

A Sociolinguistic Analysis of Selected Taboo Words in English and Arabic

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ABSTRACT

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Language is used by humans to carry out a wide range of social activities that reflect the social standards that have been established during various periods of time. Swearing is a linguistic device that serves both personal and interpersonal functions in almost all languages. As a result, linguists and anyone interested in language should pay attention to this linguistic phenomenon, which is also accompanied by a certain amount of taboo. The current study focuses on English and Arabic societies because they are wealthy in the use of swear words. Its aims is to define, classify, state functions, and identify the history of swear words in language and culture. Also, it highlights and analyzes the most important swear words in English and Arabic, and concludes the most essential findings. To fulfill the above aims, it is hypothesized that swear words come in a variety of forms, some of which are more widely used than others, culture influences the use of swear words, and the connotative meaning is determined by the context in which swear words are used. To sum, a range of elements influence the communicative act of swear words, including age, gender, social and economic status, as well as the speaker-listener relationship.

1. Introduction

Communication plays an important role in human's life. Without communication, people in the society will not be able to understand each other since they do not have any social contact. Social contact is very essential for human being because it is the foundation to build strong connection among people in the society.

According to Goodwin and Heritage (Liddicoat, 2007), social interaction is a means to transact the business of social world which can also affirm participants' identities and also transmit cultures to others. Therefore, to make a social contact functioned and transmitted properly; people need to have language as a means of communication.

Moreover, Chaika (1982) also states that people use language to reveal or conceal personal identity, character, and background without realizing that they are actually doing so. Therefore, every person has their own way to choose the language variation which can confirm one's identity. Some people may prefer to use language that has a strong impact when they are sad or angry. For instance, people sometimes use certain kind of words that are considered as bad language which is actually inappropriate to use. One of the ways to express their feeling is by producing taboo words. People usually produce taboo words to swear because they are the strongest way to express their dissatisfaction. They sometimes emphasize people's real intention.

Taboo terms were firstly introduced by Captain Cook in the late 18th century when he was sent to Tahiti. According to Allan and Burrige (2006), taboo or known as tabu is a Tongan term that denotes a person, object or act which is dangerous and therefore it

must be avoided. The example of this case can be seen in Nguni societies of Southern Africa. In Nguni, it is forbidden for a woman to mention her husband and father-in-law's name directly. If she violates this rule, she will be punished by the rule in the society. In every culture, there are both taboo acts which are things that are not supposed to do and taboo words which are things that are not supposed to say. Both are related to each other because some taboo act have corresponding taboo words, while others do not (Fairman, 2009). The example of this case is the act of incest which is known as taboo so is the motherf**ker that denotes incest activity.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Sociolinguistics

Sociolinguistics is in essence a descriptive science. Crystal (1987) defines it as a branch of linguistics which studies all aspects of the relationship between language and society. He adds that sociolinguistics studies such matters as the linguistic identity of social groups, social attitudes to language, standard and non-standard forms of language, the patterns and needs of national language use, social varieties and levels of language, the social basis of multilingualism, and so on (Gumperz and Hymes, 1972).

In Chomskyeian terms Sociolinguistics deals exclusively with performance and not at all with "competence". This is not to say that it is uninterested in underlying patterns. On the contrary, the essence of Sociolinguistics is to offer coherent explanations for the fact of linguistic and to do so by reference to the social variability which provides the context of language use. This general view has been accepted since Labov (1965). Thus, by the early 1970s when Fishman, in particular, was looking at sociolinguistic variation in language use in different societies and different cultures, it could be taken for granted that any speech community of moderate complexity would reveal several varieties of language which were functionally differentiated from each other (Fishman, 1972). Fishman, therefore, could define sociolinguistics as the study of the characteristics of language varieties, their functions and their speakers; he added that sociolinguistics examines the interdependence of speech communities and their varieties and is likely to think of entire languages and entire societies as susceptible to typological categorization.

More recently the study of language variety has developed a number of sub traditions, of which two of particular importance are, firstly, the psychological and, secondly, the sociological tradition. The first of these traditions is characterized by scholars such as Tarone (1979) and Preston (1989), much of whose work is concerned with the extent to which the minutiae of language use in highly localised contexts can give insight into both the psychology and the sociology of language use.

