| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Taboo Language in Bahraini Arabic

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| ABSTRACT

This paper explores the use of taboo language in Bahraini Arabic, drawing on two frameworks put forth by Qanbar (2011) and Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) regarding categorizing taboo language in the case of the former and the politeness theory in the case of the latter. This paper aims to investigate the use of taboo language/expressions in Bahraini Arab society. As well as the social, cultural, and religious factors for labeling certain expressions taboo in Arab societies. This was investigated by looking into previous research, listening to Bahraini Arab university students' everyday conversations, and administering a self-assessed close-ended questionnaire. As a result of scanning previous research & listening to Bahraini Arab university students' everyday conversations, a corpus of Bahraini taboo expressions, including but not limited to terms referring to origins, animals, entities, objects, sex and sexuality, and religions was collected, and the principal reason for labeling certain expressions in Arab societies, especially in Bahraini Arab society was found to be primarily religious as well as social. Furthermore, the conducted self-assessed close-ended questionnaire taken by 88 Bahraini Arab university students resulted in finding that both males and females are heard using taboo language equally, receiving 58.6%, young adults aged 17-30 are the age group frequently heard using taboo language, receiving 81.8%, taboo language is mostly used in a private setting, precisely among friends only, receiving 48.9%, and the frequently used category of taboo expressions is animal terms receiving 81.4%.

1. Introduction

1.1 Language

The term Language originated from the Latin *lingua*, i.e., tongue. The definition of language varies from one school of thought in linguistics to another. For example, Saussure (1974) sees language as a system of signs that communicate meaning and is shared by members of a community. Yet, a more inclusive definition of language was put forth by Crystal (1971, 1992, 1995) as "The systematic, conventional use of sounds, signs or written symbols in a human society for communication and self-expression" (p. 545). In other words, language is a system of signs, sounds, and symbols agreed on their meaning by a group of people in a territory and used to express one's self to others, and therefore a means of communication.

1.2 Language & Culture

Just like the definition of language, the definition of culture differs from one scholar to another. One of the definitions of culture provided by Allen (1977) is "The behavioral patterns or lifestyles of the people: when and what they eat, how they make a living, the way they organize society, the attitudes they express toward friends and members of their families, how they act in different

situations, which expressions they use to show approval and disapproval, the traditions they must observe" (p. 325). In other words, culture is the norms followed by people living in a specific territory. When looking at the above-mentioned definition of culture, one cannot but notice how the language & dialects people speak was not included in Allen's definition of culture. This can be attributed to the fact that "Language and culture have not been seen by everyone as inseparable as they might be seen today in applied linguistics" (Simpson, 2013, p. 305) and "The study of language was distinct from the study of both literature (big C Culture) and anthropology (little C Culture)" (ibid, p. 305), meaning that language was a separate field of study that was seen as irrelevant to the study of culture [i.e., the study of literature and anthropology], where languages were rarely mentioned, defined and referred to concerning culture. Another definition of culture put forth by the researcher of this paper and will be the definition followed in this research is "A way of behaving and talking and thinking that is agreed on and followed by a community (i.e., a group of people)". This community can be black, white, rich, poor, children, elderly, religious, atheists, Hispanic, or Arabs. Each group of people has its way of communicating messages through language [verbal or non-verbal], and more precisely, each community has its dialects, vocabulary, style, sequence of words, and denotations and connotations attributed to words. A community also has its way of doing things, such as dressing in a certain way, creating & listening to certain music, dancing, celebrating, eating, thinking, behaving, liking & disliking, and valuing certain things.

And indeed, not all the individuals in a society/community (i.e., group of people) think, behave, feel, and talk the same, as the identity of each individual differs from one individual to another. However, when individuals come together to form a society/community, they tend to behave, follow, and talk by what has consensus (i.e., what is agreed on by a group of people or/and deemed the norm). One of the things that reflects what is normal from what is abnormal, what is accepted from what is unaccepted in a society, is the language of that society. This was asserted by Mohsen (2015), stating that "The structure of language and the ways it is used reflect the norms and values that members of a culture share" (p. 66). The consensus on language as to what is accepted and what is unaccepted to be uttered differs from one culture/society to another. An unaccepted language that is labeled as "bad" and even prohibited from being publicly used is also known as *Taboo language*.

Furthermore, it is important to state that linguistics does not label certain words as taboo (i.e., bad/unacceptable/obscene); rather, it is the members of a community/society that does. This was noted by Qanbar (2011), stating that "There is nothing linguistically inherent in words to make them taboos or not; it is the society that sentences some words to prohibition and uses restrictions" (p. 89). In other words, words are neutral. Yet, the meanings attributed to words by members of a society/community are what deems certain words as acceptable "good" or unacceptable "bad". And in the case of the latter, the language that members of a society/community restrict its use [usually due to religious, social, or/and cultural reasons] is what leads to deeming certain language as taboo. Fab (1974) further explains this by stating that "Any word is an innocent collection of sounds until a community surrounds it with connotations and decrees that it cannot be used in certain speech situations" (p. 91). Therefore, not only do members of a society/community agree on what language is deemed taboo or not, but it is also the same entity that attributes any sound/s and word/s their meaning, be it good or bad.

1.3 Language Use

Language "Involves communication in either an explicit or implicit sense" (Sapir, 1956, p. 104), meaning that Language is a form of verbal or/and non-verbal communication, is one of- if not the only -explicit form of communication that could be used in a good manner as well as a bad manner. This is because people could communicate their thoughts, ideas, and feelings using informative, useful, acceptable, and pleasant words or useless, inappropriate, offensive, and obscene words. Language, and by that, I am referring to: written or uttered sounds, words, expressions, phrases, signs, and symbols used or can be used to convey various forms of messages, including but not limited to giving directions, requesting, warning, as well as conveying thoughts, feelings, and intentions to show agreement or disagreement, complement, inform, or educate. Whenever the purpose of the language used, and its effects are perceived to be meaningful, informative, acceptable, or/and positive by the hearer/s, it is deemed positive language. And whenever the language used and its effects are perceived as meaningless, unacceptable, obscene, or/and offensive to the hearer/s, it is deemed bad language, which is known as *Taboo Languag*e.

Taboo language includes sounds, words, phrases, and expressions that include but are not limited to animal, sexual, religious, & political terms in addition to unfriendly suggestions, name-calling, and swearing to insult the hearer or/and the addressee/s. Swearing, which Fägersten (2012) considers a form of taboo language, is defined by Jay (2000) as "Using the bad language to express anger or disappointment and direct it to a certain person who is the object of anger" (p. 87). This is as taboo language "Makes an excellent relief mechanism" that "Helps to turn on the inanimate object that has hurt you and berate it verbally" (Peckham and Crystal, 1986, p. 34). In other words, although the use of some words and expressions is unacceptable in certain

cultures, therefore taboo, however, and ironically, taboo language has good effects, such as relieving the [undesirable] strong emotions the speaker is experiencing by verbally avenging the person who caused them.

1.4 Taboo Language

Crystal (1999) defines taboo language as "Words which people may not use without causing offense because they refer to acts, objects, or relationships which are widely felt to be embarrassing, distasteful, or harmful" (p. 332), meaning that taboo language is offensive language as it denotes offensive references. Gobert (2014) stated that "Taboos are usually culturally specific" (p. 1), meaning that what is deemed taboo expressions are not universal. However, not only does taboo language differ from one culture and society to another, but it is also diachronic (i.e., changes over time). This is as what a society restricts in a language could undergo changes or become widely used and accepted as time pass, thus is no longer deemed taboo. Moreover, Boyadzhieva (n.d.) stated that as a result of time changing and affecting what is considered taboo in a language and what is not, "It is logical to expect that taboos vary in time both cross-culturally and cross-linguistically" (p. 2), meaning that taboo language is diachronic, as time is a crucial factor in changing what is deemed taboo in certain cultures and languages, to no longer be deemed taboo in the same cultures and languages (and vice versa).

Moreover, there are various strategies to avert the explicit use of taboo languages, such as "Euphemism, proverbs, metaphor, implicature and synonyms" (Al Dilaimy & Omar, 2018, p. 2); In the case of euphemisms, which Boyadzhieva (n.d.) defined as "Any string of socially acceptable language replacing verbal taboos in a communicative situation" (p. 4), which "Would not exist in language if taboos were nonexistent" (p. 3). In other words, euphemisms are the pleasant, socially acceptable expressions used to substitute the unpleasant, unacceptable words one intends to use, and these acceptable substituting words (i.e., euphemisms) would not have been created and used if not for the existence of taboo language. Thus, euphemisms serve as a face mask that would not have been made if there were no faces to cover with. Furthermore, regarding language being diachronic (i.e., changes over time), Pinker (2007) introduced the term *euphemism treadmill,* which refers to the continuous change of the semantic pejoration of euphemisms over time. Meaning that euphemisms used to substitute taboo vocabulary usually retain a courteous, [socially] acceptable meaning for a while. However, after some time, it wears out, and its meaning becomes a synonym of the taboo vocabulary it initially substituted. As a result, a euphemism of a taboo vocabulary becomes taboo, thus requiring another euphemism to replace it. This cycle was compared by Boyadzhieva (n.d.) to that of the *domino effect*. Just like how the fall of a domino leads to the fall of another, similarly, the need for a euphemism to substitute a taboo vocabulary, over time, creates the need for another euphemism to substitute the euphemism that substituted the taboo vocabulary. The question is; Why do people use implicit [linguistic] strategies, such as euphemisms, to avoid the explicit use of taboo language?

1.5 The Politeness Theory & Taboo Language

The theory of politeness, which was postulated by Brown and Levinson (1978) and its modified model (1987), touched on the notion of face attack (Al Dilaimy & Omar, 2018), and conceptualized [an individual who is], a Model Person (MP) who is "A willful fluent speaker of natural language, further endowed with two special properties: rationality and face" (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 58). This means that a fluent speaker of a language has two qualities: "rationality" and "face". The former means "That the MP would be able to use a specific mode of reasoning to choose means that will satisfy his/her ends" (Qanbar, 2011, p. 90), meaning that one behaves rationally to realize his goals. Whereas the latter means a "Public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 61), meaning one's the reputation one desires to have. If the fluent speaker of a language is aware, rational, and takes precautions in saving his/her face and the addressee's face, then he/she is a Model Person MP. Furthermore, Al Dilaimy & Omar (2018) stated that the theory of face is "Mainly based on the notion of face as introduced by Goffman (1967)" (p. 5). The notion of face introduced by Goffman composes "face" of two matters; a negative face and a positive face. Brown and Levinson (1987) defined the negative face as "The want of every 'competent adult member' that his actions be unimpeded by others", & the positive face as "The want of every member that his wants [thoughts, behaviors, words] be desirable to at least some others" (p. 312). Meaning that negative face is an individual's private self; what one desires to act as he/she pleases regardless of whether they appeal to others or not. It is an individual's identity, behaviors, thoughts, beliefs, and words that no one is to interfere in dictating but the individual him/herself. Positive face is the individual's public self; one desiring that they and their desires, thoughts, behaviors, and words are shared, respected, and accepted by others, be it all members of their society or a small group of that society.

Because the Model Person MP will strive to present themselves in the best way possible when desiring to remain a positive face (i.e., good public self-image) in a society, they will not only have to present themselves physically well but linguistically as well, where they will have to resort to avoiding the use of taboo language [at least publicly], to maintain positive face. Moreover, Al Dilaimy & Omar (2018) stated that "They [Brown and Levinson] are looking for ... a way that minimizes the threat that causes a

moral harm to the face of the addressee" (p. 4), meaning that the researchers that proposed the politeness theory [Brown and Levinson] are working on discovering strategies that speakers can follow to minimize the harm their words can do to the speaker's reputation. Eventually, Brown and Levinson addressed this matter by proposing the Face Threatening Acts FTAs. FTAs [which taboo language is a form of] negatively affect the face of its user and the addressees and/or hearers. Al Dilaimy & Omar (2018) stated that "(FTAs) that take the form of (ordering, requesting, asking or demanding) to refer to communicative acts that have an inherent threat to the face of the addressee" (p. 6). In other words, Face Threatening Acts such as ordering others around are acts that threaten one's public image [as they tend to be hostile]. Moreover, Direct Face Threatening Acts are acts that "Imply strategies that include the use of verbal and non-verbal actions leading to aggressiveness, rudeness, swearing and various kinds of [verbal] taboos" (Al Dilaimy & Omar, 2018, p. 5). In other words, Direct Face Threatening Acts are a threat to the hearer or addresses because they are animus. Furthermore, the FTAs that threaten the addressee's/hearers' negative face differ from those that threaten his/her positive face. One's negative face is threatened by receiving orders, threats, advice, suggestions, and reminders from others, whereas one's positive face is threatened by others' expressions of disapproval or criticism or contempt or ridicule, contradictions, disagreements, challenges, expressions of violent emotions, bringing bad news, raising dangerously emotional or divisive topics, blatant non-cooperation in an activity and irreverence mention of taboo topics in an inappropriate context (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 313-314).

Nonetheless, one of the defects of Brown and Levinson's (1978-1987) theory of politeness is that it sees that all mention of taboo topics [language] only have a negative influence as it only communicates the speaker's negative emotions, thoughts, and behaviors to the hearers' and addressees, thus, harming the hearers'/addressee's face or emotional, physical or/and mental state. However, this is inapplicable to all cases, as there are many cases in which taboo language is used to communicate positive thoughts and feelings. This was stressed by Alqahtani *et al.* (2022), stating that linguistically "The use of bad language may have either positive or negative effects depending on the way it is employed" (p. 562), meaning that taboo language can be of good or bad effects [on the hearers/addresses] based on context and rationale for using them. One of which the use of taboo language can be of positive/good effect is using it as means of representing one's true identity through speech/texts (Alqahtani *et al.*, 2022), especially to communicate intense emotions that could not be otherwise conveyed with the same degree and effectiveness. This was stressed by Jay (2009), stating that "Swearing [which is a form of taboo language] persists because taboo words can communicate emotion information (anger, frustration) more readily than non-taboo words" (p. 153). In other words, taboo language persists to exist because of its main purpose; to communicate intense emotions. Another positive influence of the use of taboo language is humor, sarcasm, and storytelling. This was stressed by Al Dilaimy & Omar (2018), stating that "Taboo words are used ironically to show a non-aggressive attitude which does not have much harm to the addressee" (p. 12). In other words, besides the positive use of taboo language to convey intense emotions, it can also be used to show playfulness without any harm done. The case in which the speaker uses taboo language to express humor, irony, and narration is not only true & likely but also tends to be done most, if not only in a private setting, especially among individuals the speaker is of similar age or social hierarchy as, or/and in a close relationship with. This is because if a speaker is in a formal relationship with or of younger or older age or higher or lower social status than the addressee, he/she would avoid the use of taboo language to avoid any undesirable consequences (i.e., losing a job, breaking a relationship, getting punished). Nonetheless, individuals [especially those old in age] tend to ignore and deny the benefits of using taboo language. This was stressed by Jackson (1866, 1958) in that "[Media] Ignores situations where swearing [a form of taboo language] is beneficial, such as when it is cathartic or a useful substitute for physical violence" (Cited from Jay, 2009, p. 157). In other words, not only can taboo language be advantageous when it serves to express intense emotions [thus relieving the speaker], entertain, and be playful, but it also serves as a save heaven people seek to avert abusing the hearers/addresses physically, all of which the media disregard. The use of taboo language can indeed relieve the speaker from experiencing undesirable emotions, especially to substitute physical abuse. However, the use of taboo language in these cases remains a form of abuse (i.e., verbal and emotional abuse), and the severity of its negative impact on a person is not less than the severity of what physical abuse can do to a person.

