is portrayed as a chameleon. The snake is an earth animal whose poison is deadly albeit its smooth skin or scales. It is a symbol of death, evil and deception. It is also mentioned in the Gospel and The Holy Quran, Surah Taha verse (20) which says that,

"So, he (Moses) threw it (staff) down, and thereupon it was a snake, moving swiftly"

It is said to a deceitful, evil, tricky and two-faced person who deceives others. The fox (2.48) and the scorpion (2.15) are alike in their percentage of occurrence in the collected data. The fox is a wild animal associated with shrewdness and slyness. It is said of a cunning person who behaves in a devious way. Meanwhile, the scorpion is a nasty animal whose poisonous sting may be fatal. It stung Prophet Mohammed -peace be upon him- while he was praying. Therefore, it is a cursed insect in Islamic religion and Muslims are commanded to kill it. Prophet Mohammed said,

"Damn on the scorpion it does not miss any messengers of God or anyone unless being stung". It has also been closely related to a person who is malevolent and immoral. Such a person gets closer to people and pretends to be polite and decent, but he/she is not.

The crow (1.82), the owl (1.66), the rabbit (1.32), the mouse (1.16) and the mosquito (1.16) roughly have the same percentage. The crow is the most intelligent bird and has been mentioned in The Holy Quran. It taught human beings how to lay to rest the dead. However, its caw is hideous and annoying. A person who delivers bad news or brings bad luck is depicted as a crow. The owl is a sign of bad omen, especially a sign of death. Culturally speaking, when someone sees an owl, he/she spiritually foreshadows bad luck and even death in his/her family. The rabbit is a domesticated animal that gets scared easily when seeing people. It refers to a cowardly person who lacks courage and is afraid of doing difficult things or saying the truth. The mouse is considered in the local culture as one of the ugliest animals in existence. It is famous for biting and it can transmit communicative diseases to mankind such as the plague. It also gets scared when it sees people. It is addressed to a hideous person who gets easily scared. The mosquito is a kind of irritating insect that sucks people's blood and passes serious diseases such as malaria. It is slang for a dull and irritating person who causes boredom due to their annoying behavior.

The sheep (0.83), the lizard (0.83), The octopus (0.50) and the parrot (0.50) nearly have the same percentage of the occurrence. The sheep is a tame animal reared for its meat and wool. Interestingly, it gives a picture of a person who is cowardly led blindly to follow the mob. The lizard is a reptile with soft skin or scales like the snake, but non-poisonous and not harmful like the snake. Being a lizard is an insult
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since it embodies a harmful person since the lizard carries lots of bacteria, germs and viruses that can be transmitted to human beings. A harmful person usually causes harm, damage, suffering and pain to others comparable to the lizard which causes suffering, pains and transmit infectious diseases to mankind although it has beautiful soft skin. The octopus is a dangerous sea creature that is hazardous to mankind. It is a strong and intelligent creature that possesses three heads and eight arms. An inquisitive person who is keen on getting information about different people out of curiosity to achieve certain reasons is called an octopus. The parrot is a talking bird that can be kept at home. It can imitate people’s speech. That is why a parrot gives a clear picture of a gabby person who excessively keeps on talking, especially gossips. A talkative person is called a parrot.

4.1 B: Gender Differences in Using Taboo Words in WhatsApp Messenger

Males and females used taboo words in WhatsApp Messenger differently. There are gender differences in the use of taboo words. As pointed out above in figure (1), males’(68.8. %) use of taboo words outnumbered females’(31.2%). This agrees with Ningjue (2010)’s study of taboo language in chatting rooms of both genders which confirmed that males employed more taboo language than females did. This may be ascribed to the reason that females tend to be more polite than males so as not to be harshly criticized since tabooness is a stigmatized language. Accordingly, women in Jordan tend to evade it because of strong social restrictions on them. Holmes (2001, 156-158) mentioned that women are regarded as the custodian of society’s values. Accordingly, they use standard forms to claim status. ‘Society expects women to speak more correctly and standardly than men.” Holmes also (2001, 286) maintained that women’s speech is characterized by a super-polite form of language and averting the use of taboo words. Lakoff (2004,78) implied that females are relatively much better than males in using euphemisms and avoiding taboo words. Women’s language is also characterized by a shortage of using a sense of humor.

