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***A Sociolinguistic View of Taboo Language and
Euphemisms in the Algerian Society: Attitudes
and Beliefs in Tlemcen Speech Community***

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Contact and Sociolinguistic Variation

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Dedications

I dedicate this work to my lovely son Amine, my husband who remained caring throughout this stressful and challenging period.

I also dedicate it to my parents, brothers, sister and close friends.

Nadia

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Abstract

The current study is geared to investigate Tlemcen speakers' attitudes towards taboo topics namely sex and death and their euphemistic substitutions. It also aims at improving a useful understanding of these sensitive topics. Thus, it tends to prove that some linguistic expressions are the result of societal, psychological and cultural pressures. Another purpose of this work is to analyse Tlemcen speakers' views, beliefs and, therefore, explore the motives which give a fertile soil for the creation of euphemistic substitutions. It shows that there are euphemistic expressions which represent a rich vocabulary of Algerian varieties in general and Tlemcen dialect in particular. Besides, the main objectives of this piece of research are firstly examining Tlemcen speakers' attitudes towards taboos and euphemisms in relation to a number of social and psychological factors. Secondly, it tends to investigate which politeness strategies they use in order to protect their faces during their daily interaction. Thirdly, this work tries to discover whether Tlemcen speakers use taboos in mixed- sex groups or they tend to discuss them in single-sex groups. To these ends, we have relied on many research instruments in order to test the validity of our hypotheses and to collect reliable data. Henceforth, the outcomes of this study show that the percentages of both taboos and euphemistic usage are nearly equal, although statistical analysis of the questionnaire revealed that the respondents' attitudes towards taboos were highly positive. In fact, these findings indicate that the use of these two linguistic phenomena differ from one individual to another depending on their age, gender, educational background and the context of use. They also reveal that Tlemcen people try to discuss taboo topics with their intimate friends. Nonetheless, Islamic norms and principles play a significant role in pushing them to employ the notion of politeness which restricts the open use of taboos. Lastly, these research findings prove that sex has remained as the most tabooed topic, whereas death is also handled with care in this speech community.

List of Phonetic Symbols

These phonetic symbols approximate the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA):

- **Consonants:**

	Tlemcen Arabic	English Gloss
[d]	[ndi:r]	‘I do’
[b]	[ba:b]	‘door’
[t]	[nta:ʕi]	‘mine’
[k]	[ka:məl]	‘all’
[g]	[gamra]	‘moon’
[t̪]	[t̪a:ħ]	‘he fell down’
[d̪]	[d̪far]	‘a nail’
[q]	[qalam]	‘a pen’
[ʔ]	[ʔasem]	‘what’
[ð̪]	[ħað̪i:ra]	‘park’
[ð̪]	[əlʔað̪a:]	‘harm’
[r]	[ru:ħ]	‘go’
[m]	[lmu:t]	‘death’
[n]	[nʕa:s]	‘sleep’
[l]	[li:l]	‘night’
[w]	[wa:lu]	‘nothing’
[j]	[jədd]	‘hand’
[f]	[fa:ʔ]	‘he woke up’
[s]	[si:f]	‘sword’

[z]	[zarbia]	‘a carpet’
[ʃ]	[ʃəftu]	‘I saw him’
[ʒ]	[ʒabu]	‘he brought it’
[χ]	[χa:f]	‘he feared’
[ʁ]	[ʁa:li]	‘expensive’
[ħ]	[ħbel]	‘cord’
[ʕ]	[ʕammi]	‘my uncle’
[h]	[hrab]	‘he escaped’
[ʂ]	[ʂa:bha]	‘he found it’

- **Vowels:**

- **Short Vowels**

[i]	[kursi]	‘chair’
[u]	[χubz]	‘bread’
[a]	[ħall]	‘he opened’
[o]	[foʈa]	‘towel’

- **Long Vowels**

[i:]	[fi:l]	‘elephant’
[u:]	[fu:l]	‘broad beans’
[a:]	[ba:ʕ]	‘to sell’
[o:]	[ʂo:r]	‘wall’

French Transcription

French Alphabet	French Transcription
B	b
C	s
D	d
F	f
G	g
H	
J	ʒ
K	k
L	l
M	m
N	n
P	p
Q	k
R	ʁ
S	s
T	t
V	v
W	w
X	ks
Y	j
Z	z

French vowels: a= a/ɑ, an = ā, on = ō, en = ǣ, e= ɛ, es=e, i= i, in = ē, un = ū, on= ð, eu= œ, è = ε, ø = ø, o=ɔ, u= y, ui = ʏi, ou = u.

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AA: Algerian Arabic.

AS: Algerian Society.

AP: Algerian People.

EUPH(s): Euphemism (s).

MSA: Modern Standard Arabic.

TL: Taboo Language.

TW(s): Taboo Word (s).

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General Introduction

General Introduction

Language is an essential means of communication through which we can express our views, emotions and attitudes. Henceforth, language can be seen as an integral part of human social interaction since it strengthens their relationships. However, language is not the only tool which can transmit our ideas since it is also accompanied by gestures.

Furthermore, the context, in which language is used, has also a great importance. Thus, language and the context in which interaction takes place are inseparable. This means that there are social factors which play a crucial role in directing language use between speakers. In other words, the use of language depends largely on the social context where interaction occurs. Consequently, there are some aspects that affect language including the social structure, the social environment and values of the society.

Language is deeply rooted in the culture of its people since it reflects their norms and taboos. Hence, ignoring these beliefs during interaction may lead to severe assault between speakers since every individual has to behave appropriately in his/her society depending on its norms. In this vein, one should note that all languages have certain words, expressions, sentences and topics which are banned to be uttered or discussed in public. This language or words of language are called taboos.

In fact, taboos exist in all languages and cultures, although each society has its own norms and taboos. So, taboos are also related to the cultural beliefs of the society. This means that there are taboos which are universal and others are culture-specific as it will be explained throughout the first chapter. Besides, in order to avoid embarrassment and face-losing, people try to look for substitutions that can hide or cover up the harmonious power of taboo words. Consequently, euphemisms are employed to replace offensive expressions that can cause harm and shame for speakers. These expressions are related to the religious and cultural beliefs of a given society and define its socio-cultural structure. Besides, the use of taboos varies from

one individual to another depending on certain social factors such as anger, frustration and annoyance...etc.

Moreover, gender, age and the educational background of the speaker play an essential part as social variables in analysing language in a given society because males and females use it differently depending on their age. In fact, women tend to employ more appropriate and prestigious language, whereas men search for different ways to communicate.

Trying to apply the previous scholarly methods into an Algerian context in general and Tlemcen context in particular, the present work aims primarily at exploring the Algerian cultural norms, values and beliefs through investigating the attitudes of Tlemcen speakers towards the use of taboos and euphemisms. Secondly, it describes the main reasons that push them to use taboo words and discuss some sensitive topics mainly sex and death. Henceforth, this study puts forward some clarifications on the social and psychological factors that affect deeply the individuals' use of language with the age and sex constraints. It also aims to test their attitudes towards the use of taboos in mixed-sex groups.

In this regard, our investigation attempts to make a bridge between aspects of culture and language so that we can understand the norms and taboos of Tlemcen society. Consequently, this sociolinguistic study aims to give an overview of taboo words, topics and euphemistic expressions that are used by Algerian people in general and Tlemcen speakers in particular in relation to the society's attitudes, beliefs and motivations. In this context, a number of questions are raised:

- 1- What are the attitudes of Tlemcen speakers towards the use of taboos and euphemisms?
- 2- What are the reasons behind the use of taboos?
- 3- Do Tlemcen speakers discuss taboo topics in mixed-sex groups?

Trying to find reliable answers to these questions, this study was developed with three hypotheses in mind:

- 1- It should be noted that the attitudes of speakers differ depending on their age, gender and the educational background. In fact, the attitudes of Algerian people have a deeper relation with their cultural and religious norms, although the use of taboos exists. Besides, they tend to use euphemistic substitutions in their daily conversation due to their conservative nature. So, euphemism is used as a politeness strategy in order to avoid face losing or any threatening act and to strengthen human ties.
- 2- Certain social and psychological reasons may play a crucial role in pushing the Algerian speaker to use taboo words in order to express his/her emotions for example frustration, anger and annoyance...etc.
- 3- Tlemcen females are more inclined than males to avoid the use of taboo words and phrases in mixed-sex groups, especially when they discuss the subject of sex. Consequently, both males and females may have positive attitudes towards using or discussing taboo language or topics in single-sex groups since they always prefer to speak proper language in mixed-sex groups.

Thus, the present research displays an outline of three chapters in which the first starts with the review of the related literature and gives insights of the two main sociolinguistic phenomena and their fundamental theories which are used as references and bases for analysing the data. Firstly, we will shed light on taboo language, its main categories and characteristics following Jay's model. We will deal with some taboo topics mainly sex and death. Secondly, we will discover the main reasons and circumstances that push speakers to go behind their social, religious and cultural norms and use taboo language. Lastly, we will also try to throw some light on the use of euphemism which is employed as a politeness strategy to replace offensive, disturbing and unpleasant words or phrases through investigating previous theories on politeness postulated by Brown and Levinson for the purpose of maintaining faces of both the speaker and the audience.

The second chapter will be devoted to study the use and perception of different taboo topics by Algerian people. We will divide Algerian taboos into three main areas mainly neutral words which can become taboo in certain contexts in addition to unmentionable taboos which are banned to be mentioned or discussed in public. We will speak about different types of euphemisms that exist in Algerian culture and language as well. We will also investigate the use of euphemistic substitutions in Arabic language and Quran. We will try to talk about borrowing taboos, euphemistic expressions and phrases from French language in order to lessen the powerful meaning of the local words. Lastly, we will explain different stereotypes that exist in Algerian culture which may affect the speakers' attitudes and perception of some topics.

Throughout the third chapter, we will give an overview of the different research tools which have been employed, including a questionnaire and a focus group interview, in order to confirm the validity of the hypotheses and to answer our research questions. Henceforth, data will be quantitative and qualitative since the use of one instrument is insufficient to rely on for collection and analysis. In other words, we will try to test the speakers' attitudes towards the use of some taboo words and euphemistic expressions. We will analyse their answers concerning the context where they use taboos and then, their views about whether females use offensive expressions in their daily interaction. Finally, we will, at least, test their awareness of death and the main terms and phrases they employ.

Chapter One

CHAPTER I

AN OVERVIEW OF TABOOS AND EUPHEMISMS

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1.1- Introduction

Language has a social function as a means of communication among human beings as Chaika (1994) states. She also maintains that Language and society are so intertwined that it is impossible to understand one without another. By Language, she argues, we can express our feelings, emotions and ideas. Therefore, this latter represents the society's culture. However, in real communication, people often forget about the different principles of their culture. They tend to speak and act by using words and gestures that are forbidden. These words and acts are called taboos.

Furthermore, words which have religious connotations, in some societies, are considered profane if they are employed outside religious ceremonies. Other types of words are related to death, disease, poverty, sex and bodily functions. In fact, these terms form important ingredients in the area of taboo language in many cultures. Consequently, people employ euphemism in order to protect human relations during social interaction.

As far as the Algerian society is concerned, the use of Language is related to the Islamic religious instructions. However, we can find that the numerous Algerian dialects are full of taboo expressions which make the members of the Algerian society different from other members in other societies. Besides, Algerian people have also developed some expressions, through their daily communication, to avoid the use of taboo words. These expressions have a deeper relationship with the society's religious and cultural norms.

As a result, this chapter provides an overall explanation of two sociolinguistic phenomena namely taboos and euphemisms. It stresses the relationship between culture and Language. It also expresses the reasons and circumstances behind the use of taboo expressions in relation to gender through reviewing the studies conducted by previous researchers and offers a succinct account of the different theories including the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, Hymes' speaking theory, Timothy Jay's classification of different categories of taboo language, in addition to politeness strategies and face theory put forward by Brown and Livenson.

1.2- Language and Culture

It is agreed that Language is the mirror of the society's culture since it reflects the beliefs, norms, emotions and feelings of its members. In this line, Wardhaugh notes that the relationship between 'language' and 'culture' has attracted people from different backgrounds. In order to explain more this idea, he (2010: 229) argues that:

The exact nature of the relationship between language and culture has fascinated, and continues to fascinate, people from a wide variety of backgrounds. That there should be some kind of relationship between the sounds, words, and syntax of a language and the ways in which speakers of that language experience the world and behave in it.

Additionally, the relationship between the two has attracted scholars from different disciplines. Hymes (1964: 21) believes that **“speech is so fundamental an activity of man, language so integral part of his culture”**. In other words, language cannot be studied in isolation from the culture of the people who speak it.

Basically, Hudson (1996:73) also observes that culture is something that everybody has, in contrast with 'the culture' which is only found in cultural circles – in opera houses, universities and the like. He (ibid: 71) further sees culture as the “know how” and the “know what” that an individual must have and use in his life. In short, it is the knowledge that the society has including music, literature and arts...etc.

In connection with this, Brooks (1984:84) believes that in order to be a member of a speech community, you should share with others their culture. He also maintains that culture is a social heritage since it is taught by the old to the young and learned by the young from the old. According to him, culture can be divided into two main classes namely 'material' and 'nonmaterial'. In his point of view, the former includes pottery, clothes and vehicles, whereas the latter means civilisation, education and beliefs as Wardhaugh (ibid: 211) has pointed out:

A society's culture consists of whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members, and to do so in any role that they accept for any one of themselves.

Similarly, Edwards (1976:37) goes on to add that **“Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society”**. In the same line of thought, Kramsch argues that Language and culture are closely related to each other. She further explains that the relationship between them expresses firstly cultural reality since it reflects the individuals' attitudes and beliefs. Secondly, Language embodies cultural reality i.e., the way in which the spoken, written or visual mediums create meanings that can be understood by people. She adds that culture can be expressed through the speaker's accent, style and gestures...etc. Finally, she concludes that Language symbolises social identity. In this sense, she (1998:03) states the following:

Language is the principal means whereby we conduct our social lives. When it is used in contexts of communication, it is bound up with culture in multiple and complex ways.

Language, on the other hand, is considered as a set of rules that enable speakers to relate sounds to information (Gumperz, 1971: 222) whereas; Crystal considers Language as a perfect tool that enables man to communicate. In this sense, he (1974: 30) claims that it is **“the most frequently used and most highly developed form of human communication”**. He adds that language is a part of human culture and this aspect sets apart man from other creatures. In the same line, Henslin (2004: 40) defines language as **“a system of symbols that can be strung together in an infinite number of ways for the purpose of communicating abstract thought.”**²⁵

²⁵ Quoted by Renate Giesbrecht (2009, 02)

Nevertheless, the relationship between language and culture is very strong since each one influences the other. This intimate relationship has proved that each one cannot exist without the other.

1.3- Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis

The approach known as the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis is an important axiom of the linguist and anthropologist Edward Sapir's colleague and student, Benjamin Whorf. While sociolinguistics focuses mainly on the influence of society on language use, these linguists propose that the structure of one's language aids in shaping the thought processes of an individual. In this vein, they say that:

[...] a speaker's native language sets up a series of categories which act as a kind of a grid through which he perceives the world, and which constrain the way in which he categorizes and conceptualizes different phenomena.

(Cited by Trudgill, 1984: 25)

Furthermore, Giesbrecht (2009: 3) cites Penn (1972: 9), who tends to consider that the **“Sapir's and Whorf's definition to language leads to the general assumption of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis that “one's world is dependent on the structure of the language one speaks and that thought is influenced by it.”** In the same sense, Greenberg (1963: 138) states the following:

The general notion is that the grammatical categories of a language determine or at least influence strongly the general manner of conceiving the world of those who speak it.

(Quoted by Renate Giebrecht, idem)

From this perspective, Trudgill (1984: 25) writes that the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis is based on the idea that society affects language and the way in which environment is reflected in it. He further avers that there are three effects of society on language. Firstly, the physical environment in which a society lives is being reflected

in its language. Secondly, the social environment can be also reflected in language. Thirdly, the cultural norms and values of a society can have an influence on its language as well. The best example is the existence of taboo language in all human cultures and in people's daily speech. Henceforth, people can understand the world through the cultural lens of language. This idea can be better explained by Henslin (2004: 14) as follows:

Language allows culture to exist and to develop. Only through the use of language, people are able to move beyond their immediate experiences that mean to speak of past and future events which would be impossible without the structure of language. With the help of language, events can be codified, they are attached to words so that they can then later be recalled and discussed in the present.

(Quoted by Greenberg, ibid: 5)

Greenberg further explains that language is related to the speakers' attitudes, emotions and beliefs. This knowledge is transmitted from one generation to another through language. In this regard, he (idem) highlights the following:

[...]Without language, communication about past and future events would be impossible. Therefore, advancement and development in social communities, which means cultures, becomes possible. Attitudes, knowledge, emotions and experiences are passed from one generation to the next although the members of the present generation never made the experiences the former one did. As a result, behaviour can be modified to improve living and enables humans to share perspectives.

1.4- The Concept of Taboo

Taboos have always existed in language and culture even though the term 'taboo' was not defined until 1777 when it was borrowed and introduced into English by

Captain James Cook, who reported the word taboo from Tongan 'Tapu' or 'Tabu' meaning forbidden. In this respect, Radcliffe-Brown (1939:5f) states that:

In the language of Polynesia the word means simply 'to forbid', 'forbidden', and can be applied to any sort of prohibition. A rule of etiquette, an order issued by a chief, an injunction to children not to meddle with the possessions of their elders, may all be expressed by the use of the word tapu.

(Quoted by Keith Allan and Kate Burridge, 2006:02).

As suggested above, Trudgill also supports the point that a taboo is something which is prohibited to be uttered. In this respect, he (2000:18) describes the term as follows:

A [b]ehavior which is believed to be supernaturally forbidden, or regarded as immoral or improper; it deals with behavior which is prohibited or inhibited in an apparently irrational manner.

Furthermore, Allan and Burridge highlight that the word taboo can be defined as a prescription of behaviour that affects everyday life. In the same sense, Farberow claims that taboos refer to forbidden acts and speech. He adds that they are seen as the norms of the society since they control the past, the present and the future of its members. In this regard, he (1963:2) defines the term as follows:

Taboos are primarily backward-oriented, for by being essentially forbidding and prohibiting, they tend to preserve the past and to control the impingement of the future on the present. Of course, not all taboos are old. New ones constantly appears, taking various shapes and forms as the substance of the culture evolves, but they all serve the same

goal-preservation of the status quo.

In fact, the term taboo is difficult to define since every society has expressions or behaviours that are considered taboo. In this line, Trudgill claims that taboo topics are culture-specific since topics that are forbidden in one culture can be beneficial in another one. In this sense, he states (2000: 18) that **“The type of word that is tabooed in a particular language will be a good reflection of at least part of the system”**. In contradiction with this point of view, Wardhaugh (2010:236) maintains that taboo words are universal. This statement is better explained through his speech as follows:

Each social group is different from every other in how it constraints linguistic behaviour in this way, but constrain it in some such way it certainly does. Perhaps one linguistic universal is that no social group uses language quite uninhibitedly.

With this purpose in mind, Wardhaugh further explains that people avoid certain acts or expressions that are forbidden because they result in embarrassment. In this sense, he (ibid: 239) defines the word taboo as follows:

Taboo is the prohibition or avoidance in any society of behaviours believed to be harmful to its members in that it would cause them anxiety, embarrassment, or shame.

Similarly, Laitinen (2009)²⁶ argues for the above idea when he maintains that a taboo can be anything that is forbidden to be mentioned or spoken. He also adds that taboos are the result of cultural norms and historical practises shared by the members of a

²⁶ <http://www.internetslang.com/TABOO-meaning-definition.asp>

given speech community. For this reason, some expressions, that are considered taboo in a society, are not necessarily forbidden in another community. In the same line of thought, Allan and Burridge declare that since a community's members share the same principles, they have also what is called 'shared taboos'. In this sense, they (ibid: 09) highlight the following statement:

To an outsider, many prohibitions are perplexing and seem silly-but they are among the common values that link the people of a community together. What one group values, another scorns. Shared taboos are therefore a sign of social cohesion.

On the other hand, Hughes (1991: 464) claims that the definition of taboo has shifted from meaning "strictly forbidden" to simply "offensive" or "grossly impolite". She (ibid: 462) strongly posits the view that today's taboo refers to a "**prohibition against socially unacceptable words, expressions, and topics, especially of a sexual and racist nature**". In fact, Allan and Burridge share the same view when they maintain that any word, which causes harm or shame to either an individual or a community, is considered taboo since it results in injury and discomfort. In this regard, they (2006:27) argue that:

They arise in cases where the individual's acts can cause discomfort, harm or injury to him-or herself and to others. Any behaviour that may be dangerous to an individual or his, her community is likely to be subject to taboo, whether this is in the domain of the sacred or the otherwise metaphysical, or touches on earthly persons of power or concerns contact with dangerous creatures.

This means that a taboo is "**a proscription of behavior that affects everyday life**" (idem) as they have pointed out. They also claim that people always tend to avoid such unacceptable behaviours unless they intentionally tend to violate taboos. Besides, Anderson and Trudgill (1990: 55-56) observe that some taboos are "**important**

elements in the structure and social life of a culture", for example, sex does not mean that this area of life is forbidden, but it is regulated by conscious and unconscious rules.

Moving deeper in our analysis, it is worth mentioning that through using TL; people may feel free from social norms and succeed in hurting others since taboos can act as swearwords. In this respect, Trudgill (2000: 18) observes that **"breaking rules (may) have connotations of strength or freedom which (people) find desirable"**. He (ibid: 19) also adds that **"taboo words are frequently used as swear-words [...] because they are powerful"**. In connection with this, Jay agrees that language can be used to express unacceptable things that can harm others. In this respect, he (2009: 155) maintains that:

Taboo words can be used to achieve a variety of personal and interpersonal outcomes that may be positive, negative, or inconsequential in terms of their impact on others, although some might argue all uses of taboo words are harmful to some degree.

What emerges from the above discussion is that the use of TL depends largely on the consequences of speech. If it results in embarrassment, it will be eliminated, while if it leads to solidarity, humour and relaxation, it is favoured. In this vein, Jay adds that **"speakers will use curse words based on their social utility"**. (idem).

From what precedes, it is necessary to mention that the term taboo, from this standpoint, is difficult to define because it changes depending on certain reasons. Moreover, many scholars suggest that, in a taboo area, we can find gestures, behaviours, words and expressions. However, our main concern is limited for studying taboo topics and words mainly sex and death.

1.4.1-Taboo Topics

Taboo topics are topics that are forbidden to talk about. However, many scholars claim that considering a topic taboo depends largely on its use and perception by the members of the society.

Actually, there is no need to say that all things related to sex and bodily effluvia are considered taboo. For example masturbation²⁷ is a sexual activity which is taboo since it is seen by all cultures as a moral sin. However, Allan and Burridge believe that the strongest taboo relating to sex is male homosexuality²⁸, unfaithful wives and bestiality²⁹. They add that homosexuality has drawn more scholarly attention than female one. In this vein, they (2006: 145) claim that **“All sex is subject to taboos and censoring, but the taboos on male homosexuality and ‘unfaithful’ wives have been strongest”**. They further explain the point that **“there are sound health reasons for keeping human waste at a distance”**. This means that bodily effluvia are motivated by people’s health reasons. They (ibid: 52) also maintain that bodily effluvia are considered as taboo topics in many societies since they are used to perform black magic including blood, spittle, nails and hair. However, they add that today’s people regard bodily effluvia as something disgusting or repulsive. In this respect, they (ibid: 173) highlight the following:

Human bodies need to expel the by-products of a living organism; and although we no longer worry that such effluvia will be used to perform black magic on us, they are normally obnoxious to the public – which makes them a potential source of embarrassment to the person from whom they issue.

On the other hand, they state that sex was the most tabooed topic in England fifty years ago, but it is replaced by death nowadays. In this respect, Allan and Burridge

²⁷ According to Allan and Burridge (idem) masturbation is a **“stimulation of the genitals for sexual satisfaction that is not achieved through penetrative intercourse or oral sex”**.

²⁸ This term indicates a sexual intercourse between individuals of the same sex.

²⁹ It is a sexual relation between humans and animals.

(ibid: 223) see that **“death has become the great taboo subject, smothered in prudery”**.

Moreover, disease is also a taboo topic. It is expressed with more acceptable expressions or words as noted by Allan and Burridge when they (ibid: 234) write:

In most societies, past and present, references to diseases are censored: they are spoken of euphemistically. It might be because they are thought to result from the actions of a malevolent spirit or person, or in consequence of their connection with death, or just because of their intrinsic unpleasantness.

Furthermore, food is also a taboo topic. For instance, blood and pork are forbidden for both Muslims and Jews, whereas beef is taboo for Hindus. In this vein, Allan and Burridge (ibid: 177) add that **“All human groups have food taboos of some sort. Beef is the forbidden food for Hindus, as pork for many Jews and Muslims”**.

1.4.2-Taboo Words

On the other hand, taboo words can be defined as terms that are forbidden to be uttered since they are used to offend and hurt people. In this line, Allan and Burridge (ibid: 237-238) argue that:

A taboo word in today’s English is avoided-that is to say, censored out of use on a particular occasion-not (unless one is a child)because any fear that physical harm may befall either on the speaker or the audience, but lest the speaker loses face by offending the sensibilities of the audience.

In fact, there are many types of TW(s) including those related to death, religion, disease, race and sex...etc. According to Blake and Moorhead (1993)³⁰, words such as ‘to die’ and ‘death’ are taboo since they are impolite and inappropriate to mention, for

³⁰ www.answers.com/topics/taboo

this reason, they are replaced by 'to pass away'. Thus, one might confirm that TW(s) play a crucial role in taboo language since terms such as 'nigger' and 'a Jew' can be used as insults.

Roughly speaking, it is worth claiming that all societies have taboo acts and words that they avoid to do or say. According to Anderson and Trudgill (1990: 55), TW(s) express forbidden behaviour. They add that it is better to name them as linguistic taboos since for each taboo act a linguistic taboo, i.e., a taboo word.

1.4.3-Taboo Language

According to Allan and Burridge (2006: 40), taboo language “[...] **commonly refers to language that is a breach of etiquette because it contains so-called ‘dirty words’**”. Moreover, they further argue that inappropriate language is the result of our anger and frustration. It is also used as a weapon against enemies. In this sense, they (ibid: 2) add that:

Language is used as a shield against malign fate and the disapprobation of fellow human beings; it is used as a weapon against enemies and a release valve when we are angry, frustrated or hurt.

Furthermore, Jay (1992) believes that TL has many uses. He maintains that it is employed to fulfill a speaker's or a listener's specific types of needs and intentions. He divides TL into different categories which he calls 'curse events' including swearing, obscenity, insults, blasphemy, name calling, verbal aggression, ethnic-racial slurs, vulgarity and slang...etc. In accordance, Bastistella (2005: 38) also states that there are several categories which define TL including epithets, profanity, vulgarity and obscenity.

1.5- Categories of Taboo Language

According to Goddard and Patterson (2000: 38), the different categories of taboo language are reflections of what society thinks it is taboo. They (ibid: 67) also add that the attitudes of people towards the different categories differ from one culture to

another. In the same line, Anderson and Hirsch (1985: 79) claim that Western societies take their TW(s) from the following categories:

Sexual organs, sexual relations.

Religion, church.

Excrement.

Death.

The physically or mentally disabled.

Prostitution.

Narcotics, crime.

One of the categories of TL is cursing which means the use of certain words expressions in order to harm an individual or a group of people. In this vein, Jay (1992: 03) argues that:

The intent of cursing is to invoke harm on another person through the use of certain words or phrases. These words are imbued with power granted to them mainly through religious or social demarcation. In other words, certain institutions like religion, have made a point to note that there exists in language a set of special words. These words are sanctioned by the institution by penalizing or punishing the speaker for such usage.

What can be understood from the above quotation is that religion and social norms play a vital role in the restriction of speech through punishing the speaker's usage of curse words. He (2000: 14) further mentions that cursing is a "spice" added to language, not an essential ingredient of it.

The other important categories are profanity and blasphemy. The former is related to the use of profane language or disrespect towards religion. It can be a word, an expression or a gesture which is socially considered rude or vulgar. In this regard, Timothy Jay (idem) claims that **"To be profane means to be secular or behaving outside the customs of religious belief. To be profane means to be ignorant or**

tolerant of the guidelines of a particular religious order". Accordingly, Bastistella (2005: 38) affirm that the most obvious feature of profanity is that **"it involves the coarse use of what is taken to be sacred"**. He further describes profanity as using **"religious terminology in a profane, secular or indifferent manner"** whereas; the latter is the use of certain words, or expressions to attack religion. However, lay people may confuse between blasphemy and profanity. According to Jay, there is a difference between them. In his point of view, **"A blasphemy is an attack on religion or religious doctrine"**, **"while profanity"**, he (1992: 04) adds, **"is related to secular or indifferent (to religion), blasphemy aims directly at the church"**. This means that blasphemy is a verbal assault by using the Lord's name. Besides, Bastistella adds that the difference between profanity and blasphemy is that profanity could be simply calling name of supernatural or infernal power. In this regard, Jay (1992: 4) goes on to add that:

An example of profanity would be a word or phrase which seeks not to denigrate God, religion or holy affairs but would be based more on ignorance of or indifference to these matters".

The term obscenity also belongs to these categories. It is employed to describe images, actions or gestures that are obscene especially sexuality and body function. In Montagu's (1967: 105) point of view, obscenity is **"a form of swearing that make use for indecent words and phrases"**. It refers, he adds, to **"words or expressions which characterise sex- differentiating anatomy or sexual and excretory functions in a crude way"**.

Not to forget insults which are forms of attacks on an individual, a group of people or something by calling it. Indeed, insults are related to **"(the) lack of respect for others on the part of the speaker"** as Jay (1996: 22) has noticed. In accordance, Fielder (2007: 05) defines the term as follows:

An insult is a mean thing someone says to hurt another person's feelings. People may use insults because they are angry, jealous, or have low self-esteem³¹.

What can be clearly observed from this quotation is that there are many psychological factors that push the speaker to use certain words to insult another person. In this regard, Jay (1996: 22) has pointed out that

**Insults may denote the physical, mental, or psychological qualities of the target and are commonly heard on the school playground [...]
They both function to hurt the person directly through the particular word or phrase.**

Besides, swearwords can be seen as a part of TL and are employed in daily speech. In Trudgill's point of view, they are related with things that are not used or expressions that are not said. Besides, Anderson and Trudgill (1990: 53) go on to say that swearing is a type of bad language in which:

The expression refers to something that is taboo and/ or stigmatized in a particular culture.

The expression is not presumed to be interpreted literally.

The expression can be used to manifest strong emotions and attitudes.

They also agree that people take for granted that swearing is an existing and identifiable part of human language and culture worthy of scholarly study. They go on to say that swearing is typical of spoken language since it is common between speakers in daily communication depending on the circumstances that push them for. Accordingly, Jay (1992: 155) observes that **“swearing is like the horn on your car,**

³¹ Jealous and self-esteem are bold in origin

which can be used to signify a number of emotions (e.g. anger, frustration, joy, surprise)”.

In all cases so far mentioned above, Allan and Burrridge (2006: 76) maintain that swearing is “[...] **to take an oath, make a solemn declaration; statement, affirmation, promise, or understanding; often in the eyes of God or in relation to some sacred object**”. They further (idem) claim that **“swearing is by implication, put in grave danger if found to be lying”**. Besides, they (ibid: 77) also believe that **“Swearing can act as an in-group solidarity marker within a shared colloquial style [...] it is likely to cause offence and may be specifically used to offend...”**

This means that the main aim behind the use of swearwords is to disguise, hurt and cause harm to individuals in another group. They may be, from this standpoint, a marker of solidarity in Allan and Burrridge’s point of view.

1.6- Motives for the Use of Taboo Language

According to Jay, there are psychological, social and linguistic motives for the use of TW(s). In his book, Why we Curse; A Neuro-psycho-social Theory of Speech, he maintains that life is full of unexpected events that push people to get angry or frustrated, but he (2000: 95) argues that **“psychological factors are necessary, but not sufficient.”** In contrast, Montagu (1967) observes that TW(s) produce emotional stability. Crystal (1995) shares the same idea with him when he claims that TW(s) may be a factor in reducing stress.

Additionally, TL can also have positive results depending on the reasons of use including humour, jokes, or storytelling as Jay (2000: 95) observes when he states that

Positive social outcomes are achieved by using taboo words in jokes and humor, social commentary, sex talk, storytelling, in-group slang; and self-deprecation or in ironic sarcasm in order to promote social harmony or cohesion.

In connection with this, a study conducted by Pilkington (2000)³², on the strategies used by men and women when gossiping, is of a particular interest. Through this study, he has shown that men use abusive language as a means of creating solidarity.

Furthermore, TW(s) are also employed as markers of friendliness in bantering remarks between friends. This view is supported by a study conducted by Hughes in 1992, when she investigates the use of TL by the lower working-class women. In this respect, she (1992: 299) states that **“Children are frequently sworn at [...] friends too are sworn at in both manners and this, I feel, is part of the vernacular bonding used by these women.”**

Accordingly, Fromkin and Rodman agree on the fact that there are occasions where speakers refrain from using TL due to linguistic motives. For example, Anderson and Trudgill (1990) have declared that most British people prefer using ‘donkey’ rather than ‘ass’ due to the linguistic similarity of ‘arse’ and ‘ass’. Besides, Fromkin and Rodman maintain that the members of the society share the same linguistic forms whether they are good or bad. They add that certain expressions are considered taboo due to their negative connotations. In this light, they (2010:424) write that:

The filth or beauty of language must be in the ear of the listener, or in the collective ear of the society. Furthermore, there is generally no linguistic reason why ‘the word vagina’ is ‘clean’ whereas ‘cunt is ‘dirty’.....

1.7-Theories on Taboo Language

In fact, studies on taboos have attracted much scholarly attention from different disciplines including sociology, psychology and later on linguistics. As a result, each field tries to explain this phenomenon in separation. However, sociolinguistics tends to study taboos through making a bridge between language and culture by applying

³²http://www.stanford.edu/~tylers/notes/papers/emotion/Emotion_in_linguistics_Schoebelen.doc

different methods of previous researchers in these disciplines. This can be better understood from the following scholarly achievements.

1.7.1- Pragmatic Theories

It is agreed that the study of speech as a part of human culture has attracted scholars from different disciplines including linguistics, anthropology, pragmatics and sociolinguistics. Hymes is among the first ethnographers/anthropologists who has pointed out that there is an intimate relationship between speech and human behaviour. He is influenced by a number of linguists including Boas, Sapir, Rodman Jacobson and other members of the Prague school. Most of his work opens up a project for ethnographic research, especially when he elaborates his early formulation ‘The Ethnography of Speaking’ in which he introduces the acronym of ‘Speaking’ which is employed to analyse language in use, which is termed ‘Speech Events’.

1.7.1.1-Dell Hymes’ Theory of Speaking

According to Hymes’ Ethnography of Speaking³³, in order to speak a language correctly, one needs not only to learn its vocabulary and grammar, but also the context in which words are used. He also claims that there are factors that influence communication. Among these factors:

- A. Setting and Scene: the former refers to the time and place in which the speech takes place, whereas the latter refers to the abstract psychological setting or the cultural definition of the events.
- B. Participants refer to the speaker and the audience as well. They include various combination speaker-listener, addresser-addressee, or sender-receiver.
- C. Act Sequence (A) is the form and order of an event. It also refers to the message of what is said: the precise message used, and how it is used.
- D. Key (K) is introduced to provide the tone, manner, or spirits in which an act is done. It is the overall tone or manner of the speech. The key factor describes the circumstances that make people use TW(s). These

³³ <http://www.docin.com/p-54987551.html>

circumstances can be anger, annoyance, offense, frustration, pain/injury and happiness.

