



A Sociolinguistic Study of The linguistic Taboos in the Yemeni Society

*By: Nada Qanbar **

Assistant professor

Nabed26@yahoo.co.in

Department of English- Taiz University

Author

Nada Yahya Qanbar is an assistant professor- faculty of Arts- Taiz University-Yemen. She got her M.A in 2003 and Ph.D in 2006 in Linguistics & Phonetics from CIEFL (the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages)-Hyderabad-India. Her major interest is in sociolinguistics, pragmatics and cultural studies.

Abstract

This paper investigates the linguistic taboos in the Yemeni society in terms of their relationship with the social context in which they are used and the socio-cultural factors affecting their use. The paper examines and describes the different categories of linguistic taboos in the Yemeni society and the strategies used by the Yemeni speakers to avoid the use of these words through different types of replacement of taboo words with more acceptable words such as using jargon terms, constructions, euphemisms, creating antonyms, metaphoric expressions, circumlocution, and use of standard Arabic terms . The paper also argues that these processes are conditioned by the cultural and religious norms of the society. It also offers an explanation as to why certain words are considered taboos in the society and why certain taboo words are accompanied by particular conventionally-fixed words. The taboo words in the Yemeni society have also been divided into two categories (general and context-specific) each with subcategories. The paper adopts the ‘politeness’ approach



proposed by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) as the theoretical framework for the analysis of linguistic taboos in the Yemeni society.

Key words: linguistic taboos, face threatening acts, politeness, euphemism, socio-cultural system.

1- Introduction

Although taboo words are part of every culture and language and individuals at a certain point in their life would, for one reason or another, use a taboo word, the topic is poorly studied because of its sensitive nature which implies that it is not appropriate for academic study. However, the study of linguistic taboos in any society from a socio-cultural perspective is hoped to add a new dimension to the understanding of the human psyche, as communal members are watched reacting to the world around them by creating prohibitions and linguistic sanctions to screen off behaviour and certain objects. Moreover, despite the censoring of language, taboo words will persist in the community's lexicon because they strengthen the social fabric and group identity through the feeling of sharing one socio-cultural and belief system. They make the members of the society distinct from other members in other societies. And if we understand why a taboo exists, we can understand the values and realities in the society- it gives ample information on what people think about certain issues. It also sheds light on the social customs, religious and metaphysical beliefs and also the political system of the community.

2- What is a Taboo?

A Taboo is 'any prohibitions which carry no penalties beyond the anxiety and embarrassment arising from a breach of strongly entrenched custom' (Steiner 1967: 143). The encyclopaedia of social sciences (1937) defined taboos as 'a negative sanction whose infringement results in an automatic penalty without human or superhuman mediation.' In this paper the following working definition developed by the researcher will be used for a linguistic taboo:



A linguistic taboo is any word or a phrase or a topic that if mentioned in public causes embarrassment and feeling of shame or provokes a sense of shock, and it is offending to the hearer's sensibilities or his beliefs.

3- Some previous studies on Linguistic Taboos

Taboos have been studied and discussed from a sociological, anthropological, and psychological perspectives (see Malinosky 1923; leech 1964; Mead 1937; Freud 1950; Steiner 1967; Douglas 1966, to name but a few). As a linguistic phenomenon operating in speech communities, however, a few studies touch upon the area. Hongxu et al (1990) attempted an analysis of linguistic taboos in Chinese. They discussed the creation, observance, and socio-cultural influences of linguistic taboos. They viewed taboos as a socio-cultural phenomenon associated with superstition, custom, and hierarchical power. For them, taboos fall under two categories: macrolinguistic and microlinguistic. By the former, it is meant all the words that are observed by almost all speakers in a speech community to be despicable and filthy such as sex and death. By microlinguistic taboos, it is meant that certain words are perceived as taboos in relation to a specific context. For the analysis of the Chinese taboos Hongxu et al (1990) proposed a framework which includes a "macrocontext" (that is, societal factors) and "microcontext", which includes situational factors such as register and interlocutors (p. 66). This results in several varieties of taboo: *absolute taboo*, *a quasi-taboo* and *non-taboo*.