The second sub-tradition is concerned with the way in which language can throw light on the society in which it is used. Hudson (1980) contains a good account of the relationship between the two (Wardhaugh, 2006).

2.2. Meaning of Taboo

According to Wardhaugh (2000), taboo is the prohibition or avoidance in any society of behavior believed to be harmful to its members in that it would cause them anxiety, embarrassment, or shame.

Consequently, so far as language is concerned, certain things are not to be said or certain objects can be referred to only in certain circumstances, for example, only by certain people, or through deliberate circumlocution, i.e. euphemistically. ...Tabooed subjects

can vary widely: sex, death, illness, excretion, bodily functions, religious matters, the supernatural. But quite often they extend to other aspects of social life.

Taboo can be characterized as being concerned with behavior which is believed to be supernaturally forbidden or regarded as immoral or improper; it deals with behavior which is prohibited or inhibited in an apparently irrational manner. In language, taboo is associated with things which are not said, and in particular with words and expressions which are not used.

In accordance to the statement above, there is a strong relationship between taboo behavior and taboo language. Both are forbidden because they are regarded as immoral for certain circumstances. Supporting the idea, Fairman (2009) states that every society has its own particular taboo act and taboo words. Taboo acts related to any activities that should be avoided, while taboo words related to any words that should not be uttered. Both are identified with one another since several taboo acts relate to taboo words while others do not. The popular case of this phenomenon is the act of incest. Incest is considered taboo because it refers to the sexual activity that is strongly forbidden in a society. In the same sense, any words which refers to incest activity such as motherf**ker will also be categorized as taboo because it indicates the activity. Nonetheless, there is an alternate word that is said as taboo while the activity it indicates is certainly not. When people talk about excretion, it is often considered as taboo while the act itself is not forbidden if it is done by the appropriate person in a suitable place and time. Therefore, words that are related or linked to taboo act will automatically become taboo words (Allan and Burrige, 20062).

To give an explicit explanation on how taboo act and taboo words are related to each other, Fairman (2009) in his book *Fuck Word Taboo and Protecting Our First Amendment* presents an example of scientific explanation on how taboo acts transform to taboo words. He presents effluvia taboo as an illustration to support the idea. As already known, the disgust response of one individual will be stronger if he or she is facing or touching effluvia. Moreover, when he or she is thinking about excretion and the part of human body that are responsible for it, it will invite disgust reaction. Therefore, when the individual hears the words that indicate the act, he or she will automatically generate the response. In short, Freud

(1983) via Karjalainen (2002) says that the word 'taboo' denotes everything, whether a person or a place or thing or a transitory condition, which is the vehicle or source of this mysterious attribute. It also denotes the prohibition arising from the same attribute and finally it has a connotation which includes alike 'sacred' and 'above the ordinary', as well as 'dangerous', 'unclean' and 'uncanny'

2.3. The Definition of Taboo Words

In general, people refer taboo words as offensive words which cannot be used in daily conversation since they can generate a shocking effect for the individual who hears them. Linguists such as Diez (Fakuade, 2013) also supported the idea that some people categorized taboo words as the words that have terrible meaning since they contain any substance that are cruel and inappropriate so that they should be avoided. In different societies, it may be hard for an individual to understand taboo words if they do not belong to a particular society which shares the same values.

Therefore, Akmajian et al., (2004) assert that taboo words are those words that should not be employed completely or at least prevented in different setting or polite situation. It means that to avoid any misunderstanding, each person who belongs to different cultures with different values should not talk about words that can shock them especially in polite conversations.

Another linguist that defines taboo words as the words which must be avoided is Mbaya (2002) who states that taboo words are any kinds of words or expression in one language which are characterized by their impropriety, appalling character and lack of morality which are supposed to be avoided so that it will not harm the other member of the society. Those linguists may say that taboo words must be avoided because they contain stark and vulgar language. However, words that contain sacred functions can be tabooed if they are uttered outside the context of sacred ceremonies. For instance, in a religious context such as in Church or when discussing religion, the words like Jesus Christ or being damned by God are appropriate to use. However they may become taboo, when they are uttered in the outside formal circumstances which are used to shock, to offend or to criticize others like J*s*s Chr*st! You are so God-D**ned stupid!