Nonetheless, Boyadzhieva (n.d.) sees that the existence of taboo language is justified as it would not exist if it were no longer used, stating that "Obviously, their [taboo expressions'] existence is somewhat justified" as "It is a general truth in linguistic that if words are not used by the speakers of a language they die out" (p. 11). Trudgill (2000) confirms this notion stating that "If they [taboo expressions] were not said at all, they could hardly remain in the language". Meaning that the [frequent] use of taboo expressions is what keeps them alive [in the language]. Therefore, if people no longer use taboo language, it will become obsolete. However, people will not be able to describe their intense [undesirable] thoughts and emotions as is, especially since no other words can be of the same cathartic effect as taboo language. Therefore, even though taboo language is unacceptable by the members of society, they are essential for the expression of the autonomous identity of its individuals.

1.6 Research questions:

The objectives of the study are sevenfold, namely [to find out]:

Q1. What are the expressions that are publicly uttered taboo in Bahraini Arabic?

Q2. What are the social, religious, and cultural reasons that resulted in labeling certain expressions taboo in Arab societies?

Q3. What are the commonly used [linguistic] strategies to avoid the explicit use of taboo expressions? [Used by Arabs in general, and by Bahraini Arab university students, in specific].

Q4. Which gender uses taboo language in their speech more, and why do gender differences in using taboo language emerge?

Q5. What is the reason [motivation for] Bahraini Arab university students' use of taboo language?

Q6. To what category of taboo expression do the most frequently used Bahraini Arabic taboo expressions belong?

Q7. Do Bahraini Arab university students find using/uttering taboo expressions in a foreign or/and second language easier than uttering taboo expressions in their native language (i.e., Arabic)?

1.7 Hypotheses:

H1. The main reason for labeling certain expressions taboo in Bahraini Arabic will be religious and social.

H2. The majority of Bahraini Arab university students use taboo language in a private setting, especially among close friends-only.

H3. Males will be the gender of students frequently using taboo language publicly.

H4. Expressing strong emotions will be the most frequent motivation/reason why Bahraini Arab university students use taboo language.

H5. The frequently used strategy by Bahraini Arab university students to avoid the explicit, public use of taboo language will be the use of euphemisms.

1.8 The frameworks followed for categorizing taboo expressions:

Hongxu *et al*. (1990) proposed the following framework for the analysis of [Chinese] taboo words, namely: "macro-linguistics", which are words that are perceived as taboo by all speech community, and "micro-linguistics" which are words that are perceived as taboo in a specific context. While the former consists of societal factors, the latter consists of situational factors (Hongxu *et al*., 1990, p. 66).

Nonetheless, in this research, the framework formed by Qanbar (2011) for categorizing taboo words will be followed, as it is found [by the paper's researcher] to be more inclusive. These are context-specific [taboo expressions] and general [taboo expressions]. Context-specific taboo expressions [micro-linguistics] are subcategorized into two categories; "[1] non-taboo words and [2] words related to the hearer's physical or social defect" (Qanbar, 2011, p. 91). Non-taboo words refer to the "General property of entities in normal context" (Al Dilaimy & Omar, 2018, p. 10). In other words, context-specific, non-taboo words are words that state facts, but these facts can be used in certain contexts to insult and dehumanize the addressee/hearer. An example of non-taboo words are objects such as slippers, animals such as a dog and a donkey, or describing one's physical or mental defects/impairments such as handicapped for the former and demented for the latter. These words are neutral, and uttering them is not taboo when used to refer to the items/animals/person's state as a fact. However, if an individual is referred to using the above-mentioned neutral words [a dog or a slipper], then undesirable traits are denoted, thus making the neutral words taboo. Note that even if a person has a certain impairment, blind, for example, and another person states that he/she is blind, which is a fact, it can also be an insult and thus taboo, only in case it was uttered in a sarcastic or/and offensive manner [which detecting can be hard at times]. General taboo expressions are also subcategorized into two categories, namely: unmentionable [taboo expressions], which are forbidden words, and mentionable [taboo expressions, but] with minimizers, which are "Words and phrases that are considered taboos and shocking if mentioned unaccompanied with certain fixed conventional phrases" (ibid, p. 94). In other words, general, mentionable with minimizers taboo expressions are expressions that if a speaker mentions without using certain fixed phrases that minimize their intensity [when mentioned in isolation], their mention becomes socially unacceptable (i.e., taboo). Therefore, the speaker is to use certain minimizers before or after mentioning certain expressions (i.e., when referring to places, objects, or animals deemed filthy; the lavatory, a slipper, a dog, or glorified concepts/religious figures; Allah, Prophet Mohamed) as a means to minimize "The [Their] illocutionary force" (Aliakbari & Raeesi, 2015, p. 97), thus, making the mention of these specific expressions [socially] acceptable. Furthermore, Qanbar (2011, p. 92) further divided the unmentionable taboo expressions into the following:

1. Words or terms referring to the private organs of the human body and their functions, and body effluvia.
2. Words or terms referring to religion (blasphemous) or words against religious figures and symbols.
3. Words or terms referring to national or historical, or present political figures or political systems.

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.

It is worth mentioning that of the above-mentioned subcategories proposed by Qanbar (2011), "The first three sub-categories [i.e., sex, religion & politics] could almost be found in almost all cultures across the world, though with varying degree" (Aliakbari & Raeesi, 2015, p. 96). However, some of the subcategories almost only apply to Qanbar's society (i.e., Yemen) and certain Arab societies which are not applicable in this paper's context [Bahraini Arab society], therefore they were not addressed, in addition to the addition of supplementary subcategories (See Tables 1 & 2).

Figure 1 represents the framework followed in this paper for classifying taboo expression, which was proposed by Qanbar (2011), and based on Brown and Levinson's (1978-1987) theory of politeness.
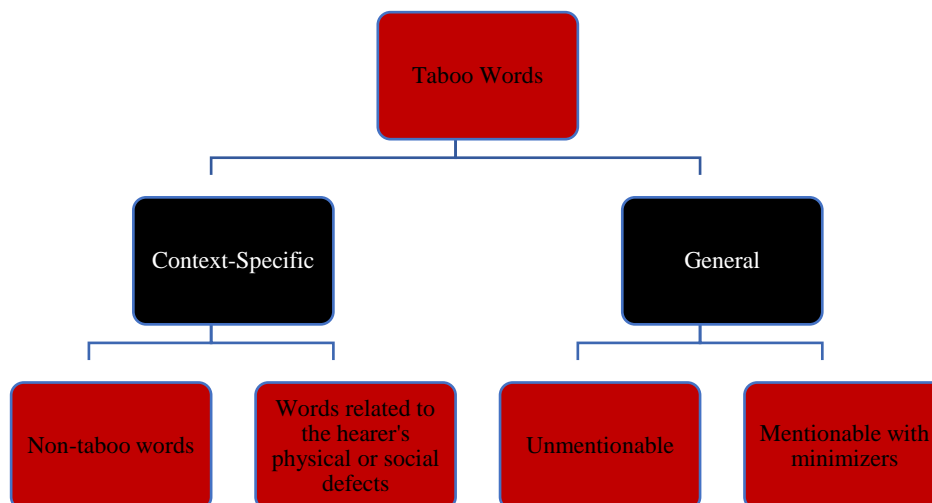
1.9 The aim, importance, & contribution of this research paper:

This research paper aims to increase university students' [and the readers'] awareness of what expressions are deemed taboo in Arab societies, and precisely in Bahraini Arab society. Especially since many of these students regard certain taboo expressions as non-taboo, this is especially for the case of mentionable [taboo words] with minimizers, which many of the surveyed university students uttered without using minimizers. Why is this important? As a result of students/readers being aware of what words/expressions are taboo in one's society, one will avoid showing social incompetence (i.e., lacking the necessary social skills to save face (i.e., public self-image)by failing to pick up contextualization cues - the verbal and non-verbal signs that are used by language speakers and are heard and seen by language listeners which provide clues into relationships, situations, environments, and conversations (Ishida, 2006)– and communicating properly with others; abiding by the social norms & settings (i.e., the age, gender, social hierarchy, formal or informal relationship the speaker has with the interlocuters as well as the formal or informal, and public or private settings. This will contribute to the current scientific literature by addressing taboo language in Bahraini Arab society, which to my knowledge, is one of the few Arab societies in which taboo language was not investigated.

Furthermore, the main aim of this research paper shedding light on why certain expressions are labeled taboo [in Arab societies, Bahraini Arab society in precise] is to demonstrate with evidence that many illogical defenses are behind certain expressions being labeled taboo. Once rational individuals become aware of the preposterous reasoning behind certain expressions being labeled taboo, these individuals will get rid of the stigma (i.e., negative labels attributed to certain entities, beliefs, ideas, characteristics, differences & states, which aim to shame and discriminate against those associated with these negative labels) surrounding these taboo expressions' by no longer deeming them taboo by using them nonchalantly in appropriate contexts. As a result, the expressions that labeling taboo was groundless will become non-taboo. For example, many Arab Muslims refer to HR; Human Resources [specialists] as *Yhud* (i.e., Jews), as a means to denote how unfair and hypocritical they are [which are conceptions of Jews being deceptive that are based on religious verses in the Quran] even though these unfair HR employees referred to as *Yhud* (i.e., Jews) are Muslims, not Jews. This serves to show that even though the use of *Yhud* (i.e., Jews) in such a contest is groundless, it is still widely used [in Arab societies].

Another example is how [Arab] females borrow the word *period* and use it instead of *El dawra el sha'hria,* which might confuse hearers with limited vocabulary and limited knowledge of English, as well as result in arbitrary borrowing, especially since a neutral word exists in the Arabic language. Even in the case where Arab females use *a'alejh*? Meaning, are you on? Instead of saying *a'alejh el dawrah*? meaning are you on your period? result in omitting crucial parts of the sentence, which will, in no doubt, cause ambiguity and confuse the hearer, and result in females being extremely secretive and even ashamed of their natural bodily functions and therefore delay seeking professional medical help when needed at an early stage causing many hygienic health issues to worsen as a result of shame, ignorance, fear, and negligence of a normal process that its mention became taboo due to preposterous reasons.

Awareness of the preposterous reasoning behind labeling many expressions as taboo - which include but are not limited to one's origin, religion, physical and mental state, supernatural creatures, and entities - will lead people to no longer deem these expressions taboo, therefore use them to state a fact rather than denote negative/undesirable attributes. As a result, people will not feel/be ashamed or/and insulted when referred to or being addressed using these expressions; thus, these expressions will no longer be a means of attacking the speaker's/addressees' face (i.e., public self-image). Expressions that are labeled taboo based on preposterous reasons no longer being associated with negative connotations once members of a society no longer deem their meaning to be negative will normalize their use. This goal is not farfetched since the meanings attributed to expressions are attributed to them by society's consensus and can change either slightly or completely [to mean the contrary] due to time or to people's awareness and consensus.

It is important to state that this research paper does not promote the use of cuss expressions (i.e., words that are vulgar, offensive, abusive, obscene, or socially unacceptable based on valid reasons) but rather promotes normalizing the use of expressions & terms that are preposterously used to discriminate against people of a specific gender, ethnicity, religion, origin, race, social & marital status, physical & mental difficulties, and other factors. And as noted by Pinker (2023), the problem with all taboos is one discusses: "Is it rational or irrational to have this taboo? Should we try to overcome this taboo? You are kind of already breaching the taboo, just by bringing it up" (Big Think, 2023, 1:03:33). Meaning that the mere discussion of whether to deem something taboo or not is in itself a taboo, and that more one command others to no longer deem certain things taboo, they are less likely to do as asked. This paper, however, does not aim to command others to use or eradicate the use of taboo language. Rather, it aims to provide evidence of the preposterous reasons behind many expressions labeled taboo to rational individuals that adjust their perceptions and behaviors according to logic, thus these rational individuals will no longer deem expressions that are preposterously taboo as taboo, resulting in lessening the [social] unpleasantness of these taboo expressions, and eventually, no longer deeming them taboo [by members of society].

2. Literature Review:

Language is a system of communication. Although Language is something both animals & humans use, it is believed to be "An exclusively human property" (What Is Language?, n.d.), meaning that only humans are endowed with language (i.e., linguistic abilities; to write, speak and read). This is because only human language developed - whether in terms of organ development or linguistic development. Mohsen (2015) stated that "Language in itself is a human phenomenon that only relates to humankind" because "There is no other non-human community that has language to communicate"; therefore ", It is only human who uses language to do so" (p. 65). In other words, only humans use language as a means of communication. And although "Language can be used freely by people", "Society sometimes imposes some restrictions and constraints on the use of certain terms in public" (Al Dilaimy & Omar, 2018, p. 2). Meaning that though people can say and write whatever they wish to say and write, society restricts the use of certain words; thus, people are no longer free to say whatever they desire to say or write. The restrictions society imposes on individuals include publicly voicing certain thoughts, expressing certain emotions, acting a certain way, believing or not believing in certain beliefs, having a certain physical appearance, performing certain practices, or/and using certain language, all of which are considered taboo when restricted. "The word *taboo* came from the *Tongan* word *tabu,* which means "to forbid" or/and "forbidden" (Radcliff-Brown, 1939) (Cited from Allan & Burridge, 2006, p. 2; Gobert, 2014, p. 1). Taboos vary from one county, culture, society, and language to another. Steiner (1967) defined *Taboo* as "Any prohibitions which carry no penalties beyond the anxiety and embarrassment arising from a breach of strongly entrenched custom" (p. 143). Meaning that certain languages, practices, and ideas are only taboo (i.e., restricted and unacceptable) socially, not legally. Thus, an individual is not punished for saying or doing that which is deemed taboo; rather, the only downside is harming this individual's face (i.e., public self-image). In the past, the term *Taboo was* used to refer to "Unacceptable social practices that were neither necessarily nor always immediately related to the spoken idioms" (Boyadzhieva, n.d., p. 2). Meaning that the term *Taboo* used to refer to socially detested behaviors that did not necessarily/promptly refer to spoken taboos. Over time, the term *Taboo* extended to include language, behaviors & practices. Generally, words labeled as "unacceptable", "offensive", "obscene", or "forbidden" Are labeled taboo words [language]