- E. Instrumentalities refer to the forms, style of speech and the choice of the channel either written or spoken. In other words, a speaker might use a casual register with many dialectal features or might use a more formal register and careful grammatical standard forms.
- F. Norms: are social rules governing the events and participants' actions and reaction.
- G. The term Genres refers to a speech act or an event which is used in the form of a proverb, a riddle or a poem.

In his approach, Hymes argues that speakers must follow these factors in order to achieve an acceptable conversation. Besides, this formula has shown that speech is influenced by the cultural and religious norms of the society. In other words, society has put rules on language use. These rules must be followed by its members in order to handle successful communication and social relations.

1.7.1.2- Speech Acts Theory

Speech Acts Theory is an important element in the field of pragmatics. Among the predecessors of this approach are the British philosopher Austin, the American philosopher Searle (1969) and Grice (1975). Accordingly, Austin (1962: 14) has pointed out that the Speech Act Theory shows the relationship between language and the context of use through providing a systematic classification of communicative intentions. She goes on to state that people do not use language in communication as a set of correct utterances but also build them in a particular action. In other words, expressions have the capacity to perform certain kinds of communicative acts such as giving instructions and asking questions...etc. Austin (ibid: 17) calls such utterances 'performatives' which means **“utterances which are neither true nor false but which bring about a particular social effect by being uttered.”**

Furthermore, Austin mentions three kinds of acts when utterances are produced including locutionary acts, illocutionary force and perlocutionary effects. The first

refers to the speaker's literal meaning of the produced utterance. The second means the speaker's intention of the conveyed utterance and the latter expresses the effects of the utterance on the hearer. It also shows the reaction of the addressee to the addresser's illocutionary act.

In short, through this theory we aim to investigate when speakers use certain undesirable acts, words and expressions to hurt others.

1.7.2- Sociolinguistic Theories

Unlike the previous scholarly works on pragmatics, sociolinguistics tries to study taboos in relation to certain social parameters including age, gender and the social class of the speaker. In other words, it tends to investigate how culture is reflected in language depending on some social factors.

1.7.2.1- Gender Differences in Using Taboo Language

Over the years, scholars have been interested in language differences between males and females. While the earliest writers argue that women's language differs from that of men in terms of their choice of vocabulary and in the construction of sentences. Modern linguists have recognised the fact that there are factors influencing people's speech. Among these factors, we have sex and gender which are two major factors. The former expresses the biological features that distinguish males and females, whereas the latter refers to the social differences society imposes on sex.

Basically, most of the previous researchers on gender differences maintain that women are collaborative in conversation, while men are competitive. Accordingly, Coates (2004: 143) has pointed out that cooperative and competitive are always used together in conversation since **“different way of talking may share the goal of creating group identity”**. She (ibid: 127) adds that cooperative discourse can be realised through some patterns including **“topic and topic development; on the other hand, impacted by the hierarchical system, men tend to be more competitive in conversation so as to grab the floor, maintain their power and achieve masculinity”**. Holmes (1995) has a similar point of view that women tend to speak

more politely and formally, since they regard themselves as being a subordinate group in society.

Another important difference according to Lakoff (1975) is that men use direct questions in speech, while women often employ tag questions demonstrating greater timidity and uncertainty. She adds that language differences lie in the unequal status of men and women in society since males usually dominate conversations. She further explains that females are relatively powerless in their relationship. Hence, they tend to employ more polite forms in their conversations. Accordingly, Finegan (2004)³⁴ maintains that men differ from women even in how they pronounce and which words they choose to use when they talk. He continues saying that there are some words and expressions which are associated with feminist speech. In the same regard, Edlund (2007)³⁵ affirms that the difference between males and females lies in the use of apologies. According to him, women apologise to show consideration, whereas men do not like to apologise because they think that it will put them in a lower status.

Moving deeper in our analysis, many of the previous scholars take into consideration these differences in investigating gender differences in using TL. However, depending on gender only is not sufficient since there are other variables that play a crucial role including age and the social class. Trudgill and Chambers argue that society's view about men using bad language is more positive than women's use of bad linguistic forms. In this vein, they (1998: 84) state that:

Linguistic sex differentiation is a reflection of a much wider tendency for men to be regarded than women if they act tough, rough and break rules. Women, on the other hand, are encouraged to a much greater extent to be correct, discreet, quiet and polite in their behavior.

Similarly, Goddard and Patterson (2005: 92) have pointed out that women are expected to be unobtrusive and quiet by society. They (ibid: 87) claim that males have

³⁴ <http://www.docin.com/p-54987551.html>

³⁵ [www. Newsgarden.org/chatters/homepages/.../dirtywords.shtml](http://www.Newsgarden.org/chatters/homepages/.../dirtywords.shtml)

more linguistic freedom than females. They also add that men who employ swearwords are considered as real men.

Furthermore, Jay (2000: 181) avers the point that women never use taboo expressions since **“Women are expected to exhibit control over their thoughts, when men are more free to exhibit hostile and aggressive speech habits”**. In the same line, Coates (2003: 126) adds that **“Women are more polite, indirect and collaborative in conversation, while men are more impolite, direct and competitive...”** Sharing the same view with the previous scholars, Holmes (2001: 286) mentions that women tend to use “super polite” forms such as euphemisms. In accordance, Coates explains that **“Women don’t use off-color or indelicate expressions; women are the expert at euphemism.”** She (ibid: 15) also adds that:

There can be no doubt that women apply a great and universal influence on linguistic development through their instinctive shrinking from gross expressions, and their preference for refined and (in certain spheres) veiled and indirect expressions.

This means that women prefer indirect expressions, including euphemism, to express their needs and emotions.

Furthermore, Jay (2000: 166) argues that men use more curse words. In this respect, he says that **“men curse more than women; men use a larger vocabulary of curse words than do women”**. In contradiction with the previous scholarly views, Coates (ibid: 97) states that **“male usage of swear words in particular drops dramatically in mixed-sex conversations”**. Besides, she has proved that men tend to produce less TL in mixed conversation, whereas women will speak more TL in a mixed setting. She also adds that there is another reason, which pushes women to use taboo expressions, is what she calls ‘covert prestige’. In her point of view, people may employ covert prestige in order to reinforce their place in the community.

On the other hand, many scholars believe that the differences between both sexes, in the use of language forms, are related to the society’s attitudes and beliefs since each society has put some rules and norms that people are supposed to behave

according to them. This idea is better explained by Goddard and Patterson (2005: 34) as follows:

First we have sex-exclusive vocabulary, language that is used to describe either males or females (such as ‘hunk and buxom’). Second, we have language where the linguistic item remains the same but the meaning changes according to whether it is men or women who are being described. Examples can cover physical attributes, as in the term ‘well-built’, or behavioural traits, as in the term ‘aggressive’ which can have a positive meaning when applied to men (in sport, or in business contexts, for example) but has only a negative meaning when applied to women.

This means that in Western culture, men and women are expected to behave correctly. Goddard and Patterson also claim that they must share some characteristics or what is called ‘social knowledge’. They believe that this social knowledge is implicit and abstract since it is related with unconsciousness awareness.

Additionally, Dooling (1996: 11-14) suggests the view that men curse because they are victims of biology. He (ibid: 5) argues that women react differently towards the use of swearing. He (ibid: 10) also adds that many studies have shown that normal language is produced in the higher structure of the brain or what is called ‘the cerebral cortex’, whereas bad language is preserved in the lower structure, i.e., in a different part of the brain. He further maintains that men use the lower structure of the brain more than women do, claiming that male’s brain is wired for violence and swearing.

1.7.2.2- Macro and Micro-Context Theory

In addition to the previous theories, Huang and Tian propose a contextual framework that focuses on the factors that influence the use of TL. They claim that there are social and situational factors or what they call ‘macro and micro-context’. They believe that we should study these factors to have a good understanding of TL. In their point of view, a word can become taboo when it gains bad connotation in the society, i.e., it depends on the perception of the members in a given society. In this

vein, they explain what they (1990:66) call ‘macro-context’ or social factors as follows:

A social setting or environment in which a semantic word gains a socially engendered connotation, either sacred or despicable and filthy. This additional meaning is usually accepted and regarded as a convention to be observed by almost all the speakers in one speech community or even at a national level.

On the other hand, Huang and Tian maintain that there are situational factors or what they call ‘micro-context’ which they (ibid: 66-67) explain as follows:

**Participants including speaker and listener their age, sex, social status, relationship to each other.
Purpose of conversation and attitudes of participants.
Content or subject matter.
Setting including place and time.
Medium.**

Furthermore, Huang and Tian give a great importance to what they call ‘participant variables’. In this vein, they (ibid: 12) state that:

The speaker should have due regard to the addressee’s sex age, occupation and status in society. All these participant variables play a vital role in deciding whether a word is given quasi-taboo state

In this regard, our main work will follow Huang and Tian model concerning the influence of social and situational factors on the speaker to use taboos. Besides, this research will follow Hymes’ Theory of Speaking to explain the reasons that push speakers to use taboos.

1.8-The Concept of Euphemism

The term euphemism, according to Holder (2008: 65), has derived from the Greek word euphemo, meaning “speaking well”. The latter is divided into eu, which means “good, well” and phemo, meaning “speech/speaking”.

In traditional scholarship, however, EUPH was used to substitute words and phrases which were considered impolite and embarrassing since people need to speak indirectly and politely. In this vein, Pyles and Algeo (1970: 201-2) state that **“Euphemism is any term that replaces a taboo word in a language”**. Accordingly, Howard (1985: 101) refers to EUPH as **“the substitution of an offensive expression by another softer, more ambiguous expression, or a periphrastic one”**. In the same line of thought, Leech (1974: 53) defines the term as follows:

[euphemism] consists of replacing a word which has offensive connotations with another expression, which makes no overt reference to the unpleasant side of the subject, and may even be a positive misnomer.

Accordingly, Lakoff (1975: 19) writes that **“When a word acquires a bad connotation by association with unpleasant or embarrassing, people may search for substitutes that do not have the uncomfortable effect-that is euphemism”**. Kenworthy (1991: 20) also argues that the existence of TW(s) leads to the creation of EUPH(s). He adds that **“The word euphemism is a word or phrase that replaces a taboo word or serves to avoid frightening or unpleasant subjects.”** Along with the same line, Gomez (2009: 717) states that **“Euphemism consists of the substitution of an unpleasant word by another, pleasant one when the first is to be avoided for reasons of religious fear, moral scruples or courtesy”**. Moreover, Rawson (1981: 1) believes that EUPH(s) are powerful linguistic forms which are **“embedded so deeply in our language that few of us, even those who pride themselves on being plain spoken, ever get through a day without using them”**.

Furthermore, Hudson (1996: 260) remarks that **“Euphemism is the extension of ordinary words and phrases to express unpleasant or embarrassing ideas. The**

indirectness of form is felt to diminish the unpleasantness of the meaning”. In the same regard, Löbner (2002) claims that negative connotations in relation to social taboos can be seen as responsible factors for the emergence of what are called EUPH.

Additionally, Allan and Burrige (1991: 23) consider EUPH as a phenomenon closely related to the norms of the society and politeness strategies used by its members, and define the term as follows:

A euphemism is used as an alternative to a dispreferred expression, in order to avoid possible loss of face, either one’s face or, through giving offence, that of the audience, or of some third party.

Furthermore, many linguists agree on the fact that human brain selects appropriate words in daily conversation. This process is known as parallel processing. In the case of EUPH(s), the brain searches for less TW(s) to fill in the cap. In this respect, Aitchison (1996: 133) observes that:

[...] the mind is enormously powerful network, in which any word which at all resembles the one heard is automatically activated, and that each of these triggers its neighbours, so that activation gradually spreads like ripples in a pond. Words that seem particularly appropriate get more and more excited and those which are irrelevant fade away. Eventually one candidate wins out over the others.

From what precedes, it is very interesting to note that EUPH represents a universal feature of language usage; all cultures use it to talk about things they find embarrassing. Henceforth, Cobb (1985: 76) observes that the main purpose behind its use is to present “**[...] a situation, a person or an object in a more agreeable, more reassuring or politer light than definition.**”³⁶ It is also through EUPH that speakers disguise “**An unpleasant truth, veil an offence, or palliate in decency**” (Kany,

³⁶ Cobb in Enright (1985)

1960)³⁷. In other words, it is employed to make something bad sounds better as the following table mentions:

Subject	Euphemistic Terms
Murder	Terminate, neutralize, and put a hit on.
Lie	Misstatement, misspeaking, plausible denial.
Civilian deaths	Collateral damage
Abortion	Interruption of pregnancy, miscarriage

Table 1.1- Some Subjects and their Euphemistic Terms Taken from Garner (1998: 3).

Furthermore, Farghal (1995) also views that the main use of EUPH is to reduce the negative effects of TW(s) and achieve a higher degree of politeness. In connection with this, Burchfield (1985: 29) argues that **“a language without euphemisms would be a defective instrument of communication”**³⁸. Along with the same line, Brown, Levinson (1987) consider ambiguity as an aspect of EUPH and is employed as a politeness strategy by language users to protect both speakers and interlocutors from the loss of face. Besides, EUPH(s) are also employed to avoid strong negative stereotypes from prejudicing a hearer as the following table has shown:

Subject	Euphemistic Terms
Poor	Economically disadvantaged.
Crippled	Handicapped; physically challenged; differently disabled.
Retarded	Development disabled.
Medical malpractice	Therapeutic misadventure.

Table 1.2 Some Negative Stereotypes and their Euphemistic Counterparts Taken from Harris (2000: 3).

³⁷ Cited by Trinch (2001: 571)

³⁸ Burchfield in Enright (ibid: 83)

Harris further explains that EUPH is used to generate several alternative terms. In this respect, He (2003: 4) says that **“Euphemising is a perfectly intelligent method of generating new and useful ways of perceiving things”**. EUPH is considered, from this standpoint, to be a lexical phenomenon employed to replace words and expressions which are seen inappropriate for polite linguistic usage.

On the other hand, the term Sweet Talking is also coined to replace topics that are harmful, forbidden and impolite depending on the culture and taboo topics of the people who interpret them. In many cultures, taboos are believed to have a demonic power on people who mention them. As a result, sweet talking is used to replace these expressions. In this respect, Trask (1996: 41) gives a good example of Australian languages when he says:

In all native Australian languages, when a number of a community dies, the members of his community are forced not to mention his/her name or, even, any word that is similar in pronunciation to his/ her name since these words are taboos and must be replaced. Consequently, they, the members of the community, are forced to search for sweet words (loan words from other languages) to replace the lost words caused by the death of the community member.

In contrast with the previous point, Yule (1996: 60) refers to EUPH as sweet talking. His argument is built on the view that the members of community should be polite in impolite situations. He further claims that when we are in interaction, we are not expected to be offensive or be offended by others. He adds that it depends on the level of formality and social status between individuals.

In fact, when someone uses sweet talking, (s) he tries to maintain her/his face and the others as well. However, the use of sweet words depends largely on the closeness of human relations. For example, referring to toilet as the loo or powder between close friends is not the same in a formal situation. Consequently, sweet talking is employed for face saving.

1.9- Categories of Euphemism

It is obvious that death is, as Allan and Burridge (1991: 153) argue, **“a fear-based taboo”**, in which different fears coexist, namely fear of the loss of loved ones, fear of the corruption of the body, fear of evil spirits and fear of what comes after death. In this vein, Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams (2010: 472) claim that **“In many societies, because death is feared, there are many euphemisms related to this subject. People are less apt to die than more apt to pass or pass away”**.

Furthermore, many Western scholars claim that people do not simply die, but they pass away, move on, or go to a better place. Agreeing on this view, Fernández (2006: 106) affirms that human beings have created straightforward expressions to deal with the topic of death. In this sense, he says that **“Symptomatic of overall discomfort with the subject of death as a whole.”** Thus, these soft expressions and words are termed ‘death euphemism’.

Additionally, sex is probably the most euphemised topic in all cultures. Henceforth, motives behind EUPH(s) connected to sex are quite different from fear. However, most of people have always considered sex as a private matter and unacceptable to be discussed in public. Thus, EUPH(s) referring to sex are probably as old as human history. In addition to this, the boundaries of sexual EUPH(s) are wide since they contain acts, organs, clothes (underwear) and results including pregnancy and the birth ...etc.

In general, many sexual terms have remained unacceptable for public use, while others have undergone radical rehabilitation such as ‘penis’ and ‘vagina’. Besides, sex, bodily effluvia and bodily parts make up an important part of TL in all cultures as it is noted by Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams (ibid: 472) when they state that **“words relating to sex, sex organs, and natural bodily functions make up a large part of the set of taboo words of many cultures”**.

Without forgetting religious EUPH(s) which are motivated by human prejudices, respect to God, fear of devil and evil forces. Thus, they are used to show respect to religion. Besides, they are employed to replace profanity, blasphemy and swearing.

1.10- Theories on the Use of Euphemism

Before dealing with the aspects of EUPH, it is advisable to provide an account of the theories that the concept of EUPH has received including Politeness Strategies, Face Theory, Relevance Theory, and The Co-operative Principle, although most of these approaches are used to explain conversational phenomena.

1.10.1- Politeness Theory

It is worth taking into consideration that **“Brown and Levinson’s theory describes politeness as a complex framework for softening face threatening acts.”** (Bowe and Martin, 2007: 71).

According to Brown and Levinson (1978: 13-5), politeness is considered as a major factor that motivates speakers towards the use of EUPH. In accordance, Emerson (1856: 326) claims that **“Politeness is the ritual of society, as prayers are of the church; a school of manners, and a gentle blessing to the age in which it grew”**.³⁹ This means that politeness is rooted in the cultural norms of the society. They (idem) also believe that the use of language depends on several factors which are summarised as follows:

Whether or not behaviour counts as good manners will depend on a number of factors. These include: the relationship between speakers, their audience, and anyone within earshot; the subject matter; the situation (setting); and whether a spoken or written medium is used. In other words: politeness is wedded to context, place and time.

What can be clearly understood from the above quotation is that politeness theory belongs to socio-pragmatic field of research which takes into consideration the relationship between the speaker/listener, the topic and setting, although there have been many theories that are used to express politeness, the widely used approach comes from face-saving view, usually associated with Brown and Levinson’s book on

³⁹ Quoted by Allan and Burridge (2006: 30)

politeness. This framework plays a crucial role in analysing how people build social relationships during interaction. They also claim that the main aim behind this strategy is to prevent damaging faces of people. They take the notion of face proposed by Goffmann (1967) to claim that EUPH is a useful linguistic tool to diminish the threat to the speaker's own social image. According to this theory, the inflexion and indirectness of speech stem from the need of accommodating politeness in conversation. In this regard, Lakoff (1975) views that “[P]oliteness usually supersedes: it is considered more important in conversation to avoid offence than to achieve clarity”.⁴⁰

Apparently, when we communicate with other members in other societies, we have to respect one's own face and to avoid threatening another's face. In order to avoid these face-threatening acts, Brown and Levinson (1987) postulate what is called Politeness Strategies. They state that these strategies are based on the following three sociological factors including the relative power of the hearer over the speaker, the social distance between the speaker and the hearer and the ranking of the imposition in doing the face-threatening act (Brown and Levinson, *ibid*: 15-16).

Indeed, Fraser (*ibid*: 219-236) reviews different approaches to the notion of politeness as a social norm (equivalent to what society identifies with 'good manners'); politeness as a conversational maxim (an adaptation of Grice's Cooperative Principle); and politeness as a way to preserve the public self-image (approach defended by Brown and Levinson). He claims that this latter is the most adequate to deal with in studying EUPH.

Politeness is, from this standpoint, considered as an important aspect in human interaction since it protects the face of both the speaker and the listener. Accordingly, Bowe and Martin report Brown and Levinson's point of view stating that the notion of politeness correlates with certain social variables. In this regard, they (2007: 71) state the following:

[...] our choice of politeness strategy, or lack thereof, is decided by a

⁴⁰ Cited by Fraser (1990: 23)

number of social variables. The first of these is the perceived social variables. The first of these is the perceived social distance between the speaker and hearer, social distance is dependent on socio-cultural factors such as age, gender, role, education, class, ethnicity and so forth, all of which contribute towards establishing a degree of familiarity between speaker and hearer.

However, understanding politeness strategies is incomplete without the introduction of impoliteness, although it has been dealt with in a dark spot without a systematic elaboration; it has attracted the attention of today's scholars for two reasons. Firstly, the theoretic framework of politeness lacks systematic explanation of this linguistic behaviour for a long time. Secondly, although Brown and Levinson formulate their theory of politeness on the notion of face attack, their studies target mainly the need for a more elaborate description of face threat acts which gives rise to impoliteness studies.

Furthermore, the definition of impoliteness has arisen more intense debates since it is not easy to explain the concept in a simplified way. According to Locher and Bousfield (2008: 2), impoliteness is **“The long neglected ‘poor cousin’ of politeness”**. Whereas, Culpeper, Bousfield and Wichmann (2003: 1545) define impoliteness as **“communicative strategies designed to attack face, and thereby cause conflict and disharmony”**. Along with the same line, Kienpointner (2008: 244) claims that impoliteness is regarded as **“the normal and expectable communicative behavior.”** In fact, Culpeper (2005: 38) proposes a revised definition when he says that **“Impoliteness comes about when: (1) the speaker communicates face-attack intentionally, or (2) the hearer perceives and, or combination of (1) and (2)”**. Similarly, Bowe and Martin (2007: 71) claim that **“Impoliteness is characterized by an intentional and purposeful attack on a hearer's face”**. Besides, Culpeper (1996: 356) lists impoliteness strategies that are used to attack the hearer's face instead of trying to save it including:

- 1) *Bald on record impoliteness* – as in Brown and Levinson's strategy, the FTA is performed as clearly and boldly as possible,**

but the difference is that Brown and Levinson's strategy is a *politeness* strategy in situations where the threat to the hearer's face is small.

2) *Positive impoliteness* – the use of strategies designed to damage the addressee's positive face wants.

3) *Negative impoliteness* – the use of strategies designed to damage the addressee's negative face wants.

4) *Sarcasm or mock politeness* – the FTA is performed with the use of obviously insincere strategies.

5) *Withhold politeness* – the absence of politeness in situations where it is expected.

1.10.2- Face Theory

Face is another important concept in studying linguistic politeness. This latter is originally introduced by Goffman in the 1960's and later on Brown and Livenson (1978, 1987)⁴¹ have derived it for their politeness theory. This view can be better summarised by Miller (2006: 4) when she states:

[...] Brown and Levinson derive their concept of Politeness from Goffman's (1967) notion of face and from the English folk term that associates face with notions of being embarrassed or humiliated...

In fact, they have constructed a model known as a 'Model Person' (MP). They claim that the model person is a speaker who is fluent and has two special qualities namely rationality and face. By rationality, they (idem) mean the "**Public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself.**", whereas face "**means the public self-image of a person**"⁴². They (ibid: 66) further maintain that face is "**something that is emotionally invested, and can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must**

⁴¹ The notion of face "is derived from both the English folk perception of 'being embarrassed or humiliated', or "losing face" (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 61), and from the work of Goffman (1955, 1967)". Cited by Bowe and Martin (ibid: 27).

⁴²Quoted by Yule (1996: 60)

be constantly attended to in interaction” and consists of two aspects namely negative and positive face. The previous refers to **“the positive consistent self-image or ‘personality’ (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants.”** On the other hand, negative face means **“the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction-that is, to freedom of action and freedom from imposition.”**⁴³ Henceforth, the members of the society need to be polite, considerate and respectful. Consequently, self-image ought to be reflected both physically and linguistically.

Miller further explains that the notion of face is deeply related to the emotion of the speaker and listener. In this regard, she (2006: 4) explains this view as follows:

Face is something that is linked with emotions, something that can be lost, maintained or enhanced and that must be constantly attended to in interaction. When people are constantly interacting, they mostly are aware of the vulnerability of face and know that normally everyone’s face depends on everyone else’s being maintained.

Indeed, EUPH plays a crucial role in daily communication. Widdowson (1990: 109-10) claims that the idea behind EUPH is the creation of good relations. In this sense, he claims that **“Those participating in conversational encounters have to have a care for the preservation of good relations by promoting the other’s self-image, by avoiding offence.”** Similarly, Bowe and Martin (idem) add that **“[...] the key observation is that politeness has two important aspects; preserving a person’s positive face self-image and avoiding imposition on a person’s freedom.”**

In relation to the concept of face, Brown and Levinson (1978: 65-67) also introduce the term FTA, a face-threatening act, which is a speech act that can damage the hearer’s positive or negative face. Besides, they (ibid: 68) also claim that the main aim of politeness is to diminish face-threatening acts. They further explain that any rational agent uses certain strategies to minimise the threat.

⁴³ Quoted by Bowe and Martin (2007: 28)

1.10.3- Relevance Theory

This approach has been developed by Sperber and Wilson in 1986 to provide a pragmatic account of the process of communication. It is also relevant to the study of EUPH. These linguists (1986: 158) are with the view that **“Every act of ostensive communication communicates the presumption of its own optimal relevance”** According to them, relevance theory may be seen as an attempt to work out in detail one of Grice’s central claims that an essential feature of most human communication is the expression and recognitions.

In fact, Sperber and Wilson have expanded Grice’s (1975) maxim of relation. In this approach, they affirm that relevance is the most fundamental principle in interaction. Under this point of view, they (1995: 260) agree that there are two principles, which guide hearers towards the speaker intended interpretation.

On the other hand, Kasper (1997) emphasises the point that **“when using euphemism, a speaker often breaks the maxim of relation in failing to be relevant to the current topic”**⁴⁴. In other words, relevance theory is not a motivation for EUPH. In a broader sense, it is used to permit its use.

1.10.4- Cooperative Principle

The cooperative principle (CP) is one of the commonly known pragmatic principles which are used to interpret literal sense and pragmatic force of utterances. Grice (1975), in his famous paper “Logic and Conversation”, suggests that this theory is designed to explain why speakers are able to implicate more from expressions that is explicitly stated. In this vein, Bowe and Martin (2007: 10) explain this principle as follows:

Grice (1975) identified four expectations that adult English speakers seem to use in interpreting literal and implied meaning in a conversation. He called these expectations conversational maxims⁴⁵, which work

⁴⁴ Cited by Coulmas (1998: 8)

⁴⁵ Conversational maxims is bold in origin.

together with a general principle he called the Cooperative Principle.

As the previous quotation clearly demonstrates, Grice (ibid: 47) identifies three maxims which he calls “Conversational Maxims”. These maxims can be summarised as follows:

Quantity⁴⁶: Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purpose of the exchange).

Do not say what you believe more informative than is required.

Quality: Do not say what you believe to be false.

Do not say for which you lack adequate evidence.

Relevance: Be relevant

Manner: Avoid obscurity of expression.

Avoid ambiguity.

Be orderly.

(Quoted Bowe and Martin, ibid: 10)

Bowe and Martin (idem) further highlight that the previous maxims “**represent norms that hearers can expect speakers to have followed, they are engaged in cooperative conversation**”.⁴⁷

However, Hudson claims that these maxims are often broken by speakers, their interlocutors search for what Widdowson calls implicature. Thus, many speakers resort to the use of EUPH. In this sense, Hudson (1996: 115) explains that:

⁴⁶ Quantity, quality, relevance and manner are bold in origin.

⁴⁷ Norms and cooperative conversation are bold in origin

As hearers, we try hard to make sense of what other people say, even when this means reading for more between the lines than is in them. But as speakers we try to anticipate problems, which the addressee may have in making sense of what we say, by saying only what we may reasonably expect him to understand.

This means that in real life, a person tends sometimes to violate to the above principles. In other words, to maintain desirable social relationships, human prefer more indirect expressions or rather choose more euphemistic expressions.

In short, the Cooperative Principle is, in essence, a kind of an important agreement between participants to work together to create a coherent and effective exchange. In this respect, Hudson (ibid: 102) argues that participants should speak **“sincerely, relevantly and clearly, while providing sufficient information.”**

As a concluding remark, EUPH is deeply linked to politeness and face strategies which are so mutually dependent on each other. In the light of this last idea, Allan and Burridge (1991: 7) observe that **“[...] the greater the oncoming face-affront, the greater is the politeness shown, and the greater is the degree of euphemism required”**.

1.11- Taboos, Euphemisms and Attitudinal Studies

It is agreed that the attitudes of humans towards an act, things or speech are the results of the society's religious norms and certain factors including fear as Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams (ibid: 478-479) have pointed out when they confirm that **“Language cannot be obscene or clean; attitudes towards specific words or linguistic expressions reflect the views of a culture or society toward the behaviors and actions of the language users”**. Besides, all people have negative attitudes towards some topics such as sex, body parts, death and disease. This view is supported by Brain (1979: 233) when he sees that **“there is tremendous cultural variation in human attitudes to sex [...] but it is my contention that in every culture we find anxiety surrounding sexuality”**. Furthermore, the feeling of anxiety

about sex arises from various beliefs since it was considered dirty. In this regard, Brain (ibid: 158) affirms:

It is clear that human starting erect must cleanse themselves; they also have to control their excretion of feces and urine to be human as we understand the word. Most importantly of all, they have to be taught to these things. There is little doubt that this is where humans universally acquire the idea that sex is “dirty”.

Moreover, death is another topic worthy of discussion since people have negative attitudes towards it. In this regard, Brain (ibid: 27-28) goes on to explain that:

We may partially repress our fears of death or joke about it to cover our terror. Freud first pointed out that we laugh most at those things we fear most. If you want to get people’s attention at a party of the interest of students at a lecture just mention death, sex, or incest.

Unlike taboos, people have positive attitudes towards the use of EUPH. According to Burchfield (1985)⁴⁸, its use does not change over time since it is employed to avoid embarrassment, but through investigating taboos, he adds, we can notice a change in our attitudes towards death, sex and other social topics.

In its general terms, taboos and EUPH(s) represent the image of the social and moral attitudes of the society’s members. Besides, there are topics, namely sex, body parts and death which are engrained in all humans and even in the name of science.

1.12- Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, we tried to shed some light on the most important theories and approaches on taboos and EUPHS including the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, Dell Hymes Speaking Theory, Politeness Strategies postulated by Brown and Levinson. While the previous approaches express the factors that push people to use

⁴⁸ Burchfield in Enright (ibid: 13)

taboo expressions, the subject of the latter, at the same time, provides an insight on the importance of politeness and face-saving as important components in daily conversation as well as in avoiding taboos through the usage of euphemistic expressions.

Furthermore, we have also investigated the different types of taboos namely taboo language, words and topics in addition to the various categories that characterise this area of research including insults, cursing, swearing, blasphemy and profanity...etc, but since these categories are not our main concern through this dissertation, we are not going to deal with in the second chapter, without forgetting the notion of EUPH which plays a vital role as a cover of rudeness and vulgarity that lead probably to embarrassment.

Roughly speaking, the first thing we have noticed is that taboos and EUPH(s) reflect the spirit of each culture since each society has its own social norms that control especially the use of TL. Henceforth, some taboos and EUPH(s) are culture-specific because many acts or words that are banned in one society can be the norm of another.

Chapter Two

CHAPTER II

ALGERIAN TABOOS AND EUPHEMISMS: AN ATTITUDINAL AND A SOCIO-CULTURAL ANALYSIS.

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2.1- Introduction

It is very interesting to note that Algerian culture represents the social and religious norms of this Muslim and Arabian society. This culture is the result of the arrival of many people who had a deeper impact on the language situation as well as the socio-cultural and religious norms of the country.

What can be also observed is that Algerian culture has made certain taboo subjects and, hence, Algerians have created expressions and terms to regulate them in their daily speech. Thus, they employ these words to express their disapproval of certain acts that are harmful. Consequently, TL expresses and reflects the social customs, beliefs and views of the Algerian society. Besides, Islam also plays a vital role in the construction of euphemistic expressions as well as in understanding people's behaviour, since it restricts forbidden acts to be done or said.

Thus, this chapter aims firstly to study TL from socio-cultural and religious perspectives. It also attempts to depict the various reasons under which Algerians use TW(s) in relation to certain parameters including age, gender, the socio-cultural status and the level of education. Furthermore, it aims to give an overview of the different strategies that are used in order to avoid taboo expressions.

2.2- Algerian Socio-cultural and Linguistic Profiles

In her book *Women, Gender, and Language in Morocco*, Sadiqi (2003: 17) declares the following statement:

Culture may be broadly defined as a system of practices, rituals, beliefs, values, and ways of meaning of a community. All cultures control their members, but they differ in the degree of the control they impose on the individuals and social behaviors of their members, as well as the parameters within the members exercise control over their destiny and their environment.

The above extract provides an overview of culture as is a set of beliefs, values, morals, and norms that are put by the society in order to restrict the behaviour of its members and, henceforth, their language.

In fact, Algerian culture is a part of the Arabic culture and reflects the social norms and traditions of the Maghreb communities in general and Islamic values in particular.

Interestingly, a lot of can be mentioned about the history of the Algerians, their culture and language, but since our main work is limited to tackle taboos and EUPH(s) as parts of this culture and language, we are not supposed to dig deeper on the Algerian linguistic profiles. In fact, Algerian culture constitutes a mosaic picture as a result of the successive comings of different civilisations starting with the Romans, then the Islamic conquests in the 7th and 11th centuries, the Ottoman Empire which left a great impact on the people's traditions in addition to the French occupation which lasted for 130 years. What can be also noted is that the French influence is deeply rooted in the Algerian culture as well. Kaye and Zoubir (1990: 69) have summarised the most important stages in the Algerian history as follows:

Before the Arab conquest in the seventh century and the Islamization of the Berbers, Algeria was a Romance province. And before it was annexed by the French in the nineteenth century, who subjugated the Berbers and the Arabs in the sixteenth century, turned Algeria into a pirate state open to a multiplicity of cultural models during two centuries of Ottoman presence.

Accordingly, Ruedy (2005: 10) shares the same view when he claims that:

The Arab invasion of the seventh century brought about the Arabization of many cities and several coastal areas, but it is clear that most Algerians in the countryside continued to speak Berber will into the twelfth century. The factor that accelerated linguistic transformation from the late eleventh

century was the invasion of the Banu Hilal and Banu Sulaym, nomadic Arabic....

Along the same line, Oakes claims that Algeria was a crossroad for different cultures which resulted in the birth of many customs and traditions. She adds that the influence appears in the traditional meals and costumes. She (2008: 23) finishes her idea claiming that:

Algeria truly stands at the crossroads of cultures; you have the indigenous Berber people, the Arabs traditions plus African influences. There is also a strong European influence, most notably French but also Spanish plus the remnants of the Turkish heritage which is most notably present in food.

Similarly, Edelstein (2011: 342) gives a good description of the Algerian culture and society as well. She affirms that Algerians are hospitable people who like guests and who have built a strong relationship between each other. This argument is explained through her speech as follows:

Algeria is culturally rich and diverse. Historically, ancient civilizations influenced the country's culture and politics through conquest and trade. Native Algerians were ethnically identified as Berber since the 5th century BC; however, historical shifts impacted the culture and identity of the nation's people indefinitely.

