A Descriptive Analysis of Linguistic Taboos of Urdu Language in Pakistan

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Abstract

In the given time and place the understanding and the usage of taboo language varies depending on the culture, literacy, gender, age, social status, profession, upbringing so on and so forth. The linguistic taboos which are catered by this paper are from Urdu language. This paper analyzes the variation with respect to two variables that are, age and gender. The task of variation was achieved by collecting data from a sample of two hundred participants in Pakistani context which was further divided into four groups. The analysis of data was completed by the employment of both qualitative and quantitative methods of research. The analysis of the data affirms two commonly held views: first, in most of the cases taboos for the older age group are no more taboos for the younger age group, implying taboo language is fluid in nature: it keeps on changing with the course of time. Second, whatever the reason might be, women use more standardized and polite language as compared to their male counterparts. In a broader framework, the findings and analyses clearly demonstrate the close relationship that exists between language and culture. The change in linguistic taboos of Urdu language clearly shows a shift in the cultural inclination of new generation. Furthermore, the new generation is more compliant towards the taboos that were strongly prohibited by the previous generation. This paper opens up a huge plethora of unexplored topics, for instance, the future research can analyze the variation in understanding of the taboo language with respect to different variables and contexts.

Keywords: Taboo Language, Linguistic taboos, Swearing, Urdu language

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1. Introduction

In this modern era, when everything in the world is subjected to change with the spread of technology, followed by advancement in the fields of education, agriculture, medicine and many more, changing the mind set of people living in 21st century over the globe. Culture is changing leading to the change in people and their dealings enough to stimulate language change. Saussure (1916) claims that language's response to social change is interlinked to the development, for language is a social product and every society composes itself through language. Our Pakistani society is not far from this development, following the variation in country's norms, values, beliefs, mores and folkways. As Pakistani culture is subjected to these changes so are its linguistic taboos. Trudgill (2000) explains that the most interesting way in which a society impacts its language is through "taboo" case. The following paper is to explore the status of certain linguistic taboos, their change along the generation gap, and the actively influencing factors that are involved in their adaptation.

1.1 Taboo Language

Language, being the most salient feature of human life, has multi-facet aims and functions to perform, be them social, psychological or physical nature-wise. It can be polite and acceptable as well as impolite and unacceptable. In between the two aspects there exists neutral language concept. Language is the reflection of its corresponding culture and society where there is positive language like, that of appraisal and respect; there are also its negative forms including racist and sexist language and the linguistics taboos. Austin (1975) proclaims that language is used to execute functions for people, they use it to make claims, to perform actions. Whereas Gao (2013) affirms that language contains special powers to cure sickness, keep away evils, bring good to oneself and harm to enemies.

1.2 Taboos

In Oxford Advanced Learner's English Chinese Dictionary (2004), taboo refers to cultural or religious custom that curbs people to do, practice or talk about a particular thing, taboo words are considered as offensive and shocking by many people i.e., they involve body, people's race or sex. Taboo words constitute highly emotional and provocative language depending on the context in which it is used. Siddiqui (2003) attests that meaning of taboo in the Western world correlates with Arabian term for taboo that is *haram* (p. 78). According to him, any behavior, verbal or non-verbal is regarded as taboo when it is prevented by societal opinion in a rational or irrational manner. Taboo language consists of words and acts

which are better to be referred to in roundabout ways (p.153). Campbell (1989) defines verbal abuse as 'negative statements by significant others. Gu (2002) asserts that "Taboo" phenomenon refers to "*holy*" or "*untouchable*" (p. 264). Taboos can be both linguistic and non-linguistic, but this paper restricts itself to the linguistic taboos in Urdu language only. Jay (1992, 2000) determines that the category of taboo words broadly concerns with profanities, vulgarities, sexual terms, social epithets and other insults. According to Heins (2007), taboo words in a language are archaic which include profanity i.e., irreverent speech, and blasphemy i.e., attacks on religion, that are prescribed by religious authorities since biblical times while Gao (2013) discussed various taboos including body excretions, death and disease, sex, four-letter words, privacy, discriminatory language, for example sexist language and racist language.