This answers the third question of the research concerning the number of taboo words used by both genders. A careful study of the figure in (1) shows that the taboo words: pig and dog recorded the highest frequency of occurrence among males; meanwhile, "bitch" is the most frequent taboo word used among females. (See chart No. (1) & (2) for gender differences in using taboo words)
Based on Table (2), it is evident that students use taboo words to express several themes. Humor ranked first representing (48%) of the total number of corpus followed by relaxation (4%) and anger (16%). Meanwhile, the theme of abuse (11%) recorded the least frequent occurrence done by students. Timothy (1999, 164) argued that taboo words, based on context, may be used to express different themes such as humor, relaxation and solidarity, (quoted in Goa. 2008). This answers the fourth question concerning the reasons why students employ taboo words in Facebook Messenger. Jay (2009, 155) also stated that taboo language can serve different themes such as telling stories, jokes, expressing anger, humor and sarcasm. In support of this statement, Pinker (2010) pointed out that taboo language related to animal names could be used to convey the theme of anger. (See table (2)).
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Table (2): The frequency and percentage of themes used in taboo words.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Humor</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxation</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abuse</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>604</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, taboo language using animal names is a cultural specificity influenced by the cultural values and norms of a certain society. It is part of daily life conversations among university students in Facebook Messenger in Jordan. It is frequently used by both genders with large differences, but male students employ far more taboo language than females. They opt more for taboo language as it signifies manliness for them. On the other hand, female students tend to use less taboo language in the same context; this is confirmed by previous research that women are deemed the guardian of the social norms and valued of the society. Using taboo language by females will hinder them from gaining a higher status in society. Taboo language is sometimes metaphorically used to convey several themes such as humor, relaxation, anger and abuse depending on the context where the utterance occurs. To sum up, studying taboo language by using animal names has offered thoughtful insight into identifying the cultural values, norms and attitudes of university students in the Jordanian setting.
تحليل اجتماعي براغماتي للفعل العاب باستخدام أسماء الحيوانات في فيسوبوك مسجر

في السياق الأردني: دراسة قائمة على النوع الاجتماعي

 Верدة الحباشي
كلية العلوم الربوية والأدب (الأونوا)، الأردن

الملخص

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى البحث في لغة العاب باستخدام أسماء الحيوانات في السياق Facebook Messenger الأردني بناءً على النص الذي ظهر فيه. وقد أجاب ما مجموعه (100) طالب وطالبة من الجامعات على استبيان صمم لهذا الدراسة الطريقة التي يستخدم بها الطلاب لغة العاب. وقد لوحظ أن الخنازير سجلت أعلى تكرارا بنسبة (11.59%) من إجمالي عدد كلمات العاب ويليها كلمة (كلب) (خفيرة). ونلاحظ وجود اختلافات مهمة في تكرار كلمات العاب واستخدامها من الطلاب (8.68%) والطالبات (32.2%). وأوضحت الدراسة أسباب اعتبار هذه الكلمات من العاب في السياق الأردني فيما يتعلق بالمعايير الاجتماعية والثقافية والدينية للمجتمع. وخلصت الدراسة أيضًا استخدام لغة العاب للتعبير عن مواضيع مختلفة مثل الفكاهة والاستراحه والغضب والأساءة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: لغة العاب، اختلافات النوع الاجتماعي، الموضوعات، اجتماعية براغماتية، فيسوبوك مسجر.
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References


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Appendix

Examples of other Arabic taboo words commonly used in the Jordanian setting, but not mentioned in the study (appendix no 1)

Appendix No 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
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