(Chu, 2009; Gao, 2013). Because distinguishing between behavioral (i.e., non-verbal) and spoken [verbal] taboo is crucial (Ningjue, 2010), *Taboo* must be clearly defined. Al Dilaimy & Omar (2018) defined taboo language as "[Terms] That are not frequently used in public because they are seen offensive, obscene or disturbing to the social, religious or ethical values of society" (p. 1). In other words, taboo expressions tend to be used in private settings as their public use is seen to be vulgar. A more specific definition for taboo language was put forth by Qanbar (2011) as "Any word or phrase or 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 sensibility or his beliefs" (p. 88). Meaning that taboo language is expressions that publicly using is unacceptable and therefore is unexpected to be heard [in public]. Thus, when an individual uses taboo language in public, it causes people to be in disbelief at what they have just heard and lose respect for that individual. Moreover, calling names, using unfriendly suggestions, and mentioning sexual and obscene terms are all examples of bad language that is considered taboo. In addition, McEnery (2006) considered blasphemous, racist & sexist language and swearing as bad language. Interestingly, Al Dilaimy & Omar (2018) stated that "Many people are using swearing words [taboo expressions] openly and frequently in most public places" (p. 8) and that the use of such taboo vocabulary is "Frequently found in the speech of irresponsible children who lack the pragmatic competence of their culture" (p. 5). In other words, it was observed [by Al Dilaimy & Omar, 2018] that socially incompetent children use swearing (a form of taboo language) in public carelessly and frequently. Unfortunately, the use of taboo expressions nowadays is not only widely spread among children but also among [young] adults. The high use of taboo language in adults' speech compared to children could be seen in how adults' conversations in their free time are loaded with taboo expressions "Adult leisure conversations are often full of offensive language" (Al Dilaimy & Omar, 2018 p. 7). The [high] use of taboo language in public [especially by young individuals] can be attributed to the fact that these young individuals are unaware of what expressions are deemed normal, decent, and/or acceptable from expressions deemed abnormal, vulgar, or/and unacceptable [in society] (Kasper, 1990). Or that these individuals are aware of what expressions are deemed inappropriate and unacceptable, yet they decided not to follow, accept, or/and respect society's consensus/conventions. Taboo language, among other forms of verbal & non-verbal language, is considered a Face Threatening Act (FTAs). FTAs were first introduced by Brown and Levinson (1978) as a part of the theory of politeness. While the main concept of the theory of politeness was that individuals coming from any culture and fluent in any language have negative and positive face wants. And a "face" in this context is defined by Brown and Levinson (1987) as a "Public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" (p. 61). Meaning that "Face" refers to the reputation (i.e., public self-image) one desires to establish for him/herself. Moreover, Al Dilaimy & Omar (2018) stated that while "Positive face reflects the desire of people to be liked and respected by members of the social community" (p. 5), Negative face is "The want of every 'competent adult member' that [their] action be unimpeded by others" (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 312). Meaning that one's positive face is one's public self, whereas one's negative face is one's private self. Moreover, a negative face is "A reflection of interference in the freedom of people and a violation of the social norms of society that are built on mutual respect between one participant and another" (Al Dilaimy & Omar, 2018, p. 6). In other words, the notion of a negative face resulted from the restrictions society imposed on certain thoughts, beliefs, behaviors, and language and shows that individuals are breaking free of the social restriction society imposes. Many [reputable] people pay much care to their choice of words as their words shape their social image, thus helping them maintain a good public self-image, while many others do not pay much care to their choice of words, as they do not care about maintaining a reputable public self-image. Yet, even reputable individuals can find themselves in a situation where they feel a persistent need to resort to using taboo language, mainly as a means of retaliation [to insult a person who verbally and initially attacked them]. They do that by using [linguistic] strategies to avoid the explicit use of taboo language. These strategies include but are not limited to: "Euphemism, proverbs, metaphor, implicature and synonyms" (Al Dilaimy & Omar, 2018, p. 2) (See 4.1.3 for a list of linguist strategies used to avoid the explicit use of taboo expressions). Furthermore, these strategies are used as a means to show politeness, especially to avoid attacking one's face (i.e., public self-image). Note that if one avoids the explicit use of taboo expressions as a means to lessen the severity of one's words by being congenial and friendly to those who attacked him/her, that is politeness. Yet, if one uses these strategies to say directly what he/she dares not say directly as a means to be hostile to those who never initiated a verbal attack on him/her, that is passive-aggressive. The difference between politeness and passive-aggressiveness might be thought to be subtle, but it is profound. This is mainly because "[Taboo expressions] Vary from one language community to another" (Al Dilaimy & Omar, 2018, p. 8), resulting in politeness being "Culture-specific & context-sensitive" (Al Dilaimy and Khalaf, 2015: 1572) (Cited from Al Dilaimy & Omar, 2018, p. 8). This means that what is polite in one society, culture, or language community, might not be polite in another, and it is not what one says that determines whether it is polite or passive-aggressive but also the context in which it was said.

Moreover, Jay (2007) sees that there is more work to be done when investigating taboo language as several issues need definitive answers, such as 1. What motivates people to use taboo language? 2. What are the most frequently used taboo words? 3. Why do gender differences in swearing taboo language] emerge? 4. What happens during catharsis; do swear [taboo] words provide more

relief than euphemisms? (p. 153-159-160). This paper will address all these issues which were not addressed [in depth] in much previous scientific literature investigating taboo language.

Furthermore, several researchers investigated taboo language in Arab & foreign societies. **In Arab societies**: (Alqahtani *et al.*, 2022 investigated the use of taboo language in Saudi Arabia and how they are avoided through the use of euphemisms; Enab, 2020 investigated taboo language and the strategies used to avoid their usage in Egyptian society in her thesis; Houssaini, 2019 investigated the use of taboo language and euphemisms in Moroccan society by considering diverse variables such as age, gender, & educational background; Al Dilaimy & Omar, 2018 investigated taboo expressions in Iraqi Arabic used by various inhabitants of Anbar Governorate, descending from the Dlaim tribe; Al-Azzam *et al.*, 2017 investigated Saudi Arabians' use of euphemisms of various forms (i.e., euphemisms related to religion, sexuality, body parts, women, death and diseases) to avoid the explicit use of taboo, as well as the social and cultural factors for the use of the employed euphemisms; Hatam *et al.*, 2017 investigated discourse strategies employed by Arabic speakers to avoid taboo language and euphemize it in Khuzestan, Iran, as well as the reason why these Arabic speakers resort to using such strategies; Aliakbari & Raeesi, 2015, investigated taboo language used in Iranian society, the context in which they are used and the strategies employed by Iranian speakers to avoid using them; Qanbar, 2011 investigated the use of taboo language in Yemeni society, the different strategies used to avoid their explicitly use, and the reason why certain words are considered taboo). **In foreign societies:** (Talley & Hui-ling, 2012 investigated the use of taboo language in Taiwan by Chinese university students, the double-standards society members have regarding the acceptance of men's use of taboo language and the unacceptance of women's use of taboo language, in addition to the motivation for students' use of taboo language and the strategy frequently employed to avoid the explicit use of taboo language; Jay, 2009 investigated English taboo expressions, precisely swearing from a psychological aspect, considering many factors that were not taken into consideration in previous scientific literature investigating taboo language such as the motivation for using taboo language, & the frequency in which swearing [a form of taboo expressions] is used).

A plethora of studies addressed taboo language in various Arab societies (Alqahtani *et al.*, 2022; Enab, 2020; Houssaini, 2019; Al Dilaimy & Omar, 2018; Al-Azzam *et al.*, 2017; Hatam *et al.*, 2017; Aliakbari & Raeesi, 2015; Qanbar, 2011). However, a few, if any, addressed taboo language in Bahraini society. Therefore, this research paper aims to investigate the use of taboo language in Bahraini Arabic, following the "Politeness Theory" introduced by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) and taboo language [expressions] categorization proposed by Qanbar (2011) as the theoretical framework for the analysis of the collected Bahraini Arabic taboo expressions. The paper mainly aims to investigate Bahraini Arabic taboo expressions and the cultural, social, and religious reasons for certain expressions being labeled taboo in Arab societies, in addition to comparing the most frequently used strategy (i.e., Euphemism) used by people to avoid the explicit use of taboo expressions in other [Arab] societies to that of the frequently used strategy [used to avoid the explicit use of taboo expressions] in Bahraini society, and the frequency of using certain categories (i.e., animal terms, supernatural creatures, death, sex & sexuality) of taboo expressions in Bahraini culture to that of other Arab cultures as to demonstrate whether taboo expressions and the frequency of their use is universal among Arab societies or differ [slightly or greatly] from each other, in addition to addressing many other concerns such as the motivation for the use of taboo language, the age group frequently heard using taboo language, the environment from which taboo language was first picked/heard, and whether uttering taboo words in a second/foreign language is found to be easier than uttering taboo words in one's mother tongue (i.e., First language 1L).

3. Data Collection Methodology & Procedures:
3.1 Methodology
This paper is ethnographic research which, according to Manes & Wolfson (1981), is the most reliable method for gathering data from everyday interactions. Ethnographic research is defined by Fraenkel et al. (2012) as "Observing the actual behavior of individuals in their natural settings" (p. 520). Meaning that ethnographic research is observing without the observed knowing that they are being observed; thus, their behaviors are likely to be natural; unaltered. The researcher will investigate the use of taboo language in Bahraini Arab society by observing everyday conversations (i.e., natural speech) of young adults aged 17-30 who are university students (amounting to 88 students). Moreover, this paper will follow a mixed-method approach. The qualitative method will be used to provide information about conditions, situations, and events that occur in the present (Ross, 2005). The qualitative data will include [1] a collection of taboo expressions the researcher observed being used in Bahraini Arab society among young adult university students, in addition to [2] providing the religious, social, and cultural reasons for labeling the collected expressions as taboo, and [3] listing and discussing several [linguistic] strategies used to avoid the explicit, public use of taboo expressions. Furthermore, *Fraenkel et al. (2012) stated that* "Ethnographic research also lends itself well to research topics that are not easily quantified" (p. 520). Meaning that ethnographic research tends to be more qualitative than quantitative. However, in this ethnographic research paper, many questions sought to be addressed by the researcher will be presented using quantitative data (i.e., stated in

percentages), which will be obtained via a self-assessed close-ended questionnaire administered to a random sample of the targeted population [*Bahraini Arab university students aged 18-30]*. The quantitative data are "Obtained when the variable being studied is measured along a scale that indicates how much of the scale is being present" (*Fraenkel et al., 2012. P. 188). Meaning that quantitative data is when a quantity is being measured in comparison to another [quantity]*. In this paper, the quantitative data presented in graphs and stated in percentages were generated from the self-assessment questionnaire designed via Google Forms.

The following are the procedures followed in researching, obtaining, presenting, describing, and analyzing the data collected in detail:

3.2 Procedures
First, a corpus of Arabic taboo expressions used in Bahraini society was collected by 1. Asking several Bahraini [university level] students about the taboo [expressions] language they frequently say or hear &, 2. Observing & listening to Bahraini Arab university students' everyday conversations, in addition to 3. Listing several taboo expressions collected from previous research investigating taboo expressions in Arab societies that are used by Bahraini Arab society as well. The collected corpus of Bahraini Arabic taboo expressions was presented (See Tables 1 & 2); the religious, social, and cultural reasons for labeling the collected Bahraini Arabic taboo expressions were stated and analyzed (See 4.1; 4.1.2.1, 4.1.2.2, 4.1.2.3, 4.1.2.4). Additionally, A list of [linguistic] strategies used to avoid the explicit mention of taboo expressions will be listed and discussed (See 4.1.3).

Second, a close-ended self-assessed questionnaire was administered to a random number of Bahraini students amounting to 88 university students, which was designed via google forms, sent via Airdrop to a WhatsApp group that joined the students, and was administered on the 13th of March 2023, and voluntarily participated in (the students' consent is included in the questionnaire).

Third, the participants' responses obtained via Google Forms were presented [in graphs and percentages], analyzed, and discussed in this paper's findings (See 4.1; qualitative date & 4.2; quantitative data) & discussion section (See 5. Discussion).

4. Findings
4.1 [Qualitative Data]
This section of the findings will address the first 3 questions of this research paper's questions (See 1.6 Research Questions). The data presented & analyzed in this section are qualitative and were gathered from 1. Asking Bahraini Arab university students about the taboo expressions they frequently use and/or hear, 2. Listening to Bahraini Arab university students' everyday conversation (i.e., naturally occurring speech), & 3. Taboo expressions and linguistic strategies used to avoid the explicit mention of taboo expressions mentioned in previous research relevant to Bahraini Arab society.

4.1.1 Q1. What are the expressions that publicly uttering is taboo in Bahraini Arabic?
In this section of the findings, presented is a corpus of taboo expressions collected by asking Bahraini Arab university students about the taboo expressions they frequently use/hear, listening to the Arab university students' everyday conversations, in addition to including several taboo expressions mentioned in previous research investigating taboo language in Arab societies that are also used in Bahraini Arab society as well. The collected taboo expressions used in Bahraini Arab society were categorized following Qanbar's (2011) framework for categorizing taboo expressions (See Figure 1), further subcategorized according to the analysis of this paper's researcher, and illustrated below (See Tables 1 & 2):

Table 1 presents context-specific taboo words/expressions.

Context-Specific taboo words	
Non-taboo words	Words Related to the hearer's physical, or social, [or mental] defects
Animal Names: K*lb* (i.e., dog), *Khanzir* (i.e., pig), H*mar* (i.e., donkey), K*haroof* (i.e., sheep), T*hor* (i.e., ox), *Hayawan/a* (i.e., [you] animal).	Marital & social deviation/status: *Mutalaga* (i.e., divorced women), A*anis* (i.e., spinster/bachelorette), *Khadama* (i.e., maid), Z*bal* (i.e., garbageman), Halayli (i.e., a villager).
Origin: *Ajmi*: (i.e., non-Arab), *Blosh* (i.e., Arabs that originated from Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan known as "Bloach Diaspora"), Hindi (i.e., an Indian).	Physical state/impairments*: Mua'awaq/Mu'aq* (i.e., disabled), *Mteen/mtkh'tkh* (i.e., fat), M*o'asgel* (i.e., extremely thin), *A'ama* (i.e., blind), *Asmakh* (i.e., deaf), *Ahwl* (i.e., cross-eyed).

Religious state: *Mulhed* (i.e., atheist), *Kafir* (i.e., non-believer), *Yhudi* (i.e., Jewish), R*afidi/She'e/*Chaoo (i.e., adherents to the Shia division of Islam), *Mushrik* (i.e., polytheist).	Mental state/impairments: *Maridh nfsi* (i.e., demented), *Mjnoon* (i.e., crazy), *Endah/a tawahud* (i.e., autistic), G*habi* (i.e., stupid), *Ahbl* (i.e., fool).
Ethnic-racial-gender words: H*rma/Mara* (i.e., woman), *Aswad* (i.e., Black), *Abd* (i.e., slave).	
Entities & relations: *El ahal* (i.e., the family), El bait (i.e., the house), *El hajya* (i.e., a female pilgrim who has visited the house of Allah in Mecca, Saudi Arabia), U*m/Abu* (i.e., mother/father of) + "the name of their son/daughter".	
Political regime: *Israeli*, S'*hioni* (i.e., Zionist), *Irani*.	