Stenström (2002) classifies taboo words with respect to purpose, into four categories including expletives, humorous, abusive, and auxiliary taboos. Additionally, Finn (2017) describes that there are five types of taboo words that trigger negative emotions. They are supernatural- invoking fear related to one's religion, bodily secretions and organs stimulating disgust, disease and death to create a sense of dread, disfavored people or ethnicity to evoke hatred, sexuality to evoke revulsion (pp.13-26). The swearing; that is to use taboo words to assert and/ or stress one's opinion, can be planned or spontaneous. In this way, there are two categories of swearing: a) propositional and b) non-propositional. Propositional swearing is swearing by intention. They are used with a proper objective in the mind of the speaker. For example, swearing while joking. Non-propositional swearing is unintentional. The speaker, for example might be swearing when in severe pain. That is considered non-propositional. The user had no objectives to be achieved through it.

1.3 Nature and Status of Taboos

Taboo language being a socio-cultural phenomenon differs from society to society, class to class and age to age. A severe taboo word in a society may not be considered a taboo at all (Yang et al, 2018, pp. 315-324). The strength of the taboo words ranges from mild to extreme (Swan, 2005; Khan & Pervaiz, 2010). According to Khan and Pervaiz (2010), there are two laws governing the general the general dichotomy of taboos, customary laws and religious laws. Further it depends on age, gender, social status, geographical boundaries, norms, laws, mores and conventions in a given speech community. But taboo language is not only associated with lack of decency, most of the times, it is just a matter of convention where the

normal use of an item in a language is inhibited due to particular social values and beliefs (Trudgill, 1986 p. 28).

1.4 Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the present research are to:
  i.   find out the varying Urdu linguistic taboos in different age groups.
  ii.   find out the varying Urdu linguistic taboos in different gender groups.
  iii. find out the factors leading to the adaptation of linguistic taboos in Urdu language.
  iv.   figure out the varying perspectives in Urdu Language due to age and gender differences.

1.5 Research Questions

The following question will be answered in the data analysis:
  i.   What are the variations in Urdu linguistic taboos while studying two different age groups?
  ii.   What are the variations in Urdu linguistic taboos while studying two different genders?
  iii. What are the sources of learning Urdu linguistic taboos in Pakistan?
  iv.   Do the perspectives about linguistic taboos in Urdu change due to gender and age?

2. Literature Review

A language keeps on changing and the old contents keep on dying along with the trends of the society (Khan & Pervaiz, 2010). This change occurs with the interference of numerous variables like population, social movements, revolutions, religious piety etc. But globalization is seen as one of the major variables tuning and turning this world into a busy spot of deliberately exchanging information, goods and services with them the beliefs, values, cultures and languages (McGee and Wolf, 1991). Language being a dynamic phenomenon is an influential effecter and a significant cause of the changing perceptions of its speakers since it is a commonly accepted fact that the language is the mirror image of its speaker's beliefs and values. Logically enough the language transmutes as do the values and perceptions of its speakers. Taboo language is the most sensitive, hence most reflective of its society (Hughes & Trudgill, 1987 p. 66). Therefore, it holds a central position in the exploration of language-perception bond.

Taboo language has been studied extensively but still most of the areas remain unexplored. This is because this field, as an object of the study,

faces very significant problems acting as obstacles. Firstly, taboo words are not included in academic studies of language. Further, they are avoided generally as well. Secondly, it is comparatively frequent in spoken language than in the written form. Lastly, it is the lack of corpus resources (Schippers, 2013) but these studies have revealed many interesting facts such as linguistic dynamism, linguistic determinism and the strong relationship that exists between thought and language. As far as the studies reveal, it is a two-way or vice-versa relationship. That is, both have influences over one another.

Euphemism involves the use of linguistic and paralinguistic features to avoid the profane words, violence, offense, embarrassment, and to maintain honor. Taboo language can be fairly avoided by following Grice's maxims. According to Farghal (1994 p.369), Grice's maxims are suitable to illustrate the use of euphemism in majority of Arab dialects.

2.1 Taboo Language and literacy/illiteracy

In earlier studies of the taboo language, its use has been closely linked with the literacy/illiteracy of the speakers. The uneducated class does not have the access to rich vocabulary so; they are left to use the taboo words. But the researchers criticize it as being too traditional, claiming that the taboo language itself has diversity, involves innovation in lexicon and its choices. Further it has its own morphological and syntactical systems especially when it comes to the swear words.