Obviously, the national language of the country is Modern Standard Arabic as all Arab Muslim countries. In fact, MSA is used in formal prestigious situations including education, press and administration, whereas Algerian Arabic (AA) or 'darija' is employed as a code in informal settings such as family conversations, markets and streets ...etc. In order to explain this idea, Oakes (ibid: 18) writes:

Most people speak a dialectal form of Arabic, known as Algerian Arabic or *darija* [...] few people speak Classical Arabic outside school and so understanding and use of the language remains limited.

Besides, Ruedy (2005: 10) affirms that AA or ‘darija’ has descended from the Nomadic invaders. In this sense, he explains this idea as follows:

The Arabic speech most widespread in Algeria today is a dialect descended from these nomadic invaders. The sedentary Arabic dialects presumed to be pre-Hilalian are limited to the Arabic speaking parts of the lesser Kabylia [...] Algerian Sahara was dominated by a nomadic group known as the Towareg. The Aures and most of the Nementcha mountains were home to the Chaouia.

In accordance with this, Edelstein (2011: 342) adds that the Algerian linguistic profile is rich as its culture. It includes Standard Arabic as the national language in addition to Berber and other Algerian Arabic dialects. French language is also a part of this profile since its words have long slipped into Algerian dialects and being used in daily interaction. In this sense, she observes that:

[...] the official language of Algeria is Arabic, Berber dialects are also spoken throughout the nation. In fact, Berber is known as the national language and Arabic the official language. French is also commonly spoken among Algerians as a second language because Algeria was under French rule between 1830 and 1962, the influence of French culture and language is significant. It is not uncommon to hear French words interwoven into Arabic conversation. Bi-and trilingualism are not uncommon in Algeria.

Interestingly, Ruedy goes on to explain that the majority of Algerians, in general, are Arabs except 25% are Berber i.e., 7 millions. In this regard, he (2005: 9) highlights the following:

Today the majority of Algerians are Arabs and 20 to 25 percent are Berber. Since it is evident that the great majority of Arab as well as Berber Algerians are descended from Berber ancestors, the criteria for the distinction are linguistic rather than racial.

He (ibid: 9) further explains that the word Berber goes back to the Greek “**who called the people they found living in the Maghreb at the dawn of history barbarians.**” He adds that this “**terminology subsequently adopted in various forms by Romans, Arabs, Europeans, and others.**”

What can be also noticed in today’s Algerian linguistic profile is that most people speak French fluently, but the written form is low. Indeed, the younger generation is weak in both languages. In this vein, Oakes (2008: 18-19) declares:

[...] many people speak good French the level of written French is often low, especially amongst the younger generation [...] The further from the capital you go the less French there is spoken. It is generally true that the older generation, educated under the colonial masters, speak better French than the new generation.

Moving further in our analysis, it is advisable to provide an overview about the structure of AS. As all Muslim societies, ensuing children and sexuality are parts of marriage and creating a family. In fact, the family structure is an important component of the AS since each partner plays a vital role. Women are the center of the family and men are created for going out and working in order to provide financial support for the family. This belief is reinforced through cultural and religious norms which increasingly advocate that the role of both women and men are fundamental in

maintaining societal structure. However, the status of the Algerian women has changed in the last decades since females begin playing a role in the society through working, although the structure of the AS has put some norms that must be followed by Algerian females. Accordingly, Oakes (ibid: 19) describes Algerian women as follows:

[...] women in Algeria are not as restricted by religion as they are in some other countries but they may still be constrained by tradition. In Algeria women rarely walk in the street at night and sitting in a café or bar marks them as a prostitute.

2.3- The Cultural and Linguistic Backgrounds of Tlemcen Speech Community

The words Tlemcen or ‘Tilimsan’ or ‘Talamsan’ are Berber terms which mean ‘spring’. Among its names, we have also Pomaria and Agadir. Tlemcen is a town located in Northwestern Algeria. Besides, its culture is the result of centuries of history foundation and the successive arrival of different civilisations including Arabic, Islamic and Andalucian cultures.

Tlemcen history has witnessed the comings of many invaders including the Romans in the 4th century, who built many military outposts in this city. During the Roman reign, Tlemcen was called Pomaria and became an Arab province after their conquests during the 8th and 9th centuries. In fact, the name Tlemcen came after the foundation of Tagrart by Almoravid in 1082, but after the collapse of their civilisation, it became the capital of the Ziyyanid kingdom between 1234 and 1554.

During the first half of the 14th century, Tlemcen became the heart of many religious foundations, famous Quranic schools and intellectual centers for all Maghreb citizens and by the late 15th century, it became under the protection of Ottoman Empire and lost its power during the French occupation.

Briefly speaking, Tlemcen culture constitutes an important part of the Algerian history in general. However, this culture is not the only crucial component in building

its history, language is still one of these bases and as we have already mentioned, we are not supposed to dig deeper in language issues since we are dealing with taboos, EUPH(s) and attitudes, but it is advisable to provide an account of Tlemcen linguistic and cultural profiles.

What can be firstly observed is that public manners are extremely important in Tlemcen society. Besides, social etiquette and good language govern the interaction between people and their relationships to a greater degree. Accordingly, Dandene (2007: 175) highlights that Tlemcen is seen as a prestigious centre which is characterised by a rich culture and a conservative nature of its people. In this regard, he writes that **“Tlemcen town has been regarded as a well-established prestigious centre whose native speakers are characterized by highly conservative social and cultural traits.”**

Furthermore, Dandene adds that the linguistic profile of Tlemcen is very rich. It is characterised by the use of the glottal stop ‘?’ which is seen as a sign of Tlemcen urban dialect and which is employed in daily communication. Moreover, as all Algerian varieties, Tlemcen dialect has borrowed many French terms which are adopted and being used in daily communication.

2.4- Types of Taboos in Algerian Culture

In most Arab cultures, taboo means that certain behaviours, topics and terms are banned. It is referred to as [ʕajb]: “taboo”. Therefore, every word, which is related to such behaviour, is forbidden. In this regard, Sadiqi (2003: 78) claims that the general meaning of taboo in Western culture:

[...] correlates with the Arabic term for taboo *haram*. A behavior (linguistic or otherwise) is considered taboo when societal opinion either inhibits or prohibits it in a rational or irrational manner.

Following Jay’s categorisation, we can classify Algerian taboos into two main types namely non-taboo topics and words which can become taboo when they are

employed in specific contexts. In this vein, Sadiqi (ibid: 78) has pointed out that **“Although taboo words are appropriate in specific contexts, they are socially forbidden in some communicative contexts. These words are not banned on the basis of their meanings, but on the basis of their forms”**, whereas the second type includes unmentionable topics and words.

2.4.1- Non-taboo Words (Neutral Words)

As we have explained in the first chapter, some topics that are banned in one society are not necessary in another. However, many societies have put heavy penalties on some non-taboo words and topics which make them inappropriate in certain contexts. In Chinese culture, for instance, offering a friend a clock as a gift is considered as an indecent act since the word has a similar sound with the end and, therefore, literally means the end of life.

Furthermore, Islam has played a substantial role in making some neutral words sound taboo especially when they are employed as swearwords such as pig, dog, a donkey and a Jew...etc. In Algerian context, however, people have developed some euphemistic expressions to use including [ħaʃa:k] before uttering these words since names of some animals are associated with dirt and uncleanness, whereas the term ‘a Jew’ is related to the meanness of Jewish people. Sadiqi goes on to add that it is taboo for most Arab people to mention their wives’ names in front of a stranger. In this sense, she (idem) explains:

Both women and sacred places ‘are forbidden to outsiders’ gaze and both are believed to need strong male protection, albeit in different places are a symbol of collective and public identity, women are more of private property and are associated with men’s social identity.

Furthermore, Edward and Guth further maintain that certain neutral words become taboo when they are related to honour and dignity as we will see during this chapter. In order to explain more this idea, they (2010: 34) add that:

An interesting case in the context of honour are the words ‘shoes’, ‘dog’ and ‘donkey’ which are taboos and are considered offensive. Hence, they should be avoided in daily communication.

2.4.2- Unmentionable Topics and Words

Digging deeper in this issue, Hayakawa (1982)⁴⁹ posits the view that every culture has its own unspeakable language which is banned in polite discourse. He further explains that the most tabooed topics are limited to what he calls the triangle of taboo including sex, religion and politics, but in this context we are limiting our study to deal with sex and death since it is impossible to tackle them in one dissertation. Hayakawa goes on to say that sex remains the most tabooed topic in Western culture, although it is replaced by death as we have seen in the first chapter. He also adds that unmentionable words are terms that are absolutely forbidden. They include terms referring to the private organs of humans and their bodily functions in addition to homosexuality, menstruation and masturbation. In this vein, Trudgill (2000: 29) reports the following:

The tabooed items vary from one society to another. The strongest taboo-words in the English speaking world are still associated with sex, followed with excretion. In Norway, they are mostly expressions connected with the devil, and in Roman Catholic, they are words essentially associated with religion.

In the same line of this thought, Hughes (1992: 462) defines unmentionable words as follows:

⁴⁹Cited by Chu (2009: 125)

[...] that which is generally unmentionable because, on a hierarchical scale, it is either in affably sacred, like the name of God, or unspeakably vile, like cannibalism or incest.

Furthermore, everything related to women is subject to taboo including dress, speech and behaviour. Thus, it is considered as a shame to utter their names in friends' meetings. According to Sadiqi, Arab societies have made some topics taboo in order to protect women. In this respect, she (2003: 78-79) claims that:

The use of taboo to protect collective and public identities, as well as property and social identity, is a peaceful, but very powerful means of keeping women invisible and legitimizing their exclusion from what culture considers 'serious' domains.

She (ibid: 80) further argues that the strongest linguistic taboos, in Muslim societies, are related to female body and its changes. She also claims that girls **“socialize in an environment where sexual discrimination is sanctioned by society. This explains the spread of taboos related to sexuality”**. She adds that there are three major tabooed topics related to sex in the Arab world including virginity, menstruation and menopause.

In many Muslim societies, sexuality is strongly regulated through norms and taboos. The naked human body is connected with sex which is in itself a shameful thing to expose. Besides, most of Arab cultures maintain that sexuality leads to the impurity of both women and men. However, Bouhdiba (2008: 14) argues that Islam **“rejects the notion of the impurity of women [...] It is the sexual relation itself that produces impurity in men as well as in women.”** He (ibid: 15) goes on to affirm that the function of [ənika:h] “marriage” is not to remove taboos, but to make them known i.e., the norms beyond [ənika:h] are considered taboo. He further adds that Islam makes a distinction between [ħala:l]: “permitted” and [ħara:m]: “forbidden” in sexual relations. In this respect, he (idem) observes that:

Islam distinguishes not only between lawful (*halal*) and unlawful (*haram*) relations, but lays it down, that lawful relations create specific taboos of the *ihsan*, violation of which constitutes the capital sin of *zina*.

In addition to this, in most Islamic societies a woman's sexual purity is related to the honour of her family, especially her male kin, whereas a man's sexual purity is related to his own honour not to that of his family or his female kin (Sadiqi, 2003: 61). In case of Tlemcen speech community, girls are traditionally expected to maintain virgin until their first marriage ceremony. Furthermore, virginity is a symbol of honour of both girls and their family as it has been noted by Sadiqi (ibid: 80) when she writes:

Virginity symbolizes the honor of both girl/women and her family. Just as motherhood is venerated after marriage, virginity is venerated before marriage. The great value attributed to virginity [...] is attested in the fact that girls are more 'watched' than boys before marriage.

She goes on to affirm that virginity is so sacred that Moroccan females cannot discuss since it is a sensitive part in women's life. In this regard, she (ibid: 81) further explains the idea as follows:

It is not talked about in mixed groups. The taboo surrounds virginity dramatizes its impact on girls and intensifies family and social control over girls and women [...] girls are continuously 'hammered' with the importance of virginity since a very young age and they grow up in the fear of losing it. This phobia often creates psychological traumas that deeply affect girls' and women's lives.

On the other hand, menstruation, for over decades, has been considered as something unclean, dirty and embarrassing. In some societies, for example, women are treated as untouchable during their menstrual period. According to Brown and Levinson (1978: 67), menstruation is usually considered as a face-threatening act since **“it involves different degrees of embarrassment according to the people who mention it”**.

Additionally, there are many terms that are considered neutral when they are employed in normal situations such as [ddam]: (blood), but it becomes taboo when it refers to menstruation as Fatima has declared when she (2003: 81) says:

Menstruation is referred to by special terms that are not taboo out of context, but become so when associated with menstruation: *lbuluy* ‘puberty’ and *ddem* ‘blood’. The usual sense of *lbuluy*, for example, is not taboo when it is used to explain the puberty of boys, and its taboo sense becomes clear when it refers to menstruation. The same is true of *ddem* when is used to refer to menstruation.

As menstruation, menopause is an important step in the lives of Algerian women since they fear it and tend to hide its beginning. Indeed, some women even try not to discuss the problem. This psychological step leads into a moral crisis including sadness and anger. For this perspective, Sadiqi (ibid: 82) tries to throw some light on menopause in Moroccan culture as follows:

Another experience in the lives of women which is associated with taboo in Moroccan culture is menopause. Menopause is perceived in this culture as ‘old age’, ‘useless’, ‘failure’, and the beginning of the end.

Apparently, AP avoid talking about this period in order not to hurt women’s feelings. Besides, menopause is like menstruation stage since girls try to hide this

reality. With this point in mind, Fatima further maintains that women try even to hide this stage from their husbands, fearing that they will marry. In this vein, she (idem) states:

People do not talk about menopause because it is considered as a phase in the life of women which does not deserve to be mentioned. People in general, and women in particular, feel more ashamed to talk about menopause than to talk about menstruation or virginity. This is mainly due to the fact that this attitude is basically male...

She (ibid: 82-83) concludes her idea saying that **“a woman knows that old age may lessen her prestige in the eyes of her husband, who may start thinking of re-marrying a younger wife.”**

In all cases so far mentioned above, it has been very important to show that these stages, namely virginity, menstruation and menopause, are of great importance in women's life since they are followed by moral, physical and psychological changes. Moreover, these topics are the most discussed in public either by men or women themselves. In order to explain more this idea, Sadiqi (ibid: 83) writes that:

The experience relating to a woman's body and the cycles of her life are generally talked about in public from a male viewpoint. This explains the fact that women's lives are surrounded by powerful taboos.

She finishes her idea claiming that these stages are considered as biological changes in women's lives, but due to their sensitive nature many cultures regard them as taboos relating to female body. This view is better understood from Sadiqi's speech when she states that the three experiences in the lives of women are namely **“virginity, menstruation and menopause, are natural biological phases which belong to the world of taboo.”** (idem).

Roughly speaking, sexuality and changing of female body are considered taboo not only in Algerian society but in all human cultures. In this vein, Kelly (2002: x)

avers the view that **“Human sexual expression in general is something few people in this society, in fact few people in the world, wants to talk about”**.

Moving further, AS has made other places and terms taboo including words referring to unclean places and objects namely footwear and bathroom...etc. Besides, it also includes expressions that indicate supernatural creatures such as ghosts and Jennies working on the belief that Islam insists on cleanness of all things that we use in order to protect ourselves from certain diseases. In this sense, Hongxu et al (1990)⁵⁰ maintain that all societies have developed certain terms referring to unclean objects and places. Henceforth, AP have created expressions that they employ when they mention such names including [ħaʃa:k]: “may God exclude you from this dirt” or [ʃazk llah]: “may God dignify you” as Sadiqi (2003: 78) has pointed out when she affirms that women **“use formulas like hasek ‘save your face’, a stronger version of ‘I beg your pardon’ before mentioning things that might be offensive such as dogs, donkeys, toilets, etc.”** This means that the main aim beyond the use of such expressions is to save the hearer’s face.

Additionally, AP do not mention the names of their wives, sisters or daughters in front of foreigners, they use expressions such as: [dda :r] or [ddrari] instead of saying ‘Madame’ or [mraʃi]: “my wife”. In case of Tlemcen females and males, who are married to well-known people, are proud of mentioning their husbands or wives’ names. In this line, Sadiqi (ibid: 78) writes about Moroccan women saying that **“Many women use *haram zS-Sayyid X* ‘wife of Mr X next there.’”**

Another important unmentionable taboo topic lies on some foods that are banned. In fact, Muslims in general and Algerians in particular classify some foods as [ħala:l]: “permitted” and others are considered [ħara:m]: “forbidden” since the prohibition of certain foods are derived from the religious laws. Thus, AP consider these foods taboo not only in consuming them but even in mentioning their names.

However, the concept of taboo may also contain other topics including the perception of certain jobs. In fact, Algerian culture has developed negative attitudes

⁵⁰ Cited by Khursheed, Ghani, Alam and Gul (2013: 36)

towards some professions namely nursing for females, hairdressers, policewomen and shopkeepers. In this case, Sadiqi (ibid: 84) writes explaining the view of Moroccan society as the following statement demonstrates:

The gendered reactions to taboo that are constructed in the family are extended to jobs, some of which are considered taboo in Moroccan culture [...] although both men and women may hold these jobs, their taboo status is more associated with women than with men. Examples of such jobs are beggars, domestics, cleaners, cinema ushers, bus drivers, waitresses, shopkeepers, nurses, and hairdressers.

Concerning the hairdresser, Sadiqi thinks that **“it is their ‘salons’ that are negatively viewed as places where ‘prostitutes’ and ‘fortune tellers’ often meet to ‘recruit’ potential clients.”** She goes on affirming that **“the historical reasons that these-jobs are taboo are that women come into with unrelated men in these service sectors or domestic positions.”** (idem).

2.5- Factors Affecting Taboo Usage in Algerian Society

It is worth mentioning that there are a number of socio-cultural factors that affect the degree of perceiving expressions as acceptable or prohibited, in addition to some sociolinguistic variables namely age and gender. Besides, words that are perceived as taboo by one individual or a group of speakers may not be shocking to others for instance, words including [ndi : r]: “I do” or [nta : ʕu]: “his own” or [hluwa]: “sweet” for instance, are regarded taboo by Tlemcen speakers and are replaced by terms including:[naʕmɔl] or [djalu], whereas it is normally spoken in other parts of the country. In fact, [ndi : r] and [naʕmɔl] have the same meaning in other Algerian varieties, while they acquire negative connotations in Tlemcen dialect due to their use and perception.

Obviously, time also plays a substantial part since certain terms that are taboo in the past, over a period of time they are stripped off from their taboo status, for

example, mentioning the names of husbands by their wives nowadays is no longer taboo in some parts of the country.

Furthermore, age is a crucial factor that affects the use of TW(s) or acts. Most studies have shown that teenage boys and girls employ more forbidden expressions. Interestingly, Ali (2011: 84) maintains that masturbation is a **“teenage experience many boys and girls go through, without a deliberate intention to be a sinful but to explore and realize their now feelings of passionate desires.”**

Agreeing on this notion, there are many studies which show teenagers' usage of taboos more than adults or children. Along with the same wave, Sadiqi shares with Ali the same view claiming that the structure of the Arab families leads children namely boys to use taboos from early age. In this regard, she (2003: 84) says:

The gendered relationship to taboo arises in the family, for example, during the socialization process of children, boys are allowed to utter taboo words, whereas girls are strictly forbidden from doing so. A well-brought-up girl is one who would show reticence, or even strong revulsion, when a taboo word or expression is uttered in her presence. A girl who would leave the room immediately in such a case would be seen as a girl of good upbringing. The attitudes *he.fsumiya* ‘timid’ and *bekku.fā* ‘dumb’ in the sense of ‘silent’, are connected to the notion of *leḥ.fuma* ‘shame’ as they denote honor and good upbringing...

So, as the quotation implies, the environment, where the Arab girl grows, does not allow her to use taboos, whereas boys can utter them normally without any restrictions or penalties on their behaviours and speech. She (ibid: 84) goes on affirming that:

Boldness is appreciated in boys, but not in girls. As a result of this, teenager girls often look quite and more timid in the presence of their brothers or in the presence of outsiders. This behaviour is generally maintained and perpetuated in adulthood.

Interestingly, she also adds that “**women usually compensate this sanction on their linguistic performance by using taboo words in all female groups such as gathering in sport centers and *hammam* ‘public bath’**” (idem). She further affirms that in Moroccan culture, women’s voices are also considered as parts of their purity and, thus, regarded as taboo or what she calls [ṣawra]. In this regard, she (ibid: 78) notes the following:

In the overall Moroccan culture, female voices lack discursive authority because of the burden of the taboo which characterizes women as listeners, rather than speakers; their voice is *ṣawra* ‘taboo’.

It is also worth noting that sex plays a substantial role in pushing women to hide certain stages in their lives from men. These stages are seen as private matters by most females. In fact, Algerian women give much interest to sexuality in their marriage lives. Tlemcen females, for example, will not speak about their sex lives in front of men or unmarried young women. But when they find themselves with married women, the conversation will be very detailed about the various strengths or weaknesses of their married lives.

As previously mentioned, it is a major problem if a Muslim uses bad language because in going so, he/she is deliberately choosing to go against the example and injunctions of our prophet Mohamed (peace be upon him). Besides, the structure of the Algerian family has put norms and rules to take care after children from early age until they become adult. Women have to look after their children and teach them Islamic norms so that they can challenge daily events.

2.6- Taboos and Islamic View

First of all, it is worth noticing that our religion has created boundaries that restrict our daily speech as well as our behaviours. The most vital topic, that Islam has regulated, is Muslims’ sexual life. Besides, it is also very essential to mention that the

conservative nature of AP in general and Tlemcen speech community in particular has pushed them to practice Islamic norms as they are.

For the above discussion, Ashrof affirms that both Islamic and social norms restrict human sexual life. In this sense, he (2005: 198) argues that **“Different social orders have integrated the tensions between religion and sexuality in different ways”**. He (ibid: 201) goes on to claim that **“Both Qur’an and hadith allude to the nature of sexual relations as a means of attaining mutual satisfaction closeness and compassion between a wife and husband”**. Furthermore, Ashrof posits the view that permitted sexual life protects both males and females from sexual diseases as well as strengthens marriage ties and diminishes social problems. In this regard, he (ibid: 187) explains the above idea as follows:

Marital sexuality is meant as healthy way of human reproduction, releasing tensions, fulfilling natural and biological needs, and strengthening the marriage ties between the spouses. The ideal sexual relations in Islam are depicted in the verse “Your wives are garment for you and you are a garment for them”.

Additionally, there are many Hadiths which focus on sexual pleasure between a male and his wife. In this sense, Ashrof (ibid: 205) claims that **“The prophet has defined an ideal Muslim male in these words: “The best among are those who are best towards their wives” (Ibn Majah)”**. In fact, our prophet (peace be upon him) has insisted on sexual satisfaction (reaching orgasm) between spouses and the use of good language in order to strengthen marriage ties. In this line, Ashrof (ibid: 203) cites our prophet’s speech as follows:

If one you are in the company of your wife, do pay attention to her needs if the husband has fulfilled his desires [reached orgasm] before his wife, he should not leave her in haste but stay until she reaches her orgasm. Prophets forbade the practice of coitus interruption (*'al-azl*⁵¹) without the wife' consent.

In all cases so far mentioned above, sexual life remains taboo since religion has put restrictions on it as Ali (2011: 11) has affirmed **“Faith and sexuality are hand in glove concepts of life. It is religion that makes it look alien and taboo”**. He (ibid: 11-12) concludes his point of view claiming that **“Religion regulates sin and virtue, so goes the tradition”**.

Accordingly, Amer believes that adultery is the most banned topic in Islamic discourse. She also defines it as an illegal intercourse between a man and a foreign woman. In this sense, she (2008: 21) states:

It is worth noting that the principal, most vehemently condemned sexual sin in the official Islam discourse is adultery (*zina*), not homosexuality (*liwat*). *Zina* is defined very specifically in Islam as vaginal intercourse between a man and a woman who is neither his lawful wife nor his concubine [...] *Zina* is emphatically and unambiguously condemned in both the Qur'an and the Sunnah, and has traditionally been the focus of Islamic scholars and of jurisprudence.

According to Islamic view, menstruation is, again, a taboo topic since menstruating women are considered vulnerable, weakened, polluted and impure. Therefore, they are not allowed to pray, fast, read Quran, or have intercourse because menstrual blood is [naʿis]: “dirty” since Allah values people who are clean and pure.

⁵¹ Al-azl means that a man refuses making intercourse with his wife.

Furthermore, a man may and should approach his wife sexually who has purified herself of menstrual blood at the end of her cycle. In this regard, Sadiqi (2003: 82) mentions that:

Like virginity, menstruation is surrounded by taboos. The taboo surrounding menstruation is related to the ‘unclean’ state –post partum of women. This taboo is mainly due to the negative attitudes of the family and society towards the female body. Menstruation signals female puberty and marks female social identity. Young girls are often advised not to tell anyone except their mothers about the first time they menstruate, lest they lose their virginity.

She (ibid: 83) goes on explaining that menstruation is a source of impurity and uncleanness as the following quotation explains:

Another reason for the taboo status of menstruation is that in Islam women are forbidden from praying, entering the mosque, touching the Quran, or fulfilling the requirements of *haj*, ‘pilgrimage’ during their menstruation period. Taboos in such contexts have religious force, *damu LhayD*, ‘menstruation’ in Standard Arabic, is understood to be *najasa* ‘dirty’, ‘soiled or ‘ritually unclean’ and is often cited in religious prescriptions as a reason for impurity.

Another taboo topic is masturbation which is “**fundamentally an individual act that is not related to bonding or reproduction, societies tend to stigmatize**” (Rutter and Schwartz, 2012: 54). They (ibid: 52) also add that “**Masturbation is the most common of all sexual physically or emotionally dangerous, the most comfortable by a person’s own wishes**”. They go on declaring that religion has considered masturbation as a sin that must be avoided. In this sense, they (idem) say that:

[...] masturbation is absolutely not the most socially acceptable sexual

practice, why not? The simple answer is religious taboo. Both Judaism and Christianity denounce “washing seed”, which refers to the non procreative character of male masturbation. Islam considers it “haraam” (forbidden) for the same reason.

In contrast with the above idea, Ali (2011: 12) argues that **“Quran doesn’t explicitly mention masturbation nor condemn it”**, whereas many scholars mention that Islam talks about man masturbation [əlliwa:t̪]: “homosexuality”.

In fact, Islamic laws do not mention or discuss female masturbation [əssiħa:q]: “lesbianism”, but it is seen as a forbidden act like homosexuality. This idea is explained by Bouhdiba (2008: 31), in his book *Sexuality in Islam*, when he denotes that lesbianism is equally condemned, although it is not talked about. It is equal to man homosexuality, bestiality, or necrophilia. Similarly, homosexuality⁵² is considered as an unnatural act and those who do it must be punished. In this sense, Siker has explained that **“Muslim religious law (Shariah) sets fixed punishment upon homoerotic activities. This punishment has been interpreted variously as fine, flogging, imprisonment, or death”** (idem). Sharing the same idea, El-Royaheb (2005: 18) states that **“Arabs thought of homosexuality as a “single condition” shared by those who prefer the active role and those who prefer the passive, nor the idea that this single condition was considered by some to be “a form of illness””**. Along with the same line, Siker notes that Islam has considered homosexuality or what he calls “homoeroticism” as a sin which led to the destruction of Sodom people. This idea is better explained in his speech when he (ibid: 6) states:

⁵² According to Siker (2007: 19) **“The idea of homosexuality is contrasted with heterosexuality, people who have sexual relations with people of the opposite sex are called straight or heterosexual, people who have sexual relations with people of the same sex are called homosexual or gay men or lesbians, and people who have sexual relationships with people of the same and opposite sex are called bisexual”**. He adds that the term was firstly used in a German pamphlet in 1869 and appeared in English a few years later.

In the context of Islam, it is especially appropriate to speak of homoeroticism rather than homosexuality, since the notion of a fixed and permanent homoerotic orientation is virtually absent. Homoeroticism traditionally has been seen as the sin for which Sodom was destroyed, and those who commit it are called “qaum lot” or “Loti” (Lot’s People).

Furthermore, El-Royaheb (ibid: 19) also talks about Islamic view of ‘liwat’. He maintains that [əlliwa:t]: “homosexuality” is a form of [əɪʔaðɑ:]: “harm” since it leads to sexual diseases. He (idem) also claims that **“The Luti was instead widely represented as a normally dissolute person, a libertine (*Fasiq*), and this latter word was sometimes used as its synonym”**. Following the previous scholars, Habib (2010: 299) has pointed out that in Islam **“homosexuality is unnatural, a perversion, and a deliberate, morally evil choice. Homosexuality is considered a crime in the same manner as adultery and murder”**. She (2003: 80) also cites Dr. Siddiqi’s⁵³ speech when he says in a conference:

Homosexuality is a moral disorder, it is a moral disease, a sin and corruption [...] no person is born homosexual, just like no one is born a thief, a liar or murderer. People acquire these evil habits due to a lack of proper guidance and education.

Moving further in analysing this hot topic, another important issue is death which has become the center of today’s Western culture as well as past religious myths. In case of Islam, death has a meaning of a passage from this life to another eternal one. In his book, *Perspectives on Islamic Law, Justice, and Society*, Khare (1987: 10) writes that:

⁵³ Dr. Muzammil Siddiqi is a former president of the Islamic society of North America.

[...] death to Muslims is a passage to another life rather than cessation of life. In death, one faces God, without any intermediaries, but with a distinct idea of the “weighing deeds” on the Day of Judgment. But death cannot be considered in isolation in Islam, its conception and meaning must be read alongside. What life, illness, medicine, wellness, and health mean in the same system.

This means that death is an important concept in Islam. She (ibid: 61) further maintains that in Islamic faith, **“there is life after death and that death should not be feared. But, this next life is either in hell or in paradise, and that depends on how humans conduct their affairs in this world”**.

What can be also understood from the above quotation is that there is a Day of Judgment and humans’ existence passes through two lives namely [əɗunja:]: “life” and [əlʔa:χira]: “eternal life”. Sharing the same view, Smith and Yazbeck (2002: 5) avers the same idea claiming that **“Qur’an draws an entirely different picture of life and death”**. Similarly, Khare also adds that life has purpose and death is the passage to another life. In her (1987: 5) opinion, **“Death is not the end but the passage into a new and eternal existence”**.

In its general terms, death is considered as [əlʔaʒal] for all Muslims and a passage to an eternal better life. It is not regarded as taboo, but since all Muslims fear the pain of death, and the Day of Judgment, they fear it. This idea is better explained through the following diagram:

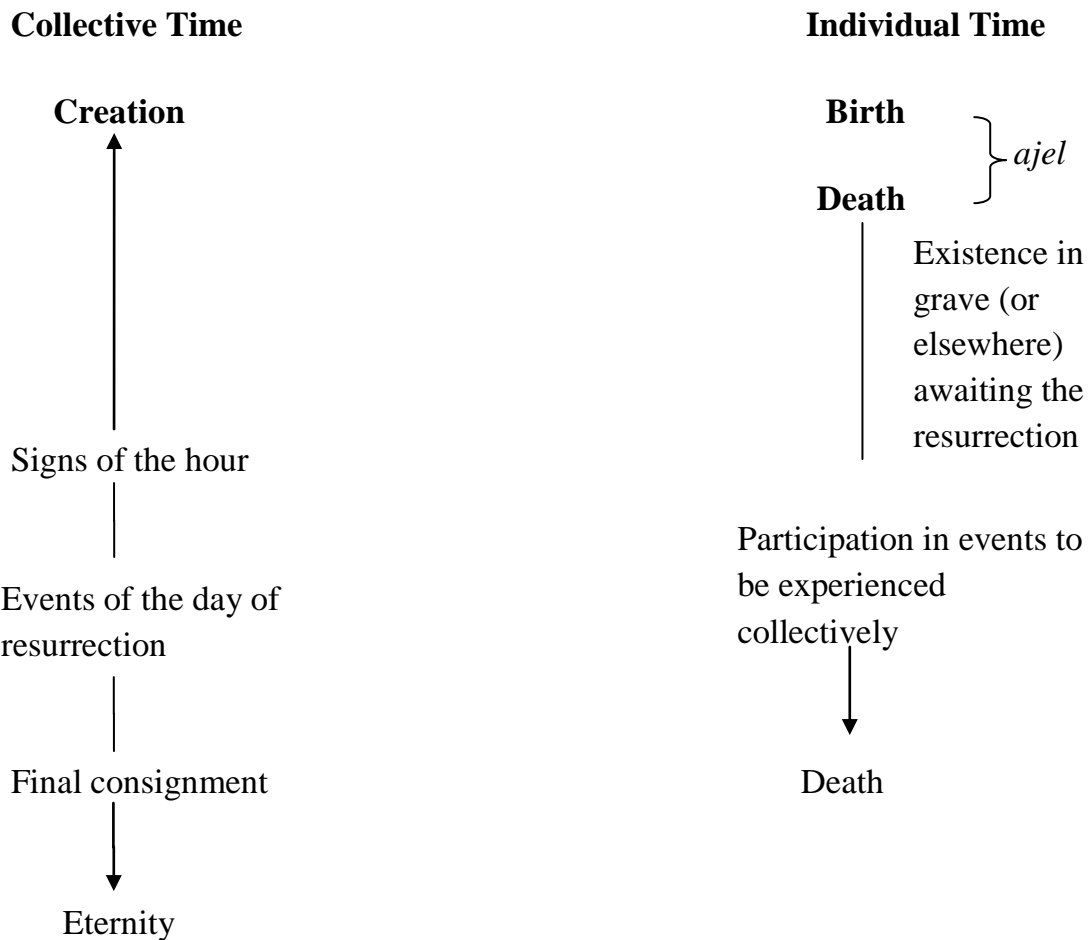


Diagram 2-1 The Islamic Understanding of Death and Resurrection
Adopted from Jane Idelman Smith and Yazbeck (ibid: 6).

2.7- Euphemisms in Algerian Culture

It is clear that there are many ways to “avoid possible loss of face; either one’s own face or through giving offence, that of the audience or of some third party” as Allan and Burrige (1991: 11) have pointed out. Indeed, Algerians try to avoid using harsh language and taboo in their connection with each others, and tend to replace these expressions with certain mechanisms including construction, creating antonyms, metaphoric expressions, circumlocution and EUPH(s) or words that are more acceptable and pleasant. When speaking with Algerians in particular and Arabs in general, it is noticeable that they shun speaking about unpleasant things out of fear that negative speech compels negative results.

Through their daily interaction, AP have created certain strategies in order to avoid taboos and to protect their faces and politeness is among them. In fact, they have created euphemistic expressions for each topic, for instance, women shift to the use of certain terms including [ra:ha ʔliha haqq əʃhar]: “she has the right of the month” or [ra:ha mwəsχa]: “she is dirty” or [ra:ha mriɖa]: “she is ill”, when referring to menstruation. This idea is better explained by Sadiqi (2003: 82) as follows:

[...] many linguistic strategies are used amongst women as euphemisms and metaphors to refer to menstruation: *haq ʃhar* ‘the right of the month’, *lwsax* ‘dirt’, *lmarD* ‘illness’, or simply *hadik* ‘that one’.

Additionally, the concept of sex is strongly euphemised by AP. Consequently, they switch to the use of certain expressions instead of referring directly to sexual matters, for example [rgut mʕa:ha]: “I slept with her” or [gəʃʃart mʕa:ha]: “I spent a night with her” or [zhi:t mʕa:ha]: “I enjoyed my time with her” instead of ‘I had love with her’ .