Table 2 presents general taboo words

General Taboo Words	
Unmentionable	Mentionable with minimizers
Sensitive body parts/genitals: *faghatik/ezgetik* (i.e., ass/your ass), K*uss* (i.e., pussy), E*er/Zib* (i.e., dick).	Objects: Z*bala* (i.e., garbage), Footwear; *Na'al* (i.e., slipper), & *Juti* (i.e., shoe),
Prostitution: *A'hera/Gahbah* (i.e., a bitch/whore), G*aw'ad/dyoos* (i.e., pimp).	Places: *El ham'am* (i.e., the lavatory).
Body waste: *Khara* (i.e., shit), F*aswa* (i.e., fart), *Naghaf* (i.e., snot/nasal mucus).	Animals: *Klb* (i.e., dog).
Swearing: *Allah yl'aank* (i.e., may God curse you/damn you), *Allah yakhthk* (i.e., may God take your soul), *Tuz* (i.e., fuck it), Tah ha'thick (i.e., may you become ill-fated/unlucky).	Body waste: *Bool* (i.e., pee), Zo'a (i.e., vomit).
Sexuality & sexual intercourse: *Khneeth* (i.e., pansy), *Sha'th* (i.e., gay), Y*ghtisbh/a* (i.e., to rape him/her), Y*nam ala batnh* (i.e., a male being sub in a sexual intercourse with another male).	Disease & death: El s*aratan* (i.e., cancer), *El mout* (i.e., death).
Menses: J*ayatha/a'leeha el dawra* (i.e., she is on her period).	Supernatural creatures: El j*in* (i.e., jennies), A*freet* (i.e., evil spirit), E*l shaitan* (i.e., the devil).
Calling names: Je'kara (i.e., a female with a grotesque/ ugly face), Um el sa'aaf wleef (i.e., hag), *Um/Abu* (i.e., father/mother of) + a [physical] feature; *el naghaf* (i.e., mucus), *ras* (i.e., [big] head), *jabha* (i.e., forehead), *khashim* (i.e., nose), *ragh'aba* (i.e., neck), *Wld/Bnt* (i.e., son of/daughter of), or + an insult; *el khara* (i.e., shit)/ el gahbah (i.e. prostitute) e*l klb/klba* (i.e., male/female dog), shl'akh (i.e., liar)	Religious notions/figures: *Allah* (i.e., God), *El Rasool/Nabi Muhammad* (i.e., Prophet Muhammad).
Unfriendly suggestions: K*il tbn* (i.e., eat [some] hay), K*il khara* (i.e., eat shit), S*dha/Entum/Enjub*(i.e., shut up/zip it), Edlf (i.e., fuck off).	

It is important to state that the above-collected corpus of taboo expressions does not include all of the taboo expressions used in Bahraini Arab society.

4.1.2 Q2. What are the social, religious, and cultural reasons that resulted in labeling certain expressions taboo in Arab societies?

4.1.2.1 Part 1.1; Religious reasons why certain expressions are labeled "taboo" when uttered unaccompanied with certain minimizers [in Arab societies] (See the right side of Table 2):

A number of the above-mentioned expressions (See Tables 1 & 2) are not religiously (and socially and culturally) taboo in Arab societies unless their mention is not followed or preceded by certain minimizers (that minimize their inappropriateness). The expressions that are to be uttered accompanied by minimizers, the minimizers that usually accompany them, and the reasons for their addition to certain expressions are below-discussed.

1. In the case of general taboo expressions that are mentionable with minimizers, precisely the 1st 4 categories (See Table 2): objects, places, animals, and body waste, the following minimizers are directly uttered after their mention. These minimizers are; *Azkum Allah* or *az gaderkum* (i.e., may God dignify you), *Hash'akum* (i.e., may God exclude you from this dirt) (Qanbar, 2011), and *Mkrm alsame* (i.e., may the hearer be glorified). The minimizers are used when the above-mentioned categories of [taboo] expressions are mentioned because "They are believed to protect the hearer's face from the dirty words mentioned" (Qanbar, 2011, p. 95). Meaning that they are used to protect the hearers'/addressees' public-self-image, as these minimizers lessen the severity of the words' obscenity.

2. In the case of general taboo expressions that are mentionable with minimizers, precisely the 5th category (See Table 2): disease and death, the following minimizers are directly uttered after their mention. These minimizers are; *Allah la yqool* or *La samah Allah* (i.e., God forbid), *Ba'ad omr taweel* (i.e., after a long time), *Ba'eid el-shar* (i.e., may evil be far away from us) (Qanbar, 2011). These minimizers are used because it is believed that if they're not used, "They will lead to the mentioned person's death" (Qanbar, 2011, p. 96). This means that these minimizers are used due to believing that the mention of a certain disease and death will bring it upon the speaker, hearers, or/and addressees. In this regard, Aliakbari & Raeesi (2015) stated that "These minimizers will make sure that neither the hearer nor the speaker gets the disease mentioned" (p. 98). In other words, these minimizers are used as a means of protection [of the speaker, hearers, and/or addressees], as their mention is believed to prevent these undesired outcomes (i.e., death or diseases) from happening [shortly]. It is worth mentioning that not only are these minimizers used to protect the speaker and the hearer's body but their face (i.e., public self-image) as well. Additionally, minimizers such as *Ba'ad omr taweel* are uttered whenever the topic of death is bought up, especially regarding an elder (who is still alive) or/and in the presence of an elder, to prevent bad omen; prevent the mentioned/present elderly's death from happening [shortly], as well as to show respect and no bad intent for that elder, such as wishing for his/her [near] death. Add to that, the minimizer *Ataak umrh* (i.e., May the remainder of the deceased person's life be added to your life) is uttered when informing an individual of someone's death and is mentioned as a means of lessening the severity of the shocking news delivered. Not to mention, the word El khabeeth (i.e., malignant), which describes the nature in which cancer spreads, is used to substitute the word El saratan (i.e., cancer), as a means to minimize its intensity and the undesired feelings it causes the hearers as well as the addresses, in addition to preventing the speaker and hearers from getting the disease. And not only do Arabic speakers tend to refrain from uttering the [equivalent word for] cancer, but even English speakers, and that is due to the negative, undesirable connotations associated with the word such as malignancy and death (Allan and Burridge, 1991).

3. In the case of general taboo expressions that are mentionable with minimizers, precisely the 6th (See Table 2): supernatural creators, the devil, jennies, and evil spirits: the following minimizers are uttered before their mention. These minimizers are; *Bismillah* (i.e., in the name of God), *A'authu be Allah* (i.e., I seek God's protection), *A'authu be Allah men el shaitan al rajeem* (i.e., I seek the protection of God from the devil) (Qanbar, 2011). Qanbar (2011) stated that these minimizers are used because the mention of these creatures without the use of these minimizers will "Bring along the creature mentioned itself and would do both the speaker and the hearer great harm" (Qanbar, 2011, p. 96). In other words, it is believed that if a speaker mentions any of these supernatural creatures, El j*in* (i.e., jennies), A*freet* (i.e., evil spirit), E*l shaitan* (i.e., the devil), without using any of the above-mentioned minimizers, the mentioned supernatural's creatures' will be present [with the speaker], and will harm the speaker and hearers. Note that Qanbar's (2011) claim is true to some extent. This is because not everyone uses these minimizers for holding the same belief. Many people use these minimizers after mentioning these supernatural creatures as a means to avoid being in their presence because it is seen as undesirable rather than harmful, while many others use these minimizers not because they believe that the mentioned supernatural creatures could bring them or the hearers any harm, but rather because it is the social norm in Arab societies, as not using these minimizers when mentioning these creatures is taboo (i.e., socially unacceptable).

4. In the case of general taboo expressions that are mentionable with minimizers, precisely the 7[h] (See Table 2): religious figures; the following minimizers are directly uttered after their mention. These minimizers are; *Tabarak wa ta'ala* (i.e., the blessing and the exalted), *Subhanh wa ta'ala* (i.e., all glory to him) are uttered after the mention of Allah (i.e., God), whereas *Sala Allah aleih wa salam* (i.e., peace be upon him) is uttered after the mention of El Rasool/Nabi (i.e., the Prophet Muhammad). Moreover, Sunnah (i.e., adherents to the Sunni division of Islam) say; *Radhea Allah anh/a/um* (i.e., God's grace is on him/her/them) directly after the mention of the companion/s and followers of the Prophet during his days (Qanbar, 2011, p. 99-100), or after the mention of any of Prophet Muhamad's daughters, wives, and sons, whereas Shia (i.e., adherents to the Shia division of Islam) say; *Aleih/a/um al salam* (i.e., Allah's hay to him/her/them) (Aliakbari & Raeesi, 2015, p. 101) directly after the mention of Prophet Muhammad's family members. The reason the words Allah (i.e., God), El Rasool/Nabi Muhammad (i.e., Prophet Muhammad), and any of the Prophet Muhammad's family members or companions are immediately followed by the above-mentioned minimizers is that these religious figures are deemed sacred in Islam [& by Muslims], and respect of them is shown through the use of glorifying minimizers after/before their mention. This is especially for the case of God's name, which [taking] uttering in vain is forbidden (Houssaini, 2019; p. 40; Boyadzhieva, n.d., p. 8), therefore is restricted by the use of certain [above-mentioned] minimizers. For instance, "Taking God's name in vain [in Christianity] is considered a sin, and its use is restricted" (Boyadzhieva, n.d., p. 8; Enab, 2020), as mentioned in the Third Commandment according to the King James Version of the Bible (KJV 1900); "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain" (Exodus 20:7) (Cited from King James Version, n.d.). Although Boyadzhieva (n.d.) referred to Christianity when stating that taking God's name in vain is a sin, the same applies to Judaism (Enab, 2020, p. 12). Nonetheless, Enab (2020) stated that "Mentioning the word God or "Allah" is not a taboo" (p. 12), which is partially true. The mention of the word Allah (i.e., God) is not a taboo, yet its mention unaccompanied with certain minimizers such as *subhbah wa ta'ala* (i.e., all glory to him) and/or *tabarak wa ta'ala* (i.e., the blessing and the exalted) is socially unacceptable and unpleasant to the hearer, therefore, is taboo [in Islam]. Houssaini (2019) asserted that taking God's name in vain is applicable [taboo] in Christianity and Judaism, as well as Islam (P. 40-48). Hence, taking God's name in vain is applicable in all monotheistic religions.

5. In addition, not only do Muslim Arabs use certain minimizers before or after uttering words belonging to certain categories that include but are not limited to [filthy] objects & places, diseases & death, supernatural creatures, and religious notions/figures, but they also use certain minimizers when using words that express admiration. The following minimizers are uttered before or after the mention of the admired things or/and people. These minimizers are; *Mashallah* (i.e., God's will is to be done) or *La elllah ela Allah* (i.e., there is no God, but Allah). In both research papers conducted by Aliakbari & Raeesi (2015) & Qanbar (2011), the importance of using minimizers when showing admiration was stressed, as these minimizers are used due to believing that not using them may lead to the admired object's destruction or cause the admired person to get an incurable disease, or worse, cause the admires person's death. These beliefs are "Deeply rooted in common beliefs and sometimes in the religious doctrine" and are used/uttered for "The protection of the admired or liked object from the evil eyes" (Aliakbari & Raeesi, 2015, p. 98). In other words, the above-mentioned minimizers are used when expressing admiration as a means of protection from being jinxed (i.e., casting an evil spell and/or causing bad luck) to the admired. Additionally, the eye is the most powerful point from which the body can transmit energy. In Arab cultures, there is a common religious belief [derived from religious texts in all monotheistic religions; Islam, Christianity, and Judaism] that an evil eye; powerful [envious] glances of an admirer, can bring about the loss or/and destruction of the admired thing, or the admired person getting infected with an incurable disease or die, especially if the above-mentioned minimizers are not uttered after mentioning or looking at the admired thing/person.

The main reason for using the above-mentioned minimizers [by Muslim Arabs] when uttering certain expressions is religious [and social as the religion followed/believed in by the majority of the inhabitants of a territory became/s the social norm], which was also found to be one of the main reasons for certain expressions being labeled "taboo" in many Arab societies governed by Islamic teachings & laws in previous research such as (Alqahtani *et al.*, 2022 in Saudi Arabia; Enab, 2020 in Egypt; Houssaini, 2019 in Morocco; Al Dilaimy & Omar, 2018 in Iraq; Al-Azzam *et al.*, 2017 in Saudi Arabia; Hatam *et al.*, 2017 in Iran; Aliakbari & Raeesi, 2015 in Iran; Qanbar, 2011 in Yemen).

4.1.2.2 Part 1.2; Religious reasons why certain expressions are labeled "taboo" [in Arab societies]:
1. Animal expressions: regarding animal [taboo] expressions, Lesmana (2018) stated that ".... The names of animals are used to berate" (p. 88), meaning that animal terms are used to degrade others. This is evident in Arab societies with a majority of Muslims, where one of the reasons animals and their expressions are deemed filthy in the first place is religious, as verses in the Quran [the book followed/believed by Muslims] degrade certain animals and their behaviors and portrays them to be inferior to humans, such as dogs panting in verse 176 in Surah Al-A'raf "His example is that of a dog: if you chase it away, it pants, and if you leave it, it [still] pants", and donkeys braying in verse 31 in Surah Luqman "The ugliest

of all voices is certainly the braying of donkeys". As a result of describing certain animals in a degrading manner], when addressing a human using animal expressions, characteristics such as filthy, inferior, obedient, a fool, ugly and ignorant are attributed to the addressee. Moreover, when Arabs refer to someone as a sheep, they denote that he is obedient; when referring to someone as a donkey or an ox, they denote that he is a fool or/and obedient; and when referring to someone as a pig or/and a dog they denote filthiness, or/and inferiority.

2. Religious status: regarding religious status, in Islamic, and Arab cultures, terms referring to non-believers [of Islam] are used by Muslims to either state a fact or to denote inferiority [of the non-believer to the believer] and hypocrisy. The word يهودي meaning Jew, is commonly used to insult someone, even if that person is not a Jew. Because a history of Jews' betrayal is stated in the Quran, many Muslims associate Jews with betrayal as well. This was asserted by Qanbar (2011) that "Jews are associated with treachery and meanness due to the nature of the relationship between Muslims and the Jews throughout history" (p. 92). As a result of the nature of the relationship between Jews and Muslims, and Jews' treachery toward Muslims, the word يهودي (i.e., Jew) became an insult showing the addressee's treachery and hypocrisy. Interestingly, HR; Human Resources [specialists] are frequently referred to as Jews as a means to denote the HR unfairness, hypocrisy, and oppressiveness of the employees of the corporate/institution they are working for.

3. Supernatural creatures: terms referring to [certain] supernatural creatures are deemed taboo as it is believed [by many people] that the mention of these creatures will cause their presence and, as a result, they will harm the speaker and/or the addressee. Interestingly, taboos were originally a fear of demonic powers and creatures that were believed to be hidden in a tabooed object (Wundt, 1927). Therefore, it is likely that the fear of these creatures is what made their mention taboo. Furthermore, many people seem to fear supernatural creatures such as Satan because they are mentioned as powerful persuaders [with false promises] and destroyers of humans in religious [Islamic] doctrine/s.

4. Prostitution: expressions referring to prostitution are taboo because all monotheistic religions deem prostitution shameful and sinful. As a result, these expressions denote filthiness, cheapness, and inferiority.

5. Calling names (i.e., mockery): calling names is mocking others' physical attributes, which are culturally specific. Calling names is taboo in Arab Muslim societies because these names either denote inferiority or, in most cases, make fun of the physical characteristics the addressee is born with, which is [religiously] unacceptable as it mocks God's creation and makes the addressee disdain him/herself as well as the speaker. The prohibition of calling names (i.e., mockery) in Islam which is the religion followed by the majority of Arabs, is stated in the Quran [the book followed/believe in by Muslims] in Suraat Al-Hujuraat, verse 11, that is, "And do not defame one another, *nor insult one another by [calling] nicknames*".

6. Swearing: regarding swearing, swearing [expressions] differ from one society to another and is taboo in Arab societies as the majority in these societies are Muslims, whose religion discourages swearing, as well as believing in those who swear habitually. The discouragement of swearing [or believing habitual swearers] in Islam, which is the religion followed by the majority of Arabs, is stated in the Quran [the book followed/believe in by Muslims] in Surah Al-Qalam, verse 10 "And do not obey every worthless [vile] habitual swearer".