2.1.1 Linguistic Taboos and Gender

It was held as a fact that women swore less tending to use the more standardized form of the language as compared to the males. But this view was refuted by the feminist researchers as being stereotyped (Stapleton, 2003; Hughes, 1992; de Klerk, 1991). Hughes (1992) rules out this tradition by saying that stereotyping is more inclined to judge the women's speech according to their sex instead of the aspects such as their economic and class situation. According to her, the working-class women swear more than men. Their language in this case is keeping up with the toughness required of their social situation; the accepted standards have no relevance for these women. They cannot have any social advantage by sticking to prescribed speech for women of a particular society. According to de Klerk (1991), it is the social authority given to a person of any gender which decides the people's verbal abusive behavior. Hence, the use of taboo language depends on the social status of the speaker. Lastly, Beebe (1995), discusses how

people intentionally use rude speech to obtain power or vent negative feelings.

2.1.2 Taboo Language and Victimization

Studies on the effects of verbal abuse reveal that verbal abuse can lead to detrimental and long-lasting effect on the victim's psychological and emotional behavior. The victims are not only children but the adolescents also (Loh et al., 2010). The children who receive verbal abuse more frequently than those of less frequent are more aggressive, antisocial and prone to anxiety, depression, lack of emotional attachment and self-confidence (Loh et al., 2010). The data on the verbal abuse shows that the victims are unable to recognize the circumstances in which they are abusive; or what constitutes verbal abuse to which they are so frequently being victimized.

2.1.3 Taboo Language and Social Orientation

Jay & Janschewitz (2008) give just the opposite picture when they claim that swearing is not always impolite since they are used considering socio-cultural orientation of one's relationship with the interlocutor. They also go far as claiming that some swear words are neither impolite nor polite rather neutral or politic in their impacts. Moreover, it is argued a general formula for the impoliteness or inappropriateness cannot be constructed because it depends on the relationship of the interlocutors and the speech practices they negotiate. Swearing indicates informality and euphemism demonstrates formal politeness. The speakers maintain their allegiance, covert prestige, with a certain group through taboo language in spite of the benefits they may have by sticking to the accepted code (Anderson and Trudgill, 1992). And the use of the accepted code in such groups might be seen 'reserved, arrogant, snobbish and artificial' (Ljung 1984, p. 19). Thus, the taboo language consists of a little paradox. A person swears to show intimacy in one place and uses it to show the distance.

2.1.4 Taboo Language and Emotional Expression

Taboo language can be used for more than social orientation. For example, the speakers deliberately use the taboo words to obtain power or vent negative feelings (Culpeper, Bousfield & Wichmann, 2003; Beebe, 1995). Their property of being highly connotative also makes them most appropriate as the expressions of strong emotions. For example, Jay (1992, 2000) defines swearing as the process of purposefully using the taboo words in order to express one's emotional state. Their meanings in the literal sense are syntactically illogical and meaningless. But their emotional impact

depends on one's linguistic experiences and cultural conventions (Jay and Danks 1977, pp. 405-408). The speaker's linguistics experience influences the judgment of likelihood and/or the offensiveness of swearing in a setting (Jay and Janschewitz, 2008, pp. 267-288). Khan & Pervaiz (2010) seem to indicate the transmutation of these experiences when they talk about the birth and death of taboo words.

2.1.5 Taboo Language and Morality

Khan and Pervaiz (2010) state that the taboo language and morality are closely associated. So, the people in order to be moral tend to avoid taboo language and use euphemism instead. Further, the youngers are very frequent in the use of taboo words. Thus, these trends are threatening the morality and the culture of the Pakistani society. Pakistani society done very little in this field. This is perhaps because the people do not feel comfortable telling about their abusive verbalism and they may be easily offended. Further, working in this field is itself considered as vulgar by the general public.

3. Methodology

Data were collected from over 100 respondents who were equally divided into four groups based on their age and gender. In group A, older males and in group B, older females while in group C, younger males and in group D, younger females were placed. The age limit in for groups A and B was set as 45-55 years and for group C and D was set 15-25. The instrument used for the current study is questionnaire with containing 43 close ended questions with dichotomous and trichotomous scales in order to get the thorough understanding and perspective of different members of Pakistani society regarding linguistic taboos, their dynamic nature and respective judgmental values towards them. There is one table of trichotomous scale variables with different focus points. The 19 linguistic taboos in Urdu language are selected as discussed in table nine given in the data analysis section.

Frequencies and percentages of participants of four groups were manually calculated in the separate tables and were further analyzed in the section data analysis and findings. The current study has taken a mixed approach because of its qualitative and quantitative nature.

4. Data Analysis

Data were collected in quantitative form. The questionnaire utilizes dichotomous and trichotomous scale by keeping in view the four objectives

of the study. The average answers will help us to constitute solid grounds that will aid in proving the above-mentioned hypothesis. The results extracted from the questionnaire are given below in the form of tables and the questions answered are given in the appendix below.