Alkhatib (1995) studied the linguistic taboos in Jordanian Arabic. He described how linguistic taboos are generated, what they are generated for, how they can be violated, and what mechanism can be used by the speaker to avoid them. He stated that linguistic taboo in Jordanian society seems to be in line with the general tenets of taboo theory as presented by leech (1964), which posits that words are subject to a strict set of rules agreed upon by the speech community members and that shared values concerning their meaning and the reality they signify is a precondition for communication. Alkhatib concluded that there are socio-cultural factors which determine the use of taboo words or their euphemistic equivalents.



Mbaya (2002) presented a descriptive study of a custom in Oromo culture (Ethiopia) which consists in avoiding mentioning the names of the persons who are relatives by marriage. The study showed that because of linguistic taboo, husband, wife and the in-laws avoid using their respective names and substitute for them several forms, most of which are coinages. To show respect, Africans address people, especially the elder ones, by using euphemism. The study analysed the taboo-words and described the mechanisms used for finding substitutes.

Seifried (2006) attempted to make some basic generalizations on the linguistic taboos in the American society. He stated that verbal taboos typically encompass a limited number of categories such as sex and bodily functions, which are generally spread throughout different cultures. He drew some comparisons between verbal taboos of the past and their modern counterparts in a variety of cultures. He claimed that recent events in the media like Clinton's affair with Monica Lewinsky allowed Americans more freedom than ever before in their use of formerly taboo words; shadings of euphemisms are hardly needed anymore to express words which have become part of everyday life.

After reviewing the literature, it is obvious that the majority of the researchers on linguistic taboos are confined to describe them as part of the social constraints and norms of the community and as a phenomenon associated with superstition and customs without taking the pain to account for the reason that makes certain words taboos in the first place. They just blame it on society without explaining why a society convicts some words over the others? In fact, there is nothing linguistically inherent in words to make them taboos or not; it is the society that sentences some words to prohibition and use restriction.

The present paper aims at exploring the taboo words and expressions in the Yemeni society by establishing a contextual framework of their categories and subcategories. New categories are found which emphasizes the specificity of the Yemeni cultural identity. This paper also attempts an analysis of the possible reasons for the tabooed words and expressions in the Yemeni society, and discusses the socio-



cultural factors affecting the use of taboo words and expressions. The study, moreover, investigates the different linguistic mechanisms and strategies to avoid their use in the Yemeni society.

4- Theoretical framework

In the attempt to study the linguistic taboos in the Yemeni society, the researcher found the idea of ‘face’ and ‘The Politeness Theory’, postulated by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987), helpful in accounting for the tabooeness of certain words in the Yemeni society.

Brown and Levinson constructed a Model Person (MP), who is a fluent speaker of a language who has two special qualities: rationality and face. By ‘rationality’ Brown and Levinson mean that the MP would be able to use a specific mode of reasoning to choose means that will satisfy his/her ends. By ‘face’, Brown and Levinson (1987: 61) define it as the “public self image that every member wants to claim for himself.” It refers to the social sense of self that everyone has and expects everyone else to recognize. Face consists of two related aspects: a) negative face: “the want of every ‘competent adult member’ that [their] action be unimpeded by others” (p.62), and b) positive face: the want of every member that [their] wants be desirable to at least some others” (p. 62) ... [the] perennial desire that [their] wants (or the actions/acquisitions/values resulting from them) should be thought of as desirable” (p.101).