According to Farghal (2005: 8), most Arabic dialects have created many expressions in order to avoid taboos. He calls these terms circumlocutions⁵⁴ such as in [ʔiʕtida:ʔ zinsi] or [fla:na laʕbu bi:ha] or [fla:na χəʃro:hæ]: “Sexual assault” for [iʔtiʕa:b]: “rape”, and [χija:na zawziija]: “infidelity” or [ʕabu:ha mʕa wa:həd]: “they found her with another man” referring to [əzzina:]: “adultery”, and [wəld lahra:m lləh jəhfaɖna] instead of [farχ]: “illegitimate child”. In this regard, Farghal (ibid: 82) maintains that such expressions **“spell out the meaning of their negative counterparts in a more acceptable way”**.

Digging deeper in the concept of EUPH, the stage of menopause is also surrounded by taboos for this reason women resort to euphemistic expressions to hide

⁵⁴ It is a figure of speech where the meaning of a word or phrase is indirectly expressed through several or many words.

their shame as Daniluk (2003: 276) has explained when she declares that **“Women sometimes feel shame about experiencing this inevitable biological process. This is apparent in the euphemistic language women often use in reference to menopause (e.g., “change of life”, “the change”)**”. Interestingly, Algerian women fear this stage; as a result they employ euphemistic expressions including [mə/ʔa:tlha əlxusla]: “she lost her period”. Besides, pregnancy is also regarded as a taboo topic. Consequently, women resort to EUPH(s) as in: [ra:ha məttaqla] or [ra:ha mri:ɖa]: “she is ill” instead of [ra:ha bəlkər/ʃ]: “she is pregnant”.

Another type of figurative speech lies in the use of personification such in [hla:lak]: “your right” or [nta:ʃak]: “yours”, which are mutually used by legal married couples. In fact, they tend to employ these expressions secretly depending on their imagination. For instance, they use [nərugdu] instead of [ndi:ru]: “making love”.

Moreover, metaphors are also used in Algerian dialects through substituting some taboos by words of different meanings for social reasons. For example, the word /bza:zal/: “breast” is euphemised by [rmmna:t]: “pomegranates” or [təffa:ha:t]: “apples”. AP, however, do not stop at this stage, but they have also created some EUPH(s) to talk about physical defects of human body through using antonyms such as in [ʃmma]: “blind”. This latter can be substituted with its opposite basic ‘sighted’, and a sick person with [ʃhi:h]: “healthy”, while words referring to the menses are avoided by metaphors like [hiʃi:st]: “jobless”.

Additionally, AA contains numerous EUPH(s) related to death or dying. The main aim of these EUPH(s) is to reduce pain, sorrow and to show sympathy for the deceased’s family, relatives and friends. In fact, Algerians believe that death is the beginning of another life. In Algerian culture, the notion of [əlmawət]: “death” has two meanings namely [əlʒasad]: “the body” and [ərru:h]: “the soul”. They also believe that the body dies whereas the soul departs to its creator.

Indeed, they believe that death is a kind of a transition [əlʔintiqal] of the soul from [da:r edunija]: “the worldly life” into [da:r əlʔa:χira]: “the eternal life”, and death is located between them i.e., in order to pass to the eternal life, you have to die. In other words, Muslims do not fear death, but they are afraid of [sakara:t əlmawət]: “dying”, [ʕaða:b əlqabr]: “torment of the grave”, and Allah punishment. Thus, AP have created many euphemistic substitutions for death including [fla:n təwafa]: “he passed away” or [llæh jərħəm fla:n]: “may Allah have mercy upon him”. In case of Tlemcen speech community, instead of saying [fla:n ma:t]: “he died”, a Tlemcen speaker says [fla:n dʒa:ʕ]: “he is lost” or [ʕəbba ba:sna wba:skum].

On the other hand, Algerians may use EUPH(s) for the purpose of making the conversation between people more interesting as well as in the sense of humour of language and to reduce the impact of certain events or problems. For example, parents often talk about their daughters as timed bombs [əlbant kil bu:mba], that is, they are worried about their daughters more than sons.

Moving further in our analysis, disease is one of the most tabooed topics that have attracted human interests and fears at the same time not only in the Algerian culture, but in all cultures as well. In this sense, Leech (ibid: 53) states:

By euphemism, people find it possible to live with, and talk about things that would otherwise shock or disturb them. Disease and indisposition established words for illness, were originally euphemisms, meaning ‘lack of ease’ and ‘lack of ability to do things’.

Accordingly, Nydell (2006: 100) posits the view that Arabs have created some expressions to avoid talking about illness. In this regard, she maintains:

[...] instead of saying that someone is sick, Arabs may describe a person as “a little tired”. They avoid a word like *Cancer*, saying instead “He has” or “She has ‘the disease’”. And often wait until an illness is over before telling others about it, even relatives. Arabs do not speak easily about death and sometimes avoid telling others about a death for some time; even they will phrase it euphemistically.

What can be summarised from the above statement is that ‘cancer’ is being hindered by the stigma the illness carries. In fact, many cultures try to keep the conditions of this disease secret. Experts in some communities believe that taboo plays a big role in the higher cancer mortality rates in some communities. People avoid using the word ‘cancer’ by employing other euphemistic expressions with the patients and their families. For example, when a patient is going to die, doctors will inform his family that they should take him such as in [mli:ħ tʕəbbiw ləmri:ɖ tʕa:kum lədda:ru]: “it is preferable to take your patient to his home”. They also say [fla:n rah mre:ɖ bəda:k lmaɖ, llaħ jʕəfi:nə]: “he has that illness, may God keep us safe” or [rah fi:h da:k lmaɖ, llaħ jəħfaɖna]: “he has that illness, may God protect us”.

Excretion is also euphemised in most cultures from ancient times. In fact, it depends on the culture of the people which pushes them to search for substitutions of the term ‘toilet’. As many languages, Arabic has developed many expressions that are used, for example [əlħamma:m] or [əlmalħa:] “toilet”. Generally, AP usually use French expressions to avoid this term such as “sanitaire”. They also employ words from their dialects such as [bi:t əlma]: “room of water” or [bi:t ərra:ħa]: “room of rest”.

Furthermore, the use of EUPH is not limited to these topics since AP have developed more expressions for daily communication, for instance they try to avoid employing terms referring to poverty including [faqi:r]: “poor”, they use instead [məski:n], [gəlli:l], [zawa:li], and [fla:n llaħ va:ləb ʕli:h].

Indeed, AA is also rich in what Gramps (1984: 227) calls double negation i.e., replacing words by employing negation of its opposite. He adds that grammarians use ‘meiosis’⁵⁵ instead of double negation. In this regard, he states that **“There are occasions when a writer’s meaning may be conveyed more exactly by ‘not un-device’, for example, ‘not unkindly, ‘not unjustifiably’,’ then by kindly”**⁵⁶. In case of AA, Algerians have a rich vocabulary including [da:r ətrəbjə] (reformatory) for [lhabs]: “prison” or [fla:n hapto:h] instead of [fla:n dəχlluh ləlhabs]: “they took X to the prison” or [fla:n ζand ra:su]: “a difficult man” instead of [fla:n wa:ζar]: “a rude person”. They also employ [fla:n qwa:lbi] or [fla:n jadχəl wjaχradz fəl hadra] or [bəlζa:t] instead of [kəða:b]: “a liar”.

As far as the topic of age is concerned, AS considers this latter as a cultural value since Islam has shown the tradition of respecting the old. Indeed, Algerian culture insists on the fact that old people are more experienced and knowledgeable. Thus, employing words, such as [əfʃi:χ] or [lhə:ζa], indicate experience.

For the reasons mentioned above, the old people are respected since it has to do with Algerian traditions and Islamic teachings. In general, parents and grandparents are still the important members of the family. Thus, young people turn always to their relatives when they come across something difficult.

On the other hand, old age is also a taboo topic in Western cultures. For example, in American society, work does not only provide material enjoyment, but also provides social status and self-respect. In this case, the old, who does not work, are ignored by the society. Thus, nobody likes to be addressed as an old person. Similarly, old people, in Algerian society, do not prefer to be called [ʃiba:nija]: “old woman” or [ʃiba:ni]: “old man”. In fact, age is taboo for most Algerian women for this reason they try to hide their real age especially old unmarried females. In this case, they employ some

⁵⁵ Meiosis is an understatement by employing a negative form to emphasise the contrary or to represent something as, more or less, milder than it actually is. For example, ‘untruthful’ for ‘a liar’, ‘intemperate’ for ‘rude’, ‘unwise’ for ‘fool’ or it was easy for it was very difficult.

⁵⁶ http://Euphemism_Bocrawler.htm.

euphemistic substitutions including [ra:h ʕa:da rabbi maʒabəlhɑ:f] which means that “she has not married yet”.

2.8- Euphemisms in Standard Arabic and Quran

According to Al-Qadi (2009: 18), the term EUPH has a similar meaning to Arabic term [əluʦf]: “kindness”. Similarly, Farghal (2005: 2-3) claims that Arabic language has used the term [ətala:ʦəf] to refer to the English word ‘euphemism’. He believes that “atalaʦuf” means the “**employment of a non-preferred expression in a context where it acquires pleasant connotations or vice versa**”. Along with the same line, Nydell (2006: 100) has pointed out:

Arabs are uncomfortable discussing illness, disaster or death. This trait illustrates how the power of words affects Arab speech and behavior. A careless reference to bad events can lead to misfortune or make a bad situation worse. Arabs avoid such references as much as possible and use euphemisms instead.

Similarly, Abdul-Raof (2006: 237) maintains:

Euphemistic expressions are employed in Arabic to replace reference to unpleasant occasions such death, defeat, etc as in:

قامت قواتنا بانسحاب تعبوي في القطاع الجنوبي من ميدان المعركة.

According to Abdul-Raof,[ʔinsiħa:b taʔbawi]: “a tactical withdrawal” is a measure to cover up [əlhazi:ma]: “defeat”.

Additionally, Farghal claims that Arabic language is rich in what he calls circumlocutions for instance instead of saying the word [əlfəʔal]: “fail”, they use [lam juħa:lifhu əlhəʔə]: (luck did not ally with him). Another example is [ʔintaħara]: “he

committed suicide” is euphemised as [waɖaʕa haddan lihaja:tihi]: “he put an end to his life”.

Another type of EUPH in Arabic lies in the use of what Farghal calls ellipsis⁵⁷ such as in [ʔibnu]: “the son of”. He also mentions the existence of euphemisers to replace socially non-preferred expressions such as [la: samaħa llah wa qaddar]: “may not God permit nor predestine this” or [bʕi:d əʃʃar]: “may the evil be far from you”. He (1995: 396) also talks about Figurative expressions⁵⁸ such as death which has many euphemistic terms in Classical and Modern Standard Arabic as well.

Following Farghal’s classification, we can divide death EUPH in Arabic into expressions referring to religion such as in [ʔintaqala ila: ərafi:q əlʔaʕla:]: “he transferred to the supreme companion” or [ʔintaqala ila: rahmati rabbihi]: “he transferred to the neighborhood of his lord” or [ʔintaqala ila: ədda:ri əlʔa:χira:]: “he transferred to the afterlife”.

On the other hand, Arabic language is also rich in the use of indirect euphemistic substitutes such as in [əlfɑqi:d]: “the deceased” or [raħala ʕanna:]: “he left us”. According to Haddad (2001: 42) [əlfɑqi:d] **“is considered as a very strong and emotive word in the Arabic language since it refers to the fact that deceased will be greatly missed and death will not be easily accepted”**.

Additionally, another important type of EUPH focuses on describing Burials, funerals, corpse, coffins and graves such as in [ənnɑʕʕ]: “coffin” or [əɭʒuθma:n]: “burial”, whereas some expressions describe death as a passage from one life to another like in [ʕa:dat ru:ħuhu ila : bariʔiha:]: “his soul returned to her maker”.

Some expressions are the result of imagination such as in [ʔinqaʕafat ʕumruhu]: “his life is ended”. This expression is used in case of early death in which the image is

⁵⁷ Farghal (idem) claims that in ellipsis **“the speaker falls short of uttering the complete taboo expression”**.

⁵⁸Farghal’s studies deal with figurative expressions, antonyms, circumlocutions, remodeling, ellipsis, understatements, overstatement, borrowings and euphemizes as an important euphemizing strategies in Arabic language.

taken from the early death of flowers. Moreover, Arabic is rich in terms referring to sudden death including [qada: nahbahu]: “he died” or [hallat niha:jatuh]: “his end arrived” or [za:ʔat niha:jatuhu].

Interestingly, Allan and Burridge (1991: 230) claim that, in English language, EUPH is also used to hide the bad effects of certain acts. This fact is similar to Arabic language such as in [darbu əzawʒat]: “wife beating”, which becomes [əlʕunu əlʔusari:]: “domestic violence”, and [əlχilaf əzawʒi:]: “marital discord” becoming [əlʔisa:ʔa əzawʒija]: “spousal abuse”. Besides, EUPH is also employed in Arabic to cover up certain behaviours that violate social and religious norms including adultery [əzzina:] which is euphemised as [juqi:mu ʕala:qa ʔajər ʃarʔija]: “he makes an illegal relation”. We can also find many substitutions for sexual intercourse such as in [na:ma maʕaha:] or [ʔa:raħaha: əlʔara:m] or [ʃa:rakaha: əlfira:ʃ] referring to “he makes love with her”. Besides, Homosexuality is also euphemised in Arabic through the use of indirect expressions such as in [əlfiʕlu əlmuʕi:nu bil ʔaxla:q] or [əlfiʕlu əlmuxillu bil həja:ʔ]. In case of bodily functions and wastes, Farghal (ibid: 65) maintains that Arabic language has also created some substitutions including [dawratu elmija:h]: “bathroom” or [beitu əlχala:ʔ] or [əlħamma:m] referring to “toilet”.

Another socio-cultural topic is menstruation, which is also euphemised in MSA such as in [ədawra]: “the monthly cycle” instead of [əlʕa:da əʃʃahrija]: “menstruation”. In its general terms, menstruation in MSA is called [ənnaza:sa]: “dirt”. In this sense, Sadiqi (2003: 82) posits the view that “[...] menstruation’ in **Standard Arabic is understood to be najasa ‘dirty, soiled’ or ‘ritually unclean’ and is often cited in religious prescriptions as a reason for impurity**”.

On the other side, Quran has also focused on good behaviour and language. This is illustrated in some verses. According to Farghal (1995: 28), EUPH(s) in Quran is used to:

[...] gain further significance as they are normally used in contexts bearing a strong relevance to Muslim social life, status of women in Muslim communities, and jurisdiction relating to such activities as marriage, divorce, cleanliness, old age pregnancy, and sexual intercourse, etc.

This means that the main aim of EUPH(s) is used to express the most tabooed topics for all humans including sex, death and excretion...etc. In fact, Quran has talked about sex, sexual organs and sexual life, although it was forbidden by most religions. Accordingly, Ali (2001: 315)⁵⁹ has also pointed out that the private organs are expressed implicitly through the use of neutral words and expressions in most Quranic verses such as in [sawʔatahumɑ:]: “their shame” (Al-Araf, 7:20)⁶⁰, and [furu:ʒahəm]: “their sex organs” (Al-Mumenoon, 24: 31)⁶¹. Similarly, Farghal (ibid: 59) adds that bodily excretion is also euphemised by using more technical words as [əɫʌa:ʔit] for feces (An-Nisa, 4: 43)⁶².

Furthermore, sexual intercourse, as one of the most sensitive issues in human culture, is also euphemised in most religions. In Quran, most euphemistic expressions refer to sexual relations between couples through legal marriage including [ərrafθ]: “have intercourse” (Al-Baqara, 2: 187)⁶³ or [la: taqrabu:hunna] (not approach) (ibid: 222)⁶⁴. In case of adultery, Quran considers it as [fa:hiʃa] and is euphemised as [əɫʌaʔi:ʔæ], but in English these two expressions are the same and mean “a sin”.

⁵⁹ www.usc.edu/dept/msa/quran.

⁶⁰ www.quran.com

⁶¹ www.quran.com

⁶² www.quran.com

⁶³ www.quran.com

⁶⁴ www.quran.com

2.9-Algerian Politeness Strategies

It seems that both face and politeness are important concepts for most Arab societies that must be taken into account in daily communication. Basically, there are many factors which push Arabs in general and Algerians in particular to maintain face including honour, and the image of others. This statement has been explained by Edward and Guth (2010: 33) when they state that **“Honour, dignity and self-respect are ‘sacred’ concepts among Arabs since pre-Islamic times, and are considered taboos, which should not be abused by anybody.”**

Interestingly, it is worth mentioning that the notions of honour [əʃʃaraf] or [əlʔird], and shame [ləħʃu:mā] are two fundamental principles governing interaction in most Muslim societies. In fact, they are employed in every social context from a casual conversation in informal situation to a formal talk in a more prestigious setting. Honour, in general, is the collective property of the Muslim societies, and, once lost, is difficult to regain. Indeed, it is a part of social etiquette and determines social status and relations between families. As far as the AS is concerned, the concept is of great importance in the value system of the society. It is considered as a norm for regulating daily interaction, the choice of words and expressions. Apparently, it is seen as a strategy to avoid loss of face and shame. It is also important to note that the notion of [əlʔird]: “honour” constitutes an important part of the honour of the Algerian society. Any violation of female sexual honour will have severe impact on the honour of the whole family. Along with the same line of thought, Ali (2011: 25-26) argues that:

Euphemism is used on all levels, in literary and non-literary texts; in classical Arabic and modern Arabic; written as well as spoken forms of Arabic [...] They are also used functionally to make remarks less direct, less blunt or harsh, and to add a touch of politeness to certain expressions which otherwise seem unpalatable and hard to digest.

In the view of many Arab scholars, Brown and Levinson's model is probably the most appropriate to deal with EUPH(s) in Arab speech communities. According to Harris (2003: 27-28), Brown and Levinson's face saving model of politeness **“has attained canonical status, exercised immense influence, and is still the model against which most research on politeness defines itself”**. Thus, this model has been applied to the analysis of many studies in different cultures and languages. In fact, most studies, which are done in Arabic language, show that there are some religious forms which are used by Arab speakers in expressing the use of EUPH(s)⁶⁵. In fact, most Arab researchers maintain that politeness is expressed through using the notions of honour and shame. Besides, positive face is maintained through in-group identity to social groups of different degrees of closeness.

Furthermore, it is essential to note that Algerians have selected many religious terms which are consistent with Islamic traditions and form an important part of Arab positive politeness. Among these expressions, we have [llah jħhafɖak]: “may God preserve you” or [llah jħali:k]: “may God live you” or [llah jħazi:k]: “may God reward you” or [llah jarɖa ʕli:k]: “may God be pleased with you”. Indeed, most Western scholars relate the notion of politeness with the Arabic concept [əɫʔaðab]: “politeness”, whereas Arab researchers have different interpretations. In her part, Sadiqi (2003: 67) relates it with [ləħʃu:mæ]: “shame”. In this line, she argues:

[...] an individual's self-image is not cultivated internally, but derives from other's opinions and attitudes. For example, an individual's honor and dignity are not disassociated clearly in the concept of *leħʃuma* ‘shame’ which may be defined as the ‘fear of loosing face in front of others’. This loss of face may be occasioned behavior that contravenes social norms, breaks Islamic precepts, or abrogates personal obligations inside and outside the family.

⁶⁵ Farghal is among the first scholars who provide important insights concerning the use of EUPH(s) in Arabic language and dialects in relation to politeness strategies.

She goes on explaining that taboo topics, related to women including menstruation, are the first factors for losing face and, therefore, the public self-image. In this sense, she (ibid: 67) argues that **“The negative conception of menstruation generates negative self-images for girls at a young age where self-image is a determinant factor in personality-building”**.

Additionally, Farghal (1995: 369) maintains that Grice’s maxims are also appropriate to explain the use of EUPH(s) in most Arab dialects. He believes that there are social, linguistic and contextual factors that govern speakers’ lexical choices. He adds that Grice’s theory and Politeness Principle go side by side in expressing euphemistic usage in Arab communities claiming that **“the interaction between the PP and CP’s maxims of conversation in the process of euphemizing”**. He goes on to explain that the maxim of quality is the most employed in both Standard and Dialectal forms of Arabic. In this regard, he (ibid: 370) observes that death EUPH in Arabic **“flout the maxim of quality, thus conversationally implicating that death in question is for the good of the deceased because he will go to heaven”**.

In case of Algerian dialects, speakers employ certain euphemistic expressions that infringe with this maxim such as in [fla:n qa:ʕ]: “he is lost”, whereas in sexual intercourse, Farghal (ibid: 372) adds, Arabs use certain euphemistic expressions that **“infringe the maxim of quantity by withholding information, thus implicating that the sexual intercourse had taken place”**, such as in [rgud mʕa:ha]: “he slept with her”. He also claims that the maxim of manner can be also employed to express EUPH(s) like in [fla:na rabbi jəhdi:ha] : “may God guide her” instead of [qəħba]: “a prostitute”.

2.10- French Taboos and Euphemisms in Algerian Arabic

First and foremost, it should be noted that French language constitutes an important part in Algerian dialects and is employed as a code for daily interaction by most citizens and especially educated people. As far as taboos are concerned, they resort to the use of some French expressions to avoid certain taboo terms. However, Mills (1995: 122) argues that most Arab dialects have the problem of lexical gap. Henceforth, they borrow many expressions from other languages. In this regard, he

explains that “The problem of lexical gaps in the language is part of a greater linguistic problem-the problem of not being able to explain yourself within the discourse structures available to you.”⁶⁶ In contradiction with this point, Sadiqi argues that Arab females prefer using expressions from other languages since they think that Arabic terms are powerful than foreign words. She adds that most tabooed topics related to female body and sexual intercourse are used in French by most Moroccan males and females. In this respect, she (ibid: 83) maintains:

[...] women’s lives are surrounded by powerful taboos. As a reaction, women resort to euphemisms of foreign languages to express concepts that are ‘illicit’ if said in one of the Moroccan languages, such as the use of French word *embrasser* ‘kiss’ instead of ‘*bus*’ ‘kiss’.

In fact, AP have borrowed many terms from French in order to lessen the power of the local expressions. For example, they say [visiœ] instead of [fla:n ʕand ruħu]: “vicious”, they also use [ẽdispœzœ] or [rɛglœ] to cover up the Algerian taboo expressions including [ra:ħa mwasɣa]: “she is dirty” or [ra:h ʕli:ja ħaqq œʃʃhar]: “I have the duty of the month” referring to menstruation.

On the other hand, some words have taken negative connotations in some Algerian dialects. For example, certain English terms seem ugly and are avoided since their pronunciations are similar to certain Algerian expressions such as [zip] meaning “penis”, whereas [sli:p] refers to a kind of underwear.

Additionally, differences in these varieties may also result in embarrassment including [zent i:t] or [kœʕa:lɑ] which are used in some dialects to refer to the back of the animal, whereas they are regarded as taboo in Tlemcen dialect since it means ‘ass’. Another instance lies in the use of certain terms alone such as [ħluwa]: “sweet” or [nta:ʕi]: “my own”. In fact, these words must be employed in whole sentences to

⁶⁶ Quoted by Sadiqi (2003: 81)

avoid their taboo meanings such as [ha:d əddali:ʕa hluwa]: “this watermelon is sweet”.

As far as EUPH is concerned, Onysko (2004: 62) discusses the importance of borrowing from other languages in forming EUPH. In this vein, he claims that:

In terms of avoiding taboos, borrowings from English do not bear such negative connotations as native swearwords. This ‘softening’ effect is represented in the language of music, as in German rap and hip hop. Artists use four-letter Anglicism such as *shit*, *bullshit*, *fuck*, *bitch* and *damn*, which evoke less strong derogatory connotations than German counterparts *Scheisse*, *Fick*, *Here*, *verdammt*.

In connection with this, Allan and Burridge (1991: 19) maintain that, in English “**the use of French is per se euphemistic**”. Indeed, it is also euphemistic in many Arab dialects including those of Maghreb. A good example is the use of [madam]: “M^{TS}” in reference to one’s wife. This latter is seen as a sign of respect for married females in Algerian society, when talking to a female directly, while it is avoided by men when referring directly to their wives.

2.11- Attitudinal Dimensions of Algerians towards Taboos and Euphemisms

As we have explained before, the use of language is related to religious teachings and the concept of face-saving. Politeness, as a part of Arab religious norms, has also an effect on their attitudes. This statement is firstly proposed by Farghal when he (2005: 1) affirms that EUPH is “**a linguistic politeness strategy whereby an offensive or harmful word/phrase is replaced with one that represents a less direct expression or carries a positive attitude**”. He further argues that words which have bad connotations are related to the negative attitudes of the members of the society i.e., words are not related to their conceptual or descriptive meaning, but to what he calls “attitudinal dimensions”. In other words, he makes a distinction between denotative meaning and connotative meaning i.e., attitudinal meaning in perceiving words as taboo.

Additionally, Farghal also talks about the attitudes of Arab speakers towards certain jobs as humble and inferior if we compare them with other intellectual jobs and, therefore, most Arab societies have carried out negative attitudes towards them. In fact, Farghal gives a good example of [zabba:l]: “a trash man” which shares the same meaning with [ʕa:mil ənaða:fa]: “a cleanliness worker”, but he says that **“both denote the same occupation in Arabic but the second one reflects a positive social attitude toward this kind of job which is lacking in the first”** (idem). Other examples lie in [rəbba:ʕ] or [χəmma:s] which are substituted by [fəlla:h]: “farmer”, and [həlla:b] which is taken from the verb [halaba] instead of [muharrib əlbinzi:n]: “gasoline smugglers”. Besides, he (1995: 366) goes on explaining that speakers’ attitudes are related to the concept of **“politeness and demureness in human interaction”**. This involves, he adds **“watching one’s language, among other things...”** Other instances of negative attitudes of AP lie in the perception of some terms such as ‘a Joy’ due the feeling of hatred which has been developed throughout history. This feeling has turned into negative attitudes towards everything related to Jewish people.

In her study on Moroccan gendered language, Sadiqi views that the strongest taboos in Moroccan society are related to women due to the social attitudes developed by the members of the society. In this light, she (2003: 78) writes that:

Some of the strongest taboos apply to words associated to women and are strongly excluded from use in a mixed company or public space. These reactions are social reflexes of social divisions and social attitudes, which, in turn, are reflected in language use. This is an area where language and society interact significantly.

She (ibid: 78) further affirms that **“in Moroccan culture, taboo is mainly determined by reactions aroused by given words, that is, by the connotative, rather than the denotative, meaning of words”**. She goes on claiming that the ambiguity of women, in most Arab societies, is also surrounded by taboos and viewed as good or bad. In the light of this, she (ibid: 75) highlights the following:

Women's ambiguity in Moroccan culture is also attested at the level of social attitudes. Generally speaking, women in Moroccan culture are perceived both good and bad. They are both the guardians of values and family unity and the personification of social strict way in which girls are brought up and women are controlled. The social ambiguous attitudes towards women in the Moroccan context are epitomized in the popular saying: *lxir mra u fjar mra* 'a woman is goodness and evil'.

Generally speaking, Algerians' attitudes reflect the social and cultural norms of the Algerian society. In fact, their attitudes are the results of religious and cultural factors since they play a vital role in restricting people's behaviour and language as well.

2.12- Stereotypes Surrounding Algerian Taboos

As we have seen previously, AP have developed negative attitudes towards certain words and topics due to their connotative meanings and, therefore, are viewed negatively by the members of the society. Besides, stereotypes, attitudes and taboos differ from one culture to another. In case of Muslim societies, they share the same values and norms and, henceforth, the same stereotypes and taboos. In the light of this idea, Dickins, Hervey and Higgins (2002: 210) declare that **“Different cultures, then, value different things, and have different taboos. In addition, there is also evidence that different cultures stereotype.”**

It is also important to mention that most Arab stereotypes are taken from Islamic norms including the evil eye and supernatural creatures such as “the devil” and “jinn”. In case of Maghreb communities, they have other stereotypes namely black and white magic and fortune-telling which are banned in Islamic norms. For this view, Joseph and Afsāgmabād (2003: 17) write the following:

Islam explicitly forbids fortune-telling, harmful “black” magic, and *shirk*, i.e., attributing natural or man-made object [...] Islam recognizes the reality of evil and off jinn who capriciously afflict humans, and

interpretations differ on the use of good “white” magic for protection.

Basically, most Muslim societies fear of the effects of what they call ‘the evil eye’ or what we call [əLʕajɲ]. In fact, it is also regarded as a taboo topic due to the stereotypes surrounding it. Indeed, Muslims believe that disease is also caused by supernatural powers such as: [əLʕajɲ] ‘the evil eye’, which is a very powerful force which is inflicted or cast by envious people. In the same line of thought, Wumser and Jarase (2008: 152) define the notion of the evil eye as follows:

Throughout the world it is commonly believed that the evil eye is the window of the soul [...] It is a window through which the inner life, the soul, radiates outward and communicates-shining or punishing, oppressed or wrathful, envious or vengeful-but also loving, admiring, and forgiving [...] The Evil Eye deals with protected shame, projected envy and perhaps jealousy, and with protected revenge, but now turned against one’s own self.

According to the above statement, envy and jealousy are the main factors which lead the person to cast the evil eye. On the other hand, Sadiqi, in her book with Ennaji, affirms that the evil eye is a stereotype specific to women. They add that the evil eye, in most Arab cultures, refers to a language or a behaviour that an envious, jealous person uses to harm other people or things. In the light of this point of view, they (2011: 228) maintain that:

The evil eye refers to “evil” (illness, misfortune, or even death) that a person’s language or presence causes. If, for example, a person gets hurt, loses something, or hears bad news after having met or spoken to a woman [...] Women who are particularly considered a source of the evil eye are usually old, divorced, or widows. In the presence of this category of women, newborns, brides, and even businesses are usually “protected” by “amulets”⁶⁷ that are inserted in clothes or put in hidden places.

Similarly, Nydell explains that the evil eye is the result of the society’s beliefs and culture. This latter is found in most Arab cultures since it is mentioned in Islam. Therefore, they develop negative attitudes towards it and it becomes one of their major stereotypes and turns with the time into a taboo topic. In this vein, she (2006: 99) writes the following:

The liberal use of blessings also demonstrates that the speaker holds no envy toward a person or object; in other words, that he or she does not cast an “evil eye” toward something. Belief in the evil eye (often just called “the eye”) is common, and it is feared or acknowledged to some extent by most Arabs, although less so by the better educated. It is widely believed that a person or object can be harmed if viewed (even unconsciously) with envy-with and evil eye. The harm may be prevented, however, by offering blessings or statements of goodwill.

In Algerian culture, in general, it is believed that every person’s eyes may have evil effect if they like or admire an object and in order to avoid the bad effects of the evil eye, they say [χamsa fi: ġini:k]: “Five in your eyes” or [χamsa waχmi:s fi: ġini:n bli:s]: “five in the eyes of the devil” . Not saying like the previous expressions may lead to the object’s destruction, and if the liked thing is a person, it is also believed that

⁶⁷ Amulets are written by religious persons in order to stop the bad effects of the evil eye, black and white magic. Speech of the amulets is taken from Quran.

this person may die or get a mortal disease as Lovering has pointed out. Sharing the same point, Edward and Guth (2010: 35) affirm that:

[...] it is quite common to hear mainly mothers who will use the expression *ḡamse* or *ḡamse fi /'yuno-* five or five in his eye (s), in reaction to someone who fails to use expressions against the evil eye, while referring to their child.

In all cases so far mentioned above, most Arabs avoid the evil eye through creating many expressions for daily use. In this regard, Nydell (2006: 99) declares that:

When a friend buys a new car, don't express envy say "May you always drive it safely". When someone moves to a new house, say "Many you always live here happily". When someone's children, say "May God keep them for you".

Trying to know more about Arab stereotypes and taboos, Sadiqi mentions that metaphysical things, including supernatural creatures, are considered taboo since people have developed their own fear towards these things. In most Arab cultures including Maghreb countries, such names will bring in these creatures. She (2003: 79) also adds that Muslims **"avoid the word *jenn* 'ghost' or *jnun* 'ghosts' and always add *bismillah rrahman rrahim* 'in the name of Allah the Almighty, the Merciful' after the utterance of these words"**. In the same line of thought, Edward and Guth (ibid: 33) explain this point of view through the following statement:

Similar to other societies Arab society strongly believe in superstitions. Hence, the Devil, Jinns, demons and other super natural creatures pre part and parcel of Arab folklore. Consequently, they are feared of, revered and should be appeased. Moreover, the fear of the harmful evil eye, and therefore, the need to protect people and properly from its deleterious effects can be reflected in many customs and, in particular,

through a large number of expressions.

It is also worth mentioning that AP have fear of superstitious powers including 'jinn'. Such fears are embedded in Algerian culture since they think that these creatures may harm them if they are disturbed. Consequently, they employ what is called 'basmala' in order to lessen their danger as it has been pointed by Moshe Piamenta when he talks about the position of 'jinn' in Libyan culture. For this perspective, he (1979: 35-36) argues that:

[...] the innovation of the *basmala* usually precedes or is associated with the mentioning of spirits and demonic powers by euphemistic names. Reference to those is sometimes omitted for fear of their influence [...] the *jinn* are referred to euphemistically as *ahli-that* 'the underground inhabitants'.

In its general terms, AP have developed certain cultural and religious beliefs towards some topics that Islam has talked about including the evil eye and supernatural creatures. Consequently, these topics have become stereotypes and, thus, acquire taboo meanings.

2.13- Conclusion

From a linguistic point of view, this chapter tried to shed light on the dark side of Algerian culture and language as well. Besides, it represented a cultural and a sociolinguistic study of EUPH(s) and taboos in Algerian dialects. It stressed the point that politeness and face-saving are parts of the Islamic teachings and norms which play a fundamental role in directing Algerian attitudes.

Henceforth, AS is built on a set of cultural rules and religious norms that govern the way individuals must behave. However, Algerian culture, as many other cultures, has its own taboos and EUPH(s) that are the result of daily interaction. Therefore, this chapter was an attempt to highlight and describe these two sociolinguistic phenomena in which not much scholarly ink has been spilled due to their sensitive nature.

Working on Jay's division of taboos, we found that Algerian taboos can be divided into two main streams including non-taboo words (neutral words) and unmentionable terms and topics. Besides, what had been stated in this chapter could be of great help in studying Tlemcen speakers and their perception of these topics.

Interestingly, this chapter provided us with some insights concerning the socio-cultural factors that prevent AP from using TW(s). Moreover, it tried to show that Algerian norms, taboos and EUPH(s) are similar to those of other Arab Muslim speech communities, although each culture is unique in terms of its members' attitudes and motivations towards the use of taboos and EUPH(s). Through this chapter, again, we tried to investigate the different politeness strategies used by AP in relation to Islamic norms and teachings. Finally, Algerian dialects have also borrowed many taboos and euphemistic expressions from French language in order to lessen the powerful meanings of the local words.

Chapter Three

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA INTERPRETATION

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3.1- Introduction

Throughout the second chapter, we tried to throw some light on Algerian culture and its sociolinguistic profile. We have also dealt with the different types of taboos and EUPH(s) in addition to certain topics mainly sex and death which are our main concern throughout this dissertation. We have also mentioned the view of Islam towards these two phenomena and their use.

In this chapter, we shall firstly describe the research methodology and data analysis used to achieve the set of aims and objectives of this study. Besides, the population, data collection, validity, reliability, and the ethical consideration are also described. All these steps are parts of the research process and are connected to each other as well as to the theoretical foundation of the study. Moreover, we will also define sensitive research and the different problems that face the researcher in data collection including threat and face-losing. Then, we will explain the different research techniques that can be employed in sensitive research.