In table 4.1, average of answers recorded by the twenty-five elder males is given. About 42 % of elder males answered "yes" to the questions given in the dichotomous table. 56% of elder males answered "no" to the questions in the questionnaire.

Table 4.1: Dichotomous table of quantitative data of elder Male group.

Questions	Yes	No	Nil	no. of respondents	total elders male	% of Yes option	% of no. option	% responded
Average	10.60	14.03	0.35	24.64	25	42.42	56.14	98.57

In table 4.2, average of answers recorded by elder male group is given. 25% of elder males answered "yes" to the queries and 50% answered "no" to the queries. Whereas 21% of people answered "rarely" to the questions in the questionnaire.

Table 4.2: Trichotomous table of quantitative data of elder male group.

Questions	Yes	No	NIL	no. of respondents	total elder males	% of Yes	% of no	% of respondents	respondents marked 'rarely'
Average	12.4	5.2	0.4	24.6	25	49.6	20.8	98.4	28

In table 4.3, average of answers average of answers recorded by the twenty-five elder females is given. About 36.56% of elder females answered "yes" to the questions given in the dichotomous table. 63.71% of elder females answered "no" to the questions in the questionnaire.

Table 4.3: Dichotomous table of quantitative data of elder female group.

Question	Option Yes	Option No	option Nil	no. of respondents	total elder female	percentage % of Yes option	percentage % of no. option	percentage % responded
Average	9.14	15.92	0.21	25.07	25	36.56	63.71	100.28

In table 4.4, average of answers recorded by elder female group is given. 52.8% of elder males answered "yes" to the queries and 17.6% answered "no" to the queries. Whereas 28% of people answered "rarely" to the questions in the questionnaire.

Table 4.4: Trichotomous table of quantitative data of elder female group.

Question	Option Yes	Option No	option NIL	no. of respondents	total elder females	% of Yes	% of no	% Age of respondents	respondents marked 'rarely'
Average	13.2	4.4	0.4	24.6	25	52.8	17.6	98.6	28

In table 4.5, average of answers recorded by the twenty-five young males is given. About 65.75% of elder males answered "yes" to the questions given in the dichotomous table. 34.24% of elder males answered "no" to the questions in the questionnaire.

Table 4.5: Dichotomous table of quantitative data of young male group.

Question	Option Yes	Option No	option Nil	no. of respondents	total young male	percentage % of Yes option	percentage % of no. option	percentage % responded
Average	16.28	8.5	0.21	24.78	25	65.75	34.24	99.14

In table 4.6, average of answers recorded by young male group is given. 46.4% of elder males answered "yes" to the queries and 18.4% answered "no" to the queries. Whereas 33.6% of people answered "rarely" to the questions in the questionnaire.

Table 4.6: Trichotomous table of quantitative data of young male group

Question	Option Yes	Option No	option NIL	no. of respondents	total young males	% Of Yes	% Of no	% Of respondents	respondents marked 'rarely'
Average	11.6	4.6	0.4	24.6	25	46.4	18.4	98.4	33.6

In table 4.7, average of answers recorded by the twenty-five young females is given. About 53.28% of elder males answered "yes" to the questions given in the dichotomous table. 45.28% of elder males answered "no" to the questions in the questionnaire.

Table 4.7: Dichotomous table of quantitative data of young female group.

Question	Option Yes	Option No	option Nil	no. of respondents	total young female	% Age of Yes option	% Age of no. option	% Age of responded
Average	13.46	11.32	0.25	24.78	25	53.85	45.28	99.14

In table 4.8, average of answers recorded by young female group is given. 26.4% of elder males answered "yes" to the queries and 28.8% answered "no" to the queries. Whereas 43.2% of people answered "rarely" to the questions in the questionnaire.

Table 4.8: Trichotomous table of quantitative data of young female group

Question	Yes	No	NIL	no. of respondents	total young females	% of Yes	% of No	% of respondents	respondents marked 'rarely'
Average	6.6	7.2	0.4	24.6	25	26.4	28.8	98.4	43.2

4.1 Analysis

We have taken percentages from above displayed tables and sketched average values to sort out our objectives. By taking average values we have drawn two following comparative analysis:

4.1.1 Comparative analysis of the Taboos

While comparing elder males and females with younger males and females we came up with following investigation:
EM= elder males, EF=elder females, YM=younger males, YF=younger females