Taboo words may have similarities among societies but they also vary from culture to culture. What is thought to be taboo words in one culture may become a norm in other cultures.

2.4. Taboo Words in English

Taboo words have a different pattern which varies from one society to another society. Trudgill observed that the most severe taboo words in the Western society are related to sex, excretion and the Christian religion. (Trudgill, 2000). Taboo words related to religion become severe words because they refer to supernatural things which can generate the feeling of fear. Typical examples from this category are expressions such as, d**n! and J*s*s Chr*st!. Then, taboo words which denote body function and effluvia also become strongest words since they incite the feeling of disgust due to the fact that some irresistible diseases can be carried from one person to another via body effluvia. The examples of this category are words like s**t, a*sh*le, and f**t. Moreover, taboo words related to sexuality or sexual organ also become severe and are mostly found in western society's conversation because they usually are uttered to insult one's sexual orientation and sexual habit (Yang, 2006).

2.5. Types of Taboo Words

Gao (2013) categorizes taboo language into seven types as follows:

2.5.1. Bodily Excretions

Naturally, all languages have certain things which should be avoided in speaking or writing. For example, in English, words associated with excretions are the first of these things.

Words associated with bodily excretions are thought to be taboo except tears. The words, such as "move to bowels" and "pass water" are considered vulgar, and the words "defecate" and "urinate" are used in hospitals. Consequently, some euphemistic expressions are used to replace these words, like "answer the call for a nature," "do one's needs" or we may ask "where the rest room is", "Powder room", "loo and John" which can be used to say lavatory. It's the place where we wash our hands or where we urinate or pooh, which have already been euphemized. However, "a semantic change may be noted, for the expressions which have been used often have little to do with referents" (Gao, 2013).

2.5.2. Death and Disease

Gao (2013) also claims that scare of death may lead to scare of words related to death or of certain illnesses associations. She adds that many people think that such words have great relations with what they suggest. However, instead of saying "die", people use alternative words like "pass away" "go to his reward", "answer the call of God", "go home," "to have a better place," "depart and

go west." Some perilous illnesses are also taboo matters. "Cancer", for instance, is said in an indirect way as "Big C" "or critically ill". Hence it is with the illness or psychological condition and intelligence deficiency. Such taboos, however, can be euphemized as: "he is not all there," "she is a little eccentric" / "a little confused." (Gao, 2013).

2.5.3. Sex

Words related to "anatomy and sex, and words even loosely suggesting anatomical or sexual matters, have noteworthy associations, particularly in American" (Deng, 1989). For example, ladies of the nineteenth century did not dare saying "breast" or "leg", not even the word "chicken" and thus the terms "white meat" and "dark meat" were replaced. Also, it was believed ill-mannered to say "going to bed" and the word "to retire" was substituted (Deng, 1989).

2.5.4. Four-Letter Words

Gao (2013) mentions that people are more lenient with words like "fuck", "tits", "damn" the so called "four-letter words". For example, it is usual to see in the streets of London people use the word "fuck" which, in fact, is the abbreviation of "French Connection United Kingdom." "Despite of the sexual revolution, these words are still deemed inelegant in dialogues and in written forms".

2.5.5. Swear Words

Taboo language can be manifested in various forms and swearing is unquestionably not excluded (Gao, 2013). Gao says that "a noteworthy variety of linguistic forms can be deemed as cursing and swearing." "There are the complex and developed expressions that may be found in different contexts: religious, legal and other official contexts." He also adds that there are many everyday examples of taboo language that express feelings such as animosity, defeat, amazement and so on.

The most common speech includes single words or a kind of phrase that communicate different levels of strength and drawing different degrees of social endorsement (Gao, 2013).