According to the positive face needs, rational members of the society would continually try to present themselves in the best shape possible. They strive to keep their faces intact and present themselves worth-respect, self-sufficient, pure, and free from bad or filthy matters that may damage the integrity of their faces. They need to be reinforced in their view of themselves as polite, considerate, respectful members of their society. From this perspective, this image ought to be reflected both physically and linguistically. It will go against the fulfilment of one’s positive face needs if one shows in public that he/she answers the nature’s call or copulates as an instinctive need, for example. Douglas (1966) thinks that by default we are polite, and



euphemistic; and we censor our language use to eschew tabooed topics in pursuit of well-being for ourselves and for others.

Furthermore, as an Islamic society, the Yemeni society is influenced by the Islamic teachings and values that place restrictions on using obscene words as Prophet Mohammed says: “the true believer is not vulgar nor does he/she use an obscene language.”

On this basis, I attempt in this paper to explore the phenomenon of the linguistic taboos in the Yemeni society.

5- Linguistic Taboos in the Yemeni Society

First, let us propose a general classification of taboo words and expressions in the Yemeni society which can be divided into two broad categories:

i- Context-specific

ii- General

These two categories also branch out into other subcategories as seen Figure 1:

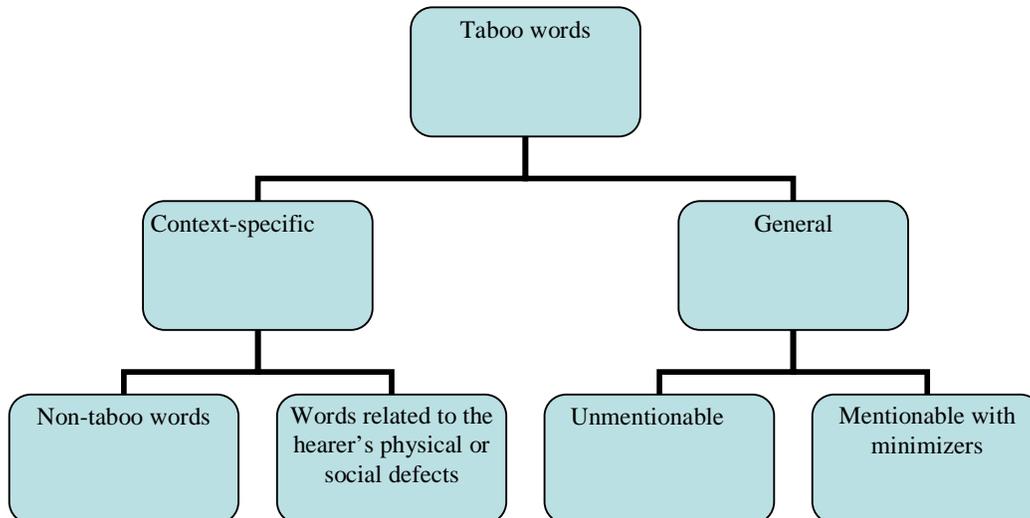


Fig. 1: Linguistic Taboos in the Yemeni Society

The words under **context-specific** category are neutral and non-taboo but they get tabooed in particular contexts. **Context-specific** taboos are divided into two subcategories: **non-taboo words**, and words **related to the hearer's physical or social defects**; while the subcategories under the category **General** include the



unmentionable (the words under this subcategory should be euphemised in polite speech), and **mentionable with minimizers** which include words that are to be mentioned along with other fixed conventional expressions which the researcher called *minimizers*. The following sections describe these categories in details.

i- Context-specific Taboo Words

a- Non-taboo words: words which are neutral in meaning in everyday speech such as (pig, dog, a Jew, etc.) but become taboos in certain contexts when used as swear words. Religion has also played a role in tabooing these words. The animals mentioned above are associated with impurity and uncleanness (dog and pig). Jews are associated with treachery and meanness due to the nature of the relationship between the Muslims and the Jews throughout history.

b- Words with connotations to the hearer representing for him/her a physical or social defects like mentioning *divorce* in front of a divorced woman, or *blindness* in front of a blind man.