Table 4.9: Percentages of yes and no answers

Type of Taboos	% Age of yes in EM	% Age of no in EM	% Age of yes in EF	% Age of no in EF	% Age of yes in YM	% Age of no in YM	% Age of yes in YF	% Age of no in YF
Use of Swearing	11	82	10	88	65	34	38	62
Use of Cross language taboos	32	68	16	84	76	24	60	40
Use of abusive words	24	76	4	96	20	80	4	96
Singing songs in front of elders and opposite gender	24	76	22	78	54	46	52	48
Talking about marital choices in front of parents	32	60	4	96	50	50	32	64

Violating privacy	20	80	32	64	75	25	40	60
Showing affection in public	24	72	16	80	56	44	20	80
Discussing sensitive topics sex, transgender etc. in public	48	52	28	72	60	40	40	60
Discussing sensitive topics like death, sex etc. without euphemism	88	12	92	8	92	8	92	8
Calling teachers by name	0	100	4	96	32	68	0	100
Use of word *yaar*	44	56	20	80	96	4	84	16
Making sexual jokes	12	76	16	80	68	32	40	60
Making fun of physical appearance	16	84	16	80	68	32	40	60
Opening up about personal opinion in front of father	48	52	28	72	60	40	40	60
Talking in high pitch in the presence of elders	12	88	0	100	72	28	36	64
Talking to fiancé	40	60	48	52	64	36	32	68
Calling spouse by name	20	80	20	80	48	52	24	76
Openly talking of social media scandals in front of parents	44	56	20	80	96	4	84	16
Use of abusive language by religious people.	16	84	12	88	96	4	52	48

The table 4.9 contains percentages of selected taboos in the 4 groups are explained in this table which show a comparative change in the percentages both with respect to age as well as gender.

4.1.2 Use of Swearing

The linguistic taboos such as swearing words (like Shit, Damn) in Urdu language is definitely more prevalent in younger groups as compared to elders as it is 11% in elder males, 10% in elder females but the percent is nearly six times in younger males 65% and three times in younger females 38%. Moreover, the prohibition level has also decrease by 20% in the younger groups and usage of the swearing words have become more

normal. However, it is apparent that swearing words are more prevalent in younger males 65% as compared to younger females 38%.

4.1.3 Use of Cross linguistic taboos

These are the linguistic taboos in Urdu which are incorporated from other varieties and languages such as Punjabi, Saraiki, Hindko and other languages. These linguistic taboos also show a strong bifurcation among the younger group and the elder group like only 32% of the elder males and 16% of elder females use cross language taboos whereas 76% of younger males and 60% younger females use cross language taboos. This difference may also reflect that the gender discrimination among taboo language is also decreasing with the passing generation as elder females use 16% of linguistic taboos whereas younger females use 60%. Also, the younger male group excessively uses these linguistic taboos as compared to elder males.

4.1.4 Use of abusive words

These are the linguistic taboos in Urdu where verbal abuse is highly incorporated to insult the other persons. These linguistic taboos are comparatively more abundant in elder males 24% and younger males 20% as the use of this taboo remains the same in both elder and younger females i.e. 4%. The data clearly show that due to social exposure, the Pakistani males either younger or elder are more prone to use the abusive words as compared to females who are excessively residing inside the houses but if we look at the age difference variables, the younger men use less abusive language i.e. 20% as compared to elder men which is 24%.

4.1.5 Singing in front of the elders

In Pakistani culture singing songs in front of elders or opposite gender has been a linguistic taboo but this taboo is also weakening out with the passing generations. As the data show, the elder males i.e. 24%, elder females are 22% whereas younger males are 54% and younger females make 52%. However, this linguistic taboo shows a little less discrimination i.e. 2% on the basis of gender in the male and female groups. However, the same cannot be said about the age variable as the difference is more than 40% in the elder and younger groups.

4.1.6 Talking about marital choices

Although, talking about the marital choices is surely important for both males and females, but in context of Pakistani society this is still a linguistic taboo in majority of the households. However, this linguistic taboo has been diminishing with the new generation. For instance, 32%

elder males, 4% elder females talk about these choices whereas 50% younger males and 32% younger females talk about it. The data clearly show that elder groups considered it a taboo, but the influence is clearly decreasing in the younger generation. The gender difference in the linguistic taboo is also apparent as talking about marital choices is more prevalent in males as compared to females of the Pakistani society.

4.1.7 Violating privacy

These are the linguistic taboo in Urdu where choices of words are violating the privacy of another person. These taboos are also becoming part of the language day by day and effect of linguistic taboo is definitely decreasing in the society. As the data shows, 20% of elder males, 32% of elder females, 75% of younger males and 40% of younger females uses these linguistic taboos. The difference is apparent more in males as compared to females as the difference is of 55%.