English examples extending from the moderate such as "heck" and "dash" to the severest one, "fuck". In these social contexts, swear words can become as a main linguistic feature, with sentences every so often include taboo words. Sex, excretion and paranormal powers are the main springs of swear words. Half of them related to words referring to body parts and functions that societies deemed them taboo, such as "ball" and other fourletter words. The second half concerns the names of "gods", "devils", etc. "like" "God", "dear Lord", "By the holy sacrament", "Heavens", "Hell", etc. (Gao, 2013).

2.5.6. Privacy

Deng (1989) States that questions on personal matters are considered one of the causes behind taboo that English people put a high value on secrecy. English has a proverb "A man's home is his castle", which means "a man's home is holy to him"; that is one comes in without leave. Does it also apply to his life, personal affairs and secretive interests? For, instance, "asking questions around one's age, weight, income, marital status, politics, religion" etc. would be considered interfering into one's privet life, which is another usage of invading a person's "castle".

In other words, questions such as "How old are you?" "What's your income?" "What's your religion?" "Are you married?" "Where are you going?" " How much did you pay for that?" are considered taboo to an English or American man (Deng, 1989).

2.5.7. Discriminatory Language

Currently, people have an increasing inclination to be sensitive to what is termed sexist language and racist language.

2.5.7.1. Sexist Language

Nowadays, sexist language means language that is biased against the woman and in favor of men. "In speech and writing, for example, 'a person or a baby or an unidentified sex is usually referred to as he rather than she'. The person, even a woman, heading a meeting is referred to the "chairman not the chairwoman". Another word which manifests this bias is the word "mankind". That is, we often say the history of "mankind" not the "womankind". These words and alike usually denote male. If it is required to refer to female, additional marks should be put before or after them. For example, "waiter – waitress" "hero – heroine", "doctor – woman doctor" (Deng, 1989).

2.5.7.2. Racist Language

"Racism is the belief that some human races are fundamentally inferior to others. Racist language is that which shows a bias against certain racial or ethnic groups; it is the language that lowers or belittles them" (Deng, 1989). Much of the segregation in English, is against "black", whether black people or black color, for this color is related to "wickedness", "evil", "filth", e.g., "blackguard", "blacklist" "black mark."

A member of a family whom others are embarrassed of is named "a black sheep", "not a white sheep." "Even a lie, if it is a white lie, is not so bad as an ordinary lie, or black lie." Nevertheless, this is not restricted to blacks whom are called with degrading names in the U.S., other racial or ethnic groups are also called with humiliating names. "Italians", for instance, are called "dagos", "Jews-kikes", "poles-Pollacks" "Chinese-chinks", "Japanese-japs," etc. "all of which are degrading names, showing strong racial prejudice" (Deng, 1989).

2.8. Taboo Words in Arabic

As a linguistic occurrence, taboo has received a great consideration, particularly via the contemporary Arab linguists. This is either as an outcome of the mentions and considerations of euphemism in Arabic or as a result of the efforts exerted by current Arab linguists in order to be familiar with western literature in linguistics so as to expose their comprehensions in their works. As a result of the influence of the western linguistic studies, Arab linguists have tackled taboo in different ways.

They disagree on one definite word to indicate prohibition in their writings which mostly deal with semantics. For example, Arab linguists use the combinations اللغوية المحضورات (linguistic taboos), and الحظر واللامساس (i.e., ban and untouchable) الكلام الحرام والكلام غير اللائق (i.e. prohibited speech and undesirable speech) in expressing the concept of taboo (ibid.: 66-67). That is, there is no definite term in Arabic like that in English. However, in Arabic, like English, the word taboo "refers to anything regarded sacred or damned that cannot be touched, or can come close to, whether a name or thing, due to its mythical nature." A conduct (verbal or else) is deemed taboo when a social attitude constrains or forbids it in a reasonable or unreasonable manner. One of the traits of linguistic taboo is the unreasonable rejection of the use of specified words that can be used in a particular situation and objected in a certain other situation socially.