7. Menses: regarding menses, women's menses is religiously referred to as filthy in many monotheistic religions [egesises], resulting in menses [and women during that period] being deemed filthy and impure, as well as women being taught and asked to be secretive about their bodies and bodily functions, especially their menstruation, all which resulted in menses being taboo.

8. Sensitive body part: regarding sensitive body parts (i.e., genitalia), many terms referring to female sensitive body parts are stereotypically and universally used to denote weakness and inferiority, whereas terms referring to male sensitive body parts are stereotypically used to denote superiority and dominance. Yet, both terms referring to males' and females' genitals are taboo because showing these parts is religiously [and later became socially and culturally] inappropriate; therefore, the mention of such terms became taboo; inappropriate as well.

9. Religious notions/figures: mentioning the name of religious notions and figures such as Allah (i.e., God) and Prophet Muhammad without the use of minimizers is not taboo unless uttered unaccompanied with certain minimizers. This is especially as all monotheistic religions forbid taking God's name in vain as it shows disrespect to the mentioned [religious notion/figures] (See 4.1.2.1, 4).

4.1.2.3 Part 2; Social reasons why certain expressions are labeled "taboo" [in Arab societies]:

Many of the reasons accounting for why certain expressions are labeled taboo in Bahraini Arab society are socio-cultural. Below-mentioned are the social reasons in detail. The social factors include but are not limited to:

1. Gender: regarding gender, Boyadzhieva (n.d.) argues that "It [statistical research] shows that men and women do not differ neither in the number of the bad words they use nor in the type of bad words they choose to express their emotions" (p. 11), meaning that women use taboo language equally to men. However, several researchers found that contrary to Boyadzhieva's statement, men do use taboo language, especially swearing in public more frequently than women (Jay 1980b, 1996a; McEnery, 2006; Mehl & Pennebaker, 2003; Thelwall, 2008). Moreover, several studies found that women's speech tends to be more polite, cautious, and decent than men's speech (Haas, 1979; Holmes, 1989; Hatam *et al.*, 2017; Talley & Hui-ling, 2012). Furthermore, Aliakbari & Raeesi (2015) stated that "Common beliefs and Islamic teachings have emphasized women more than men to be solemn and serene in their verbal speech" (p. 99). The researchers mean that [Muslim] women tend to avoid taboo language in their speech, especially through the use of euphemisms, as a result of Islam teaching placing more focus on women's speech being sedate, formal, and bashful [especially with men], than men's speech. This was supported by Enab (2020), stating that "Women tend to be more euphemistic by nature compared to men" (p. 121), meaning that compared to men, women tend to speak in an indirect, pleasant manner, replacing unpleasant words with pleasant words, more than men as a result of following religious teachings or/and the social norms. Therefore, it is normal to notice a marked difference in women's language compared to men's language. It is worth mentioning that Islamic teachings derived from Quran concerning the language used by Muslims require that both men and women be serene and solemn in their speech equally. Therefore, the difference in [Muslim] men's and women's frequency of using taboo language is not only because of the religious restrictions Islam imposes on speech, which [apparently] women abide by more than men, but also because of the social norms/expectations that condemn women's use of taboo language and portrays women using it to be cheap, while accepting men's use taboo language and portrays men using it to be normal; masculine. It is socially acceptable in many Arab societies, such as Yemen, to hear men using taboo language than hear women using it (Holmes, 1992). Not only is men's use of taboo language more accepted than women's in Arab cultures but in Asian cultures as well. This was further asserted by Talley & Hui-ling (2012) as they found that 73% of men and 86% of women believe that "A notable double standard exists which assumes that taboo language is for the exclusive use of men and that between men and women" (p. 169). Meaning that society members tend to accept and lend the use of taboo language to men while judging and condemning women 's usage of it [taboo language]. Yet, the same researchers found that 56% of men and 52% of women believe that the use of taboo language by women is as appropriate as that of men. The participants in Talley & Hui-ling's (2012) research seem to contradict themselves as to how come members of society, including the students themselves, criticize the women who use taboo language, yet more than 50% of both genders find it appropriate for women to use it. Distinctly, the participants subconsciously excluded themselves from their society and its members, who have double standards of accepting men's use of taboo language while criticizing women's use of taboo language. Additionally, besides the social norms, the fact that [Muslim] Arab females are usually not in an open, mixed environment, such as mixed/sex education and the streets, positively affected (i.e., decreased) their use of the language used in such environments; taboo language (Aliakbari & Raeesi, 2015). Add to that, "Men are still in dominant positions over women" Aliakbari & Raeesi, 2015, p. 97) [the researcher was referring to the state of affairs in Iran, which happens to be the case in many Arab Islamic societies]. This means that men's frequent use of taboo language can also be attributed to men having more power and fewer restrictions [on their speech], where many exercise their power linguistically by speaking longer than females, frequently interrupting their speech, and using the taboo language frequently as a means to demonstrate masculinity and superiority [over others, and women in particular] (Al Dilaimy & Omar, 2018, p. 3-4).

2. The relationship between the interlocutors: the relationship between interlocutors refers to how comfortable the speaker is when conversing with another. Usually, it is when the interlocutors are of the same age group or are on the same level of social hierarchy (i.e., social class) or/and of the same gender. In the case of gender concerning the relationship between interlocutors, it was found that men seem to find it easier to use taboo language in the presence of other men [only], and women seem to find it easier to use taboo language in the presence of other women [only], than in the presence of members of the opposite gender. This was supported by Jay (2009), stating that "Men and women swear more frequently in the presence of their gender than in mixed-gender context" (p. 156). In the case of age concerning the relationship between interlocutors, members of the same age, especially young adults, find it more comfortable to use taboo language with others of the same age group as them (Mehl & Pennebaker, 2003; Mehl *et al.*, 2007). And in the case of social hierarchy concerning the relationship between interlocutors, people belonging to the lower level of the social hierarchy (i.e., low class) and are/or uneducated [people] are believed to use taboo language more than people on the higher level of the social hierarchy (i.e., high class), and are/or educated [people] (Al Dilaimy & Omar, 2018; Aliakbari & Raeesi, 2015;

Qanbar, 2011). Additionally, low-class, uneducated people tend to use taboo language more in the presence of individuals of the same social class. However, Jay (2009) stated that "In many cases, media analyses serve to perpetuate undereducated speakers swear [use of taboo language]", yet "Swearing [which is a form of taboo language] crosses all socioeconomic classes" (p. 157). This means that the media tend to portray uneducated people to be swearing frequently, thus associating swearing with uneducated low-class people. However, both educated as well as educated people swear [frequently], especially in intense situations. Nonetheless, regardless of one's gender, age, and level on the social hierarchy, the more the relationship between interlocuters is intimate, the more they feel free to use taboo language (Coupland *et al.*, 1997, 2003) (Cited from Qanbar, 2011, p. 97).

3. Age: regarding one's age, it is believed that taboo language is more common among young adults [than individuals of other ages], a claim which was supported by Mehl & Pennebaker (2003) and Mehl *et al.* (2007), who found that swearing [a form of taboo language] occurred more frequently in college communities [by young adults]. However, Jay (1992) and Thelwall (2008) found that swearing [a form of taboo language] occurs across individuals of all ages, yet, it peaks in the teenage years and declines afterward.

4. Educational background: regarding one's educational background, it is believed that it is more common to hear uneducated people use taboo language than educated people (Al Dilaimy & Omar, 2018; Aliakbari & Raeesi, 2015; Qanbar, 2011). In this regard, Al Dilaimy & Omar (2018) stated that [in Iraqi society] the use of taboo language was "More frequently found in the speech of uneducated people than in the speech of educated people" (p. 10), meaning that when speaking, uneducated people use taboo language more than educated people. In line with Al Dilaimy & Omar's (2018) previous statement, Aliakbari & Raeesi (2015) asserted the frequent use of taboo language by uneducated people stating that the "Level of education also contributes to the use of linguistic taboos" and that "The educated, for example, are more conservative to use taboo words than the uneducated" and that "They [educated individuals] have to bring up taboo subjects if they are in the position of, say, a doctor or specialist" (p. 99-100). In other words, contrary to uneducated individuals, educated individuals do not use taboo language [frequently] unless necessary to communicate crucial [professional] information to others, such as doctors using taboo language to communicate with a patient straightforwardly. Moreover, contrary to Aliakbari & Raeesi's (2015) and Al Dilaimy & Omar's (2018) statements, Boyadzhieva (n.d.) stated that "Bad words are used both by highly educated and not very educated people to nearly one and the same extent" (p. 11). In other words, educated and uneducated individuals use taboo language [almost] equally.

5. Geographical location: the geographical location in which one live plays a crucial role in the language one speaks, especially the frequency of taboo language use. It was observed by Al Dilaimy & Omar (2018) that the use of taboo language was frequent in the Iraqi rural area [where the researchers conducted their ethnographic research]. However, Aliakbari & Raeesi (2015) stated that "Open expressions of some concepts may be typical in urban areas while the same may still be considered taboo [in rural areas] and vice versa" (p. 99), meaning that while certain expressions might be deemed taboo in rural areas, the same taboo expressions might not be deemed taboo in urban areas, and vice versa; the expressions deemed taboo in urban areas might not be deemed taboo in rural areas.

6. Physical & mental difficulties: expressions referring to physical and mental difficulties are taboo as they denote inability, inferiority, and an undesirable [physical or/and mental] condition that is socially looked down upon.

7. Marital & social status: regarding marital and social status, expressions referring to marital and social status, just like expressions referring to physical and mental difficulties, are taboo as they are used to show inferiority and undesirability of certain marital and social statuses. An example would be the word Halayli, meaning a villager. After urbanization, many people started perceiving those living and coming from a village (i.e., villagers) as poor and inferior. Ironically, even those living in an urban area either once lived in a village before urbanization or their ancestors did [live in a village]. Therefore, the social status and origin of villagers, which some people might consider inferior, is the origin and social status of all of our ancestors; hence, there is no reason to be ashamed of or looked down on a universal social status.

8. Origin, religious status, & ethnic-racial background: terms that refer to one's origin, religious status, and ethnic-racial background can be taboo when they are used to show the speaker's superiority over the addressee. In the case of race, many American, Europeans, and Arabs tend to utter certain racial terms [in a degrading manner] as a means to show superiority ([usually] over Asians or Africans). In the case of religious status, many Muslims use terms that refer to one's religious belief [other than Islam], or lack of religious belief thereof, as a means to denote superiority and even rationality over those who do not believe in Islam or any religion for that matter. And in the case of gender, males use certain gender taboo expressions (such as H*rma/Mara*, meaning woman) to denote irrationality, inferiority, and/or fragility.

9. Time: time is a crucial factor affecting taboo language use and meaning. This is as what was once a non-taboo word could have become taboo (and vice versa). An example of this is the word *Tuz*, which was an equivalent for [the word] salt in the time of the Ottoman Empire. Back then, Turkish authorities took customs duties from merchandise entering its land to collect taxes. At that time, there was no tax on salt, and Arab salt traders wishing to get through the Turkish customs line and avoid a long inspection would point at their salt and carelessly say to the soldiers/inspectors, "*Tuz, Tuz*", meaning that it is salt which was nothing [to be taxed] (Arabicway, n.d.). Over time, when people are careless about anything or anyone, they would say *Tuz* to communicate their carelessness. Likely, the careless manner in which this word is used, in addition to its use in serious matters, is what made it socially taboo. However, to my knowledge, no one is certain of what made the word *Tuz* labeled taboo in Arabic.

4.1.2.3   *Part 3; Cultural reasons why certain expressions are labeled as "taboo" [in Arab societies]:*

Many of the reasons accounting for why certain expressions are labeled taboo in Bahraini Arab society are socio-cultural. Below-mentioned are the cultural reasons in detail. The cultural factors include but are not limited to:

1. [Filthy] Objects, Places & body waste terms: just like animal expressions, expressions referring to certain objects, places & body waste are mainly used to denote filthiness, as they are filthy by nature (i.e., the lavatory, slippers). Interestingly, objects that are deemed filthy seem to be universal across cultures. An example would be slippers. The reason that such an item is universally deemed filthy, cheap, and low is because of their actual state of filthiness, as slippers touch everything they step on, are worn on the lowest part of the body (i.e., one's feet), and are usually cheap, therefore denote filthiness, cheapness, and lowness, thus calling or referring to people using these expressions is taboo (socially unacceptable, and inappropriate).

2. Entities and relations: entities and relations in many Arab cultures, especially female entities, and relations, are referred to using general and sometimes ambiguous terms rather than calling them by name. For example, a man would rather call his wife [before strangers and even relations of his/their] as *El ahal,* meaning the family, than mention her name or state her relation to him, my wife. Al-Hamad (2013) claimed that the use of honorifics when referring to women in Arab society is a way in which Arab men show respect and appreciation for women. However, the concealment of people's identities [their names in this case] is never a way of honoring individuals, regardless of how much people may try to sugarcoat it. This is, as Allan & Burridge (2006) stressed, "One's name is an inalienable part of one's identity; it is the essence of self and is a means by which one is known to one's fellows" (p. 125). This means that without proclaiming women's names, women's identity remains unknown and cannot be referred to, and rather becomes another man's property than a woman's independent self. Therefore, the concealment of women's names by referring to them as a man's property (i.e., a man's house, family, wife/daughter) rather than their names is a way of concealing women's identity, thus concealing their existence as independent individuals, and in its root is due to shame of women, neither being proud of nor being respectful of.

3. Sex, sexuality & sexual intercourse: one of the reasons why the mention of sex, sexuality, and sexual intercourse is taboo is due to "The great emphasis traditionally placed on sexual morality in our culture" (Trudgill, 1974, p. 30), which means that the mention of sex and sexual intercourse became taboo as a result of the great attention given to sexual morality (i.e., attempts to explain the purpose of sexual intercourse and in what relationship it is permissible to have sex in) by monotheistic religions. Moreover, terms referring to sexual intercourse usually indicate someone's [inferior/submissive] position [usually women] during sexual intercourse. As a result, terms denoting sex and sexual intercourse are culturally used [mainly by men] to exercise power over the addressee to imply the addressee's inferiority [compared to the speaker].

4. Political regime: the reason the mention of certain regimes is taboo is that people supporting such regimes are believed to be immoral, disgraceful, irrational, and inferior compared to those who do not [support certain regimes]. What regime is to be supported and what regime is to be opposed differs from one culture to another and from one individual to another.

5. Unfriendly suggestions: Unfriendly suggestions are taboo as they are indecent suggestions/requests that damage the addressee's face (i.e., public self-image).

6. Disease & death: regarding expressions referring to death and disease they are taboo as their mention is culturally believed to cause disease to or/and the death of the speaker or the addressee/s, especially when mentioned unaccompanied by certain minimizers (See 4.1.2.1, 2).