Additionally, we will look deeply on the attitudes of Tlemcen speakers towards the use of certain taboo terms and EUPH(s). In other words, we will try to see the people's perception of these expressions and topics. Therefore, we have designed a research methodology in order to collect quantitative and qualitative data that show the attitudes of Tlemcen speakers towards the use of taboos and EUPH(s).

3.2- Research Challenge

It is important to note that progress in scientific and social investigations focus mainly on research. In other terms, **“Research is often viewed as the cornerstone of scientific progress”** as it has been pointed out by Marczyk, DeMatteo and Festinger (2005: 1), but the question that imposes itself, in this regard, is how should we define sensitive research?

3.2.1- Defining Sensitive Research

Over decades, research on sensitive issues has attracted the interest of many scholars and pushed them to search for more appropriate methods and techniques in

order to collect and analyse data without facing any research problems regarding some topics including taboo domains mainly sex. In this regard, researchers tend to find definitions to such type of research. Sieber and Stanley are among the first who bring a general definition to what they call 'sensitive research'. They (1988: 49) argue that there are studies **“in which there are potential consequences or implications, either directly for the participants in the research or for the class of individuals represented by the research.”**⁴⁴ However, this definition has been criticised by many scholars including Lee (1993: 3) who argues that this latter focuses on **“The consequences of the research rather than the specific technical and methodological issues that are inherent in sensitive research”**. In his point of view, it is better to give importance not only to the consequences of the research, but to the techniques, methods and participants.

In fact, previous researchers, such as Faberow (1963), try to link sensitive research with taboo topics. Agreeing on this notion, Lee (ibid: 6) defines taboos as topics **“[...]which are laden with emotion or which inspire feeling of awe or dread.”** Along with the same line, Swift contends that sensitive research can influence not only the researcher but the participants as well. She (2005: 11) claims that it **“has the potential to impact on all of the people who are involved in it.”** She further explains that this definition pushes researchers **“to examine the potential for harm to the researchers as well as to the research participants.”** She (ibid: 11) also adds that **“sensitive research encompasses many areas which are deemed to be sensitive.”** Henceforth, sensitive research can include different topics by employing a set of methods and techniques that are designed to collect data without any threat or face-losing for both the researcher and the participants.

Actually, Lee (1993: 5) observes that topics related to what he calls 'the private sphere' of some people are termed sensitive, and he argues that private topics differ according to certain parameters including age, cultures and situations. In his point of view, we can consider a topic as sensitive due to the emotions and attitudes of the participants towards it. Accordingly, Wellings and Colleagues (2000: 256) argue that

⁴⁴ Cited by Dickson-Swift, Lyn James and Liamputtong (2007 , 1)

topics, which can harm the participants' behaviours or attitudes, are regarded as sensitive. In this sense, they state:

Research is deemed as sensitive [...] if it requires disclosure of behaviours or attitudes which would normally be kept private or personal, which might result in offence or lead to social censure or disapproval, and / or which might cause the respondent discomfort to express.

(Cited by Liamputtong, idem)

Additionally, Renzetti and Lee (1993: 05) affirm that the sensitive character of a piece of research lies on the social context in which the study takes place rather than on the topic under investigation. In this regard, they state the following:

[...] the sensitive character of a particular piece of research lies less in the topic itself but rather in the relationship between the topic and the social context in which the research is conducted. From this perspective, any topic can become sensitive, depending on the social milieu [...] certain areas of research have a higher probability of being perceived as threatening and controversial than others.

(Cited by Belk, 2006: 511)

Roughly speaking, through investigating sensitive topics, the researcher needs to take every step into account. They should acquire skills and tendency to confront the problems that appear during data collection. In this light, Lee (ibid: 210) concludes stating that:

Researching sensitive topics makes substantial demands on researchers. They acquire skill, tenacity and imagination if they are successfully to confront the problems and issues which arise when research in various ways poses a threat to those who are studied.

3.2.2- Sensitive Research as a Threat

According to Lee, sensitive research can become a threat in three broad areas. The first is ‘the intrusive threat’. The second type is what Lee calls ‘threat of sanction’ which includes studies in criminal problems including drug, addiction and illegal behaviours, whereas the third is termed as ‘political threat’. In the light of this, he (idem) writes that:

[...] sensitive research falls into three main areas: (a) intrusive threat (probing into areas which are ‘private, stressful or sacred), (b) studies of deviance and social control .i.e. which could reveal information that could stigmatizing or incriminate (threat of sanction), and (c) political alignments, revealing the vested interests of ‘powerful persons or institutions, or the exercise of coercion or domination’, or extremes of wealth and status.

(Quoted by Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007: 166)

Furthermore, Lee (1993: 74) reveals that research can become a threat when it **“might bring to light that which was formerly hidden.”** In other words, participants may feel that some hidden parts of their life can be revealed such as drug, alcohol and addiction...etc. In case of our study, it falls on the first step since we are tackling some hidden topics that characterise Tlemcen society and, henceforth, we are dealing with private matters that can result in face-losing and embarrassment for us and for the participants. Consequently, the researcher must build an appropriate atmosphere for the participants, so that they can feel at ease during data collection. In this regard, Lee (ibid: 02) states that when the research is threatening, **“the relationship between the researcher and the researched is likely to become neglected about with mistrust, concealment and dissimulation”**.

3.2.3- Ethical Consideration in Sensitive Research

Most scholars agree on the fact that research on sensitive topics has a great importance since it tackles issues that affect people. However, they argue that researchers may find many problems in their investigation including ethical issues.

For the above idea, Lee highlights that ethics is one of the major problems that researchers face. He further claims that **“Sensitive topics also raise wider issues related to the ethics, politics and legal aspects of research. Issues of this kind impinge on all research, whatever its character.”** (idem). Similarly, Belk claims that **“Sensitivity can introduce different issues at different stages of the research process. The problems can be methodological, ethical, political or legal...”** (idem).

On the other hand, Draucker posits the view that investigating topics such as disease, sexuality and criminality raise many ethical problems. She also talks about death claiming that asking participants questions about this topic may evoke strong memories of their relatives or friends. She (1999: 162) continues stating that using procedures such as **“as in-depth interviews and detailed questionnaires that may unleash painful emotions and memories in participants.”**⁴⁵

In fact, many scholars observe that ethical issues are among the first problems that have attracted much scholarly attention, when dealing with sensitive research. However, ethical problems are not the only factors that the researcher should take into consideration. Thus, researchers should know how to control these issues and to overcome other problems. Besides, they should build a good relationship with their participants in order to avoid any threat or face-losing concerning taboo topics. In the light of this point, Lee (1993: 16) highlights that:

[...] researchers need to find ways of dealing with the problems and issues raised by research on sensitive topics. The threats which the research poses to research participants to the researcher and to others need to be minimized, managed or mitigated.

Furthermore, Waltz, Strickland and Lenz argue that most of research processes on sensitive topics tend to focus on personal and social topics. They further argue that research in sensitive topics can produce methodological complexities, ethical dilemmas and safety concerns. In this regard, they (2010: 339) state that:

⁴⁵ Dickson-Swift, Lyn James and Liamputtong (ibid , 5)

Sensitive information usually focuses on personal and/ or social topics of a nature likely to evoke strong emotional responses from subjects, such as embarrassment, humiliation, fear, stigma, guilt, anger, vulnerability, pain, stress, and/ or anxiety.

3.3- Data-collection Methods

Most scholars agree on the view that no research is complete without data collection and analysis. However, they disagree on which method to choose since each step in data collection can affect the research process. In their book on social research, David and Sutton observe that data are what is recorded by the researcher through methods and techniques. In other words, collecting data, through systematic techniques and methods, is the basis of any research process. They (2004:27) further argue that **“Data is not what is out there to collect”,** but data **“is what is actually recorded by the researcher”**. They add that **“it is in a very important respect what researchers manufacture in their work as researchers.”**

Additionally, data collection methods differ from one branch to another according to the type of research. In this light, Kumar (2011: 5) writes that **“Each scientific discipline has developed a set of techniques for gathering and handling data, but there is, in general, a single scientific method”**. He (ibid: 5) adds that this latter is based on reality which is **“out there to be discovered”**.

In case of research on taboo domains, every step is sensitive and difficult. In the light of this view, Kumar (ibid: 156) maintains that **“[...] researchers have used a number of approaches to deal with this problem but it is difficult to say which approach is best.”** Along with the same line of thought, 0. They also state that **“If one accepts the results at face value, each of the data gathering methods is best under certain conditions.”**

As far as sensitive research is concerned, Kumar adds that the researcher should design techniques and strategies for collecting sensitive data. In this regard, he (2011:

340) claims that **“the investigator then may select and employ strategies and techniques for the collection of sensitive information.”**

Taking into consideration the previous ideas, we have designed a research methodology which suits our field of research since we are dealing with a sensitive topic. Therefore, we will rely on quantitative and qualitative methods for data collection and analysis through a structured questionnaire and a focus group interview since relying on one tool is insufficient. Thus, we can divide data into primary data which are collected through observation, a questionnaire and an interview, whereas secondary data rely on previous scholarly works as it has been pointed by Panneerselvam when he (2004: 13) states that:

The data can be classified into primary data and secondary data. The data which is collected for the first time by direct observation is called primary data. The data which is obtained from existing records, publications, etc, is known as secondary ones.

3.3.1- Quantitative Data

First of all, it should be made clear that quantitative research **“is based on the measurement of quantity or amount. It is applicable to phenomena that can be expressed in terms of quantity.”** (Kumar, 2008: 8). Drawing on Jonker and Pennink’s (2010: 65) work, quantitative research is also based on the assumption that **“Knowledge about reality can only be obtained ‘through the eyes of the researcher’”**. In contradiction, Kumar (2008: 165) claims that choosing the instruments depends on the nature of research and the information. In this line, he maintains that:

The construction of a research instrument is the most important aspect of any research endeavour as it determines the nature and quality of the information [...] A research instrument in quantitative research must be developed in light of the objectives of your study.

In his part, Cresswell (2003: 174) claims that quantitative methods are very essential in any research since they provide the researcher with **“a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of population by studying a sample of that population.”** He adds that from sample results, **“the researcher generalizes or makes claims about the population.”**

3.3.2- Qualitative Data

Actually, data, which are collected through qualitative methods, are difficult to organise since they are taken from daily lives of the participants. These methods involve a set of stories, events, personal experiences and interviews...etc. In the light of this idea, Denzin and Lincoln (1994: 2) report the following:

Qualitative research is a multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials-case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts-that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in people’s lives.

Similarly, Patton (2002: 22) observes that qualitative methods touch the cultural side of each society through giving an image of its attitudes and beliefs. In his point of view, qualitative methods give detailed descriptions of **“situations, events, people, interactions, observed behaviors...”** He (ibid: 22) adds that these methods supply the researcher with **“direct quotations from people about their experiences, attitudes, beliefs and thoughts and excerpts or entire passages from documents, correspondence, records, and case histories.**

In this respect, the researcher should follow a systematic and an organised observation of data. In other words, he should provide a very detailed and a clear

description of the topics at hand. He should also be objective if the phenomenon touches a sensitive domain.

3.3.3- Questionnaire

First and foremost, the main aim behind the use of the questionnaire is to reach a vast amount of data. In this vein, Wikinson and Birmingham (2003: 8) report the following statement:

Questionnaires can be designed and used to collect vast quantities of data from a variety of respondents. They have a number of benefits over other forms of data collection [...] An effective questionnaire, is one that enables the transmission of useful and accurate information or data from the respondent and unambiguous ways that the respondent may interpret them.

In fact, the questionnaire contains a set of questions that are created according to the objectives and types of research. In this road, Wikinson and Birmingham (ibid: 10) add that there are types of questions and **“The essential ones being: closed questions, multiple choice or ranking questions, and open-ended questions.”**

In this case, we have designed a questionnaire which consists of some closed questions in which the participants may answer with ‘yes’ or ‘no’ or what Wikinson and Birmingham call “dichotomous questions”. In this light, they claim that there are questions in **“which all possible answers are provided. The most often-used form of closed questions is the dichotomous questions requiring a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ response.”** (idem).

In multiple choice questions, we give some possible answers or suggestions for the participants; so that they can choose freely (see question 2 of the questionnaire). According to Wikinson and Birmingham, this type provides **“a number of predefined responses. This allows the researcher to hold some control over the responses given.”** (idem). Besides, we have also designed what is called ‘the ranking order questions’ as a part of multiple choice questions (see question 3 of the questionnaire) which supply

the respondents with suggestions working on Wilson and Mclean's (1994)⁴⁶ point of view. They argue that in ranking order questions, the researcher should provide the informants with the most important suggestions in order to help them in their selection. However, they are asked to order their choices through placing numbers in boxes to indicate the order of their views since we have given them these questions to test their opinions and attitudes, but the construction of these questions should be careful, in order to gain acceptable answers. Besides, we have also designed some questions which depend on what is called 'the likert scale' (see questions 21-22 of the questionnaire) which is very important to test the level of attitudes. In this regard, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (ibid: 253) state the following:

Rating scales are widely used in research, and rightly so, for they combine the opportunity for a flexible response with the ability to determine frequencies, correlations and other forms of quantitative analysis. They afford the researcher the freedom to use measurement with opinions, quantity and quality.

Similarly, Kumar mentions that in order to test the respondents' attitudes, the likert scale is the most useful one. In this vein, he (ibid: 173) writes that:

Attitudinal scales are used in quantitative research to measure attitudes towards an issue. Their strength lies in their ability to combine attitudes towards different aspects of an issue and to provide an indicator of an overall attitude.

Whereas, open-ended questions give the participants a chance for free suggestions and recommendations. Thus, our questionnaire relies on closed, open-ended and multiple questions.

Furthermore, it should be very essential to add that many scholars disagree on the length of questions. Some of them argue that questions, in sensitive research, should be short, concise and precise especially when dealing with people's attitudes, whereas

⁴⁶ Cited by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007: 333)

others including Sudman and Bradburn (1982: 50-1)⁴⁷ claim that long questions should be preferred when dealing with behaviour or the use of language.

In contrast, Lee (ibid: 161) claims that the length of questions depends largely on the nature of **“the topic under investigation, how complex the questions are, the nature of the respondents who have been targeted and time it takes to complete the questionnaire.”**

Henceforth, we have focused on short questions due the sensitivity of our topic. Besides, the suggestions provided are embarrassing for this reason we have found a great problem with the informants and their understandings of the core of this research.

In fact, many researchers agree on the view that in designing a questionnaire, the researcher should take into account what, how and why questions need to be asked. They also add that the language of the questions should be understood by all participants. Hence, designing a questionnaire depends on the form, types of questions and the language being used. Thus, we have selected MSA to ask the questions, whereas the expressions, in the questionnaire, are taken from Tlemcen dialect.

3.3.4- Interview

In a very broad term, the interview is an interpersonal and face-to-face conversation as Taylor, Sinha and Ghoshal have pointed out. They (2006: 75) further explain that interviews **“provide a method of data collection that involves presenting oral-verbal stimuli and collecting the oral-verbal responses”**. In order to explain more this idea, it is worth mentioning that an interview plays a substantial role as a tool in qualitative analysis and measurement since it can be a source of rich data. In this light, Taylor, Sinha and Ghoshal (idem) suggest the following:

⁴⁷ Quoted by Lee (1993: 161)

Interviews can be regarded as one of the foremost tools [...] not only for the purpose of obtaining qualitative data but also as a tool for measurement [...] Nevertheless, interviews are particularly valuable for obtaining data in situations where formality of a questionnaire would be less likely to elicit the desired information. Thus an interview can be used as an exploratory tool to suggest hypotheses and identify research variables as well as for studying relationships and testing hypotheses.

In fact, the interview is not just a conversation, but it is something that **“should have a plan”** as Goddard and Melville (2001: 49) have noticed. They further explain that this latter is better than the questionnaire since **“the researcher can ask the respondent to clarify unclear answers and can follow upon interesting answers”**. Besides, an interview is more appropriate to gain access to people’s life, their opinions and emotions...etc. In the light of this idea, Denscombe (2003: 174) argues that when the researcher needs to be close to the people’s opinions, views, feelings and knowledge, then **“interviews will almost certainly provide a more suitable method...”**

Furthermore, the questions of the interview should be well designed. Thus, the researcher should **“[...] think ahead about how you will deal with situations in which a participant becomes distressed”** as it has been stated by King and Horrocks (2010: 59). Henceforth, we have relied on a focus group interview since **“people do not mind particularly in focus group-in fact, they tend to find the sessions enjoyable and stimulating-and the interview typically yielded rich data”** as it is noted by Dörnyei (2007: 146). We have also designed semi-structured questions for the interview. However, we have faced many problems since some of these questions are embarrassing. Therefore, in the first question, the informants were asked about the main factors which push them to use taboos in their daily interaction. The purpose of second question is to know if women use taboos, whereas the third is designed for investigating the frequency of use between Tlemcen speakers. In the last one, they were asked about their views concerning death.

On the other hand, we have faced lots of problems due to the sensitivity of this topic. Henceforth, 10 informants, whom we gave the questionnaire, agreed to answer

them. Besides, the questions of the interview are accompanied with more explanations about the topic. In fact, we have included the interview to know more about the attitudes and views of Tlemcen informants towards taboos, as well as their opinions towards the use of euphemistic expressions. Thus, our main aim from the interview is to help the questionnaire with more explanations and suggestions.

3.4- Population and Sampling

According to Taylor, Sinha and Ghoshal (2006: 201), the population selected or what they call the target population should be able to answer the research questions. In connection with this, Hartas (2010: 67) affirms that researchers are not interested in the size of the population, but in the characteristics of those who are chosen for the study. In her point of view, **“A population is a group of individuals or organizations that share the same characteristic that is of interest to our study...”**

Once the population is defined, we should describe the type of our sample. Thus, sampling involves decisions about **“which people, events, behaviour or social processes are selected and/or observed.”** as it is suggested by Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006: 44). They go on claiming that the main aim of sampling is to select subjects that will be representative of the population and which will help the researcher to reach the solutions for the research problems. In other words, **“A sample is a selection of a subgroup of the population we intend to study [...] the sample has to be representative of the population from which it was drawn.”** (Hartas, *ibid*: 67). Hartas goes on explaining that the group, who is selected, is called the representatives of the sample i.e., **“the individuals or the units”**, who, she adds, **“display the characteristics and attributes that are typical of the population.”**

In this study, our target population comprises informants from different occupations, educational backgrounds, ages and genders since these sociolinguistic variables play a vital role in knowing the cultural and linguistic levels of the respondents and, therefore, the degree of taboos and euphemistic usage.

In fact, most scholarly researchers highlight that taboos occur as a result of certain factors such as anger, frustration and embarrassment. They also argue that

taboos can be found in places such as cafés, markets, cinemas, schools, universities, work places and homes...etc. Thus, our questionnaire is distributed to participants from different categories including students, house wives, nurses, jobless, policemen, doctors, teachers and bus drivers...etc.

In his book *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques*, Kothari (2004: 63) notes that once the researcher selects the sample, the next step is choosing informants or representatives from the whole population. In his part, we should resort to what is called ‘a random sample’ **“because under it bias is generally eliminated and the sampling error can be estimated.”** However, Kumar (2008: 193) observes that sampling has advantages and disadvantages. The advantages, in his point of view, **“are that it saves time as well as financial and human resources”**. He (ibid: 193) further maintains that the disadvantage **“is that you do not find the information about the population’s characteristics of interest”**. He (ibid: 194) adds that **“Through sampling you only make an estimate about the actual situation in the total population from which the sample is drawn.”**

In fact, a random sample means that the selection of a sample is randomly i.e., each gives **“possible sample combination an equal probability of being picked up and each item in the entire population to have an equal chance of being included in the sample.”** (Kothari, ibid: 56). Briefly, Kothari (idem) summarises the advantages of a random sample as follows:

- (a) **It gives each element in the population an equal probability of getting into the sample: all choices are independent of one another.**
- (b) **It gives each possible sample combination an equal probability of being chosen.**

Additionally, we have selected the representatives of this research through what Hartas (2010: 67) calls ‘a simple random sample’. In her point of view, this latter gives a chance for all representatives since the participants **“are selected randomly from a population with the intent that the sample is representative of this population”**. She (ibid: 67) adds that the idea behind a simple random sampling is that **“any bias of the**

population is distributed equally in the sample”. Thus, she finishes that **“simple random sampling can be accomplished easily.”**

Thus, we have classified our sample into four subcategories. 130 informants have been given the questionnaire but 20 individuals refused answering the questions. So, we will deal with 110 participants.

Age	Females	Males	Total
18-25	30	19	49
26-35	21	13	34
36-45	4	18	22
Above 46	/	5	5
Total	55	55	110

Table 3.1: Categories of the Informants.

As this table clearly shows, our participants were selected randomly focusing on different linguistic variables namely age since it is an important component in a random sample. So, every individual, in Tlemcen speech community, has the chance of being selected. In this sense, the first category comprises about 49 of the informants of our sample i.e., they represent (44,54%), and most of them are secondary and university students in addition to jobless, housewives, builders and policemen....etc.

On the other hand, gender is an important concept in sociolinguistic research and, therefore, it plays a substantial role in data collection. In this sense, Murphy (2010: 43) writes that age and gender are important variables in any research. She adds that TL can be better **“examined in terms of the influence of age, as a sociolinguistic variable, on their form and function in age-differentiated all-female talk”**. She further argues that we cannot separate these variables from each other when dealing with language. She (ibid: 24) also reports Hamilton’s (1992) point of view claiming that **“[...] age is socially constructed just as gender is (Eckert 1984).”** She further highlights that **“language use and communicative needs can be expected to change as people age, take on different social roles and experience shifts in gender identity and/or gender roles over their lifetimes”**.

In fact, we tried to select an equal number of both sexes in order to facilitate our measurement of their attitudes as the table (3.1) clearly demonstrates.

It is also important to note that the levels of education and occupation of the informants give us a general idea about their knowledge and, henceforth, their attitudes and views. This is better explained through the following table:

Occupations	Females	Males	Total
Nurses	1	6	7
Doctors	/	2	2
Policemen	/	2	2
University students	5	5	10
Secondary school students	17	1	18
Biologists	7	1	8
Builders	/	6	6
Painters	/	10	10
Bus driver	/	1	1
Housewives	18	/	18
Lawyers	1	/	1
Accountants	4	5	9
Secretaries	1	/	1
Jobless	/	8	8
Middle school teachers	1	/	1
Retired	/	8	8

Table 3.2: The Educational and Occupational Levels of the Informants.

As this table shows, we can notice that the intellectual level of our informants is so varied. This gives us the advantage of collecting rich data.

Furthermore, have also focused on a focus group interview. Therefore, we have selected two groups of ten individuals from different ages, educational backgrounds and occupations. Five females, who were given the questionnaire, were interviewed at

the same time, whereas five males were only interviewed since they have refused answering the questions of the questionnaire because of their sensitive nature.

3.5- Data Preparation, Analysis and Interpretation

Throughout the following analysis of both the questionnaire and the interview, we are going to investigate Tlemcen speakers' attitudes towards taboos and EUPH(s).

3.5.1- The Questionnaire

In designing this questionnaire, we have insisted on four parts. The first one focuses on the informants' age, gender and occupation for the purpose of identifying the sample. The second part insists on their attitudes and views towards TL as well as, we have given them the chance to write their suggestions and recommendations as we have explained, with the aim of selecting a large amount of lexical items since we have focused on taboo words and topics. We have also included some euphemistic expressions concerning the topic of sex. The third part insists on evaluating their opinions about females' use of taboos and their attitudes towards French taboo words, whereas the last one investigates the informants' attitudes towards the use of euphemistic expressions related to death.

In fact, the informants answered the questionnaire, although it was sensitive. Thus, our first aim is to know whether the informants use taboos or not.

3- Do you use taboo language?

a- Yes.

b- No.

Suggestions	Females	Males	Total
Yes	42	44	86
No	13	11	24
Total	110		

Table 3.3: Speakers' Attitudes towards Taboo Usage.

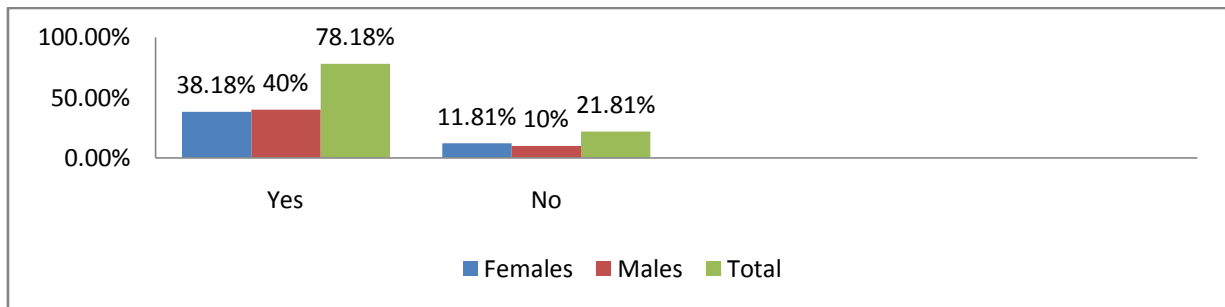


Figure 3.1: Speakers' Attitudes towards Taboo Usage.

As the previous diagram and table show, the majority of males and females (78.18%) declared that they use TL, whereas other participants, who represent (21.81%), answered this question negatively. Besides, most informants, whose responses are positive, are teenagers and adolescents, whereas those, whose answers are negative, are between 40 and 55 years old.

Interestingly, it should be important to note that the social milieu plays a crucial role in pushing people to employ taboo items. Besides, it depends on certain reasons in which the person finds him/herself and then on the way and place in which children raise. For example contact between teenagers, through mobile phones and internet, is the major factors which encourage them to use taboos. Moreover, it is essential to note that the way parents behave with their children is another reason. It should be also noted that teenage age is a sensitive step in the life of an individual since he starts learning how to acquire experiences and the social milieu is the first fact that affects his development. Through this age, teenagers try to use taboo expressions in order to attract the interest of others namely those who are in the same age. Besides, they also employ these expressions to show their belongings to their groups.

In its general term, it is worth mentioning that we have to look after our children through their first ages until they pass the adolescents' period since there are many factors that push them to learn these expressions without knowing that these terms are forbidden to utter in our society.

- 4- How do you often use taboo language?
 - a- Many times a day.
 - b- Every day.
 - c- Once a day.
 - d- Sometimes.

e- Rarely.

Suggestions	Females	Males	Total
Many times a day	2	16	18
Every day	2	8	10
Once a day	/	2	2
Sometimes	20	8	28
Rarely	18	10	28
Total	86		

Table 3.4: Frequency of Taboo Usage.

According to the previous table, the use of TW(s) differs from one person to another. They can be used depending on the context, certain factors, topics, the educational background and the social upbringing of the person. In other words, the social, situational and psychological positions of the interlocutors play a crucial role in the frequency of taboo usage.

As it is also demonstrated in this table, about (20.93%) of the informants claimed that they use taboo expressions in daily communication. Besides, some of them (11.62%) declared that they employ taboos many times a day, whereas (2.32%) of the participants took the third suggestion into consideration. Finally, most of the participants (32.55%) selected the last suggestion especially aged females and males. This is better understood from the following diagram:

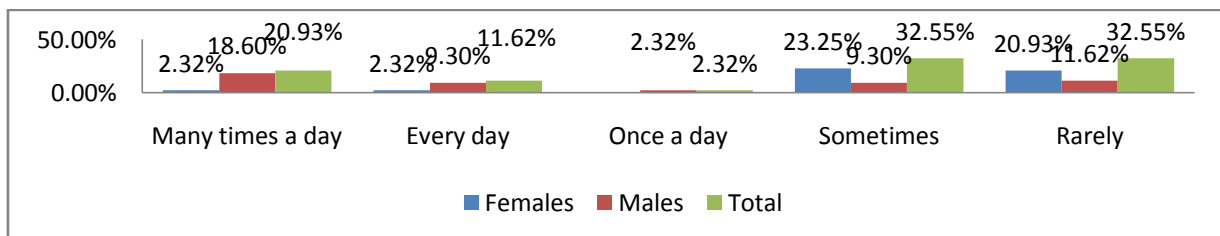


Figure 3.2: Frequency of Taboo Usage.

Looking at the results presented in this figure, it would not be wrong to claim that the choices are so vary that the informants can have the chance to select depending on their attitudes, views and emotions. Thus, it should be important to mention that multiple choice questions can help in measuring the frequency of taboo usage.

- 5- Could you please choose and order the following choices according to your attitudes?
- a- Anger.
 - b- Insult.
 - c- Comments.

Suggestions	Females	Males	Total
Anger	24	29	53
Insult	18	15	33
Total	86		

Table 3.5: The Main Reasons behind Using Taboo Language.

It should be noted that the ranking order questions play an important role in identifying the informants' attitudes and opinions through giving them the chance to classify the first reason that pushes them to use TL.

As the previous table illustrates, most respondents (61.62%) chose the first reason. Thus, the percentage of the first suggestion is high for both females and males, by contrary, some of the participants (38.73%) selected the second since they thought that insults can lead to anger. This point was illustrated through their comments since insults are used to attack people. In Tlemcen context, insult means [əssab] or [ləmʃa:jra].

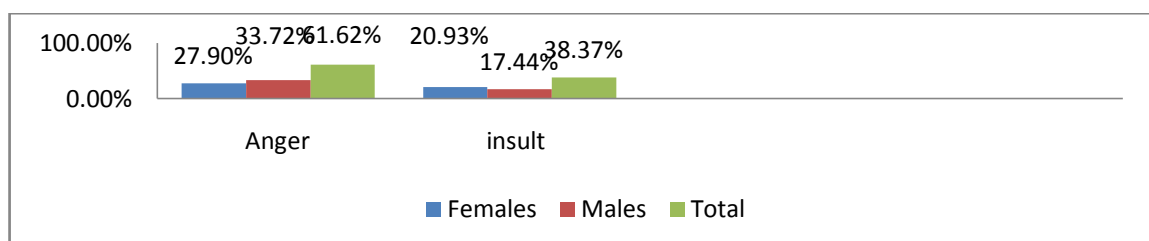


Figure 3.3: The Main Reasons behind Using Taboo Language.

This diagram shows that choices of both males and females do not differ a lot since anger can push the individuals to loose self-control and, therefore, they start speaking inappropriate expressions. In fact, it is worth mentioning that our religion teaches us how to control ourselves and, thus, our behaviour and language since anger can destroy human relations.

- 6- Do you see it as an insult if someone uses taboo language in front of you?
- a- Yes, I do.
 - b- No, I do not.
 - c- Yes, some words.
 - d- It depends on the meaning and the goal.

Suggestions	Females	Males	Total
Yes, I do	19	12	31
No, I do not	1	11	12
Yes, some words	13	13	23
It depends on the meaning and the goal	9	8	17
Total	86		

Table 3.6: The Attitudes of Respondents towards the Use of Taboos in Daily Interaction.

After taking a closer look at the previous table, it is important to note that the difference between males and females does not stop on which reasons can push them to use such expressions, but on their attitudes, views and acceptance of these terms. Thus, most participants, who represent about 36.04% of the sample, are against the use of taboo in their presence. However, what can be seen from this table is that females' attitudes towards the use of taboos in their presence are high than males. Besides, many participants (30.23%) took the third suggestion into consideration since some words can acquire a taboo meaning due to their negative connotations and the attitudes which the individuals develop against them. Besides, males' choices of the second type represent about (25%) i.e., they do not mind if they hear TW(s).

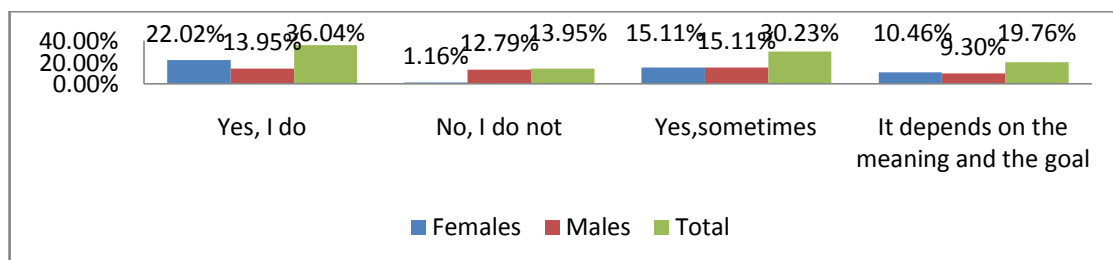


Figure 3.4: The Attitudes of Respondents towards the Use of Taboos in Daily Interaction.

The fourth diagram represents the attitudes and opinions of both males and females towards the use of TL in front of other people. In fact, Tlemcen speakers consider such behaviour as inappropriate since it diminishes respect between the members of the society and, henceforth, their relationship. Besides, they insist on good language due to their conservative nature. Indeed, Tlemcen culture represents a set of norms and traditions which are deeply rooted in Islamic teachings. In other words, they insist on politeness as a part of their daily language, behaviour and social interaction as well.

7- According to your point of view, which of the following areas is the most offensive?

- a- Sex.
- b- Death.
- c- Insulting religion.

Suggestions	Females	Males	Total
Sex	20	19	39
Death	5	4	9
Insulting religion	17	21	38
Total	86		

Table 3.7: The Most Offensive Taboo Topics.

In the sixth table, we can note some further differences of both males and females concerning the most tabooed topic. The most offensive topic for males is insulting religion followed by the topic of sex. On the other hand, female participants thought that sex is the most offensive topic to discuss, whereas insulting religion comes after. Henceforth, their opinions represent about (45.34%) for sex, (44.18%) for insulting religion and (10.46%) for death.

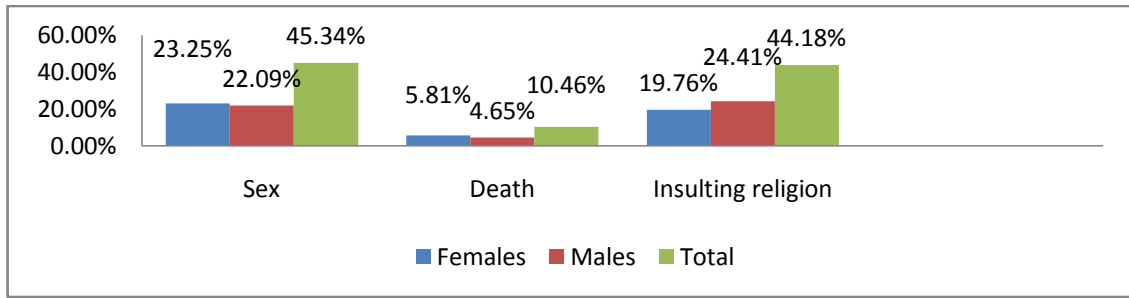


Figure 3.5: The Most Offensive Taboo Topics.

As it is clearly shown in the previous diagram, both genders have different opinions and attitudes towards the most offensive topic. In fact, most females view that sex is avoided in public speech, whereas males see that religious matters are the most tabooed since they are direct insults towards their religious principles and beliefs.

8- In which context, do you prefer discussing taboo topics mainly sex?

- a- Intimate friends.
- b- Public.
- c- Family.
- d- Work colleagues.
- e- Comments.

Suggestions	Females	Males	Total
Intimate friends	23	32	55
Public	/	/	/
Family	17	8	25
Work colleagues	2	4	6
Total	86		

Table 3.8: Participants' Answers Concerning the Context of Use.