Arabic, like English, has many areas of taboo: religion, death, health, naming and addressing, human body parts, swearing, and aging. In religion, Muslims know and believe that it is God alone who merits to be worshipped, and so they refrain from guiding any performances of worship to someone or something else. That is, it is taboo to worship someone or something except God (ibid :73). Death is 'a fear-based taboo or it is a bad presage.' However, this notion is not likely to brand Arab culture. In the health

area, some people do not like even to hear anything about illness or a pain. But others think that it is a gospel castigation comes in form of sickness and has a positive impact on the health and assists to ensure rapid treatment and a quick cure. Consequently, taboo words related to health is weakened owing to the people's belief that illnesses come from God to refine them.

Naming, which is another area of taboo language, means to give a name to somebody or something. In Arab beliefs as well as in Islam, an individual has to select names carrying attractiveness in sense and suggest blameless presage. In other words, if the name is forbidden, it becomes taboo also. Addressing: when people talk to one another, they do not do it arbitrarily, but there are specific rules which are socially- bound. The most significant aspects which administer the use of these rules are "power", "solidarity", and "age". "A person can be addressed by first name, last name, or a title, depending on the situations and social relations" (ibid.:8081) As for swearing words , historically they did not appear broadly in lexicons. It is thought that they were occasional; and Arabs shunned their use. ' Even if such words were used, people would be unable to know their structure as well as the meaning . As in English, some body parts in Arab culture are prohibited to talk of overtly as it is socially immoral or impolite matter. In general, the taboo ness behind the dodging of a direct reference to private parts is politeness, beside the conservative culture of Arabs.

Aging is an unavoidable course in the human life. In Arab culture, old age has valuable associations, for people show respect to old people and therefore this age is beheld moralistic. However, the word old age may have another negative meaning. People usually use the expression *خرف* (senile) to express their anger towards someone who got them upset. That is, the word old age, in this case, reflects only the taboo meaning in the view of the Arab culture (ibid:98-99).

2.9. Denotation and connotation

2.9.1. Denotative Meaning

The denotative sense is the data usually presented in a dictionary, the mental representation of a collection of objects, characteristics, or events to which a term refers. Denotation involves truth, analysis, intention, significance or synonymity (Jay,1981)

Salih (2013) states that this kind of terms are used with logical and cognitive sense interchangeably. An expression denotation is an eternal part of the truth to which the expression is related. The term 'blue, for instance,' signifies the colour blue. This implies that what the term really refers to is a denotative or conceptual meaning, or it is the lexical meaning in dictionaries. This kind of meaning is stable and constant regardless of ages and societies.

2.9.2. Connotative Meaning

Connotative meaning is defined by Leech (1981) as "the communicative value an expression has by virtue of what it refers to over and above purely conceptual content.". Connotation is conveyed meaning involved in irony, sarcasm, understatement, overstatement, humour, idiomatic usage and implied requests. Connotative reference can occur with both taboo and nontaboo words, just as both can be used denotatively (Jay,1992).

But in using swear words, connotative meaning is dominant over denotative meaning, and it is easy to distinguish these two aspects of meaning. Usually, dirty-word expressions are interpreted connotatively (Jay and Danks, 1977).

Since people want to express emotional feelings or have an emotional effect on listeners, speakers choose dirty words for this message. So, when we call somebody a bastard, for instance, we do not question the legitimacy of his birth, but express dislike

for him. Connotation is usually related to emotional expression, not to a specific characteristic of the person in question (Jay and Danks, 1977).

3. Methodology

The current study uses the quantitative method. A qualitative investigation focuses on the details that ‘collecting primarily textual data and examining it using interpretive analysis’ (Heigman and Croker 2009: 5). Here, the information gathered in this type of study is frequently presented in the form of explanations, stories, and events. Two different sub-models are used in this investigation: Ljung (2011) introduced several types of taboo words, as well as how to formulate the meaning, and also the class and structure of each word. McEnery (2006), on the other hand, has clarified more types of taboo words as well as the gender to which they are directed.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Taboo words in English

In this section, we look at the more common Taboo words types that are used as swear words in English

4.1.1. Animal-based swear words

This section discusses common animal terms in English that are used connotatively for swearing.

Ass /donkey

These two expressions are used as synonyms each one used in an area or situation. These terms indicate both male and female to refer connotatively to a person who is being or acting like an idiot/ass. They are usually looked in the form of noun as in Man, that kid is such a donkey

‘Donkey’ here is a simple single word which is a part of the sentence.