ii- General

This can be further divided into two subcategories as shown in the figure:

a- Absolutely forbidden words which are referred to as (the unmentionable)

b- Permissible or mentionable with minimizers

a- The Unmentionable

The absolute forbidden words (Unmentionable) are divided into the following subcategories:

- 1- Words or terms referring to the private organs of the human body and their functions, and body effluvia (snot, faeces, menstrual fluid, etc.);
- 2- Words or terms referring to religion (blasphemy) or words against religious figures and symbols;
- 3- Words or terms referring to national or historical or the present political figures or political system;
- 4- The first names of one's female members of the family mentioned in public or before an outsider;



- 5- Words referring to things that you give away to the poor and the needy, or friends on social occasions.

The first three sub-categories are known in the literature as the *triad of taboos*, which almost, could be found in most of the cultures across the world, i.e., the triangle of sex, religion and politics, though the degree of the tabooeness varies¹. The tabooeness of this category and the stigmatized status of these words are usually instilled from early childhood and it forms a part of childhood language socialization. The third subcategory which includes addressing the current political system and political figures in charge throws light on the present political scene and records the changes that the society is witnessing. For example, in Yemen which is claimed to be a democratic country since the unification of Yemen in 1990, there were opposing newspapers that published articles criticizing the president and the government, but since 2008 when voices threatening the unity of Yemen have risen, a law was issued that any article targeting the personality of the president, or any article that goes against the principles of the Yemeni unity is perceived as a threat to the national stability and is likely to stir up discontent and create disorder. Therefore, they are severely censored and considered a crime. Many journalists, unlike before, were sent to jail and majority of newspapers are suspended. So talking now against the president or current political system becomes a taboo and many euphemised words are on the grow.

The fourth and fifth subcategories are Yemeni-specific and exclusively related to the cultural identity of the Yemeni society. In the Yemeni society, it is not allowed for a man to utter neither the first names of his female family members in the presence of an outsider nor the names of the family female members of an outsider without a genuine need. A Yemeni gentleman is not supposed to mention the first given names of the females in his friends' or

¹ The tabooed items vary from one society to another. The strongest taboo-words in the English-speaking world are still associated with sex, followed by those associated with excretion. In Norway, they are mostly expressions connected with the devil, and in Roman Catholic culture, they are words essentially associated with religion. (Trudgill 1986: 29)



acquaintances' families. To understand the reason for the tabooeness of the family female names, the general social context of Yemen must be understood and the status of women in the Yemeni society should be considered. Traditionally, the position of women is, and has always been, determined by their status in law and custom, and the roles they play in the household and outside it. Yemeni society is patrilineally and patriarchally organized; males have the ultimate power and the responsibility to provide for women and children. Women are considered to be subordinate and ,thus, there are many taboos imposed on women in the Yemeni society in terms of behaviour, dress, and speech (cf. Douglas 1970 on subordination of the individual which leads to creation of taboos). Moreover, she is considered *aar* (shame or disgrace), and women are commonly referred to as *aar*, and this reference is not offending. Therefore, a woman is an *aar* and so is her name. A man, thus, should not give away the name of his family females, and similarly to mention the first names of an outsider's female family members is to transgress over the private property of someone else, and particularly on his positive face. Yemeni males go to the extreme that they do not mention in their everyday speech the word meaning 'lady or woman', and use the words which literally means 'a family' instead.

The fifth subcategory is a part of the Islamic teachings and values which is well-encompassed by the Yemeni social system. If you give away something like money, clothes, food to the poor, it is not a good thing to mention it to other people. Islam teaches us that the best rewarding alms are those given in full secrecy. Similarly, when Yemenis give a friend or an acquaintance a gift on social events like a wedding, they do not mention it to other people and upon need, a euphemised word is used as we will see in section 7.

B- Mentionable with Minimizers

This category is Yemeni- unique and includes words and phrases that are considered taboos and shocking if mentioned unaccompanied with certain fixed conventional phrases. The function of these phrases is to mitigate and



minimize the illocutionary force of the tabooed item and make it acceptable.