This table shows that most informants (63.95%) declared that they want to discuss taboo matters with their close or intimate friends, whereas (29.97%) of them claimed that they prefer to talk about sensitive topics with their family members including wives, husbands, sisters and brothers. On the other hand, other informants (6.97%) maintained that they enjoy talking about them with their colleagues, but nobody wishes to discuss these topics, especially sexual intercourse, bodily effluvia

and body parts, with public members since it is embarrassing and can be seen as a source of impoliteness and face-losing.

Furthermore, most of the informants' comments have supported the first suggestion i.e., in single-sex groups. They added that they have no tendency towards discussing sex subjects in mixed groups. In fact, these comments can be supported by previous studies conducted by Gamm (1981)⁴⁸ who observes that males and females prefer talking about the topic of sex in single-sex groups.

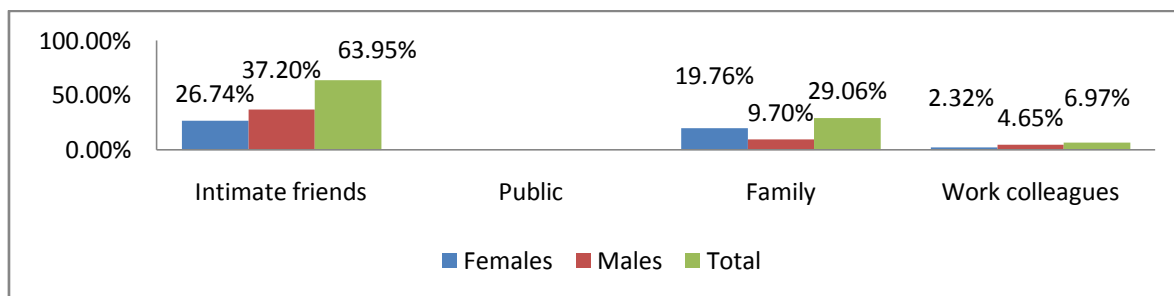


Figure 3.6: Participants' Answers Concerning the Context of Use.

As it has already been shown in this diagram, the tendency, for discussing taboo topics namely sex, differs between genders. For instance, females prefer to talk about sexual matters with their intimate friends and family members including sisters and sometimes their mothers, whereas males rarely discuss their private sexual life with their brothers since such behaviour can diminish their respect to each other. In other words, the aspect of [ləhʃu:ma]: “shame” and the notion of [ʃajb]: “taboo” can be seen as the first factors that push them not to discuss it with their brothers.

9- How do you call an old man?

a- [əʃ ʃi:χ].

b- [lħa:ʒ].

c- [ʃibani].

d- Suggestions and comments.

⁴⁸ Cited by Coates (2004: 97)

Suggestions	Females	Males	Total
[əʃʃi:χ]	6	14	20
[lhɑ:ʒ]	34	26	60
[ʃibani]	15	15	30
Total	110		

Table 3.9: Names for Old Men.

What can be seen from the above table is that males and females have nearly equal percentages concerning the second choice, though the term [lhɑ:ʒ] does not mean that old men go to pilgrimage, but it is employed to show respect to them. This word, which is spoken by almost (54.54%) of the participants, replaces the last choice [ʃibani] which is taboo since it shows disrespect to the old people.

In Tlemcen culture, however, old men have a special position in the family because they are seen as the most experienced since the bridges they cross are more than the roads the youths walk through. Besides, old age has been valued in Islam and is seen as a part of daily behaviour and, therefore, most of the participants stated that they resort to [lhɑ:ʒ] as a euphemistic expression which indicates respect. In fact, the term [ʃibani] is used by (27.27%) of the informants. They have justified their choice stating that the word is employed for referring to unknown old men, whereas the term [lhɑ:ʒ] can be used when you are addressing directly to the old man.

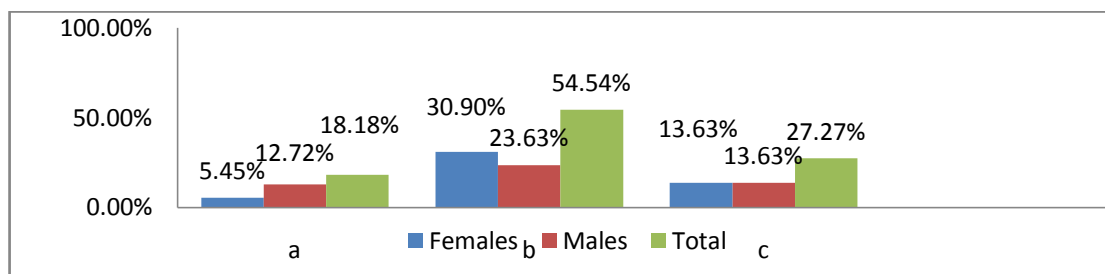


Figure 3.7: Names for Old Men.

According to this diagram, the most used term is [lħa:ɜ]. This behaviour is a part of Tlemcen traditions and Islamic instructions, which are deeply rooted in people’s culture and language as well.

What can be also noted is that Tlemcen speakers have also created other euphemistic substitutions such as [ʕəmmi]: “my uncle”. On the other hand, most of the participants claimed that the term [ʃi:χ] has specific use since it is employed by an employee, for example, to call his employer.

10-How do you call an old woman?

- a- [lħa:dɜa].
- b- [laʕɜu:ɜ].
- c- [ʃibanija].
- d- Suggestions.

Suggestions	Females	Males	Total
[lħa:dɜa]	38	29	67
[laʕɜu:ɜ]	2	16	18
[ʃibanija]	15	10	25
Total	110		

Table 3.10: Names for Old Women.

Table 8 depicts females’ and males’ use of certain terms related to the age of old women. Most of participants resorted to the first choice when speaking directly to an old woman. The term [lħa:dɜa] takes up about (60.90%) of the participants’ answers, whereas [ʃibanija] represents only (22.72%) of their choices. Consequently, [lħa:ɜa] is the most frequently used by most males and females in Tlemcen speech community, though its use differs from one region to another. In rural places, for instance, the term [ʃibanija] is not regarded as taboo and is normally employed in interaction such as in [kirahum ʃwabi:n tta:ʕek]: “how are your parents?” On the other hand, the word

[laʕzu:z], which is spoken by (16.38%), is a lexis of Algiers’s dialect and is not much used by Tlemcen speakers.

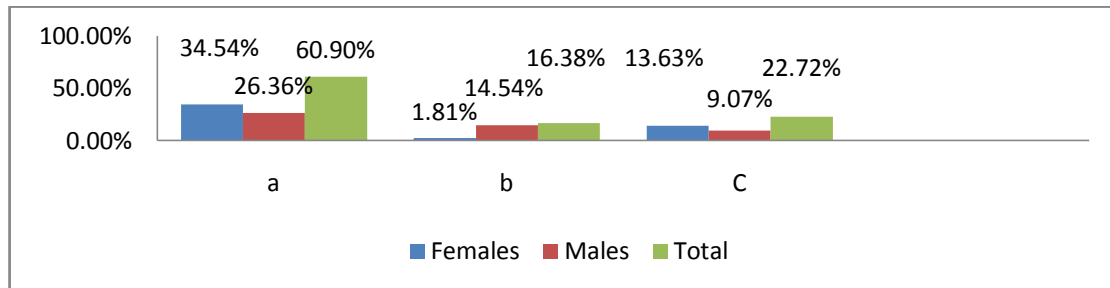


Figure 3.8: Names for Old Women.

Henceforth, the respect towards the old is apparent in daily speech of Tlemcen speakers since terms such as [ʕibani] and [ʕibanija]. Indeed, these words have acquired negative connotations due to the taboo meaning surrounding age. Thus, their use is avoided in direct contact with the old. In fact, Tlemcen speakers resort to some euphemistic substitutions including [ʕəmmi]: “my uncle” and [ʕəmmti]: “my aunt” or [χa:lti] in order to diminish the negative results of the previous expressions. For instance, when asking your friend about his/her parents, it is preferable to use expressions such as [kīra:h lħa:ʒ wəlħa:dʒa]: “how are your parents?” or [kīra:hum le parã] since terms, including [kīra:ha mmuk]: “how is your mother?” or [wa:ldi:k]: “your parents”, can be used as insults.

11-How do you call an old unmarried woman?

- a- [lba:jra].
- b- [ra:ki ka:lja wla:dak fi kərʕak].
- c- [vijej fij].
- d- [rabbi maʒabəlha:ʕ].
- e- Suggestions.

Suggestions	females	Males	Total
[lba:jra]	11	9	20

[rak:i ka:lja wla:dak fi kərʃak]	2	2	4
[vijej fij]	14	5	19
[rabbi maʒabəlha:ʃ]	28	39	67
Total	110		

Table 3.11: Names for Old Unmarried Women.

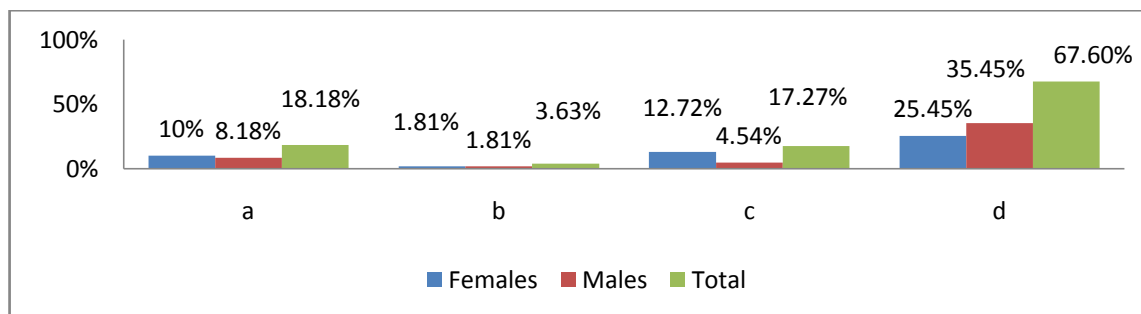


Figure 3.9: Names for Old Unmarried Women.

The result shows that most of the participants resorted to the last choice. Their answers represent about (67.60%) of the total sample. This choice is a type of EUPH which is employed to avoid mentioning that the woman is old and has not married yet. In fact, the question of age is sensitive for females in all societies, for this reason, most women try to hide their real age especially unmarried ones.

It is also worth mentioning that Tlemcen speakers tend to borrow French expressions in order to avoid taboo meanings of certain words in their dialect. Thus, the third choice is used by almost (17.27%) of the informants. On the other hand, the first choice, which is regarded as a face threatening act for both the speaker and the audience and may lead to bad results. Henceforth, the relationship between speakers, in Tlemcen speech community, is based on mutual respect. This latter is seen as a part of their politeness strategies since daily speech is restricted through the society's norms and taboos. Besides, Tlemcen speakers do not stop at this stage, but they also create other euphemistic expressions to avoid the taboo word [lba:jra] including [maktu:bha rah ʃa:da maʒa:ʃ]: "her destiny has not come yet". Thus, they have negative attitudes towards the use of [lba:jra] in normal speech, unless they are insulting each other especially when the conversation is between women. In other words, these expressions are employed more by females rather than males.

12- How do you call a prostitute?

- a- [χa:mʒa].
- b- [marju:la].
- c- [qaħba].
- d- [ba:ʔiʕatu əlhawa:].
- e- [pas].
- f- [bent blaʒa].
- g- [fla:na rabbi jahdi:ha].
- h- Suggestions.

Suggestions	Females	Males	Total
[χa:mʒa]	13	5	18
[marju:la]	5	8	13
[qaħba]	8	16	24
[ba:ʔiʕatu əlhawa:]	2	4	6
[pas]	5	4	9
[bent blaʒa]	8	/	8
[fla:na rabbi jahdi:ha]	14	18	32
Total	110		

Table 3.12: Participants' Attitudes towards Terms Referring to 'a Prostitute'.

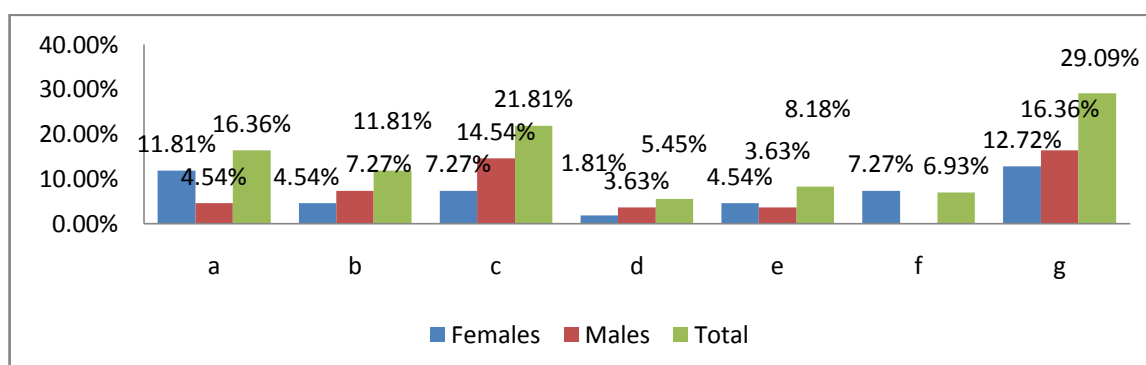


Figure 3.10: Participants' Attitudes towards Terms Referring to 'a Prostitute'.

As it is shown in the previous table and diagram, there is a difference between respondents' answers about this question due to its sensitive nature. It is estimated that (29.09%) of the informants claimed that they resort to the euphemistic term [fla:na rabbi jahdi:ha] "X may God guide her" since the previous choices represent a direct attack towards such type of women. In contrast, the term [χa:mʒa] is almost spoken by (16.36%) of the participants. Thus, this forbidden act is illegal and, therefore, it is seen as a dirty behaviour which is banned in Islamic Norms and cultural values of Tlemcen society.

Furthermore, the comments of the informants were very rich since they added other terms connected with the word [χa:mʒa]. However, males and females differ in the expressions they use. In women's part, the most tabooed terms are represented in words like [matəswa:ʃ] or [χa:rʒa tri:g]: "she is out of faith" and [ħamu:ja]. All these expressions indicate this dirty forbidden act. On the other hand, males employ different terms such as [nta:ʃ tul mɔ̃nd]. All these words and sentences have the same meaning of "a prostitute".

13-How do you call adultery?

- a- [əddaʕa:ra].
- b- [ʔaʕma:l ħurra taħt surra].
- c- [ləwsaχ].

Suggestions	Females	Males	Total
[əddaʕa:ra]	15	22	37
[ʔaʕma:l ħurra taħt surra]	10	5	15
[ləwsaχ]	30	28	58
Total	110		

Table 3.13: Names Referring to Adultery.

As it is shown, most of the respondents (52.52%) selected the last choice which is a EUPH related to sex topic. This latter is strongly euphemised by Tlemcen speakers

since the conservative nature of this society pushes its members to create rules and norms for daily contact. Hence, the degree of usage differs from one individual to another due to several factors including the social upbringing, the social milieu and the educational background. All these factors play a substantial role in directing the speakers' views, attitudes and, therefore, their beliefs.

Furthermore, what can be observed from our analysis of the previous questions is that most of the participants tend to use EUPH since it plays a significant part in maintaining the harmonious interpersonal relationship. Besides, the conservative nature of Tlemcen speakers imposes on them many norms to follow in order to control their behaviour and language as well. However, this conservative nature is changing in nowadays since Tlemcen society has witnessed many events including the arrival of other citizens. This event is seen as a major factor which lessens the strength of the society's norms and beliefs. Consequently, it leads to the spread of many phenomena including taboos.

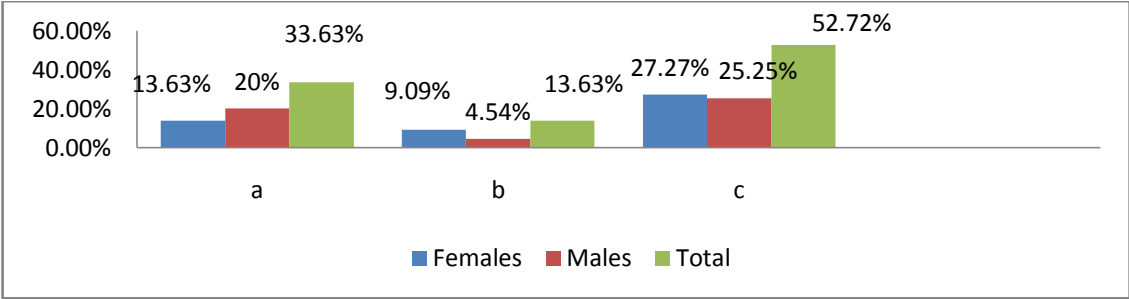


Figure 3.11: Names Referring to Adultery.

14- How do you call an illegitimate child?

- a- [mløggat].
- b- [wəld ləħra:m].
- c- [farχ].
- d- [maski:n rabbi mʕa:h].
- e- [tʃifl vøir ʃarʕi:].
- f- Comments.

Suggestions	Females	Males	Total
[mløggat]	4	3	7

[wəld ləħra:m]	13	9	22
[farχ]	11	27	38
[maski:n rabbi mʕa:h]	21	12	33
[tʃifl ʔəir ʃarʕi:]	6	4	10
Total	110		

Table 3.14: Names Referring to Illegitimate Child.

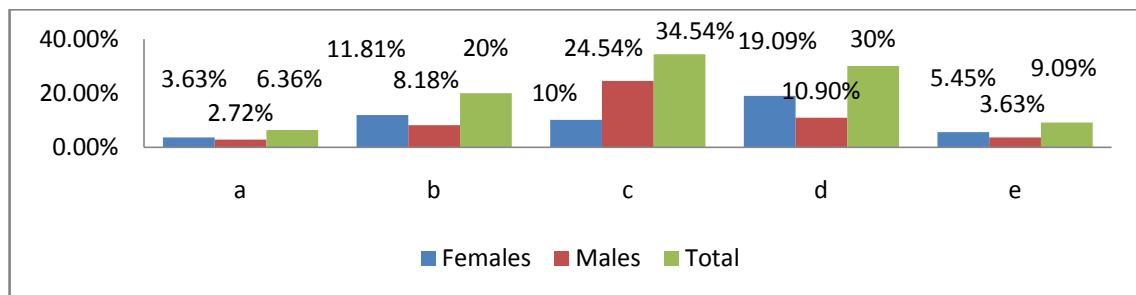


Figure 3.12: Names Referring to Illegitimate Child.

The previous table and figure demonstrate a set of taboos and EUPH(s) which exist in Tlemcen dialect in particular, and Algerian varieties in general. However, the attitudes towards the use of such expressions vary from one individual to another. Thus, the attitudinal measurements are not equal. For instance, some of the participants, whose choices represent (24.54%) of the whole sample and whose answers of the first question are positive, claimed that they prefer using the third proposition which is a taboo term in Tlemcen society since it shows that the child is the result of an illegal intercourse. On the other hand, the third proposition, which represents (30%), was taken as the second choice by those whose answers of the first question are negative. This proposition is, again, a euphemistic substitution for the previous taboo terms.

In fact, they have justified their choices stating that the term [farχ] is employed as an insult, whereas the word [mləggat] is a part of women's speech and [wəld ləħra:m] is also used as an insult by old males.

15-How do you call man's sexual organ?

- a- [lɔmʃallam].
- b- [lma:rtɔ].
- c- [zɔbb].
- d- [ʃwa:lah ɔʃɔrs].
- e- Suggestions.

Suggestions	Females	Males	Total
[lɔmʃallam]	5	4	9
[lma:rtɔ]	10	14	24
[zɔbb]	12	19	31
[ʃwa:lah ɔʃɔrs]	28	18	46
Total	110		

Table 3.15: Taboos Related to Man’s Sexual Organ.

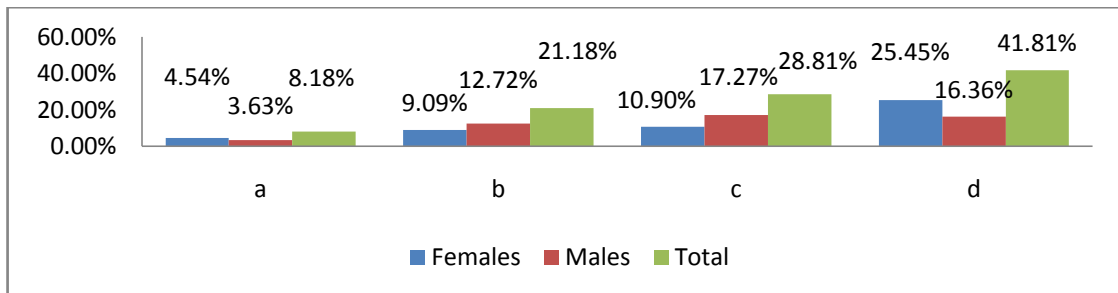


Figure 3.13: Taboos Related to Man’s Sexual Organ.

As shown in the table and the graph above, (41.81%) of the participants stated that they use the term [ʃwalaħ ɔʃɔrs] which is a type of EUPH that Tlemcen speakers employ in order to hide the taboo meaning of the previous terms. In other words, the use of EUPH has become a part of folkway of Tlemcen culture.

On the other hand, the term [zɔbb] is spoken by almost (28.81%) of the participants. This latter is the most tabooed term in Tlemcen dialect and is a part of the body which is banned to expose or even to mention in daily communication. However, this word can be found in men’s speech especially as a type of insult. Finally,

(21.18%) of the respondents reported that they employ [lma:rɪp] mainly teenagers i.e., it is a part of teenage vocabulary and is not used by adult women or men, although they know the term, whereas the last proposition gains only (8.18%) of their choices.

Furthermore, one should note that teenagers have created a rich vocabulary which they use between each other, but it differs between women and men. Males, for instance, use specific expressions including [sla:h ətqi:l]: “heavy weapon” or [ənnam]...etc. These expressions can be seen as a type of simile, whereas women use different expressions. They tend to name it after the names of people or things such as [bu:ʃla:m],[qæddu:r] ,[bana:na]: “bananas” or [əlʔimbra:tɔ:r]: “the emperor”...etc.

16-How do you call women’s sexual organ?

- a- [əlkarmu:sa].
- b- [ʃeiʃa].
- c- [fanɔ:ra].
- d- [sawwa].
- e- [əlfaraʒ].
- f- Suggestions and comments.

Suggestions	Females	Males	Total
[əlkarmu:sa]	3	3	6
[ʃeiʃa]	18	1	19
[fanɔ:ra]	2	/	2
[sawwa]	18	34	52
[əlfaraʒ]	1	6	7
Total	86		

Table 3.16: Taboos Related to Woman’s Sexual Organ.

A closer look at the previous table reveals that 24 of the participants refused answering this question due to its sensitive nature, although they answered the previous one. The main reason is that we do not give them a euphemistic expression as a proposition in this question, whereas the choices of the remaining informants were so varied. They have showed their positive attitudes towards the use of such terms and they have justified their selections claiming that they use these words when they are angry or as a kind of jokes between each other. Besides, they continued stating that they employ such words with their intimate friends of the same age. Moreover, some of the comments of the informants revealed that some girls or boys especially teenagers employ these expressions to attract the attention of each other or to show their belongings to their groups. Consequently, one may note that the attitudes towards the use of TW(s) differ from one individual to another depending on their gender and age.

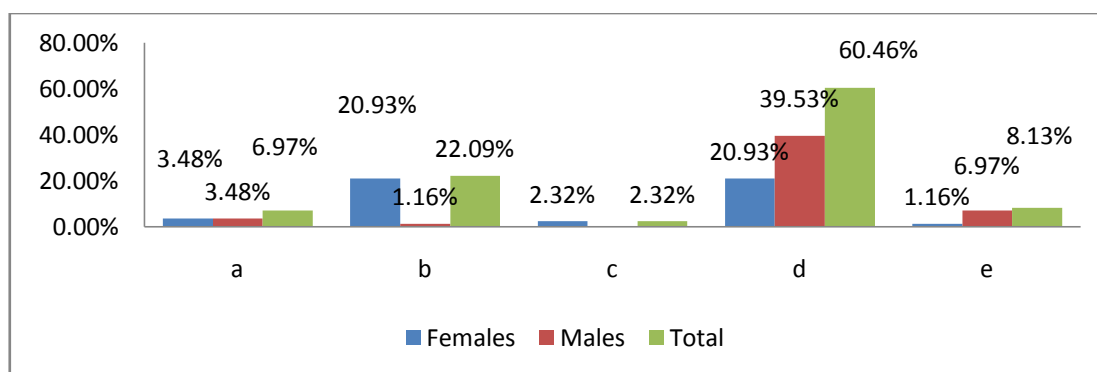


Figure 3.14: Taboos Related to Woman's Sexual Organ.

This chart clearly shows the difference of use between the participants. (60.46%) of them took the fourth proposition which is considered as the most tabooed word related to the body of women, whereas (22.09%) chose the second proposition. In fact, naming sexual organs after the names of people is used by women more than men since females tend to create code words for their interaction between each other such as [rani ma:ʃja nəfliksi] which means that "I am going to the toilet". In terms of this question, males tend to employ terms different from females including [lməʃmo:ra] or [lbəkku:ʃa] or [χanfu:fa], whereas women use special words such as [χbi:za] or [bubu:ʃa] or [ssfanzə] and [fula wə nqəsmət ʃla zu:ʒ]...etc.

17- How do you call women's breast?

- a- [əθθadj].
- b- [təffa:ħat].
- c- [rmmana:t].
- d- [ʒdar].
- e- [bza:zal].
- f- [le sin].
- g- Suggestions.

Suggestions	Females	Males	Total
[əθθadj]	/	/	/
[təffa:ħat]	11	18	29
[rmmana:t]	4	2	6
[ʒdar]	3	3	6
[bza:zal]	7	16	23
[le sin]	17	5	22
Total	86		

Table 3.17: Taboos Related to Woman's Breast.

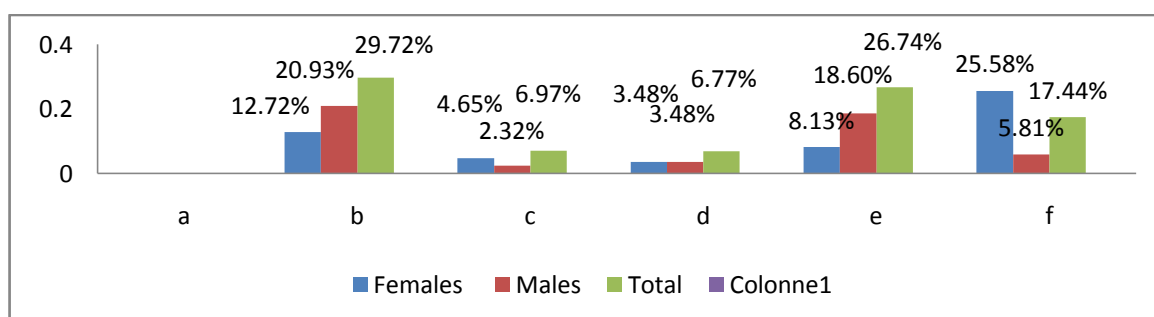


Figure 3.15: Taboos Related to Woman's Breast.

It should be noted that most of the propositions are similes which are used as EUPH(s) in order to lessen the harm of certain taboo expressions. In fact, Algerian varieties are rich in similes related to human body. The main aim behind the creation

of such terms is to decrease the power of TW(s) that exist side by side with EUPH(s) in these dialects. Besides, Algerian speakers do not stop at this stage, but they tend to borrow from other languages expressions which may diminish the harmonious power of the local words as the case of this question.

Henceforth, what can be observed from the above table and chart is that [təffa:ħat] and [bza:zal] have nearly equal percentages, though the former represents (29.72%) of the respondents' selections i.e., this term is the most obviously used in Tlemcen dialect, whereas the latter is employed by almost (26.74%). In fact, [taffa:ħat] can be considered as a lexicon of man's language, whereas women resorted to the use of French taboo word [le sin]: "breast" thinking that this latter is more acceptable to mention rather than [bza:zal]. Consequently, men have created certain expressions to use, whereas women have developed more positive attitudes towards the use of French taboos and EUPH(s). Among males' expressions, we have [d̥raʔ] which is only spoken by old males in addition to [nhu:d] or [ləʕda:jal]...etc. On the other side, women tend to create feministic expressions which suit their views and attitudes such as [ʔamʔu:ma:t] or [bəkbu:ka:t].

18-How do you call women's ass?

- a- [lχarza].
- b- [lʕaqlija].
- c- [matɛrijel].
- d- [mʂa:ʂi:t].

Suggestions	Females	Males	Total
[lχarza]	10	7	17
[lʕaqlija]	1	4	5
[matɛrijel]	15	23	38
[mʂa:ʂi:t]	16	10	26

Total	86
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Table 3.18: Taboos Related to Woman's Ass.

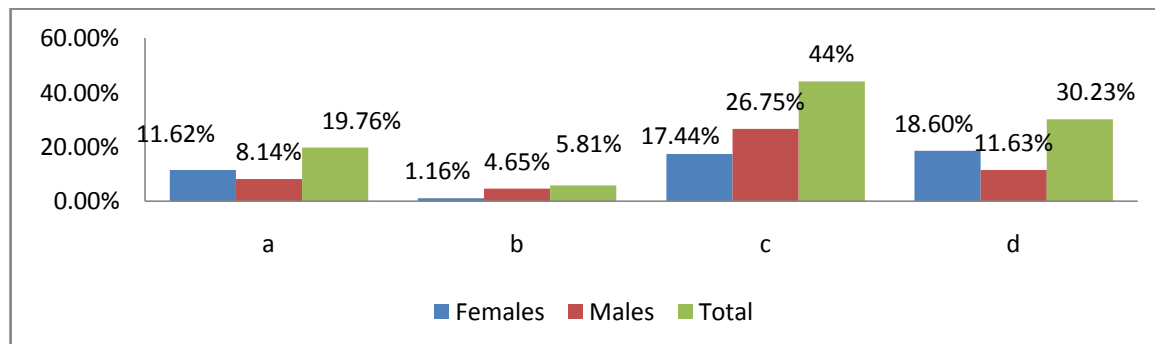


Figure 3.16: Taboos Related to Woman's Ass.

From the assessment of the above results, it seems that (44.19%) of the participants selected [matɛrijɛl] which means 'a woman's ass'. This latter is a French term, which is used in Algerian varieties, to denote the different sexual parts of females' body including breast and ass. Men, however, use this latter in their speech to refer to 'a woman's ass' since it has not the same degree as [mɣa:ɣi:t], whereas (30.23%) of the informants chose this term especially women. Thus, it should be noted that this latter is a character of women's speech, although it is used by men. The results also show that (21.81%) of the informants refused answering this question because of its sensitive nature. Therefore, their attitudes towards the use of such expressions are negative.

19-How do you call a pregnant woman?

- a- [ra:ha mri:ɖa].
- b- [ra:ha mɔttaqla].
- c- [ra:ha belkarʃ].
- d- [ãsent].
- e- [ħa:mil].
- f- Comments.

Suggestions	Females	Males	Total
[ra:ha mri:d̪a]	7	13	20
[ra:ha məttaqla]	4	6	10
[ra:ha belkarʃ]	20	26	46
[ãsent]	24	8	32
[ħa:mi]	/	2	2
Total	110		

Table 3.19: The Frequency of Using Taboos Related to Pregnancy.

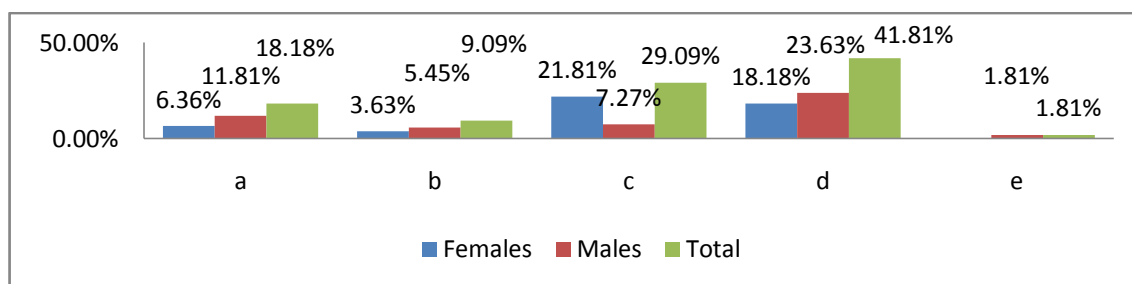


Figure 3.17: The Frequency of Using Taboos Related to Pregnancy.

As we went back to the questionnaire, we have observed that these expressions are typical of women's vocabulary. We have also noticed that EUPH is a basic feature of Tlemcen speakers' daily interaction. Thus, the results of the previous graph demonstrate that the notion of [ləħʃu:ma] is still existing in Tlemcen society in contrast with other parts of the country. What can be also observed from the results is that all participants display different views towards the above propositions. Therefore, this question clearly shows that the participants' selection is strongly related to their attitudes. Hence, such results demonstrate that the majority of informants (41.81%) declared that they use of [ãsent] in their daily interaction. In contrast, some of them (29.09%) reported that they employ [ra:ha belkarʃ] which is considered taboo though it is employed unconsciously. On the other hand, about (18.18%) of the participants declared that they use [ra:ha mri:d̪a].

20-How do you call a menstrual woman?

- a- [ra:ha mwesχa].
- b- [ra:ha mri:ɖa].
- c- [ẽdispɔze].
- d- [rɛgle].
- e- Suggestions.

Suggestions	Females	Males	Total
[ra:ha mwesχa]	/	12	12
[ra:ha mri:ɖa]	1	13	14
[ẽdispɔze]	24	7	31
[rɛgle]	30	23	53
Total	110		

Table 3.20: Degree of Using Taboos and Euphemisms Related to Women’s Menstrual Period.

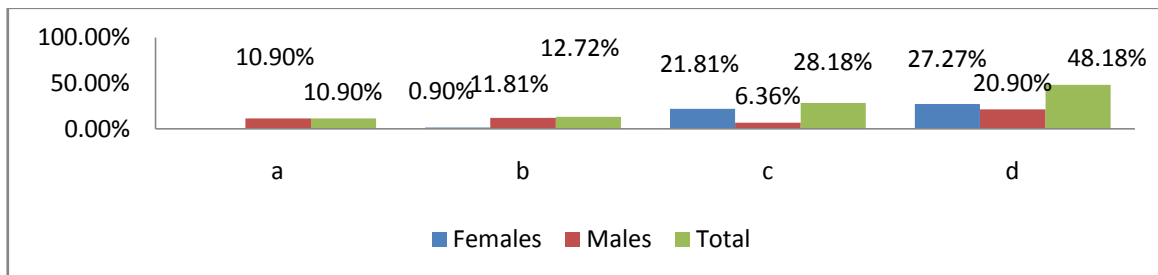


Figure 3.18: Degrees of Using Taboos and Euphemisms Related to Women’s Menstrual Period.

What can be summarised from the above results is that the term [rɛgle] remains the most used word especially among females with a percentage of 50 percent. In fact, menstruation is regarded as the most tabooed step in women’s life because of the sensitivity of everything related to their body since they are seen as [ʔawra] and are banned to expose. In the second position comes the term [ẽdispɔze] with a percentage of 28.18 percent. This proposition realises nearly an equal rate of use for females. In this regard, this fact draws us to say that both males and females tend to borrow French taboo words in order to lessen the effect of [ra:ha ʕlija ħaqq əʃʃhar].

Arguably, the results show the fact that teenagers tend to employ [ra:hæ rɛɡl], whereas adult women use [ra:ha ɛ̃dɪspɔzɐ]. In men’s part, they also tend to employ other euphemistic substitutions such as [ra:ha mri:dɑ] to indicate that the female is either pregnant or passing her menstrual period. However, the informants gave no suggestions due the sensitive nature of this question.