4.1.8 Showing affection in public

These linguistic taboos in Urdu language are more apparent in male groups as compared to the female groups. For instance, 24% elder males, 16% elder females, 54% younger males and 20% younger females use these taboos. The age difference is excessively shown in the male groups where there is a difference of 32%, which means that the linguistic taboo is relatively diminishing in the society, however the same cannot be said about the females. Although, the data clearly shows that males are given more liberty to express affection in public as compared to females.

4.1.9 Discussing sensitive topics in public

These linguistic taboos are also slowly diminishing as the younger groups are excessively using these taboos in daily life as compared to the elder generation. For example, the use of these linguistic taboos is in elder males 48%, elder females 28%, younger males 60% and younger females 40%. The data reflects the gender difference as well as the age difference in the groups. Younger groups are using these taboos more as compared to elder groups. Whereas female groups are using these taboos less as compared to male groups.

4.1.10 Discussing sensitive topics

The level of euphemism while discussing sensitive taboos is same in the female groups and younger males with 92%, however the elder males are less prone to use euphemism with 88% than the other three groups. This also shows that Urdu language speakers are more prone to use euphemism

when talking about sensitive issues, which also signifies that some linguistic taboos are still the same in elder and younger groups.

4.1.11 Calling teachers by name

This linguistic taboo clearly reflects a drastic change in taboos in Urdu language. Not a single elder males and younger females uses this taboo, whereas elder females (4), and younger males (32%). This linguistic taboo has been clearly diminishing in the male groups with the passing generation.

4.1.12 Use of Urdu word *Yaar*

Using word *yaar* is a linguistic taboo in Urdu language where 44% elder males, 20% elder females, 96% younger males and 84% younger females use this linguistic taboo. This taboo has been clearly diminishing with the passing generation and the adaptation is quite apparent in the data, moreover, male groups are more prone to use this taboo as compared to female groups.

4.1.13 Making sexual jokes

Making sexual jokes is a serious linguistic taboo in Urdu language. As elder males 12%, elder females 16%, younger males 68% and younger females 40% use these taboos. The data shows that younger males use these taboos more as compared to younger females, similarly elder females use these taboos more as elder males. The younger groups however use these taboos more as compared to elder groups.

4.1.14 Making fun of physical appearance

These taboos are more prevalent in younger groups as compared to elder groups and males use these kind of taboos more as compared to females. As 16% elder males, 16% elder females, 68% younger males and 40% younger females uses these taboos.

4.1.15 Saying personal opinion in front of parents

This linguistic taboo is more prevalent in male groups as compared to female groups, moreover the linguistic taboos is abundantly used by younger groups as compared to elder ones. As 48% elder males, 28% elder females, 60% younger males, and 40% younger females use this linguistic taboo. The choice of sharing one's opinion in front of father is excessively given to males as compared to females in Pakistani society.

4.1.16 Talking in high pitch

Talking in a high pitch in presence of elder is a serious linguistic taboo in Urdu language. This taboo is used by 12% elder males, 0% elder females, 72% younger males and 36% younger females. the data clearly shows that male groups use this taboo more as compared to females and elder groups use this taboo less as compared to younger groups. This is strong evidence of diminishing of linguistic taboos in Urdu language with passing generation.

4.1.17 Talking to fiancé

40% of elder males, 48% elder females, 64% younger males and 32% of younger males use the linguistic taboo of talking to their fiancé. The data shows that the taboo is clearly diminishing in the younger groups as they are prone to its use. On the other hand, male groups use this taboo more as compared to female groups.

4.1.18 Calling spouse by name

20% elder males, 20% elder females, 48% younger males, and 24% younger females call their fiancé by their name which is a linguistic taboo in Urdu language. The elder group is less prone to use this taboo as compared to younger groups. Moreover, males are more prone to use this taboo as compared to females.

4.1.19 Talking of social media scandals

So far as the question of talking on social media is concerned, 44% elder males, 20% elder females, 96% younger males and 84% younger females openly talk about social media in front of their parent. The data shows that younger groups are more prone to this taboo as compared to elder groups. Moreover, males are more abundantly using this taboo as compared to females.