This category is further divided into three subcategories:

- 1- Words or phrases referring to unclean places or objects (For example: sewages, bathrooms, footwear, etc.)
- 2- Words or phrases referring to metaphysical things that go beyond the control of the human being (For example: supernatural creatures like jennies, ghosts; certain diseases, accidents resulting in deformation of human body like getting burned);
- 3- Words or phrases referring to the expressions of admiration for things or objects we admire and like.

Unclean objects

The minimizers of this subcategory directly address the hearer and aim at saving his/her face from being injured by these unclean words. Interestingly, the words themselves become contaminated as they are associated with the dirty things they stand for (cf. Hongxu et al 1990:73). These minimizers are like (*azakum allah* or *az qadrakum* (May God dignify you), *hashakum* (May God exclude you from this dirt), or *akramakum allah* (May God glorify you). These minimizers are used because they are believed to protect the hearer's face from the dirty words mentioned.

Metaphysical things

The second subcategory of minimizers indicates the protection of both the speaker and the hearer from what it is mentioned. German psychologist Wundt (1927) explains that taboos were originally nothing other than an objectified fear of a "demonic" power which was believed to lie hidden in a tabooed object. It is exactly this fear that leads to the ceremony of using a particular minimizer aimed at keeping the evil at a distance or driving it off. One underlying belief is the magical power of the spoken word. It is as if uttering these words may bring about the occurrence of the object, action, or phenomenon it refers to (cf. Apte 2001). It is as if the tabooed object were like a radioactive fuel rod, which will have dire effects on anyone who comes into direct contact with it unless they know how to defend themselves (Allan and



Burridge 2006). Thus, on uttering a name of a serious disease like cancer, leprosy, etc., phrases like *wa eleyathu be allah* (God's protection is sought), *hurem waladi* (May God protect my child), *afana allah* (May God cure us all), *muggawareen be allah* (we are in God's affinity) or *yaseen aleina* (*yaseen* (a chapter in the Holy Quran) is on us) are uttered. These minimizers will make sure that neither the hearer nor the speaker gets the disease mentioned. To talk about the possibility of the death of someone dear to either the speaker or the hearer, minimizers like *allah la qaal* (God forbid), *la samah allah* (May God not allow that), *baad omr taweel* (after a long time), and *baad al-shar* (May evil be far away from us) are used, otherwise it is believed it will lead to the mentioned person's death.

Talking about supernatural creatures like jinnies, afreets, ghosts, etc. invokes the use of minimizers like *aaauthu be allah men ash-shaitan* (I seek the protection of God from the devil). The mention of the supernatural creature without using the minimizer is also believed to bring along the creature mentioned itself and would do both the speaker and the hearer/s a great harm.

Expressions of admiration

The third subcategory with minimizers insures the protection of the admired or liked object from the evil eyes befalling on the object even if this object belongs to one's self. This object may be physical like a car, a certain distinguished beauty feature, a dress, or abstract things like a skill in doing something. It is commonly believed that every person's eyes may have an evil effect if it likes or admires an object. It depends, therefore, on the admirer's discreteness and degree of religiosity to protect the admired object from his/her evil eye by saying *allahma salli ala mohammad* (O God's prayers on Mohammad), or *masha allah* (God's will is to be done). Not saying these phrases may lead to the object's destruction, and if the liked thing is a person, it is also believed that this person may die or minimally he/she will get an incurable disease.