21- Do you agree that women use taboo language?

- a- I agree.
- b- I strongly agree.
- c- I disagree.
- d- I strongly disagree.
- e- Comments.

Suggestions	Females	Males	Total
I agree	6	10	16
I strongly agree	43	35	78
I disagree	3	9	12
I strongly disagree	3	1	4
Total	110		

Table 3.21: Informants’ Views about Women’s Use of Taboos.

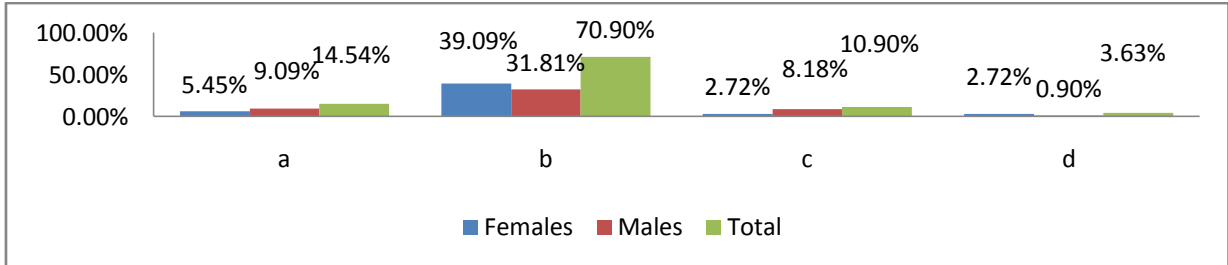


Figure 3.19: Informants’ Views about Women’s Use of Taboos.

This question aims at determining the views of both sexes mainly men towards women’s use of TW(s) through employing what is called the likert scale, that is, we try to know the respondents’ exact attitudes through giving them choices. Consequently, 70.90 percent of the informants claimed that they agree on the fact that females use

taboos, while 14.54 percent especially men were strongly sure of that fact. In contrast, fewer informants, who represent 10.90 percent, refused this view and lastly about 3.63 percent of the respondents were against the idea that females employ offensive or dirty language. Their views are built on the belief that women are obliged to control their behaviour and language. Henceforth, the likert scale can be seen as an essential scale for measuring the participants’ attitudes. This scale clearly shows that Tlemcen speakers’ attitudes vary between positive and negative.

- 22-Do you agree that women use taboos more than men?
- a- I agree.
 - b- I strongly agree.
 - c- I disagree.
 - d- I strongly disagree.
 - e- Comments.

Suggestions	Females	Males	Total
I agree	5	5	9
I strongly agree	7	13	20
I disagree	39	37	76
I strongly disagree	4	1	5
Total	110		

Table 3.22: Differences in Using French Taboos between Males and Females.

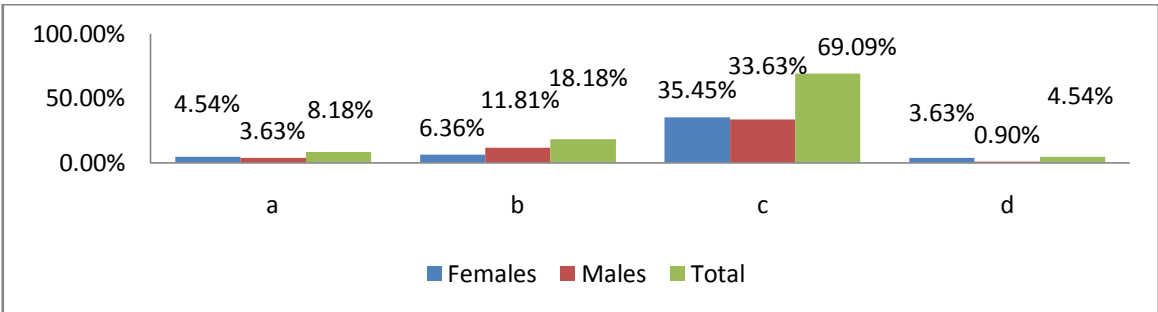


Figure 3.20: Differences in Using French Taboos between Males and Females.

The chart and the table above explain clearly the views of the participants which are the results of their daily observation. In this regard, the results reveal that 69.09 percent of the respondents declared that they disagree on the view that women are

similar to men in terms of taboo usage, while fewer participants (18.18%) maintained that they agree on the fact of females' use taboos in their daily interaction when they are in a single-sex group. They have justified their views claiming that females talk to each other about certain embarrassing topics for the purpose of having more knowledge. For instance, unmarried girls prefer knowing more about the sexual life in order to be prepared during their marriage. They also added that this depends on their age and the social situation since young girls cannot discuss these topics with their mothers. Lastly, about (4.54%) of the respondents argued that they strongly disagree, especially old females whose comments have illustrated more their views. They also stated that the family plays a crucial role, that is, if parents look after their children, they will never use such dirty language.

23-Do you use euphemism?

- a- Yes.
- b- No.
- c- Sometimes.
- d- Rarely.

Suggestions	Females	Males	Total
Yes	45	33	78
No	2	7	9
Sometimes	6	10	16
Rarely	2	5	8
Total			

Table 3.23: Speakers' Attitudes towards the Use of Euphemism.

When we speak about the conservative nature of Tlemcen speakers, it is necessary to talk about the value of EUPH in this society. Indeed, Tlemcen speakers are always looking after their speech. They even create norms when they are speaking. In comparison with other Algerian speech communities, Tlemcen speakers are strict in terms of language use. For this reason, their speech is very rich as a source for data collection. In contrast, it is difficult to investigate whether they use taboos or not.

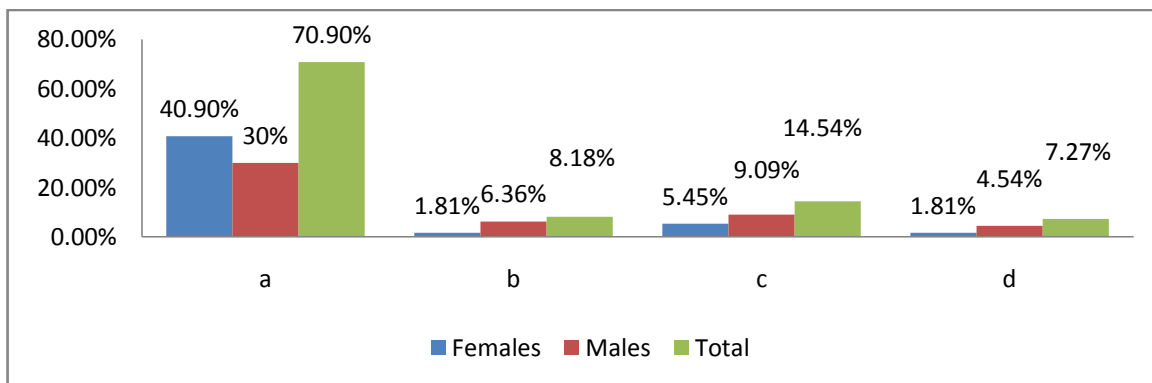


Figure 3.21: Speakers' Attitudes towards the Use of Euphemism.

In gross, what can be summarised from this chart is that the majority of participants claimed that they use EUPH. Therefore, we find that the respondents are aware of euphemistic usage, although they do not understand the question until we have explained to them. Interestingly, a great number of participants (70.90%) stated that they employ EUPH in their speech, while (14.54%) of them declared that they speak some expressions unconsciously. On the other hand, fewer participants (8.18%) reported that they never use EUPH in their speech, whereas a small number (7.27%) rarely employ them. Henceforth, we can deduce that those, who do not use EUPH, have a great percentage of taboo usage or are not aware about their speech.

24- How do you say "he died"?

- a- [fla:n dʒa:ʃ].
- b- [fla:n ʃtʌ:k ʃumru].
- c- [mu:l lʔama:na ʃəbba ʔama:ntu].
- d- [ʃəbba ba:sna w ba:skum].
- e- [fla:n ma:t].
- f- Suggestions.

Suggestions	Females	Males	Total
[fla:n dʒa:ʃ]	15	32	47
[fla:n ʃtʌ:k ʃumru]	14	2	16
[mu:l lʔama:na ʃəbba ʔama:ntu]	10	10	20

[ʕəbba ba:sna w ba:skum]	10	2	12
[fla:n ma:t]	6	9	15
Total	110		

Table 3.24: Informants' Views and Attitudes towards Death Taboos and Euphemisms.

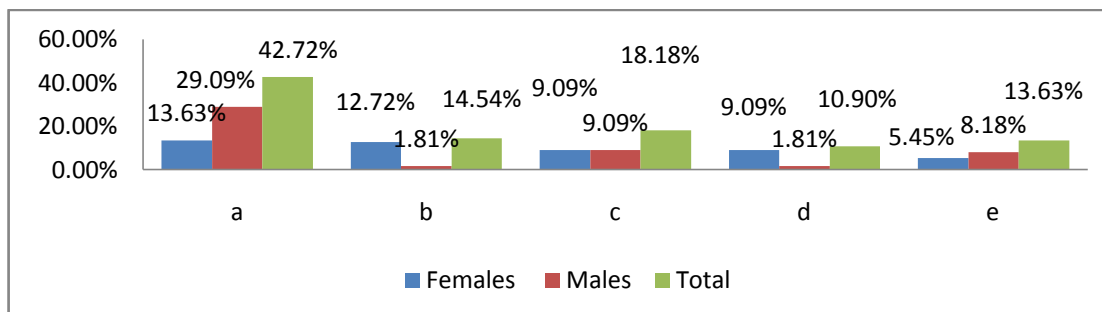


Figure 3.22: Informants' Views and Attitudes towards Death Taboos and Euphemisms.

The table and the graph tend to shed light on the euphemised expressions which are used by Tlemcen speakers instead of the term [ma:t]: “died”. The results also show the frequency of usage of each word or expression by the participants. Therefore, the above graph indicates that 42.72 percent of the informants claimed that they tend to use [fla:n ɖa:ʕ]. Furthermore, these results show that the use of EUPH varies according to the gender of the participants. For example, the term [fla:n ɖa:ʕ] is employed by males and females, but it is more frequent among men (8.18%) rather than women (5.45%). Moreover, females tend sometimes to euphemise the term [ma:t] through a direct reference to religion by using [rabbi ha:bu]: “Allah loves him” or [ʕəbba ba:sna w ba:skum]: “Allah took his trust” which is spoken by almost 10.90 percent of the respondents. They have also supplied us with more important expressions such as [fla:n twəfa llah jarħmu] or [fla:n twəffa llah jwassaʕ ʕli:h] or [fla:n dda:jam llah fi mulku].

25-How do you strengthen the family of the deceased?

a- [llah jarħam fla:n].

- b- [əlbāraka f ro:skum].
- c- [llah j̄baddəl m̄habbtu bə ʒbar].
- d- Suggestions.

Suggestions	Females	Males	Total
[llah jarḥam fla:n]	7	5	12
[əlbāraka f ro:skum]	20	8	28
[llah j̄baddəl m̄habbtu bə ʒbar]	28	42	70
Total	110		

Table 3.25: Expressions Used to Strengthen the Family of the Deceased.

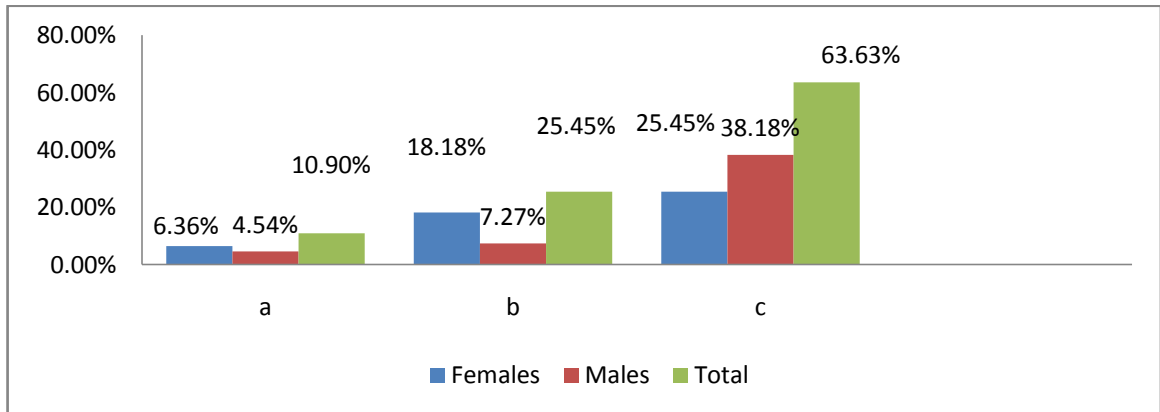


Figure 3.23: Expressions Used to Strengthen the Family of the Deceased.

Based on the previous stated findings, it is clear that the majority of informants (63.63%) supported the use of [llah j̄baddəl m̄habbtu bə ʒbar]. This latter is an expression that belongs to Tlemcen dialect, while fewer participants, who represent 25.25 percent, resorted to the third choice. Besides, [əlbāraka f ro:skum] is more frequently used by old males and females. In fact, the former and the latter choices clearly show the differences between males and females in terms of euphemistic usage. However, women have developed certain words that are employed in their interaction concerning death topic, while men tend to take expressions from MSA such as [llah j̄ʃadq̄dam ʔazarkum].

26-How do you call a person who dies suddenly?

a- [fla:n naχtaf].

b- [fla:n taħat wraqtu].

c- Suggestions.

Suggestions	Females	Males	Total
[fla:n naχtaf]	21	10	31
[fla:n taħat wraqtu]	34	45	79
Total	110		

Table 3.26: Euphemisms Referring to a Sudden Death.

In this concluding question we have asked for the suggestions of the informants since there are many expressions which can be found in Tlemcen dialect referring to a sudden death. In fact, death has its own position in Tlemcen society and is not considered as a taboo topic since they do not fear death, but they fear what comes after. Losing relatives, however, can result in the most difficult emotions.

From what has been shown in this table, we can conclude that most Tlemcen speakers look after their speech when dealing with the topic of death. Thus, they have also created many substitutions to express their fear and grief of sudden death. For example, they use [fla:n ma:t ʃvɪr məski:n] or [fla:n ba:t maʃbaħ], [fla:n rabbi tfakru] or [za:t lmu:t ta:ʃu ʃla ʃafla]. They further employ expressions which indicate that they accept this type of death such as in [la: radda liqaɖa:ʔi llahi wa qadarihi] or [lʔaʒal djalu kmal]...etc.

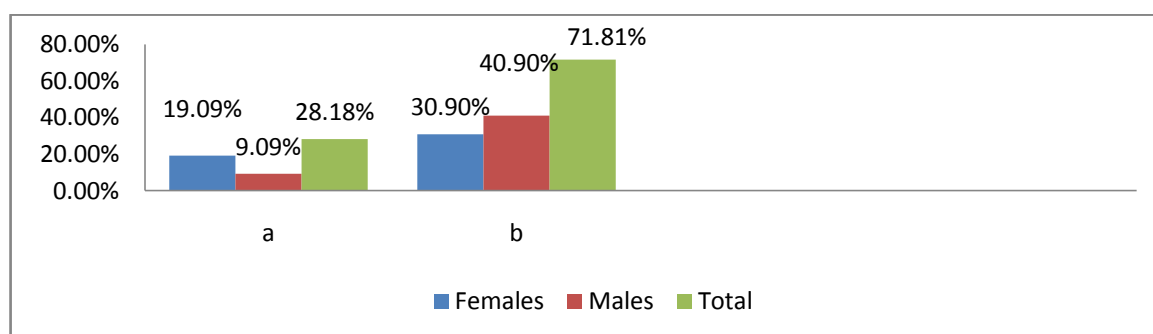


Figure 3.24: Euphemisms Referring to a Sudden Death.

Henceforth, the majority of informants, who represent (71.81%), declared that they prefer the last choice. They further reported that this expression is more appropriate when we talk about old ill people. On the other hand, 28.18 percent of the participants chose the first proposition. This clearly shows the level of education and gender of the respondents because this latter is mostly used by old illiterate people especially females since younger generation rarely use it.

3.5.2- Preparing the Interview and Data Analysis

In this section, we tried to investigate Tlemcen culture in relation to its dialect. We also tended to throw light on the different taboo topics that are banned especially sexual matters depending on people's attitudes and views. We also tried to show that EUPH is an aspect of Tlemcen society which proves its conservative nature, although the use of taboo exists side by side with these substitutions.

- 1- According to your opinion, which reasons can push speakers to use taboo language?

According to female interviewees, there are many reasons which explain the use of taboos including the social upbringing of the child and the social environment which are seen as two fundamental factors beyond taboo usage. They further claimed that the role of parents is important in child socialisation because if the child, for example, hears his/her father speaking dirty words, he/she will learn them. Moreover, contact with other children can push them to learn such expressions from each other and if they acquire these terms, their parents should teach them that these words are banned to use. Moreover, they added that there are also psychological factors including anger, annoyance and frustration. These factors can be seen as indicators for using offensive language. Therefore, female participants, who represent 50 percent, have insisted on the fact that the family upbringing is seen as the first step for teaching children to behave well and to look after their language. However, they also claimed that the lack of contact between the members of the family leads them to pass more time outside and, henceforth, they will learn these embarrassing terms. They went on

stating that today's educational system is no longer looking after children's or adolescents' language or behaviour.

Similarly, all male interviewees, who represent 50 percent, agreed on the fact that family upbringing is the main factor since it helps in building the child's personality. They, again, explained that the social milieu, where the child can get in contact with each other, is seen as the second factor which can affect him/her either positively or negatively. In other words, child socialisation is the result of their parents' way of teaching since he/she learns everything from them during his/her first years.

Furthermore, three out of five male interviewees argued that when the child learns such terms, he/she will probably use them unconsciously without knowing their bad effects, while adolescents employ them consciously since they know their meanings and can control their speech. Consequently, all interviewees shared the same views that there are social and psychological factors which express learning and using bad language.

2- Do women use taboo language?

In this question, all female informants maintained that men use taboos as a sign of masculinity, that is, they are not punished for their speech or behaviour, whereas females should look after their language because they are always observed by the society and represent the honour of their families.

In addition to this, two out of five female interviewees, who represent twenty percent, claimed that the degree of use differs not only between males and females, but also from one individual to another depending on their age and the educational background. They further explained that some females may use taboos in order to strengthen their relations or intimacy with boys or what they call in Tlemcen dialect [ddaṣarhum]. They also added that there are few girls, who are called [bna:t əzanqa], have a high frequency of taboo usage.

On the other hand, fifty percent of male informants reported that Tlemcen females use taboos, though they are supposed to be the mirror of this conservative

family. Females, thus, differ from men in terms of taboo usage. It should be also mentioned that the use differs from one individual to another depending on their age, gender and the factors, which we have already explained.

3- In what context do you prefer discussing taboo topics namely sex?

In fact, three married interviewees, who represent 30 percent, declared that they can discuss sexual life with their intimate friends or sisters. They have justified their views stating that the main aim beyond discussing sexual matters is to strengthen marriage ties and protect them from sexual diseases, while one participant claimed that she can discuss these things with her mother, stating that she is no longer considered her as a mother, but rather as her close friend.

On the other hand, about forty percent of male interviewees stated that they can discuss their sexual matters with their intimate or close friends. For instance, they can advise them about a bad girl claiming that[hadi:k ɣa:mʒa]: “she is a prostitute”, while they employ other substitutions with their brothers such as[had:k matəʂlahʃ]. In contrast, one male participant argued that he can discuss sex topic with his brothers if he no longer considers them as brothers, but as close friends.

4- Do you think that Tlemcen speakers use taboo words and expressions?

Throughout this question, all participants, who represent 100 percent, observed that the structure of Tlemcen speech community has changed in the last few decades. This fact leads Tlemcen speakers to acquire new habits and customs which influence family ties and decrease the level of communication between its members. Consequently, it increases the frequency of taboo usage.

Furthermore, they confirmed that Tlemcen speakers employ taboos in their speech, but the frequency of use differs between them according to their gender, age, occupation, and the educational background. They further maintained that it becomes difficult for an individual to give up speaking these expressions when he/she becomes adult. Thus, the speakers’ attitudes vary between positive and negative depending on the reasons and context of use.

5- How do you see death and what are the expressions that you use to talk about it?

The results of this question reveal that the participants are unwilling to name death directly because they fear what comes after. For this reason, they try not to mention the word [lmɪjjət] or [fla:n mat] i.e., they utter them unconsciously. They sometimes find themselves replacing these words with more acceptable expressions. In fact, the term [lmɪjjət] is avoided by Tlemcen speakers, although it is used by some people since they may not find it taboo.

3.6- Implication and Concluding Remarks

One should note that the attitudes of speakers towards the use of taboos differ according to their gender, age and the educational background. Besides, it is worth mentioning that sex topic is still the most sensitive and fearful subject which people try to avoid mentioning in public. In fact, most people feel reluctant when dealing with sex topic for this reason they have created expressions which are called EUPH(s). Therefore, sex topic is mentioned euphemistically by people in order not to harm their relationships.

Furthermore, it should be mentioned that death is also another taboo topic since it relates humans with another mysterious life which they fear. This subject is also replaced by more acceptable expressions. Henceforth, the study of these two linguistic and cultural phenomena provides us with more knowledgeable information about the socio-cultural and religious norms of the society under investigation. It sheds light on the dark side of the cultural and linguistic levels since it provides us with rich data about what is banned in speech and behaviour.

Hence, the results above provided us with a fertile soil for proving the validity of our hypotheses concerning taboos and EUPH(s). Indeed, the majority of informants are in favour of taboos and euphemistic usage, while a small minority has negative attitudes towards the use of such dirty language. By the end of our analysis of the questionnaire and the interview, we deduced that most respondents namely teenagers

enjoy positive attitudes rather than negative ones. Concerning positive attitudes, it had already been explained that there are factors beyond the use of taboos namely social and psychological reasons such as the social upbringing of the person in addition to anger and annoyance. As revealed in the first questions of the questionnaire and the interview, Tlemcen speakers cannot discuss taboos with their family members or the public, but with their intimate friends, unless they no longer use respect as a strategy during their interaction.

What also emerged from our analysis is that the use of taboos exists side by side with EUPH(s) depending on the context of communication. Indeed, Tlemcen speakers are careful in approaching certain topics especially sexual matters since the majority of them do not show any direct reference to such topics, unless they are violated by some reasons. Besides, death EUPH(s) are formed consciously since they show more care to this topic. In fact, they display the same attitudes and views towards death, though the expressions they use differ between individuals according to their age and gender. In this regard, one might confirm that death is a universal topic as well as culture specific since each society has its own beliefs. In case of Muslim societies, it is seen as a transition from this life to another better one.

Finally, it should be made clear that Tlemcen speakers' positive attitudes are high than those towards the use of EUPH. Another point worth mentioning is that they even develop negative attitudes not only towards the use of taboos, but even towards those who utter them, especially girls since they are always watched by the society. Consequently, those who use taboos are considered impolite. In a lesser extent, Tlemcen people resort towards the use of certain politeness strategies such as respect and the notions of [ləħʃu:ma]: "shame" and [əʃʃaraf]: "honour" in order to protect their faces during interaction. They also employ religious EUPH(s) in order to cope with different taboo topics.

3.7- Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, we relied on a research methodology which is based on both quantitative and qualitative data. In the former, we gathered information by a

questionnaire which was given to 110 respondents and 86 of them answered all questions and showed their positive attitudes towards the use of both taboos and EUPH, whereas the remaining informants, who represent (21.81%) of the sample, did not answer the questionnaire entirely because of the sensitivity of its questions. However, our data collection was incomplete without a qualitative research. Therefore, we designed a focus group interview as a second research instrument which contained semi-structured questions in order to complete our data collection and to confirm the validity of our hypotheses.

General conclusion

General Conclusion

The study of taboo language is always seen as inappropriate for academic research because of the sensitivity of its nature especially sex, although it exists in all human cultures. There is also no doubt that tackling the dark side of both culture and language of a given society is hoped to add new dimensions for understanding human psyche.

Interestingly, one should note that research on taboos and euphemisms is vast since they are heavily used in all societies and most studies, which are done in these two fields, have been piloted by Western researchers and few works have been done by Arab scholars. It is also evident that the analysis of such phenomena is scattered since they pertain to the culturally sensitive areas which have only received a lot of academic attention in the last few decades.

Admittedly, this piece of work provides us with an overview about the socio-cultural structure, religious norms, customs and beliefs of Tlemcen speech community in particular and the Algerian society in general. Henceforth, one should note that each culture is unique in terms of which topics are considered taboo and which are not. This fact clearly shows that the use of taboos differs from one individual to another depending on their gender, age, the educational background, the context of use and their attitudes. In fact, people's attitudes reflect their views, beliefs and norms which clearly show the image of their society.

Apparently, it has been proved that sex topic has remained as the most fearful subject to discuss. As a result, most people try to employ more moderate expressions to lessen the embarrassing nature of such words. Linguistically and culturally speaking, these substitutions are euphemisms; this latter is a politeness strategy which is employed to maintain the faces of both the speaker and the audience. In contrast, death has become the most tabooed subject which replaces sex topic nowadays. In Arabic culture, this latter signifies the completeness of life since it is seen as a bridge to another one.

Furthermore, the investigation of this area has provided us with insights concerning the different categories of taboo words. Following Timothy Jay's division of taboos, we have found that Algerian taboos can be divided into neutral words which can carry taboo meanings due to their perception by the members of the society in addition to unmentionable terms which are banned to be uttered in public.

Putting studies on taboo topics and language in a practical mould, our attempt is to describe Tlemcen forbidden terms and expressions by shedding light on its culture and language as well. In fact, the investigation of these two socio-cultural phenomena has led us to make some conclusions about Tlemcen society and answering our research questions stated earlier in this work. Indeed, examining the use of taboos and euphemisms in this speech community has demonstrated that these linguistic phenomena are universal, although their use and perception differ from one culture to another.

In this sense, the current research enables us to check Tlemcen speakers' views and beliefs which are generally taken from Islamic values and norms. In fact, they are aware of the different taboo topics mainly sex and this awareness is so varied between them since death, for instance, is not seen as taboo for some speakers and, henceforth, the term [lmɨjjət]: "the dead" or [lmu:t]: "death" are used unconsciously. Besides, awareness depends largely on some social factors such as gender, age and the educational background.

It is also apparent that Tlemcen speakers use taboo words differently depending on many conditions, but they also believe that taboos are forbidden behaviourally and linguistically in an open conversation in a public setting. The findings also reveal that taboos and euphemisms are deeply rooted in the Algerian cultural, religious norms and beliefs which affect their views and attitudes.

The impact of age is also very apparent since our examination has drawn us to conclude that younger generations have more positive attitudes towards the use of taboos, whereas elders tend to look after their speech. Adolescents and middle-aged speakers are between using and controlling their language depending on the context of the conversation and certain social factors.

Additionally, it is very essential to note that Tlemcen speech community is very cautious in using unmentionable taboo words or neutral terms which can become taboo due to their negative connotations. However, taboos can be discussed in certain contexts depending on the speakers' relations and the conversational necessity.

On the other hand, euphemistic strategies are always present in order to eliminate threats and to save face and, henceforth, disrupting the harmonious relationships between speakers including interpersonal conflicts and impoliteness. Nonetheless, it is essential to note that choosing the appropriate language, in building social relations, involves the dimensions of solidarity (or social distance) and social status (or power) as it has been noted by Holmes (1995: 67). She adds that such dimensions are based on politeness behaviours.

Before drawing any conclusion, some limitations of the study need to be acknowledged. Firstly, this study was conducted with a limited number of participants. Therefore, the findings will be a gate for further researches in this sensitive area. Secondly, this study investigates only the attitudes of some Tlemcen speakers from different occupations and educational backgrounds.

Bearing these limitations in mind, this study yields relevant results which clearly shed light on the structure of Tlemcen society. Moreover, this work has shown that if handled well, discussion of a taboo topic does not harm our relations with the participants. Besides, the findings of this study also indicate that what might be considered taboo by the majority of society can be an enjoyable topic to be discussed by a sample of population. It shows that when a society develops a negative attitude towards a topic, it becomes a part of its forbidden acts and, thus, unspeakable in certain contexts.

Last and not the least, this study endeavours to offer a new perspective regarding research on language in relation to culture. It illustrates speakers' interest towards taboos and euphemisms and their willingness in discussing taboo topics and the positive attitudes they display afterwards.

From the aforementioned conclusions, we may say that the attitudes of speakers are not the same. They vary according to their socio-cultural norms and other social factors. All in all, more research should be conducted before generalising the results. In fact, there are few studies which are done on taboo subjects because Western findings do not always fit our context since we have different culture and religion, although the most tabooed topics are universal in all societies. In this vein, one may wonder about the future of Algerian behaviour and language in the light of the successive changes which this society has witnessed. Therefore, the questions that are raised then are: why do Algerian speakers use French taboo words? Are they seeing them as neutral terms? Besides, are they aware of the use of euphemisms? Does gender affect the use of euphemistic strategies? Or do they resort to employ it unconsciously? Such research questions need a thorough examination and investigation which can open a gate towards exploring human psyche and cultural values in relation to language use.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Questionnaire

In the light of this study, can answer the following questions?

- 1- Age
- 2- Male female
- 3- Occupation.....

II- Taboo Language

1- Do you use taboo language?

- Yes no

2- If you answer with 'yes', how do you often use it?

- f- Many times a day.
- g- Every day.
- h- Once a day.
- i- Sometimes.
- j- Rarely.

3- Could you please choose and order the following choices according to your attitudes?

- d- Anger.
- e- Insult.
- f- Comments.....
.....

4- Do you see it as an insult if someone uses taboo language in front of you?

- e- Yes, I do.
- f- No, I do not.
- g- Yes, some words.
- h- It depends on the meaning and the goal.

5- According to your point of view, which of the following areas is the most offensive?

d- Sex.

e- Death.

f- Insulting religion.

6- In which context, do you prefer discussing taboo topics namely sex?

f- Intimate friends.

g- Public.

h- Family.

i- With work colleagues.

j- Comments.....

.....

7- How do you call an old man?

e- [əʃʃi:χ].

f- [lħa:ʒ].

g- [ʃibani].

h- Suggestions and comments.....

8- How do you call an old woman?

e- [lħa:dʒa].

f- [laʃzu:z].

g- [ʃibanija].

h- Comments.....

9- How do you call an old unmarried woman?

f- [lba:jra].

g- [ra:ki ka:lja wla:dak fi kərʃak].

h- [vijej fij].

i- [rabbi maʒabəlha:ʃ].

j- Suggestions.....

.....

10-How do you call a prostitute?

i- [χa:mʒa].

j- [marju:la].

k- [qaħba].

l- [ba:ʔiʕatu əlhawa:].

m- [pas].

n- [bent blaʒa].

o- [fla:na rabbi jahdi:ha].

p- Suggestions.....

.....

11-How do you call adultery?

d- [əddaʕa:ra].

e- [ʔaʕma:l ħurra taħt surra].

f- [ləwsaχ].

12-How do you call an illegitimate child?

g- [mləggaʔ].

h- [wəld ləħra:m].

i- [farχ].

j- [maski:n rabbi mʕa:h].

k- [ʔiʃl ʔeir ʕarʕi:].

l- Suggestions and comments.....

.....

13-How do you call man's sexual organ?

f- [ləmʕalləm].

g- [lma:rʔp].

h- [zebb].

i- [ʃwalaħ əlʕɔrs].

j- Suggestions.....
.....

14-How do you call women's sexual organ?

g- [əlkarmu:sa].

h- [ʕeiʃa].

i- [fanʔɔ:ra].

j- [sawwa].

k- [əlfaraʒ].

l- Suggestions and comments.....
.....
.....

15-How do you call women's breast?

h- [əθθadj].

i- [təffa:ħaʔ].

j- [rɔmma:ʔ].

k- [ʃdar].

l- [bza:zal].

m- [le sin].

n- Suggestions.....
.....

16-How do you call women's ass?

e- [lħarza].

f- [lʕaqlija].

g- [materijel].

h- [mʃa:ʃi:ʔ].

17-How do you call a pregnant woman?

g- [ra:ha mri:ɖa].

h- [ra:ha məttaqla].

i- [ra:ha belkarʃ].

j- [āsent].

k- [ħa:mil].

l- Comments.....

.....

18-How do you call a menstrual woman?

f- [ra:ha mwasχa].

g- [ra:ha mri:ɖa].

h- [ēdispoze].

i- [rεgle].

j- Suggestions.

.....

.....

19-Do you agree that women use taboo language?

f- I agree.

g- I strongly agree.

h- I disagree.

i- I strongly disagree.

j- Comments.

.....

.....

20-Do you agree that women use taboos more than men?

a- I agree.

b- I strongly agree.

c- I disagree.

d- I strongly disagree.

e- Comments.....
.....

II- Euphemism

21-Do you use euphemism?

e- Yes.

f- No.

g- Sometimes.

h- Rarely.

22- How do you say "he died"?

g- [fla:n d̪a:ʕ].

h- [fla:n ʕta:k ʕumru].

i- [mu:l lʔama:na ʕəbba ʔama:ntu].

j- [ʕəbba ba:sna w ba:skum].

k- [fla:n ma:t].

l- Suggestions.....
.....

23-How do you strengthen the family of the deceased?

e- [llah jarham fla:n].

f- [əlbarka f ro:skum].

g- [llah jbaddəl mħabbtu bə ʕbar].

h- Suggestions.....
.....

24-How do you call a person who dies suddenly?

d- [fla:n naχtaf].

e- [fla:n taħaʔ wraqtu].

f- Suggestions.....

.....

Interview

6- According to your opinion, which reasons can push speakers to use taboo language?

.....
.....

7- Do women use taboo language?

.....
.....

8- In what context do you prefer discussing taboo topics namely sex?

.....
.....

9- Do you think that Tlemcen speakers use taboo words and expressions?

.....
.....

10-How do you see death and what are the expressions that you use to talk about it?

.....
.....

Appendix B

Questionnaire

في إطار هذه الدراسة الميدانية، الرجاء الإجابة على الأسئلة التالية مع العلم أن بعض المواضيع محرّجة:

- 1 - السن
- 2 - ذكر أنثى
- 3 - العمل

I - اللغة السوقية.

- 1 - هل تستعمل اللغة السوقية؟
- نعم لا
- 2 - إذا أجبت بنعم، فمتى تستعملها؟
- عدة مرات في اليوم
- كل يوم
- مرة واحدة في الأسبوع
- نادرا
- عندما أكون غاضبا
- 3 - إذا كنت تستعمل اللغة السوقية، فهل تستطيع إختيار و ترتيب بعض الأسباب التي تدفعك إلى ذلك؟
- الغضب
- الإهانة
- تعليقات

4 - هل تعتبرها إهانة إذا ما استعمل أحد أمامك اللغة السوقية؟

- نعم، أجدها.
- لا أجدها.
- نعم، بعض الكلمات.
- يعتمد ذلك على المعنى و الهدف.

5 - من بين المواضيع التالية إختار واحدا تجده سوقيا؟

- الجنس
- السب و الشتم
- إهانة الدين

6 - مع من تستطيع مناقشة هذه المواضيع و بالأخص الجنس؟

- الأصدقاء المقربين.
- عامة الناس.
- العائلة.
- زملاء العمل.