4.1.20 Use of abusive language

The question of abusive language is also of importance where 16% elder males, 12% elder females, 96% younger males, and 52% younger females experience the use of abusive language by religious people. The data shows that younger groups are more prone to experience this linguistic taboo as compared to elder groups. This taboo is clearly diminishing with time in the Urdu language. Whereas females experience less linguistic taboo as compared to males in the society.

5. Findings

The results from the data collected above reveal the dynamic nature of linguistic taboos alongside the stereotyping of linguistic choices between genders. The research reveals the variety of perceptions about the taboo words and their varied patterns of use according to the age and gender of speakers. In the context of Pakistani society, age and gender are the most fundamental and significant factors influencing both the verbal and non-verbal, and social and private behavior of the people. So far as the age of the speakers is concerned, the younger age group, both male and female, have more liberal approach towards linguistic taboos i.e. they are more tolerant and even permissive towards the use of taboos and swear words. It can be demonstrated by the difference of opinion both groups gave about the causes of using taboo and swear words. According to younger group, they use taboo words mostly in a joke, whereas the older age group uses taboo words to assert themselves and express their anger. The angrier they are, the harsher the taboo words would be. Moreover, they use taboo words more often than the elder age group, both male and female. In most of the cases, the taboos which are considered highly stigmatized and offensive by the elder age group are not considered taboo at all by the younger age group. For instance, swearing as a joke is not considered a taboo by younger people whereas the elder people think it as insolent and offensive. But it does not mean that the taboos are dying for the younger age group, rather new taboos are also emerging. In short, taboo language is liquid in nature; it is as much vulnerable to change as the world views of its users.

The use and perception about the taboo language also varies across gender groups. The males, both elder and younger use taboo language more frequently than their female counterparts. In addition, the young males are more prone to use those taboos as compared to their female counterparts. The females remain conservative with respect to the adoption of new taboos and their use. For example, the younger females still feel shy to discuss their marital choices with their parents. The reason for this can be located in the highly patriarchal infrastructure of Pakistani society. It is held as a fact that males are more inclined to be abusive as compared to females since they need to be abusive for their better survival and safeguard of themselves and their families. While the abuse on the part of the males is accepted as quite normal females face rejection and are judged more severely. Moreover, the tabooed expressions related to females or their bodies are still considered as very severe. The reason can be sought in the major religion of the state,

Islam, which prohibits women to expose their bodies, thus their bodies and its reference becomes a taboo, and a severe one.

The tabooed verbal behavior depends directly on the company or the adience. By audience here is meant both listeners and the addressee/s. The level of comfort of the subjects with the company roughly follows this pattern: peers> siblings> parents> spouses> public. The pattern can differ a little bit depending on the gender and idiosyncratic perceptions of the individuals. It means that almost all the people can comparatively be more abusive and tolerant towards taboos in the company of their peers as compared to their siblings, and more to their siblings than public or their parents. Though women, both younger and older, prefer the use of euphemistic expression over taboo words, they are still way more expressive and casual in their verbal behavior as compared to their male counterparts. The verbal choices of males, especially older age group, vary sharply depending upon their addressees and listeners. The women, on the other hand, pay less attention to the company around them. For example, most of the females, both younger and older, can quite comfortably discuss sensitive topics, like marital choices, with their male friends; but the males behave more conservatively in such a situation.

In spite of the fact Pakistani people are generally taken to be frank and open, they nevertheless are reluctant to disclose themselves in public or be judged or remarked in the similar context. They prefer to keep reserve in front of new people. If they talk in public, they use more generous and socially apt words, avoiding talks on sensitive topics. Most of the people, irrespective of their age or gender, are more conscious about their self-image and do not bear and/or put any kind of insulting remarks.

As we are thoroughly discussing the variation in linguistic taboos of Urdu in this paper, so the factors and causes directly concerned with taboo behavior of our respondents would be equally significant to be discussed here. There are a number of causes affecting this process such as a person's social-physical environment, his peer groups, family upbringing, TV shows and social media sites such as YouTube, Instagram, Facebook etc., which are flooded with our youth where they simultaneously affect others globally and also get affected by them. The tendency to adopt taboo behavior with respect to the above mention factors, is more considerable among younger group, be it girls or boys because of their flexible attitudes and pre-matured learning stage. In contrast, the elder group individuals regardless of their gender, have deep-rooted cultural ties and more rigid mindset owing to their

age factor, are comparatively lesser affected by them. Their experience and wisdom also work for their kind of attitude. Many of our respondents, related to four of the selected groups, agree that parents play a major role in building the child's taboo language. Secondly, the fastest affecting factor i.e. the social media also has deep rooted effects on its users. The person's social and physical environment and peer groups have their significance in this regard. Likewise, all these factors are the choices of people who deliberately choose them to get influenced by them. Finally, we cannot ignore the religious inclinations of individuals and their personal integrity which prevents them from adopting this socially less-acceptable language.