6- Factors affecting the use of taboos:



Using taboo words and the degree of perceiving words as acceptable or prohibited in the Yemeni society are subject to a number of socio-cultural factors. One and the same taboo word does not necessarily have the same influence on different speaker groups. Words that may be shocking to one individual or a group of speakers may not necessarily be as shocking to others. Even the nature of the word used determines the degree of its tabooeness, for example the genital organs of women are usually more strongly tabooed than those of men. Time also plays a role- once some words were taboos in the past, but over a period of time they are stripped off from their tabooeness. For example, mentioning the names of the husbands by wives nowadays are no longer taboos in the cities. Other factors include education: educated people are likely to use less taboo words than uneducated people. It is also supposed that the teenagers would use more taboos than adults or children (cf. Holmes 1992). In the Yemeni society, it is more acceptable to hear a taboo term from a male than from a female (cf. *ibid*).

Demographic background is instrumental in the use and perception of the taboo words: rural people are more likely to use taboos related to sex and bodily functions in public domains more frequently than urbanities because they have been brought up in an agricultural rural communities where they have many opportunities of observing animal sexual behaviour. But, on the other hand, these people may be more restrained to use blasphemous words.

There is also the socio-economic factor: the poor and those living in degraded housing conditions are more inclined to use taboo words due to their style of living. A house, most of the time, is just one-room where all the members of the family live together. Children may observe their parents have an intercourse (cf, Qanbar 2008 on street children). Therefore, references to sexual and excretory organs and activities may be common and casual (Apte 2001). The kind of the relationship between the participants may also permit or disallow the use of the taboos. The more the interlocutors are intimate, the more they would feel free to use taboos (Coupland, et al 2003). It is a linguistic device to affirm in-group membership(Rayson et al 1997, Stenstorm 1995, 1999).



7- How to avoid using taboo words in the Yemeni society

There are several ways of replacing taboo terms in the Yemeni society. Although the topic stays the same, the words are replaced to “avoid possible loss of face; either one’s own face or, through giving offence, that of the audience, or of some third party” (Allan and Burridge, 1991, p.11). To replace the terms, Yemenis employ a number of mechanisms such as using jargon terms, constructions, euphemisms, creating antonyms, metaphoric expressions, circumlocution, and use of standard Arabic terms. Some taboo words can be replaced by making use of all or some of the mechanisms mentioned.

Some words related to physical defects of human body are euphemised through creating its antonym. For example, the word for blind *a’ama* can be substitute with its opposite *basir* (sighted); a one-eyed person *a’awar* with *kareem alain* (the owner of honourable eye), and a sick person with *assalim* (the healthy).

For the body organs and their functions jargon terms are used. The term *yatbraz* (to defecate) is a medical expression, which puts the uncomfortable topic of emptying the bowels into a medical context, and gives it an air of propriety. The word for faeces *xara* is replaced by a euphemised word *wasax* (dirt). The male organ is replaced by the word *thakar* (lit. male), or the standard Arabic word *qadeeb* (penis), or *aledw athakari* (the male organ). As for the female organ, the word for the male organ is used but the female suffix *-ah* is added at the end, or the standard Arabic word *faraj* (vagina), or *aledw alttanasuli alenthawi* (the female reproductive organ) are used. Another mechanism used is to modify the pronunciation of the word especially the first sound; so for the male organ the first fricative sound is changed into a dental sound form. Also, every family may have its made-up names for sex organs, especially when used to talk with children.

Also taboo words can be avoided by whole constructions: to have an intercourse, for example, can be substituted with non-offensive constructions like *yerqud maa’* (sleep with), *’imlu* (do it), *seheru* (stay up late), or the



standard Arabic words like *gima'* (copulation). The first intercourse between the newly-married couples is referred to as *saddu* (they reach an agreement). The term *yefaregh me'datuh* (to empty one's bowel), is a common construction used to avoid a more literal description of 'defecation'. *Yereq alma'a* (to spill water) is used instead of *yebul* (to urinate). Similarly, words for prostitutes are replaced by construction like *mara/bent mesh tamam* (not a good women/girl), or *bent share'* (a street girl).