Bird

Generally, this expression is used to refer to girl or young woman. So, it directed to female only when connotatively she comes across as vain, ditzzy, stupid or useless. It is formed as a noun as in you dumb bird. Here, ‘bird’ is structured as simple single word which is a major part of the sentence.

Cow

It is an offensive word which connotatively refers to a female who is stupid, annoying, or fat. This expression is usually formed as a noun as in You cow!

Here ‘cow’ syntactically is a simple single word which is a major constituent of the sentence.

Table (3) Animal-based swear words in English

Words	Meaning	Structure	lass	Gender directed
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				male	Female	both
Ass/donkey	an idiot	Simple word	noun			√
Bird	vain,ditzy, stupid or useless	Simple word	noun		√	
Cow	stupid, annoying, or fat	Simple word	noun		√	

4.1.2. Body parts based swear words

In this sub-section, we deal with human body parts that are used connotatively for swearing in English

Arsehole/ arse

When someone calls another person as an arsehole, connotatively, it implies that the person is extremely stupid or has acted foolishly and someone who makes you feel disgusted and angry. It is directed at both males and females. It is a compound word which takes the position of a noun, as in:

4. An arsehole had parked so I couldn't get out

Arsehole here is a major constituent of the sentence.

Bloody

It is used connotatively to emphasize meaning whether good, sarcastic, or bad and it simply means absolutely, wholly, purely, extremely, truly, and has nothing to do with blood or murder, except in the sense that the term has been corrupted. It is placed before or in the middle of words/sentences. This expression is addressed to male and female. It is an adverbial intensifier as in

A bloody fool

'bloody' is the major constituents of the sentence.

Table (4) Body parts based swear words in English

Words	Meaning	Structure	Form	Gender directed
-------	---------	-----------	------	-----------------

				male	female	Both
Asshole	Stupid or fool	Compound word	noun			√
Bloody	emphasize meaning whether good, sarcastic, or bad	Simple word	adverbial intensifier			√

4.1.3 Excretion-based swear words

This section is used in the excretory system of animals or humans to connote swear words in English.

Bullshit

When somebody utters this swear word, s/he connotatively describes stupid things people do as nonsense, lies or false information. This term is used to direct both gender male and female. The structure of this word is a compound word which can be used as full sentence, as in Bullshit!

Which is a noun that gives a full meaning of swearing.

Fart

This word connotatively indicates an irritable, unpleasant person or foolish people who annoy others. It is usually directed at both genders, males and females. It can be formed as verb, as in:

Fart around, to spend time foolishly or aimlessly.

Which is a separate verb phrase

Table (5) Excretion-based swear words in English

Words	Meaning	Structure	Form	Gender directed

Bullshit!	stupid things people do as nonsense, lies or false information	Compound word	noun	male	female	Both
Fart around	irritable, unpleasant person or foolish people who are annoying others	Phrase	verb			√

4.1.4 Intellect-based Swear words

The following swear words have a neutral base. They can be found throughout English society.

Dumb

It is a slang word which denotatively refers to a person who isn't very intelligent or is lacking intelligence. It is directed to both males and females. Generally, it is an adjective as in:

He is asking a dumb question.

Which is a single word that intensifies the noun.

Fool

This phrase is denotatively directed to someone who makes rash or imprudent acts; a silly person. It indicates males and females in the same degree. In most examples, it is formed as a simple word which is a major part of the sentence, as in:

You are such a fool!

Which could be considered as a noun.

Idiot

It is a more common synonyms of 'fool' or 'moron' which is used to refer to a person who is foolish and stupid. This expression is usually directed to any person whether male or female. In the normal cases it is a simple word which takes a major place in the sentence, as in:

Don't be such an idiot!

Also, here the class of 'idiot' is a noun.