- تعليقات

7 - كيف تسمي رجلا كبيرا في السن؟

- الشيخ

- الحاج

- الشيباني

- إقتراحات و تعليقات

8 - كيف تسمي امرأة مسنة؟

- الحاجة

- لعجوز

- شبانية

- إقتراحات و تعليقات

9 - كيف تسمي فتاة عانس؟

- بايرة

- راك كالية ولادك في كرشك

- Vieille fille

- رب ماجبلهاش

- إقتراحات

10 كيف تسمي امرأة عاهرة؟

- خامجة

- مريولة

- قحبة

- عطاية

- بائعة الهوى

- pass

- بنت بلاصة

- فلانة ربي يهديها.

- إقتراحات

11 كيف تسمي الزنا؟

- الدعارة

- أعمال حرة تحت السرة

- لوسخ

12 كيف تسمي ابن غير شرعي؟

- ملقط -
 - ولد لحرام -
 - فرخ -
 - مسكين ربي معاه -
 - طفل غير شرعي -
 - إقتراحات وتعليقات -
-

13 كيف تسمي العضو الذكري للرجل؟

- المعلم -
 - المارطو -
 - زب -
 - صوالح العرس -
 - إقتراحات -
-

14 كيف تسمي العضو التناسلي للمرأة؟

- كرموسة -
 - عيشة -
 - فنطورة -
 - خنانة -
 - سوة -
 - الفرج -
 - إقتراحات و تعليقات -
-

15 كيف تسمي ثدي المرأة؟

- الثدي -
 - تفاحات -
 - رمانات -
 - صدر -
 - بزازل -
 - Les sins -
 - إقتراحات -
-

16 كيف تسمي مؤخرة المرأة؟

- خرزة -
- العقلية -
- Matériel -
- مصاصيط -

17 كيف تسمي إمراة حامل؟

- راها مريضة -

- إقتراحات.....

.....

23 كيف تعزي عائلة المرحوم؟

- الله يرحم فلان

- الله يرحم ترابوا

- البركة في روسكم

- الله يبذل محبتو بالصبر

- إقتراحات.....

.....

24 كيف تسمي إنسانا مات موتا مفاجئا؟

- فلان نخطف

- فلان طاحت ورقتوا

- إقتراحات.....

.....

وشكرا

Interview

اللغة السوقية هي ألفاظ أو عبارات و التي تعتبر عيبا إذا ما استعملناها كوسيلة تواصل مع غيرنا.

1 - إذن في نظرك ما هي الأسباب التي تدفع الناس لاستعمال اللغة السوقية؟

.....

2 - هل المرأة تستعمل اللغة السوقية؟

- نعم لا

- التعليل

.....

3 - مع من تستطيع مناقشة المواضيع المحرجة كالجنس مثلا ؟

.....

4 - هل تعتقد أن أفراد الأسرة التلمسانية يستعملون الألفاظ السوقية ؟

- نعم لا

- التعليل

.....

5 - كيف تنظر لموضوع الموت و ما هي الألفاظ التي تستعملها لتجنب التحدث عنه مباشرة ؟

ملخص:

يتناول هذا البحث مسألة ميول التلمسانيين نحو استعمال اللغة السوقية و اللطيفة إعتقادا على تحاليل كمية و نوعية. كما تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى مناقشة الأسباب الرئيسية التي تدفع الناس لاستعمالها في التواصل اليومي. كما أنها تهدف إلى مناقشة أكثر المواضيع المحظورة في المجتمع الجزائري عامة ألا و هو الجنس. أما الهدف الرئيسي من هذا البحث هو الوصول إلى أن هناك إختلاف في درجة الاستعمال و الذي يرجع إلى عوامل إجتماعية منها السن، الجنس، و المستوى التعليمي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: اللغة و المواضيع السوقية، اللغة اللطيفة، الميول ،الثقافة الجزائرية، الدارجة الجزائرية، المجتمع اللغوي التلمساني.

Résumé

Cette recherche est une tentative pour enquêter sur les attitudes de la communauté de Tlemcen en particulier l'utilisation des tabous et des substitutions euphémismes suivant les analyses quantitatives et qualitatives. Elle vise également à examiner les raisons qui poussent les gens à utiliser un langage tabou dans la communication quotidienne. Cette étude discute les sujets les plus tabous et surtout ceux relatifs au sexe, toujours interdit dans la discussion de la société Algérienne; comme elle met en évidence la fréquence de l'utilisation des mots tabous en fonction de certains facteurs sociaux liés à l'âge, au genre et au niveau éducatif.

Mots clés : langue et sujets tabous, euphémisme, attitudes, culture Algérienne, dialecte Algérien, communauté linguistique de Tlemcen.

Summary

This research is an attempt to investigate the attitudes of Tlemcen speakers towards the use of taboos and euphemistic substitutions following quantitative and qualitative analyses. It also aims at discussing the main reasons which push people to use taboo language in daily communication. This study examines the most tabooed topics mainly sex which is still banned to be discussed in the Algerian society in general. It tends to show the difference in the frequency of using taboos depending on certain social factors including age, gender and the educational background.

Key words: taboo language and subjects, euphemism, attitudes, Algerian culture, Algerian Arabic, Tlemcen speech communit

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***A Sociolinguistic View of Taboo Language and
Euphemisms in the Algerian Society: Attitudes
and Beliefs in Tlemcen Speech Community***

Dissertation submitted in candidacy for the Degree of MAGISTER in Language
Contact and Sociolinguistic Variation

Summary of the Dissertation

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1- Abstract

The current study is geared to investigate Tlemcen speakers' attitudes towards taboo topics namely sex and death and their euphemistic substitutions. It also aims at improving a useful understanding of these sensitive topics. Thus, it tends to prove that some linguistic expressions are the result of societal, psychological and cultural pressures. Another purpose of this work is to analyse Tlemcen speakers' views, beliefs and, therefore, exploring the motives which give a fertile soil for the creation of euphemistic substitutions. It shows that there are euphemistic expressions which represent a wealth vocabulary of Algerian varieties in general and Tlemcen dialect in particular. To these ends, we have relied on many research instruments in order to test the validity of our hypotheses and to collect reliable data. Henceforth, the outcomes of this study show that the percentages of both taboos and euphemistic usage are nearly equal, although statistical analysis of the questionnaire revealed that the respondents' attitudes towards taboos were highly positive. In fact, these findings indicate that the use of these two linguistic phenomena differ from one individual to another depending on their age, gender, the educational background and the context of use. They also reveal that Tlemcen people try to discuss taboo topics with their intimate friends. Nonetheless, Islamic norms and principles play a significant role in pushing them to employ the notion of politeness which restricts the open use of taboos. Lastly, these research findings prove that sex has remained as the most tabooed topic, whereas death is also handled with care in this speech community.

Key words: taboo language and subjects, euphemism, attitudes, politeness strategies, Islamic Norms, Algerian culture, Algerian Arabic, Tlemcen speech community.

2- Introduction

Taboos exist in all languages and cultures, although each society has its own norms and taboos. So, taboos are also related to the cultural beliefs of the society. This means that there are taboos which are universal and others are culture-specific as it will be explained throughout the first chapter. Besides, in order to avoid embarrassment and face-losing, people try to look for substitutions that can hide or cover up the harmonious power of taboo words. Consequently, euphemisms are employed to replace offensive expressions that can cause harm and shame for speakers. These expressions are related to the religious and cultural beliefs of a given society and define its socio-cultural structure. Besides, the use of taboos varies from one individual to another depending on certain social factors such as anger, frustration and annoyance...etc.

Trying to apply the previous scholarly methods into an Algerian context in general and Tlemcen context in particular, the present work aims primarily at exploring the Algerian cultural norms, values and beliefs through investigating the attitudes of Tlemcen speakers towards the use of taboos and euphemisms. Secondly, it describes the main reasons that push them to use taboo words and discuss some sensitive topics mainly sex and death. Henceforth, this study puts forward some clarifications on the social and psychological factors that affect deeply the individual's use of language with the age and sex constraints. It also aims to test their attitudes towards the use of taboos in mixed-sex groups.

In this regard, our investigation attempts to make a bridge between aspects of culture and language so that we can understand the norms and taboos of Tlemcen society. Consequently, this sociolinguistic study aims to give an overview of taboo words, topics and euphemistic expressions that are used by Algerian people in general and Tlemcen speakers in particular in relation to the society's attitudes, beliefs and motivations. In this context, a number of questions are raised:

- 4- What are the attitudes of Tlemcen speakers towards the use of taboos and euphemisms?
- 5- What are the reasons behind the use of taboos?
- 6- Do Tlemcen speakers discuss taboo topics in mixed-sex groups?

Trying to find reliable answers to these questions, this study was developed with three hypotheses in mind:

Firstly, it should be noted that the attitudes of speakers differ depending on their age, gender and the educational background. In fact, the attitudes of Algerian people have a deeper relation with their cultural and religious norms, although the use of taboos exists. Besides, they tend to use euphemistic substitutions in their daily conversation due to their conservative nature. So, euphemism is used as a politeness strategy in order to avoid face losing or any threatening act and to strengthen human ties. Secondly, certain social and psychological reasons may play a crucial role in pushing the Algerian speaker to use taboo words in order to express his/her emotions for example frustration, anger and annoyance...etc. Lastly, Tlemcen females are more inclined than males to avoid the use of taboo words and phrases in mixed-sex groups, especially when they discuss the subject of sex. Consequently, both males and females may have positive attitudes towards using or discussing taboo language or topics in single-sex groups since they always prefer to speak proper language in mixed-sex groups.

Thus, the present research displays an outline of three chapters in which the first starts with the review of the related literature and gives insights of the two main sociolinguistic phenomena

and their fundamental theories, whereas the second chapter will be devoted for studying the use and perception of different taboo topics by Algerian people. Besides, the third chapter gives an overview about the different research tools in order to test the speakers' attitudes towards the use of some taboo words and euphemistic expressions.

1- Defining Taboo:

According to Trudgill, a taboo is something which is prohibited to be uttered. In this respect, he (2000:18) describes the term as follows:

A [b]ehavior which is believed to be supernaturally forbidden, or regarded as immoral or improper; it deals with behavior which is prohibited or inhibited in an apparently irrational manner.

2- Motives for the Use of Taboo Language

According to T. Jay, there are psychological, social and linguistic motives for the use of TW(s). In his book, "Why we Curse; A Neuro-psycho-social Theory of Speech", he maintains that life is full of unexpected events that push people to get angry or frustrated, but he (2000: 95) argues that **"psychological factors are necessary, but not sufficient."**

3- Defining Euphemism

According to Hudson (1996: 260), **"Euphemism is the extension of ordinary words and phrases to express unpleasant or embarrassing ideas. The indirectness of form is felt to diminish the unpleasantness of the meaning"**.

4- Politeness Strategies

According to Brown and Levinson (1978: 13-5), politeness is considered as a major factor that motivates speakers towards the use of EUPH. In accordance, Emerson (1856: 326) claims that **"Politeness is the ritual of society, as prayers are of the church; a school of manners, and a gentle blessing to the age in which it grew"**.⁴⁹

Brown and Levinson have constructed what is a Model Person (MP), who is a fluent speaker of a language with two special qualities: rationality and face. By rationality, Brown and Levinson mean that **"the MP would be able to use a specific mode of reasoning to choose**

⁴⁹ Quoted by Allan and Burridge (2006: 30)

means that will satisfy his/her ends". By face, Brown and Levinson (1987: 61) mean **"public self image that every member wants to claim for himself."**

5- Attitudinal Dimensions of Algerian Taboos

In most Arab cultures, taboo means that certain behaviours, topics and terms are banned. It is referred to as: [ʕajb]: "taboo". Therefore, every word, which is related to such behaviour, is forbidden. In this regard, Sadiqi (2003: 78) claims that the general meaning of taboo in Western culture:

[...] correlates with the Arabic term for taboo *haram*. A behavior (linguistic or otherwise) is considered taboo when societal opinion either inhibits or prohibits it in a rational or irrational manner.

In case of Algerian context, taboos are divided into neutral words which can become taboo due to their perception by the members of the society, whereas the strongest linguistic taboos, in Muslim societies, are related to female body and its changes. In this regard, Sadiqi (ibid: 80) claims that girls **"socialize in an environment where sexual discrimination is sanctioned by society. This explains the spread of taboos related to sexuality"**. She adds that there are three major tabooed topics related to sex in the Arab world including virginity, menstruation and menopause.

In fact, the concept of sex is strongly euphemised by AP. Consequently, they switch to the use of certain expressions instead of referring directly to sexual matters, for example [rgut mʕa:ha]: "I slept with her" or [gaʕʕart mʕa:ha]: "I spent a night with her" or [zhi:t mʕa:ha]: "I enjoyed my time with her" instead of 'I had love with her'.

6- Algerian Politeness Strategies

It seems that both face and politeness are important concepts for most Arab societies that must be taken into account in daily communication. Basically, there are many factors which push Arabs in general and Algerians in particular to maintain face including honour, and the image of others. This statement has been explained by Edward and Guth (2010: 33) who state that **"Honour, dignity and self-respect are 'sacred' concepts among Arabs since pre-Islamic times, and are considered taboos, which should not be abused by anybody."**

It is essential to note that Algerians have selected many religious terms which are consistent with Islamic traditions and form an important part of Arab positive politeness. Among these expressions, we have [llah jħhafɔak]: “may God preserve you” or [llah jħali:k]: “may God live you” or [llah jħazi:k]: “may God reward you” or [llah jarɔa ħli:k]: “may God be pleased with you”. Indeed, most Western scholars relate the notion of politeness with the Arabic concept [əɫʔaðab]: “politeness”, whereas Arab researchers have different interpretations. In her part, Fatima Sadiqi relates it with [ləħʃu:mæ]: “shame”.

7- French Taboos and Euphemisms in Algerian Arabic

In fact, Algerian people have borrowed many terms from French in order to lessen the power of the local expressions. For example, they say [visiœ] instead of [fla:n ħand ruħu]: “vicious”, they also use [ɛdispœzœ] or [rɛglœ] to cover up the Algerian taboo expressions including [ra:ħa mwasħa]: “she is dirty” or [ra:ħ ħli:ja haqq əʃʃħar]: “I have the duty of the month” referring to menstruation.

On the other hand, some words have taken negative connotations in some Algerian dialects. For example, certain English terms seem ugly and are avoided since their pronunciations are similar to certain Algerian expressions such as [zəbb] meaning “penis”, whereas [sli:p] refers to a kind of underwear.

8- Stereotypes Surrounding Algerian Taboos

Algerian people have developed negative attitudes towards certain words and topics due to their connotative meanings and, therefore, are viewed negatively by the members of the society. Besides, stereotypes, attitudes and taboos differ from one culture to another. In case of Muslim societies, they share the same values and norms and, henceforth, the same stereotypes and taboos. In the light of this idea, Dickins, Hervey and Higgins (2002: 210) declare that **“Different cultures, then, value different things, and have different taboos. In addition, there is also evidence that different cultures stereotype.”**

In Algerian culture, in general, it is believed that every person’s eyes may have evil effect if they like or admire an object and in order to avoid the bad effects of the evil eye, they say [ħamsa fi: ħini:k]: “Five in your eyes” or [ħamsa waħmi:s fi: ħini:n bli:s]: “five in the eyes of the devil” .

Not saying like the previous expressions may lead to the object's destruction, and if the liked thing is a person, it is also believed that this person may die or get a mortal disease.

9- Euphemisms in Algerian Culture

Indeed, Algerians try to avoid using harsh language and taboo in their connection with each others, and tend to replace these expressions with certain mechanisms including construction, creating antonyms, metaphoric expressions, circumlocution and EUPH(s) or words that are more acceptable and pleasant. When speaking with Algerians in particular and Arabs in general, it is noticeable that they shun speaking about unpleasant things out of fear that negative speech compels negative results.

Through their daily interaction, AP have created certain strategies in order to avoid taboos and to protect their faces and politeness is among them. In fact, they have created euphemistic expressions for each topic, for instance, women shift to the use of certain terms including [ra:ha ʔli:ha haqq əʃhar]: “she has the right of the month” or [ra:ha mwəsχa]: “she is dirty” or [ra:ha mriɖa]: “she is ill”, when referring to menstruation.

Additionally, the concept of sex is strongly euphemised by AP. Consequently, they switch to the use of certain expressions instead of referring directly to sexual matters, for example [rgut mʕa:ha]: “I slept with her” or [gəʃʃart mʕa:ha]: “I spent a night with her” or [zhi:t mʕa:ha]: “I enjoyed my time with her” instead of ‘I had love with her’ .

AA is also rich in what Gramps (1984: 227) calls double negation i.e., replacing words by employing negation of its opposite. He adds that grammarians use ‘meiosis’⁵⁰ instead of double negation. In this regard, he states that **“There are occasions when a writer’s meaning may be conveyed more exactly by ‘not un-device’, for example, ‘not unkindly, ‘not unjustifiably,’ then by kindly”**⁵¹. In case of AA, Algerians have a rich vocabulary including [da:r ətrəbjə] (reformatory) for [lhabs]: “prison” or [fla:n hapto:h] instead of [fla:n dəχlluh ləlhabs]: “they took X to the prison” or [fla:n ʕand ra:su]: “a difficult man” instead of [fla:n wa:ʕar]: “a rude

⁵⁰ Meiosis is an understatement by employing a negative form to emphasise the contrary or to represent something as, more or less, milder than it actually is. For example, ‘untruthful’ for ‘a liar’, ‘intemperate’ for ‘rude’, ‘unwise’ for ‘fool’ or it was easy for it was very difficult.

⁵¹ <http://Euphemism.Bocrawler.htm>.

person”. They also employ [fla:n qwa:lbi] or [fla:n jadyχəl wjaχradʒ fəl haqra] or [bəlʕa:t] instead of [kəða:b]: “a liar”.

10-French Taboos and Euphemisms in Algerian Arabic

First and foremost, it should be noted that French language constitutes an important part in Algerian dialects and is employed as a code for daily interaction by most citizens and especially educated people. As far as taboos are concerned, they resort to the use of some French expressions to avoid certain taboo terms. However, Mills (1995: 122) argues that most Arab dialects have the problem of lexical gap. Henceforth, they borrow many expressions from other languages. In this regard, he explains that **“The problem of lexical gaps in the language is part of a greater linguistic problem-the problem of not being able to explain yourself within the discourse structures available to you.”**⁵²

In fact, AP have borrowed many terms from French in order to lessen the power of the local expressions. For example, they say ‘[visiœ] instead of [fla:n ʕand ruhu]: “vicious”, they also use [ēdispœze] or [rɛglɛ] to cover up the Algerian taboo expressions including [ra:ha mwasχa]: “she is dirty” or [ra:h ʕli:ja haqq əʃʃhar]: “I have the duty of the month” referring to menstruation.

11-Research Findings and Data Interpretation

In order to collect reliable data, we have designed a research methodology in which we have relied on a questionnaire and a focus group interview. Besides, our participants were selected randomly. They were about 100 informants who answered the questionnaire and 10 who answered the interview.

Among the questions of the questionnaire, we have selected the most important ones:

- 1- Do you use taboo language?
 - c- Yes.
 - d- No.

Suggestions	Females	Males	Total
A	42	44	86
b	13	11	24

⁵² Quoted by Fatima Sadiqi (idem)

Total	110
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Table 3.3: Speakers' Attitudes towards Taboo Usage.

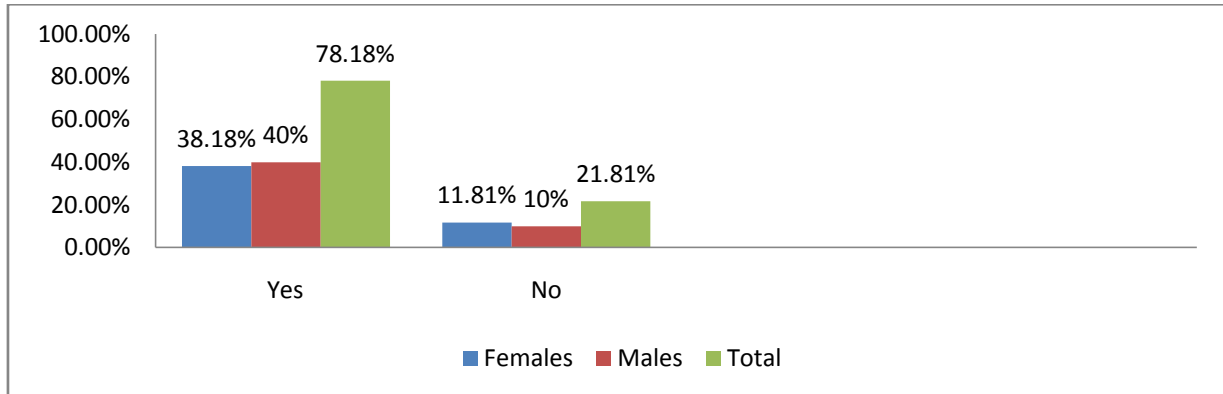


Figure 3.1: Speakers' Attitudes towards Taboo Usage.

As the previous diagram and table show, the majority of males and females (78.18%) declared that they use TL, whereas other participants, who represent (21.81%), answered this question negatively. Besides, most informants, whose responses are positive, are teenagers and adolescents, whereas those, whose answers are negative, are between 40 and 55 years old.

Interestingly, it should be important to note that the social milieu plays a crucial role in pushing people to employ taboo items. Besides, it depends on certain reasons in which the person finds him/herself and then on the way and place in which children raise. For example contact between teenagers, through mobile phones and internet, is the major factors which encourage them to use taboos. Moreover, it is essential to note that the way parents behave with their children is another reason. It should be also noted that teenage age is a sensitive step in the life of an individual since he starts learning how to acquire experiences and the social milieu is the first fact that affects his development. Through this age, teenagers try to use taboo expressions in order to attract the interest of others namely those who are in the same age. Besides, they also employ these expressions to show their belongings to their groups.

In its general term, it is worth mentioning that we have to look after our children through their first ages until they pass the adolescents' period since there are many factors that push them to learn these expressions without knowing that these terms are forbidden to utter in our society.

2- How do you often use taboo language?

- k- Many times a day.
- l- Every day.
- m- Once a day.
- n- Sometimes.
- o- Rarely.

Suggestions	Females	Males	Total
a	2	16	18
b	2	8	10
c	/	2	2
d	20	8	28
e	18	10	28
Total	86		

Table 3.4: Frequency of Taboo Usage.

According to the previous table, the use of TW(s) differs from one person to another. They can be used depending on the context, certain factors, topics, the educational background and the social upbringing of the person. In other words, the social, situational and psychological positions of the interlocutors play a crucial role in the frequency of taboo usage.

As it is also demonstrated in this table, about (20.93%) of the informants claimed that they use taboo expressions in daily communication. Besides, some of them (11.62%) declared that they employ taboos many times a day, whereas (2.32%) of the participants took the third suggestion into consideration. Finally, most of the participants (32.55%) selected the last suggestion especially aged females and males. This is better understood from the following diagram:

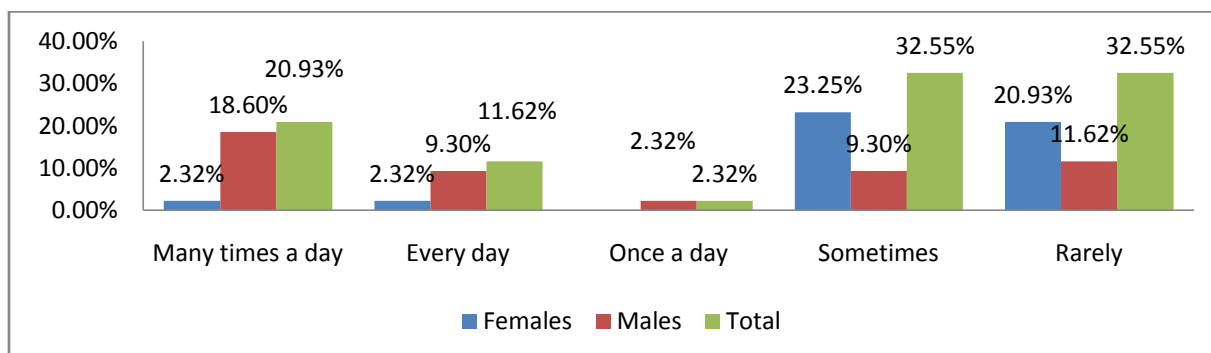


Figure 3.2: Frequency of Taboo Usage.

Looking at the results presented in this figure, it would not be wrong to claim that the choices are so vary that the informants can have the chance to select depending on their attitudes, views and emotions. Thus, it should be important to mention that multiple choice questions can help in measuring the frequency of taboo usage.

3- Could you please choose and order the following choices according to your attitudes?

g- Anger.

h- Insult.

i- Comments.

Suggestions	Females	Males	Total
a	24	29	53

b	18	15	33
Total	86		

Table 3.5: The Main Reasons behind Using Taboo Language.

It should be noted that the ranking order questions play an important role in identifying the informants' attitudes and opinions through giving them the chance to classify the first reason that pushes them to use TL.

As the previous table illustrates, most respondents (61.62%) chose the first reason. Thus, the percentage of the first suggestion is high for both females and males, by contrary, some of the participants (38.73%) selected the second since they thought that insults can lead to anger. This point was illustrated through their comments since insults are used to attack people. In Tlemcen context, insult means [əssab] or [ləmʕa:jra].

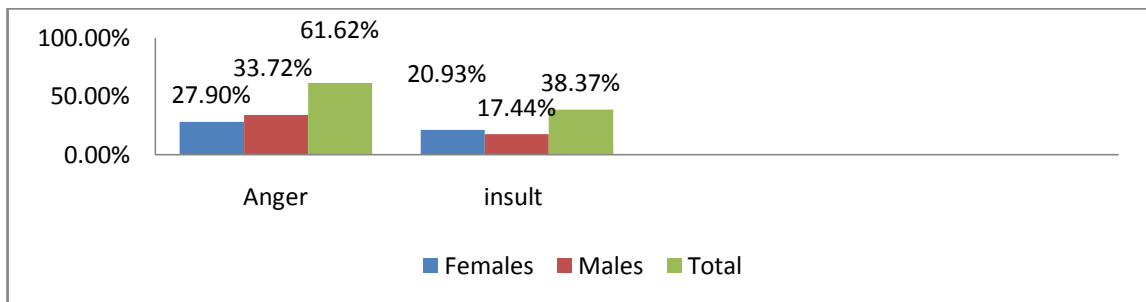


Figure 3.3: The Main Reasons behind Using Taboo Language.

This diagram shows that choices of both males and females do not differ a lot since anger can push the individuals to loose self-control and, therefore, they start speaking inappropriate expressions. In fact, it is worth mentioning that our religion teaches us how to control ourselves and, thus, our behaviour and language since anger can destroy human relations.

- 4- Do you see it as an insult if someone uses taboo language in front of you?
 - i- Yes, I do.
 - j- No, I do not.
 - k- Yes, some words.
 - l- It depends on the meaning and the goal.

Suggestions	Females	Males	Total
a	19	12	31
b	1	11	12
c	13	13	23

d	9	8	17
Total	86		

Table 3.6: The Attitudes of Respondents towards the Use of Taboos in Daily Interaction.

After taking a closer look at the previous table, it is important to note that the difference between males and females does not stop on which reasons can push them to use such expressions, but on their attitudes, views and acceptance of these terms. Thus, most participants, who represent about 36.04% of the sample, are against the use of taboo in their presence. However, what can be seen from this table is that females' attitudes towards the use of taboos in their presence are high than males. Besides, many participants (30.23%) took the third suggestion into consideration since some words can acquire a taboo meaning due to their negative connotations and the attitudes which the individuals develop against them. Besides, males' choices of the second type represent about (25%) i.e., they do not mind if they hear TW(s).

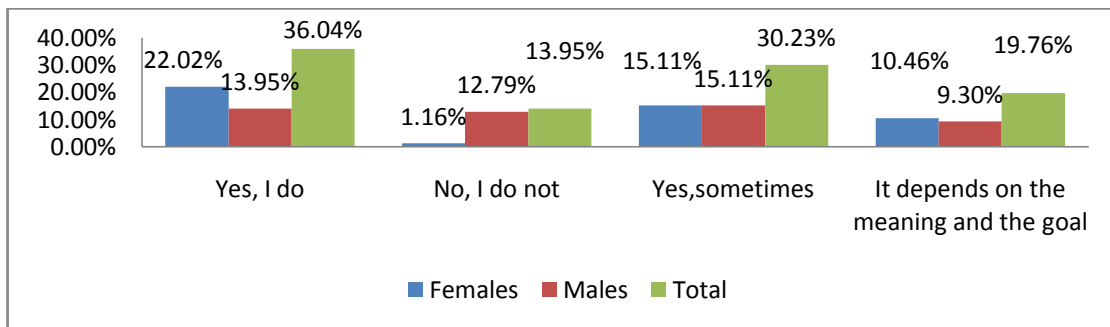


Figure 3.4: The Attitudes of Respondents towards the Use of Taboos in Daily Interaction.

The fourth diagram represents the attitudes and opinions of both males and females towards the use of TL in front of other people. In fact, Tlemcen speakers consider such behaviour as inappropriate since it diminishes respect between the members of the society and, henceforth, their relationship. Besides, they insist on good language due to their conservative nature. Indeed, Tlemcen culture represents a set of norms and traditions which are deeply rooted in Islamic teachings. In other words, they insist on politeness as a part of their daily language, behaviour and social interaction as well.

5- According to your point of view, which of the following areas is the most offensive?

- g- Sex.
- h- Death.
- i- Insulting religion.

Suggestions	Females	Males	Total
a	20	19	39

b	5	4	9
c	17	21	38
Total	86		

Table 3.7: The Most Offensive Taboo Topics.

In the sixth table, we can note some further differences of both males and females concerning the most tabooed topic. The most offensive topic for males is insulting religion followed by the topic of sex. On the other hand, female participants thought that sex is the most offensive topic to discuss, whereas insulting religion comes after. Henceforth, their opinions represent about (45.34%) for sex, (44.18%) for insulting religion and (10.46%) for death.

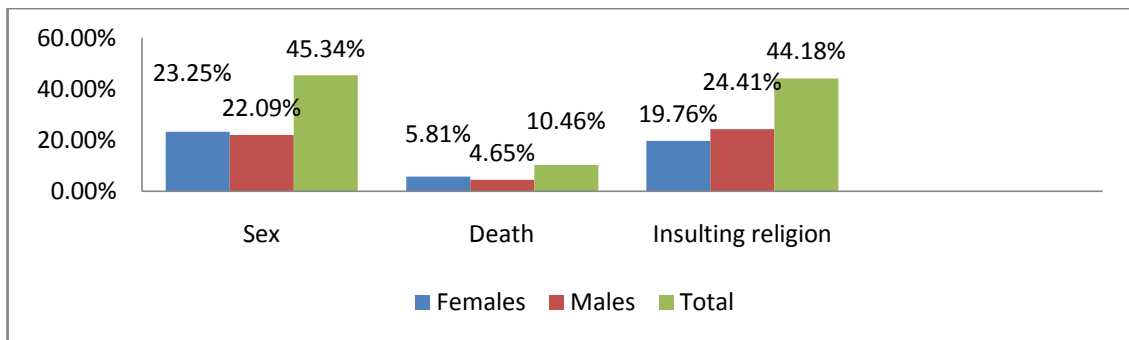


Figure 3.5: The Most Offensive Taboo Topics.

As it is clearly shown in the previous diagram, both genders have different opinions and attitudes towards the most offensive topic. In fact, most females view that sex is avoided in public speech, whereas males see that religious matters are the most tabooed since they are direct insults towards their religious principles and beliefs.

- 6- In which context, do you prefer discussing taboo topics mainly sex?
- k- Intimate friends.
 - l- Public.
 - m- Family.
 - n- Work colleagues.
 - o- Comments.

Suggestions	Females	Males	Total
a	23	32	55
b	/	/	/
c	17	8	25
d	2	4	6
Total	86		

Table 3.8: Participants' Answers Concerning the Context of Use.

This table shows that most informants (63.95%) declared that they want to discuss taboo matters with their close or intimate friends, whereas (29.97%) of them claimed that they prefer to talk about sensitive topics with their family members including wives, husbands, sisters and brothers. On the other hand, other informants (6.97%) maintained that they enjoy talking about them with their colleagues, but nobody wishes to discuss these topics, especially sexual intercourse, bodily effluvia and body parts, with public members since it is embarrassing and can be seen as a source of impoliteness and face-losing.

Furthermore, most of the informants' comments have supported the first suggestion i.e., in single-sex groups. They added that they have no tendency towards discussing sex subjects in mixed groups. In fact, these comments can be supported by previous studies conducted by Gamm (1981)⁵³ who observes that males and females prefer talking about the topic of sex in single-sex groups.

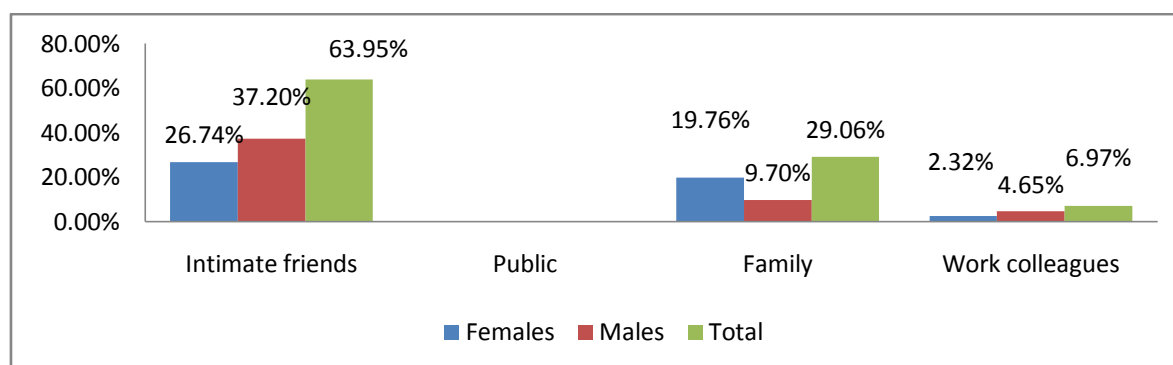


Figure 3.6: Participants' Answers Concerning the Context of Use.

As it has already been shown in this diagram, the tendency, for discussing taboo topics namely sex, differs between genders. For instance, females prefer to talk about sexual matters with their intimate friends and family members including sisters and sometimes their mothers, whereas males rarely discuss their private sexual life with their brothers since such behaviour can diminish their respect to each other. In other words, the aspect of [lɔħʃu:ma]: “shame” and the notion of [ʃajb]: “taboo” can be seen as the first factors that push them not to discuss it with their brothers.

12-General Conclusion

In this sense, the current research enables us to check Tlemcen speakers' views and beliefs which are generally taken from Islamic values and norms. In fact, they are aware of the different

⁵³ Cited by Coates (ibid: 97)

taboo topics mainly sex and this awareness is so varied between them since death, for instance, is not seen as taboo for some speakers and, henceforth, the term [lmɨjjət]: “the dead” or [lmu:t]: “death” are used unconsciously. Besides, awareness depends largely on some social factors such as gender, age and the educational background. It is also apparent that Tlemcen speakers use taboo words differently depending on many conditions, but they also believe that taboos are forbidden behaviourally and linguistically in an open conversation in a public setting. The findings also reveal that taboos and euphemisms are deeply rooted in the Algerian cultural, religious norms and beliefs which affect their views and attitudes.

Additionally, it is very essential to note that Tlemcen speech community is very cautious in using unmentionable taboo words or neutral terms which can become taboo due to their negative connotations. However, taboos can be discussed in certain contexts depending on the speakers’ relations and the conversational necessity.

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