6. Conclusion

From the above findings, we can conclude that the younger age groups are more prone to use swearing as compared to the elder age groups while male groups use more foul language as compared to the female groups. Peers, bad crowd, and social media are the triggering forces in learning many linguistic taboos in Pakistan. People usually use taboos in an excited situation and avoid in a normal one. Elder groups are more formal and hesitant than the younger groups. Perspective about linguistic taboos are surely changing with the change in generation. Elders are more attracted towards religion which make them more reserved while younger people are more exposed to use taboos. The limitations we faced while doing our research were firstly, that people had no idea about linguistic taboos especially young crowd which leads to second limitation of this research, that is, people are uncomfortable to discuss their tabooed linguistic choices especially elder people, thirdly linguistic taboos are directly related to religion and moral values in our society. Therefore, the study on this topic is stigmatized and considered a taboo itself. In Pakistani society, age and gender are the significant variables in establishing, nurturing, and breaking up social relationships. The difference of verbal taboo behavior regarding these two variables gives a nearly holistic view of Pakistani speech community. This research study will ensure other linguistic students to explore other dimensions of linguistic taboos present in Pakistan as taboos keep on changing with the passage of time and severity of situation.

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Appendix-I

Dear All,
This is a questionnaire of a research paper on the use of taboo language or words. We assure you that your data will not be disclosed in any situation. If you cooperate with us, we would be very grateful of you. Thank you.

Dr. Azhar Pervaiz, Fahim Arshad, Kaynat Khuda Dad, Rabieah Tahir

Department of English, UoS

Name:
Gender:
Age:
Occupation:
Questionnaire:

Tick the right answer you think is of the question.

Sr. #	QUESTION	OPTION A	OPTION B
1	Do you use taboo language?	YES	NO
2	Do you swear like shit, damn, etc.?	YES	NO
3	Do you use euphemism?	YES	NO
4	Have you abused someone of lower rank or low financial status but senior in age?	YES	NO
5	Do you think straightforwardness should be practiced?	YES	NO
6	Is it necessary to use euphemism while discussing sensitive topics like death, insult, assault etc.?	YES	NO
7	Do you think boys use more taboo language than girls?	YES	NO
8	Do you think people anger issues are the reason for people to use foul language?	YES	NO
9	Do you sing songs in front of your parents?	YES	NO
10	Do you sing songs in front of your siblings, friends or opposite gender?	YES	NO
11	Do you call your female and male friends "yaar"?	YES	NO

12	Do you discuss marital choices with your parents?	YES	NO
13	Do you think bad company of friends is a cause of adapting abusive language?	YES	NO
14	Do you swear in front of your parents?	YES	NO
15	Do you think social media is playing a role in adaptation of taboos?	YES	NO
16	Do you talk about your crush, like you are attracted to, with your close relatives or friends?	YES	NO
17	Do you make sexual joke with your close friends?	YES	NO
18	Do you talk in code language about your social media information in front of your parents?	YES	NO
19	Do your mother call your father by his name?	YES	NO
20	Is talking to your fiancé acceptable in your family?	YES	NO
21	Can you use high pitch tone words in the presence of elders?	YES	NO
22	Do you address your teachers by their name?	YES	NO
23	Are you comfortable talking about transgender in public?	YES	NO
24	Can you express your personal perspectives openly in front of your father?	YES	NO
25	Are you comfortable in praising opposite gender in front of your parents or close siblings?	YES	NO
26	Is it ok for you when people make fun of your physical appearance?	YES	NO
27	Do you think boys are given more leverage in using abusive language?	YES	NO
28	Do you think parents can play a vital role in improving their child's abusive language?	YES	NO

Tick the right answer from the given option in the following questions.

Sr. #	Questions	Option a	Option b	Option c	Option d
1	What sort of words do you think are most offensive?	Sex	Menstruation	Swearing	Adultery
2	What would you think about a religious person using abusive language?	Fake	Normal	contradictory	Ignore him
3	Girls prefer discussing taboo topics with	Parents	Siblings	Friends	None
4	Boys prefer discussing taboo topic with	Friends	Siblings	Parents	None
5	If you use euphemistic expressions, why is it so?	Face value and Politeness	Impression and comfort	Respect	Formality