Table (6) Intellect-based Swear words in English Words Meaning

Words	Meaning	Structure	Form	Gender directed		
				male	female	Both
dumb	a person who isn't very intelligent or	Simple word	Adjective			
						√
Fool	someone who makes rash or imprudent acts; a silly person	Simple word	Noun			√
idiot	foolish and stupid	Simple word	Noun			√

4.1.5 Death and disease based Swear words

In this section, we analyse swear words in English that are related to death and disease.

Pox

This term is connotatively used to indicate someone or something bad, awful, or crappy. It is usually directed to both males and females. This expression is commonly used in literature as in

A pox on both your houses!

It is used as a simple word in the form of a noun which is taking the major role in the sentence.

Damn

This expression is used in unexpected, anger and irritation situations.

It means ‘go to hell’ or things that might happen after something passes away, as in: Damn you!

Here, ‘damn’ is a simple word formed as a verb which is a major part in the sentence.

Table (7) Death and disease based Swear words in English

Words	Meaning	Structure	Form	Gender directed		
				male	female	Both
Pox	someone or something bad, awful, or crappy.	Simple word	Noun			
						√
damn	go to hell or things that might happen after something passes away	Simple word	Verb			√

4.1.6 General terms

This section collects and explains all other terms used in English that are not covered in the preceding sections.

Bum

This expression connotatively refers to disreputable associations, namely idleness, dishonesty, and promiscuity although it denotatively refers to a homeless person. It is directed to both male and female in the same degree. This word is formed as a simple word which structures an important part of the sentence, as in:

Gave me bum advice.

Here ‘bum’ is formed as an adjective.

Fat

It is possibly one of the most uncreative yet incredibly effective insults in the English language, requiring little thought. It indicates a stupid, worthless or slowly moving person who acts like a child. It is given to both genders. This expression is structured as a simple word that holds the major meaning of the sentence, as in:

My nice little fat Rosie.

Here ‘fat’ is classed as an adjective which describes the noun.

ugly

Denotatively, this expression is directed to anything that is very unattractive or unpleasant to look at. It is offensive to the sense of beauty and displeasing in appearance. It is directed at both genders, male and female. But as a personal appearance it addresses females more. It could be an adjective that describes the noun, as in:

You're so ugly.

‘Ugly’ here is structured as a simple word that has the major part in the sentence.

Table (8) Other swear words in English

Words	Meaning	Structure	Form	Gender directed		
				male	female	Both
Bum	disreputable associations, namely idleness, dishonesty, and promiscuity	Simple word	Adjective			
						√

Fat	stupid, worthless or slowly move person who acts like a child	Simple word	Adjective			√
Ugly	A person who is unattractive or unpleasant to look at.	Simple word	Adjective			√

4.2. Taboo words in Iraqi Arabic

In this section, we look at some of the more popular types of swear words used in Iraqi Arabic.

4.2.1. Animal-based swear words

In this section, we look at the more common swear words that are used as swear words in Iraqi Arabic.

بكرة “Begarrah” (cow)

It is a common swear word with connotations of fat, unintelligent, and pure-hearted females. In some Iraqi areas, هاشية ‘haysha’ is used as a synonym for ‘bagarah’. It is always a simple single noun as in بكرة “Begarrah” (cow)

Which is full sentence.

The same semantic meaning word is ثور ‘thor’ (ox) is used to refer to male with different connotative meaning which is directed to a person who becomes angry without understanding. It is also a simple single noun, as in: chnah thor wahayij ,,as a nery ox (چنه ثور وهايج)

And it is a major constituent of the sentence.

بومة ,,Buma” (owl)

It is the most commonly used animal-based swear word when referring to females. It connotes an ominous woman who, upon her arrival, causes all evil things to happen, it also refers to a woman with a frown on her face. It is a simple single noun, as in: *يا بومة!* „A ya buma!“ (O owl!)

It is a major constituent of the sentence.

حية „hayih“ (snake)

This word is used connotatively to refer to female-directed wickedness or duplicity or when she acts as a very good person but in fact she is the reverse. In the example below, its structure is more obvious. *kafi talafiyn wadwrin mithl alhayih* „Enough to change and adore like a snake (كافي تلفين و ادورين مثل الحية)

Syntactically, (Al_hayih) is a simple single noun which is part of a constituent of the sentence. People use compound swear words (حية صفرة hayih safrah) in some areas and (حية سودة hayih sudih) in others to refer to stronger swear words. It is possible to find a stronger word than these two, which is *صل* (sil). This type of snakes is more dangerous, for that it is a more effective in swearing.