Examples are listed in Tables 1 and 2 and explained in 4.1.2.1. 4.1.2.2, 4.1.2.3, and 4.1.2.4

4.1.3 Q3. What are the commonly used [linguistic] strategies to avoid the explicit use of taboo expressions?
The following strategies are [recommended to be] followed to mitigate and reduce the negative meanings communicated and feelings resulting from the blunt use of taboo expressions. The strategies include but are not limited to:

1. Euphemisms: euphemisms are defined by Boyadzhieva (n.d.) as "Words and phrases that are socially acceptable to substitute verbal taboos in human interaction" (p. 3). Meaning that euphemisms are [socially] acceptable words as well as phrases used to substitute unpleasant words. However, in this research, euphemism will only refer to the researcher's definition: "Pleasant and acceptable words created and used to replace [socially] unpleasant and unacceptable words". This definition was put forth to distinguish between euphemism (i.e., replacing an unpleasant word with another) and construction (i.e., replacing one word with more than 1 constructed word, "i.e., a phrase"). Moreover, the principal aim of the use of Euphemism is to reduce the unpleasantness of taboo expressions. An example of this strategy is saying *buraz* (i.e., feces) instead of *Khara* (i.e., shit) and *tu'wufi* (i.e., he passed away) instead of *Mat* (i.e., he died). Euphemism is the linguistic strategy used most as a means to avoid the explicit use of taboo language, as proven in previous research (Alqahtani *et al.*, 2022; Enab, 2020; Houssaini, 2019; Al Dilaimy & Omar, 2018; Al-Azzam *et al.*, 2017; Hatam *et al.*, 2017; Aliakbari & Raeesi, 2015, Qanbar, 2011; Boyadzhieva, n.d.). It is no surprise that many researchers found replacing taboo expressions with the use of euphemisms to be common, as "People generally cooperate and maintain smooth interaction and thus respect the social norm that has been agreed upon by members of society over a long period of time" (Al Dilaimy & Omar, 2018, p. 5). In other words, people tend to be conformists (i.e., confirm to/follow the accepted social norms) by being polite and euphemistic (Douglas, 1966) as a means to maintain smooth communications, lasting relationships, and a good reputation.

2. Loan words/Borrowing/Code-switching: this strategy refers to when a speaker uses a foreign expression instead of an existing expression in his/her first language (1L). In the case of this research paper's context, it refers to uttering taboo expressions by Native Arabic speakers in a language other than Arabic. An example of this is how the Arabic words *El dawra el sha'hria*, *khara*, and *Allah yel'ank* are replaced with the borrowed English words *period*, *shit*, and *fuck you*. It is important to note that sometimes the pronunciation of the borrowed words is adjusted to make pronouncing them more comfortable (Aliakbari & Raeesi, 2015, p. 100-102).

3. Construction: This strategy refers to replacing a taboo word with a constructed phrase. An example of this is replacing the verb *ytbwl* (i.e., to pee) with *yfrgh mthantah* (i.e., to empty his bladder) and replacing the word Mat (i.e., he died) with *Ataak Umrh* (i.e., May the remainder of the deceased person's life be added to your life). What differentiates construction from euphemism is that 1. The taboo word is not replaced by another word but rather by several constructed words, "i.e., a phrase," as seen in the above example, and 2. It does not change the way the thing, in this case, the verb referred to, is perceived, as the speaker would still think of/imagine the same idea itself, not a different, sugarcoated one [as in the case of euphemism].

4. Addition of particular conventionally-fixed words, labeled as "minimizers" by Qanbar (2011): this strategy refers to when the speaker used additional words "minimizers" along with the taboo words mentioned as a means to minimize/reduce their unpleasantness. The use of this strategy to avoid the explicit use of taboo words was mentioned in many research such as (Alqahtani *et al.*, 2022; Hatam *et al.*, 2017; Aliakbari & Raeesi, 2015; Qanbar, 2011). Examples of minimizers used with taboo expressions in Arab societies (See 4.1.2.1, Part 1.1).

5. Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) terms: the use of MSA terms instead of Ammiyah (i.e., colloquial Arabic) makes speech more formal, as well as publicly uttering a taboo expression [in MSA] somewhat acceptable. An example of this would be replacing the words *Khara* (i.e., shit) with *El buraz (i.e., feces)*, replacing El *ham'am* (i.e., the lavatory) with *Dawrat al meyah* (i.e., WC; Water Closet), and replacing *kuss* (i.e., pussy) with either the words *el farj* (i.e., vulva) or el *udu al tanasuli al unthawy (i.e., female reproductive organ)*.

6. Omission: This strategy refers to omitting [the taboo word] of the expression. An example of this is saying *a'alejh*? (i.e., are you on it [your period]? Instead of saying *a'alejh el dawrah*? (i.e., are you on your period?). The use of this strategy to avoid the explicit use of taboo words seems to be common nowadays, as mentioned in a few recent research such as (Enab, 2020; Houssaini, 2019).

7. General-for-specific "i.e., metonymy": this strategy is used when referring to a general notion [term] rather than the specific one. An example would be saying *Ba roh el ham'am* (i.e., I will go to the bathroom) instead of saying *ba'tbawa*l (i.e., I will urinate) (Allan & Burridge, 1991, p. 18) and saying *El ahal* (i.e., the family) instead of saying *zwjty* (i.e., my wife).
8. Using non-verbal language instead of verbal language: this strategy refers to when the speaker would rather insult the hearer using gestures and facial expressions [i.e., non-verbal language] rather than [verbally] uttering the taboo words the speaker intends to express, especially when in public and in the presence of others, where the speaker would wait for the moment in which no one is looking except for the addressee to do a certain hand of facial gesture. An example would be flipping the middle finger instead of saying "fuck you".

9. Silence: this strategy is used when the speaker chooses to remain silent when having the urge to utter a taboo word. Distinctly, many speakers resort to silence, which is refraining from speech when finding themselves near uttering taboo words, especially when they are in a formal setting (This claim is based on one of this research's findings (See 4.2.6 Q.9)).

The use of any, some, or all of the above-mentioned strategies enables the speaker to mention taboo expressions as well as talk about taboo subjects, themes, and objects without causing much harm to his/her face (i.e., public self-image) or the addressee's face. In addition to limiting, if not eliminating, the unpleasantness of the words used and topics discussed. Failure to use a strategy to avoid the explicit use of taboo expressions is likely to be considered impolite of the speaker, especially in a formal setting and in the presence of individuals of older age or higher social hierarchy, thus destroying the speaker's face, and showing the speaker's lack of social competence (i.e., lacking the necessary social skills to save face (i.e., public self-image)by failing to pick up contextualization cues - the verbal and non-verbal signs that are used by language speakers and are heard and seen by language listeners which provide clues into relationships, situations, environments, and conversations (Ishida, 2006)– and communicating properly with others; abiding by the social norms & settings (i.e., the age, gender, social hierarchy, formal or informal relationship the speaker has with the interlocuters as well as the formal or informal, and public or private settings.

4.2 [Quantitative Data]

This section of the findings will answer the last 3 questions (from questions 4-7) of this paper's questions, in addition to additional questions necessary to address, as a means to either prove or refute [some of] this paper's hypotheses. The data presented in this section are quantitative and were obtained via a self-assessed questionnaire designed using Google Forms, sent to a random number of Bahraini Arab university students (amounted to 88 students) via Airdrop to a WhatsApp group that joined the students on the 13th of March 2023 and was participated in voluntarily by the surveyed students (the students' consent is included in the self-assessed questionnaire).

4.2.1 Q4. Which gender uses taboo language in their speech more, and why do gender differences in the use of taboo language emerge?

Which gender of individuals do you usually hear using taboo expression?
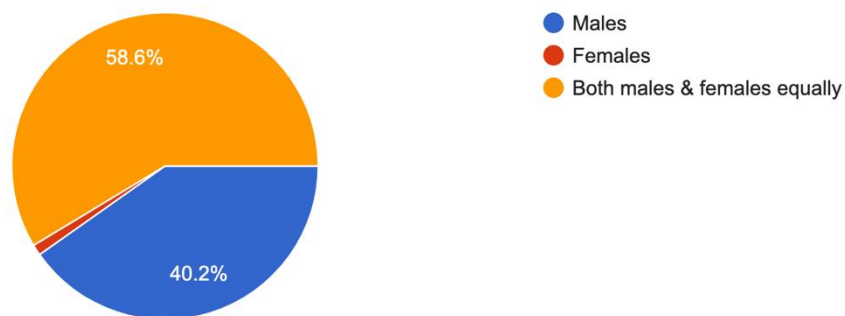87 responses

*Figure 2 presents the gender of individuals frequently heard using taboo language.*

Q.4.1 Which gender uses taboo language in their speech more?

When asking the surveyed Bahraini Arab university students, "Which gender of individuals do you usually hear using taboo expressions?" the majority, that being 58.6%, said it was both males and females equally, whereas 40.2% said it was males, and only 1.2% said it was females.

Q.4.2 Why do gender differences in the use of taboo language emerge?

For the answer (See 4.1.2.3, part 2; "Gender").

4.2.2 Q5. What is the reason [motivation for] Bahraini Arab university students' use of taboo language?

I use taboo language
81 responses
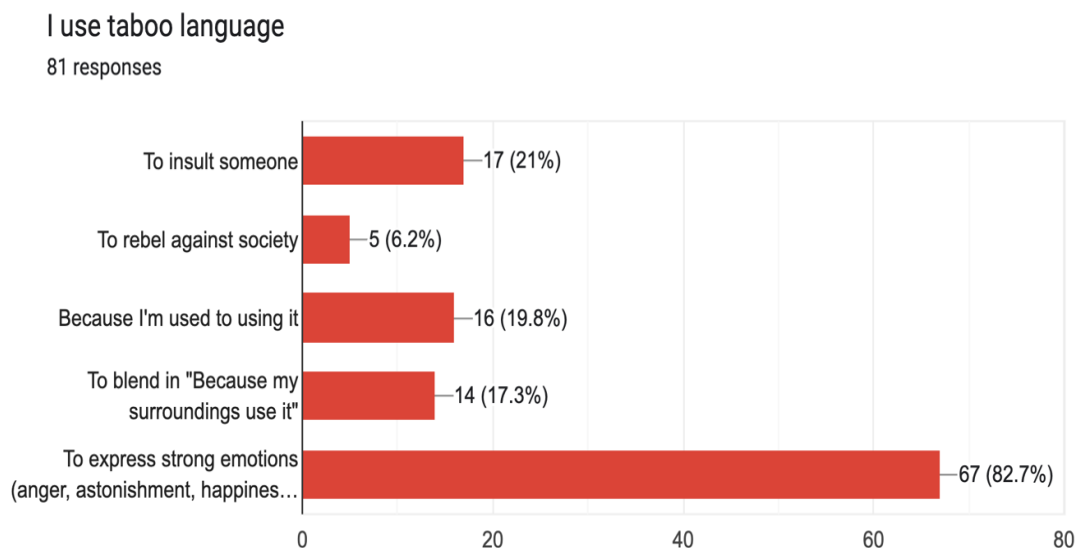
Figure 3 presents the reasons Bahraini Arab university students use taboo language.

Q5. When asking the surveyed Bahraini Arab university students who use taboo language why they use it, the majority, that is 82.7%, said they use it to express strong emotions of anger, astonishment, happiness, and/or sadness, whereas the second most frequent reason was to insult someone, which 21% chose. Interestingly, only 6.2% said they use taboo language to rebel against society, thus showing that the majority of the participants do not use taboo language because it is prohibited (religiously, socially, or/and culturally) as a means to rebel against the norms, but rather because it has a function (i.e., expressing strong emotions).

4.2.3 Q6. To what category of taboo expressions do the most frequently used Bahraini Arabic taboo expressions belong?
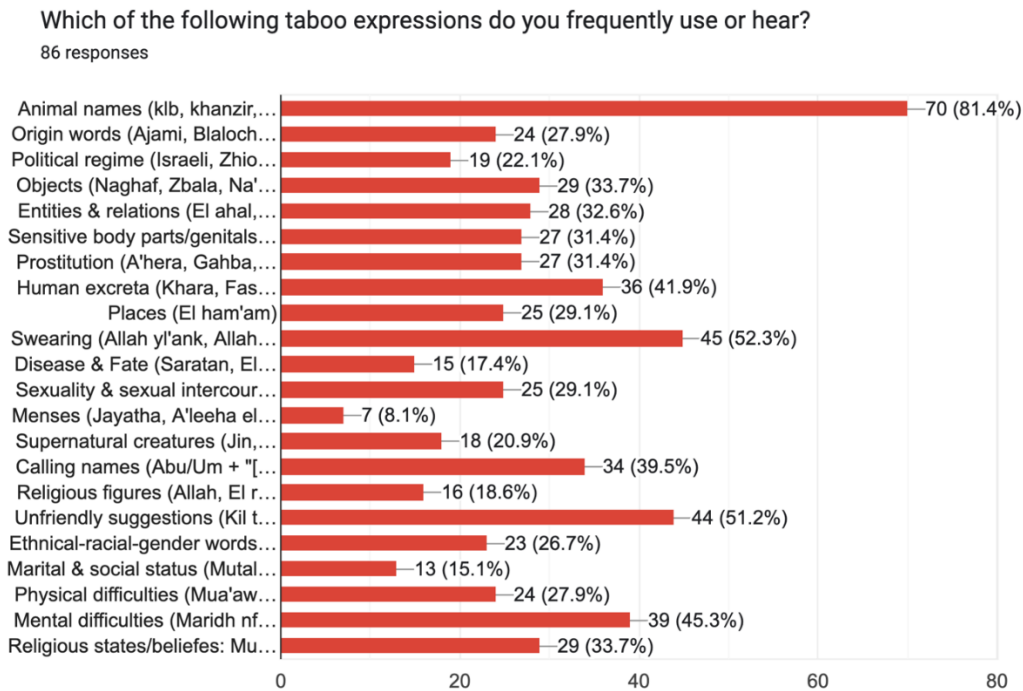
Which of the following taboo expressions do you frequently use or hear?
86 responses

Category	Count
Animal names (klb, khanzir,…	70 (81.4%)
Origin words (Ajami, Blaloch…	24 (27.9%)
Political regime (Israeli, Zhio…	19 (22.1%)
Objects (Naghaf, Zbala, Na'…	29 (33.7%)
Entities & relations (El ahal,…	28 (32.6%)
Sensitive body parts/genitals…	27 (31.4%)
Prostitution (A'hera, Gahba,…	27 (31.4%)
Human excreta (Khara, Fas…	36 (41.9%)
Places (El ham'am)	25 (29.1%)
Swearing (Allah yl'ank, Allah…	45 (52.3%)
Disease & Fate (Saratan, El…	15 (17.4%)
Sexuality & sexual intercour…	25 (29.1%)
Menses (Jayatha, A'leeha el…	7 (8.1%)
Supernatural creatures (Jin,…	18 (20.9%)
Calling names (Abu/Um + "[…	34 (39.5%)
Religious figures (Allah, El r…	16 (18.6%)
Unfriendly suggestions (Kil t…	44 (51.2%)
Ethnical-racial-gender words…	23 (26.7%)
Marital & social status (Mutal…	13 (15.1%)
Physical difficulties (Mua'aw…	24 (27.9%)
Mental difficulties (Maridh nf…	39 (45.3%)
Religious states/beliefes: Mu…	29 (33.7%)

Figure 4 presents categories of taboo expressions used (uttered & heard) in Bahraini Arabic.

Q6. When asking the surveyed Bahraini Arab university students: what category of taboo expressions they usually hear or use, the majority, that is 81.4%, frequently heard/used animal names, followed by swearing, which received 52.3%, followed by unfriendly suggestions, which received 51.2%, followed by mental difficulties receiving 45.6%. Interestingly, terms referring to menses were the least heard/used category of taboo expressions receiving 8.1%.