Words referring to the menses are avoided by metaphors like *mubansher* (not working), or *fi agaza* (on vacation), or *tesaben* (she is washing clothes), *matesalish* (she doesn't pray), or the standard Arabic word *ha'ed* (having menstruation).

For a political figure like the president, euphemised terms like *alafandam* (the officer), *alakh* (the brother), *amana* (our uncle), and *alragel* (the man) are used. If the president's name is mentioned in the official domains, his full name should be mentioned with his military rank and the conventional phrase *hafadahu allah* (May God protect him).

Words referring to females in the family depend on the role they play in the family. Therefore, for example, the mother is referred to as the mother of the eldest male child in the family. Sometimes, if there are no children, the husband may make up an imaginary male name to be the prospectus name of the future child and call the lady the mother of that child. If a man wants to speak about one of his female relations or the addressee's, he uses the word *ala'ela* (the family (though he may be talking about a single female)), or *albeit* (lit. the house), *algama'a* (the group), the term *kareematikum* (your honoured daughter) or *um fulan* (the mother of a male son).

Holy words like *Allah* should not be mentioned solo but accompanied with *subhanahu wa taala* (All glory to him), the name of the Prophet should be also accompanied with *sala allah elieh wa sallam* (peace be upon him), and this phrase should also be said upon hearing the name of the Prophet as well as used



in written forms. The companions and the followers of the Prophet during his days should also be accompanied by *radhai allah anhu/m* (God's grace is on him/ them). Under any circumstances should Allah's and Prophet Mohammed's names be mentioned in the bathrooms.

When someone wants to say that he/she gave money to someone on his wedding occasion for example, he says *gabarna* (share his/her happiness), or *salamnatu aliha* (we/I greeted her/him) . *Gebtu haga* or *gebtu sadaka* (I gave something/ alms) is used when someone gave away anything to the poor or the needy without naming the thing or how much in case someone gave money.

An interesting fact I found during this study is that words referring to death and the ceremonies accompanied are not tabooed in the Yemeni society, though talking about the possible death of someone close may triggers off the use of a minimizer as mentioned in section 6. The common word *maat* (died) is used without being euphemised unless used by highly educated, and is replaced by *towafa* (passed away). Words like *gutha* (corps), *qabr* (grave), *kafan* (coffin), *thalaga* (mortuary), *mashraha* (morgue) and the related verbs and adjectives are rarely euphemised.

While the strategies and mechanisms addressed above are by no means an exhaustive account of how euphemism is created, they serve to illustrate the variety of ways that Yemeni speakers are able to avoid using taboo language in order to avoid a face-threatening environment and create an environment of calm, polite, and morally acceptable speech.

Conclusion

The present paper, to the best of my knowledge, is the first ever to explore what counts as verbal taboos in the Yemeni society in terms of its relationship with the social context in which they are used and the factors affecting them. This study is not a mere description of verbal taboos in the Yemeni society, but it provides some insight into the socio-cultural fabric of the Yemeni society as it



reveals to an extent some of Yemeni customs and beliefs. Of course, there are many similarities of the major categories of taboos across cultures but as the study shows that taboos can also highlight the uniqueness of a certain culture in terms of the degree of tabooeness or the existence of tabooed concepts or objects which are completely neutral in other societies and cultures. When compared to the study of the verbal taboos in the Jordanian society, this paper shows a great deal of similarities and overlapping in most of the verbal taboo categories, and also the mechanisms for replacement the taboo words and expressions with, sometimes, the same words and expressions. This similarity tells us about similar values and beliefs under the umbrella of a unified Arabic and Islamic culture, but there are, on the other hand, a number of categories and subcategories specific to the Yemeni society which echoes a distinctive cultural identity. There are still beliefs in superstitions like the belief of the existing of supernatural objects that interfere with our world and mess up with us, or contracting and catching a serious disease by uttering mere words, or bringing about disgrace to the family if the first name of a female member is mentioned.

The study needs, however, to be complemented by a study of what constitutes social taboos to offer a more thorough picture of the underlying cultural Yemeni system.