Table (9) Animal-based swear words in Iraqi Arabic

Words	Meaning	Structure	Form	Gender directed		
				male	female	Both
بغرة	fat, unintelligent, and purehearted females	Simple word	Noun		√	
بومة	ominous woman	Simple word	Noun		√	
حية	wickedness or duplicity person	Simple word	Noun		√	

4.2.2. Intellect-based swear words

The following swear words have a neutral base. They can be found throughout Iraqi Arabic society.

اثول “Athwal” (idiot)

Athol is an idiot who is easily fooled by others. This expression is a swear word in its basic meaning. It is directed to both gender male and female. This expression is formed as a noun as in *أثول مايفتيم* “athul mayafatihum!” (an idiot does not understand!)

In the above example *اثول* is a simple word which holds the major constituent of a sentence.

خبل “khebal” (insane)

This swear word is used denotatively to indicate someone who cannot behave wisely and behave as a mad person. It usually refers to those who behave childly. This expression is directed to both gender male and female, it becomes *خبله* when used with female. It takes the form of a noun which is structured as a simple word that holds the important meaning in the sentence, as in: *چنه خبل* “chnuh khabal!” (like insane!)

Table (11) intellect-based swear words in Iraqi Arabic

Words	Meaning	Structure	Form	Gender directed		
				male	female	Both
اثول	an idiot who is easily fooled by others	Simple word	Noun			√
خبل	someone who cannot behave wisely and behave as a mad person	Simple word	Noun			√

4.2.3. Death and disease based swear words

In this section, we analyse swear words in Iraqi Arabic society that are related to death and disease.

الله ياخذك “Allah yakhudhuk!” (May Allah take you!)

These expressions *كبر لفق / سليمه الكرفتك / موت الكرفك* can be used as synonyms. These expressions are commonly heard in any group of people in the street, in café, etc. The meaning of these words a ‘may Allah take you’ is connotated to be as damn to pass away from this world. These words is directed to both genders males and females. It is structured as a compound word the noun^{الله} comes with the verb ‘ياخذك’ to make a full sentence, as in:

الله ياخذك ! “Allah yakhudhuk!” (May Allah take you!)

طبك مرض “tibak marad” (to get sick)

These two words is commonly used to indicate that you deserve what had happened to you. It is denotatively meant that to have a heavy sickness and the same meaning is connotatively used as swear word. This expression is directed to both genders. The verb *طبك* collocates with the noun *مرض* and make a compound word that is structured to be a full sentence, as in:

طبك مرض "tibak marad!" (to get sick!)

Table (12) Death and disease based swear words in Iraqi Arabic

Words	Meaning	Structure	Form	Gender directed		
				male	female	Both
الله ياخذك	damn to go pass away from this world	Sentence	Noun + Verb			√
طبك مرض	to have a heavy sickness	Sentence	Noun + Verb			√

5. Conclusion

The linguistic landscapes of English and Iraqi Arabic are complex, making them interesting societies that deserve to be studied linguistically. The purpose of this study is to investigate the use and perception of swear words in these societies, as well as their relationship to the social context in which they are employed and the factors that influence them to arrive at the following conclusions: A variety of factors, including age, gender, social and economic standing, as well as the speaker-listener relationship, influence the communicative act. Nonetheless, an analysis of the motivations that lead to the usage of swear words has revealed that shame and causing injury are the primary goals that lead the speaker to use swear words.

The use of swear words is highly influenced by culture. Both cultures (English and Iraqi Arabic) prohibit swearing from religious standpoints. Sexual phrases can also be offensive and taboo. As a result, swear words are becoming more limited; otherwise, they are instilled everywhere and at all times.

The context in which swear words are used is the most essential factor in determining whether an ordinary word becomes a swear word. The number of swear words directed at men and women is the highest in both languages, followed by male-directed swear words. As a result, men use swear words more frequently than women.

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