4.2.4 Q7. Do Bahraini Arab university students find using/uttering taboo expressions in a foreign or/and second language easier than uttering taboo expressions in their native language (i.e., Arabic)?

I find using taboo language
87 responses

- 51.7% — Easier in my native language than in a second or a foreign language (red)
- 48.3% — Easier in a second or foreign language than my mother language (blue)
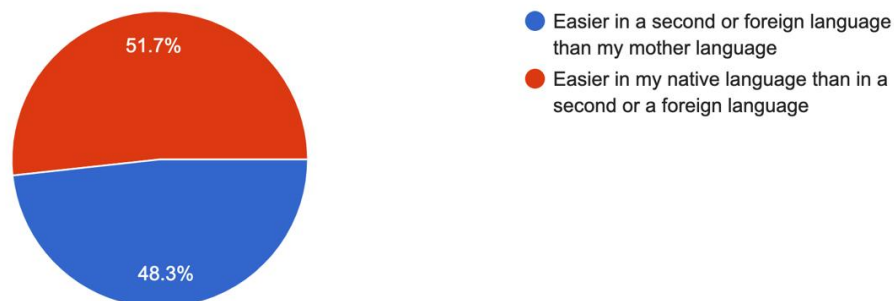
Figure 5 presents the percentage of students who find it easier to use taboo language in their mother tongue and those who find it easier to use taboo language in a second or a foreign language.

Q7. When asking the surveyed Bahraini Arab university students whether they find using taboo language easier in their mother tongue (i.e., Native language) or in a foreign or/and second language, the percentages were quite even. This is as the majority, that is 51.7%, find it easier to use taboo language in their native language (in this case, it is Arabic) than in a second or foreign language, whereas 48.3% find it easier to use taboo language in a second or a foreign language than in their native language.

4.2.5 Q8. What age group of individuals use taboo language more frequently?

Which age group of individuals do you usually hear using taboo expression?
88 responses
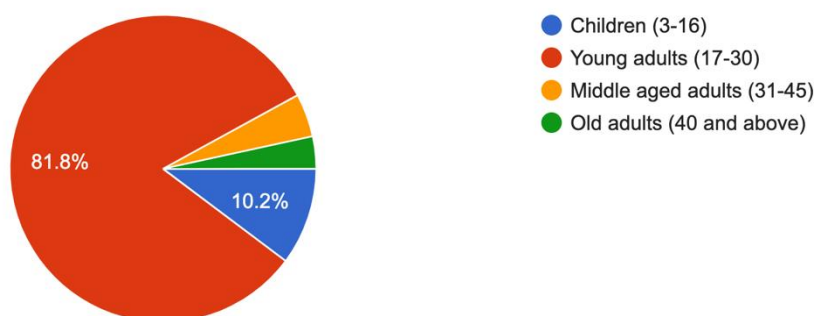
Figure 6 presents age groups of Bahraini Arabs frequently heard using taboo language.

Q8. When asking the 88 surveyed Bahraini Arab university students, "What age group of individuals do you usually hear using taboo expressions?" the majority, that is 81.8%, said they usually hear taboo language from young adults aged 17-30, whereas 10.2% said they usually hear it from children aged 3-16.

4.2.6 Q9 What environment did Bahraini Arab university students first pick up taboo language from?

I first heard taboo expressions from
88 responses
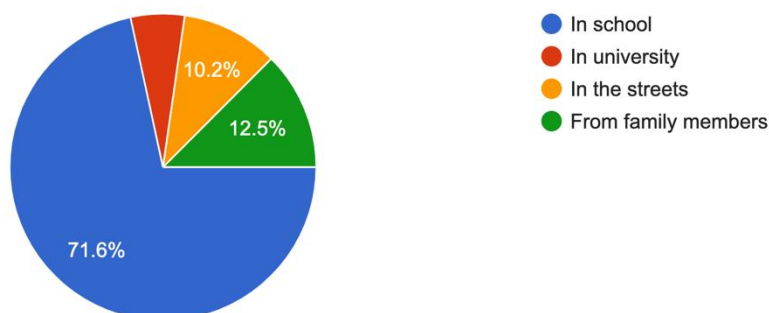
Figure 7 presents the environment in which Bahraini Arab students first picked up the taboo language from.

Q9. When asking the 88 surveyed Bahraini Arab university students from which environment they first picked up (i.e., heard) taboo language?", the majority, that is 71.6%, said they first heard it in school, whereas 12.5% first heard it from family members (i.e., at home), and 10.2% first heard it in the streets. Interestingly, the university was not where most or even many Bahraini Arab participants first picked up the taboo language.

4.2.7 Q10. What are the [linguistic] strategies Bahraini Arab university students frequently use to avoid the explicit use of taboo language?

Instead of using taboo language implicitly, I

88 responses
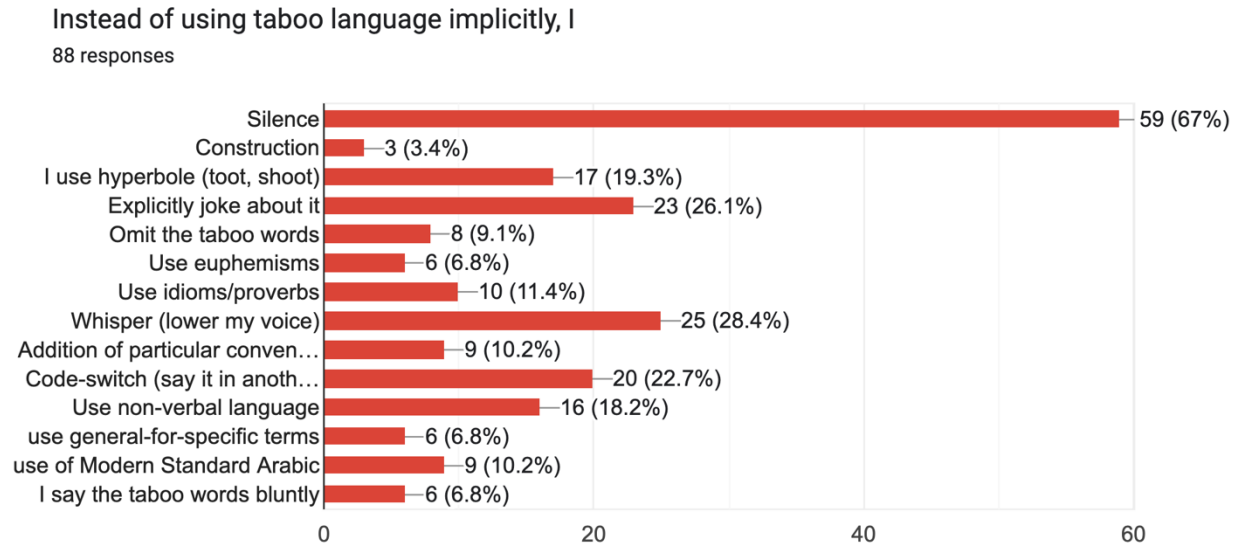
Figure 8 presents the strategies Bahraini Arab university students use to avoid the explicit use of taboo language.

Q10. When asking the 88 surveyed Bahraini Arab university students about the strategies they use to avoid the explicit use of taboo language, the majority, that is 67%, resort to silence, whereas 28.4% whisper the taboo expressions, 26.1% explicitly joke about the taboo expression, 22.7% code-switch when using taboo language, and only 3.4% resort to using construction strategy.

It is important to note that the participants were [verbally] provided with the definition and examples for each strategy included in this question.

4.2.8 Q11. Does using linguistic strategies to avoid the explicit use of taboo expressions achieve the same level of emotional satisfaction for Bahraini Arab university students?

This question was added to the self-assessed questionnaire to address a gap noted by Jay (2009), stating that "At present, we do not know if speakers achieve the same level of emotional satisfaction when they substitute a euphe-mism for a taboo word" (p. 154), meaning that it is unknown whether using euphemisms instead of explicitly mentioning taboo expressions achieve to the speaker the same level of emotional satisfaction compared to the level of emotional satisfaction, the speaker gets when using taboo expressions explicitly. However, in this paper, this question included all [linguistic] strategies used to avoid the explicit use of taboo expressions (See 4.1.3 Q3), not just euphemisms. In addition, because the administered questionnaire was self-assessed, there is no way to measure and confirm the participants' level of emotional satisfaction [for this question]; rather, only seek to provide a yes or no answer.

Does using any of the above mentioned linguistic strategies instead of the explicit use of taboo expressions achieve the same level of emotional satisfaction to you?

87 responses

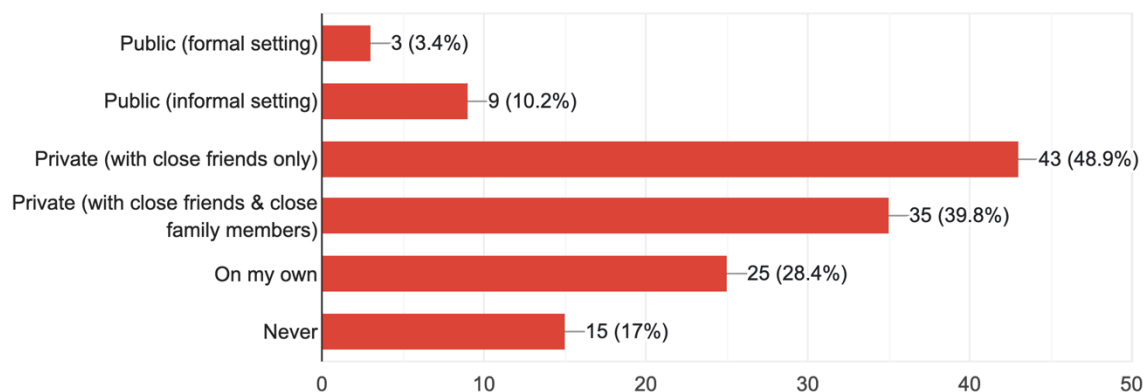- No, it does not.
- Yes, it does.

50.6%

49.4%
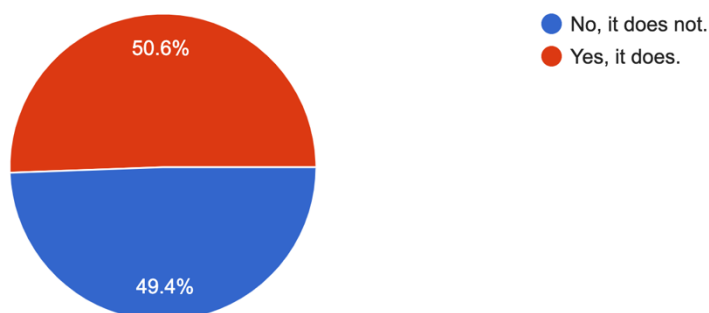
Figure 9 presents the percentages of students who find using [linguistic] strategies to avoid the explicit use of taboo language to achieve the same level of emotional satisfaction and the students who do not find using [linguistic] strategies to achieve the same level of satisfaction [as explicitly using taboo language].

Q11. When asking the surveyed Bahraini Arab university students whether using linguistic strategies instead of the explicit use of taboo language achieve the same level of emotional satisfaction, the percentages were quite even. This is because the majority, that is 50.6%, find that using these linguistic strategies instead of taboo expressions achieves the same level of emotional satisfaction, whereas 49.4% find that using these linguistic strategies instead of explicitly using taboo expressions does not achieve the same level of emotional satisfaction.

4.2.9 Q12. In what setting do Bahraini Arab university students use taboo language?

I use taboo language in

88 responses


Public (formal setting)	3 (3.4%)
Public (informal setting)	9 (10.2%)
Private (with close friends only)	43 (48.9%)
Private (with close friends & close family members)	35 (39.8%)
On my own	25 (28.4%)
Never	15 (17%)

Figure 10 presents the setting in which Bahraini Arab university students use taboo language.

Q12. When asking the surveyed 88 Bahraini Arab university students in what setting they use taboo language, the majority of the participants said they use taboo language in a private setting. While 48.9% use it in a private setting among close friends only, 39.8% use it in a private setting among close friends & close family members. Interestingly, more participants use taboo language when they are on their own than those using taboo language in a public setting (even when combining both formal and informal

public setting percentages [13.6% in total]). This is because the former [when students are on their own] received 28.4%, whereas the latter [in public] received 10.2% in an informal public setting and 3.4% in a formal public setting.

4.2.10 Q13. How do Bahraini Arab university students perceive those who use taboo language?

How do you see/feel about people who use taboo expressions?
88 responses
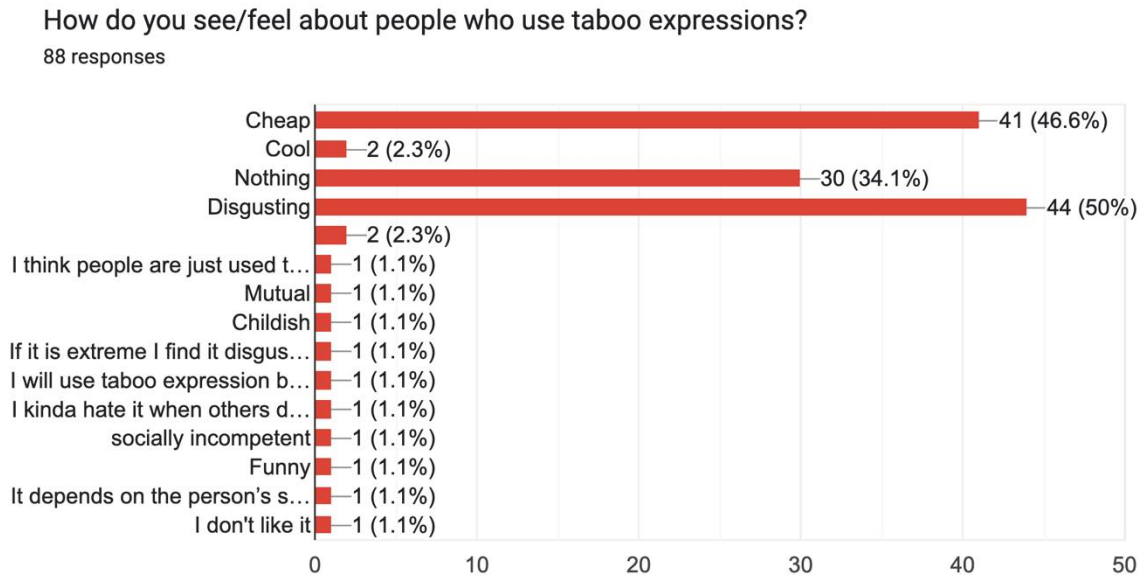
Figure 9 presents Bahraini Arab university students' perceptions of individuals using taboo language.

Q13. When asking the surveyed 88 Bahraini Arab university students how they perceive (i.e., feel about, think of, and view) those who use taboo language, the majority, that is 50%, perceive them or their behavior as disgusting, 46.6% perceive them to be cheap, and 34.1% do not judge them for their use of taboo language (they do not think anything of them). Others with a 2.3% or less perceive those who use taboo language as cool, funny, childish, mutual, or/and socially incompetent.

It is important to note that the total percentage amount to more than 100% in each of the questions numbered 5, 6, 9, 11, and 12, as the participants were allowed to choose more than 1 option [in these questions]. In addition, the participants had the choice to answer or refuse to answer any question they feel uncomfortable answering, and as a result, many questions received responses less than the total number of participants, that is 88 participants.