References

Allan, K. and K. Burridge. 1991. *Euphemism and Dysphemism: Language Used as Shield and Weapon*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Allan, K. and K. Burridge 2006. *Forbidden Words: Taboo and the Censoring of Language*. Cambridge.

Al-Khatib, M. 1995. "Sociolinguistic View of Linguistic Taboo in Jordanian Arabic". *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, Vol. 16, No. 6: 443 – 457.

Apte, M. 1985. *Humour and laughter: An Anthropological Approach*. Cornell University Press. Ithaca. NY

----- (2001) "Taboo words". *Concise Encyclopaedia of sociolinguistics*. Elsevier: Oxford.

Brown, P. and C. Levinson. 1978. "Universals in Language Usage: Politeness Phenomena." In Goody, E. (ed.) *Questions and politeness: Strategies in social Interaction*: 56-289. Cambridge: CUP.

----- 1987. *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*. Cambridge: CUP.

Coupland, J. & A. Jaworski (2003). "Transgression and Intimacy in Recreational Talk Narratives". *Research on Language and Social Interaction* (36)1, 85-106.

Douglas, M. (1966). *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution*



and Taboo. London: Ark-Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Douglas, M. (1970). *Natural Symbols*. Middlesex, England: Penguin.

Freud, S. 1950. *Totem and Taboo*, trans. James Strachey. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul [First published 1913].

Holmes, J. (1992). *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. Longman: London and New York.

Hongxu, H., & Guisen, T. (1990). "A Sociolinguistic View of Linguistic Taboo in Chinese." *International Journal of Society and Language*, 81, 63-85.

Leech, E. (1964). "Anthropological aspects of language: Animal Categories and Verbal Abuse". In Eric H. Lennenberg (ed.) *New Directions in the Study of Language* (pp. 23-36). Cambridge, MA. : M.I.T. Press.

Malinowsky, B 1923. "The Problem of Meaning in Primitive Languages". In Ogden C, I, Richards (eds.) *The Meaning of Meaning* (suppl. 1). Harcourt Brace, New York.

Mbaya, M (2002) "Linguistic Taboo in African Marriage Context: A Study of the Oromo *Laguu* Nordic." *Journal of African Studies* 11(2): 224-235.

Mead, M. (1937) "Tabu". *Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences*. London: Macmillan, vol. 7: 502-5.

Qanbar, N. (2006). Request and Apologies in the Yemeni Society: A socio-pragmatic Study. Unpublished PhD thesis: CIEFL: Hyderabad, India.

_____ (2008). "The Linguistic Behaviour of Street Children: How do they request and apologize?" *University Researcher*. Ibb University, Vol. 19: 29 – 44.

Rayson, P., Leech, G. and Hodges, M. (1997) "Social differentiation in the use of English vocabulary: Some analyses of the conversational component of the



British National Corpus". *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics* 2 (1), 133_ 152.

Seifried, B. (2006) *Taboo: Cultural Phenomenon Headed For Extinction?* M.A Dissertation, Georgia State University, Sociolinguistics, April, 2006.

Steiner, F. (1967) *Taboo*. Penguin books, Harmondsworth. Uk.

Stenstrom, A. (1995) "Taboos in teenage talk". In G. Melchers and B. Warren (eds) *Studies in Anglistics* (pp. 71_ 79). Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell International.

Stenstrom, A. (1999)" He was really gormless _ she's bloody crap. Girls, boys and intensifiers." In H. Hasselgard and S. Oksefjell (eds) *Out of Corpora: Studies in Honour of Stig Johansson* (pp. 69_ 78). Amsterdam: Rodopi.

Trudgill, P. (1986) *Dialects in contact*. Blackwell, Oxford, UK.

Wundt, W. (1927). *Völkerpsychologie*. 10 vols. 4th edn. Leipzig: Kröner.