5. Discussion

First, the main reason for labeling many Bahraini Arabic expressions as taboo is found to be both social and religious, which proves this paper's H1, "The main reason for labeling certain expressions taboo in Bahraini Arabic will be religious and social", to be true. This is because the religious and social reasons [found] behind labeling certain Bahraini Arabic expressions as taboo were equal (9 reasons for each), whereas the cultural reasons [found] were less (6 reasons). Because the majority of Bahraini Arabs are Muslims, the religious teachings/factors likely became the social norm, resulting in both the religious and social factors/reasons [found for labeling certain Bahraini Arabic expressions as taboo] being equal in number. (See 4.1.2.1, 4.1.2.2 4.1.2.3 & 4.1.2.4 for the religious, social & cultural reasons why certain expressions are labeled taboo [in Arab societies]).

Second, the majority of Bahraini Arab university students were found to use taboo language in a private setting, more precisely among their close friends only, with a percentage of 48.9%, which proves this paper's H2 "The majority of Bahraini Arab university students use taboo language in a private setting among their close friends-only" to be true. While Al Dilaimy & Omar's (2018) stated that "Many people are using swearing [a form of taboo language] openly and frequently in most public spaces" (p. 8). In other words, Al Dilaimy & Omar (2018) asserted that people frequently use taboo language freely, explicitly, and publicly, which is contrary to this research findings, as only a few Bahraini Arab participants stated that they use taboo language in public settings.

Note that it is possible that the students who participated in this research's self-assessed questionnaire could use taboo language publicly [more than privately], frequently, and freely, yet stated otherwise.

Third, the majority of Bahraini Arab university students that is 58.6% hear males and females use taboo language equally, proving H3, "Males will be the gender of students frequently using taboo language publicly", to be false. This finding is contrary to the finding of Houssini's (2019) research, as the majority of his participants agree that men use taboo words more than women, and the findings of research by Hatam *et al.*, 2017, in which females were found to avoid naming taboos more frequently than males, in addition to several other of researchers (Boyadzhieva, n.d.; Jay 1980b, 1996a; McEnery, 2006; Mehl & Pennebaker, 2003; Thelwall, 2008). It is worth noting that as a result of providing the participants in this research question of the self-assessed questionnaire, that is "Which gender of individuals do you usually hear using taboo expressions?" with three options (males, females, & males and females equally) rather than two options (males/females), not only made space for unbiased results but also resulted in findings [both males and females use taboo language equally] contrary to other researchers (Boyadzhieva, n.d.; Jay 1980b, 1996a; McEnery, 2006; Mehl & Pennebaker, 2003; Thelwall, 2008; Houssini, 2019; Hatam *et al.*, 2017) who found males/men to use taboo language more than females/women. It is also worth noting that the majority of this research participants hear both males and females equally using taboo language rather than males using taboo language more frequently than women because this question (See 4.2.1. Q4) was inclusive of expressions that are not regarded as taboo by many young adults who lack social competence. These [taboo] expressions usually belong to the "mentionable with minimizers" category, which is one of the categories in the framework followed [in this research paper] for categorizing taboo expressions/words, which was proposed by Qanbar (2011). Qanbar's (2011) framework regards many words as taboo if uttered without the use of certain minimizers (See the right side of Table 2 for a list of examples), which is true in many Arab Muslim cultures. Yet, many young adults that do not socialize much (especially with elders) seem to be unaware of these words being deemed taboo [when uttered without certain necessary minimizers] (See 4.1.2.1, part 1.1 for an explanation of why these mentionable expressions are taboo when unaccompanied with certain minimizers). As a result, socially incompetent young adults end up regarding certain taboo expressions as non-taboo words, thus using them nonchalantly. Upon informing the participants that the use of certain expressions without certain minimizers is taboo, they considered all categories of taboo expressions (i.e., context-specific & general; unmentionable, & mentionable with minimizers) when answering this question (See 4.2.1 Q4), which in turn resulted in the unexpected result; the majority of participants (58.6%) hear both males and females use taboo language equally.

Forth, the main motive for Bahraini Arab university students' usage of taboo language is to express strong emotions with 82.7%, proving H4 "Expressing strong emotions will be the most frequent motivation/reason why Bahraini Arab university students use taboo language" to be true. This finding is in line with (Alqahtani *et al.*, 2022; Talley & Hui-ling, 2012) findings, as the majority of [their research] female participants use taboo language to express/vent strong emotions. Furthermore, these findings support Boyadzhieva's (n.d.) statement that "Taboos are emotionally charged" (p. 11) and that "Taboo words persist because they can intensify emotional communication to a degree that non-taboo words cannot" (Jay & Janschesits, 2007; Potts, 2007) (Cited from Jay, 2009, p. 155), meaning that because taboo language has a function non-taboo language lack; to increase the power of the emotions transmitted through uttered taboo words, that their use remains in real-life speech, thus, remain in language. Thus, it is safe to state that regardless of religious, social, and cultural prohibitions, [some] taboo expressions will continue being used because they have a level of powerfulness and desirability and even serve a [linguistic] function that no other expressions can serve such as communicating intensified emotions. And just as Alqahtani *et al.* (2022) stated, "The use of bad language may have either positive or negative effects depending on the way it is employed" (p. 562), indicating that ironically, [taboo] bad language can, at times be good language if it has good effects as a result of being used in the right time, context, and with the right people. Distinctly, the use of taboo language is found by the participating Bahraini Arabic speakers to be desirable and even necessary in the case of expressing strong emotions and undesirable when used in excess or/and formal settings.

Fifth, the majority of Bahraini Arab university students that is 67%, resort to silence as a strategy to avoid the explicit, public use of taboo language, proving H5 "The frequently used strategy by Bahraini Arab university students to avoid the explicit, public use of taboo language will be the use of euphemisms" to be false. This finding is contrary to the finding of several research (Alqahtani *et al.*, 2022; Enab, 2020; Houssaini, 2019; Al Dilaimy & Omar, 2018; Al-Azzam *et al.*, 2017; Hatam *et al.*, 2017; Aliakbari & Raeesi, 2015, Mouallem, 2015; Talley & Hui-ling, 2012; Qanbar, 2011; Boyadzhieva, n.d.) in which the use of euphemism was found to be one of the most frequently, if not the most frequently used strategy to avoid the explicit, public use of taboo language. Moreover, the fact that the second most used strategy to avoid the explicit, public use of taboo language [by this research participants] was whispering with 28.2% is in line with Houssaini's (2019) statement that "People would enter this tabooed realm only in whispering" (p. 41), which indicates that people do tend to use taboo language, yet utter it subtly [by whispering so that only the addressee can hear it], which prevents others from overhearing it. Moreover, the majority of this research participants, that is, 50.6%, find

using linguistic strategies instead of the explicit use of taboo expressions to achieve the same level of emotional satisfaction [as when using taboo expressions explicitly]. Nonetheless, the fact that the majority of this research participants use taboo language mainly to express strong emotions, yet find that the use of [linguistic] strategies instead of uttering the taboo expressions explicitly achieves the same function; the same level of emotional satisfaction, begs the following question; why then do these students still explicitly, and publicly use taboo language, instead of using the linguistic strategies? This is especially since the use of these strategies rather than the explicit use of taboo language demonstrates social competence & politeness, thus saving the face of the speaker as well as the hearer.

Sixth, the category of taboo words frequently heard and used in Bahraini Arab society is animal terms with 81.4%, which is contrary to the findings of Alqahtani *et al.* (2022), as the majority of the Saudi participants (young and adults) in her research refuse to use animal terms [to refer to their friends]. This finding is interesting, especially since Saudi culture overlaps with Bahraini culture religiously & culturally as well as linguistically, showing that even overlapping cultures can and do have linguistic differences, especially in terms of what is [socially] accepted and what is unaccepted.

Seventh, the majority of Bahraini Arab university students, that is 46.6%, perceive those who use taboo language as disgusting, showing that these expressions are not only deemed taboo (i.e., unacceptable & unpleasant) by elders but by young adults (who are this research sample) as well.

Eights, the fact that the majority of the participants, that is 71.6%, first heard taboo language in school shows that regardless of how appropriate the environment one is raised in, people will eventually interact and socialize with others coming from different environments & cultures who will display different [verbal or non-verbal] behaviors, and sooner or later, one's behavior will be affected either positively or negatively by the behaviors of one's peers.

Ninth, the fact that the category of entities & relations of taboo expressions [which are expressions used refer to female members as a means to hide their names] were among the least taboo categories heard & used in Bahraini Arab society, amounting to 32.6%. This shows that contrary to other Arab and Islamic cultures, and research investigating taboo expressions in Arab cultures where women's names are hidden (Al-Azzam *et al.*, 2017 "In Saudi Arabia"; Aliakbari & Raeesi, 2015 "In Iran"; Qanbar; 2011 "In Yemen"), In Bahraini Arab society women's identities (in this case their names) are not hidden and ashamed of, as women's names are publicly mentioned before others.

Tenth, in line with Mehl & Pennebaker (2003) and Mehl *et al.* (2007), who found swearing [a form of taboo language] to occur more frequently in college communities [among individuals aged 17 to 30], the majority of this research participants, that is 81.8% stated that they use as well as hear young adults aged 17 to 30 use taboo language more frequently [than individuals of other age groups].

Eleventh, the majority of the Bahraini Arab university students, that is 51.7%, find it easier to use taboo language in their native language, that is Arabic, than in a second or a foreign language, contrary to one of the findings of Talley & Hui-ling (2012), who found that the 35% of the participants use a second/foreign language of theirs when using taboo language (i.e., Taiwanese) rather than their L1 (i.e., Chinese). Moreover, Talley & Hui-ling (2012) also found that 41% of males use "A mixture of two or more languages for speaking taboo language" (p. 171), meaning that the students code-switch when using taboo language, which is the strategy 22.7% of this research participants use to avoid the explicit use of taboo expressions. Individuals' code-switching when uttering taboo expressions could be because they [1] find it easier to utter taboo language in a foreign/second language, as some foreign words can be lighter/easier to pronounce, and have less depth in meaning (to a non-native speaker) (than words in one's mother tongue), therefore cause less negative impact; emotional harm to the hearers' or/and social harm to their and face/reputation as "It is believed that a foreign word have less impact on the hearer than using a word in [one's] their native language" (Enab, 2020, p. 108), or [2] believe that the addressee will not fathom the meaning of the uttered foreign words, therefore these individuals will get to insult someone without the insulted person even realizing it, and by that causing more harm to the addressee's face (i.e., public self-image), or [3] because these foreign words sound fancy or show that one is educated or fluent in these languages, thus serve as a means of bragging or/and to create a certain social image [that the speaker desire to create for him/herself].

6. Conclusion

This paper aimed to investigate taboo language [expressions] used in Bahraini Arabic by Bahraini Arab university students following the two frameworks proposed by Qanbar (2011) and Brown and Levinson (1978-1978), from a qualitative and quantitative approach [to increase the validity of the data] which was not used in many research addressing the same issue, as most of them were purely descriptive. A corpus of taboo expressions was collected by asking & listening to Bahraini Arab university students' everyday conversations, in addition to several taboo expressions mentioned in previous research investigating taboo expressions used in Arabic countries, especially Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries which were relevantly used in Bahrain as well. Many factors affecting the use of taboo language [not addressed in previous research] were addressed in this research paper, such as [sub] categories of taboo expressions, gender, age group, motivation for the use of taboo expressions, the environment from where the taboo language was first picked up, the setting in which it is used, the perception of those using it, and the [linguistic] strategies used to avoid the explicit use of taboo expressions, and several other factors. As a result, this paper's [hypotheses] H1, H2, & H4 were proven to be true, whereas H3 & H5 were proven to be false (See 5 Discussion).

Moreover, several categories of taboo expressions were found, which include but are not limited to expressions referring to religions, origins, animals, menses, sex & sexuality, death, supernatural creatures, swearing, and unfriendly suggestions. Additionally, a great number of similarities as well as differences in taboo expressions used in Bahraini Arab society and other Arab and Islamic societies were found. This is as in previous scientific literature investigating taboo language in Arab societies (Al-Azzam *et al.*, 2017; Hatam *et al.*, 2017; Aliakbari & Raeesi, 2015; Qanbar, 2011) almost all of the taboo expressions' categories (i.e., death, sex, disease, and supernatural creatures) frequently used in Arab societies were not frequently used in Bahraini Arab society (except for animal terms, swearing, and unfriendly suggestions). Besides, the main motive for the use of taboo language by this research's participants, to express strong emotions, is in line with the findings of Alqahtani *et al.* (2022) and Talley & Hui-ling (2012), as the motivation of Saudi Arabian female Arabic speakers' use of taboo language in the case of the former, and the motivation of Chinese female speakers' use of taboo language in the case of the latter was expressing/venting strong emotions. However, the category of taboo expressions frequently heard and used in Bahraini Arabic is animal terms with 81.4%, which is contrary to one of Alqahtani *et al.* (2022) findings where the majority of the Saudi participants (young and adults) in her research refuse to use animal terms [to refer to their friends]. This proves that the frequency of the use of taboo expressions differs from one category to another and from one society to another. Even when most members of society follow/believe in the same religion and therefore have similar [social/legal] prohibitions, differences in connotations attributed to expressions and language use will always emerge.

Furthermore, the fact that the majority of the fluent, Native Arabic-speaking participants [of this research] chose silence, followed by whispering as strategies to avoid the explicit use of taboo expressions when their faces (i.e., public self-image) are attacked in public, demonstrates that they do follow the principles of the politeness and that these participants are what Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) called an MP; a Model Person, as their choice/s shows their rationality; awareness of the necessity of choosing their words wisely, especially in public, and their carefulness to maintain a positive face; to behave in a socially acceptable way, as well as not attack the hearers' face, which demonstrates one of Al Dilaimy & Omar's 2018 statement, that is "People generally cooperate and maintain smooth interaction and thus respect the social norm that has been agreed upon by members of society over a long period of time" (p. 5). In other words, despite individuals' desire of maintaining a negative face (i.e., that their desires, decisions, and behaviors [verbal and non-verbal] are unimpeded by society/the social norms), they, however, do maintain a positive face (i.e., to behave in a socially acceptable way) as a mean to not cause any offense, miscommunication, misinterpretation or destroy the hearers' and addressees' face (i.e., public self-image) as well their face, as to not damage their reputation which repairing is way more difficult than destroying.

7. Limitations & Suggestions for further research

Nonetheless, this study has potential limitations, as it is only concerned with investigating taboo language in Bahraini Arabic by university students and was only administered to 88 participants, which is considered relatively low. In addition, the participants were mainly limited to young adults aged 17-30, and 86.4% were females, whereas only 13.6% were males. Therefore, further research investigating taboo language in Arab or non-Arab societies is recommended to have more participants, especially participants of equal numbers of each gender and diverse age groups, to be more inclusive. In addition, investigating taboo language in Kuwaiti Arabic or Emirati Arabic is recommended as, to my knowledge, the use of taboo language has not yet been investigated in these two societies. It is important to note that investigating the use of taboo language is crucial because of the stigma surrounding the use of neutral words that include but are not limited to one's religion, origin, identity [such as women's menstruation and names], social status, and physical & mental defects. Everything considered, [taboo] expressions are neutral; are not bad or good in themselves, rather these words are deemed bad [or good for that matter] relative to something else; because

of being compared with other things, thus being associated with other meanings. Further investigating how deeming a neutral thing/concept taboo is pernicious and how the preposterous reasoning behind many taboo expressions can be invalidated is recommended.

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