

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



**Sudan University of Science and Technology**  
**College of Graduate Studies**



**Using Euphemism and Impolite Language  
among University Students**

**تداول اللغة اللطيفة والمبتذلة بين طلاب الجامعات**

A Case Study of Four-Year Students of English Department-  
Sudan University of Science and Technology

(دراسة حالة طلاب الفرقة الرابعة قسم اللغة الانجليزية جامعة السودان للعلوم  
والتكنولوجيا)

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for  
the Degree of Master in English Language

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

## الآية

**قال الله تعالى:**

(أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ أَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ وَفَرْعُهَا فِي السَّمَاءِ (24)  
تُؤْتِي أُكْلَهَا كُلَّ حِينٍ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهَا وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ (25) وَمَثَلُ كَلِمَةٍ  
خَبِيثَةٍ كَشَجَرَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ اجْتُثَّتْ مِنْ فَوْقِ الْأَرْضِ مَا لَهَا مِنْ قَرَارٍ (26))

صدق الله العظيم

سورة ابراهيم الايات ( 24-26 )

## DEDICATION

To my family,

To my brothers,

To my fiancé,

To my friends.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to Allah who gave me power and patience to complete this study. My deep sense of appreciation and gratitude is to my supervisor Dr. Mohammed for his advice and valuable guidance. Also my deep thanks are to my parents for their supports and encouragement.

## **ABSTRACT**

### **(ENGLISH VERSION)**

The aims of this study are; to help students to pay more attention to euphemism and taboo, to help them to use these two concepts in a very precise way, and to encourage using euphemism, while avoiding using taboo. To achieve the objectives of the study, the researcher designed a questionnaire for a sample of 40 four-year students of English department, from Sudan University of Science and Technology. The researcher used the descriptive analytical method to conduct her study. After the analysis of data, the researcher reached the following results: people do not use euphemism very much; people use taboo groups, in informal conversations, and with close friends; people agree to the use of euphemism in protecting feelings and showing respect and concern. Religion, politeness etc are reasons restrict people from using taboo. The researcher recommended that; people should pay more attention to euphemism and taboo, Taboo should be forbidden in public places, and people should encourage using euphemism in their daily lives.

## ABSTRACT

### (ARABIC VERSION)

#### (مستخلص الدراسة)

الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو مساعدة الطلاب على التركيز على اللغة اللطيفة وتجنب المبتزلة . مساعدتهم على استخدام اللغة اللطيفة بدقه. تشجيعهم على استخدام اللغة اللطيفة وتجنب المبتزلة. للوصول لاهداف البحث استخدمت الباحثة الاستبيان لعدد 40 طالب من الفرقة الرابعة قسم اللغة الانجليزية جامعة السودان للعلوم والتكنولوجيا. استخدمت الباحثة طريقة التحليل الوصفي للوصول للنتائج. بعد تحليل البيانات توصلت الباحثة للاتي:لايستخدم الطلاب اللغة اللطيفة بكثرة بينما يستخدمون اللغة المبتزلة في المجموعات والمحادثات غير الرسمية ومع الاصدقاء المقربين.اجمعت العينة على ان استخدام اللغة البقه يحمي المشاعر ويظهر الاحترام والاهتمام.ان الدين والتهديب وغيرها هي الاسباب التي تمنع الناس من استخدام اللغة المبتزلة.وصى الباحث على انه يجب الانتباه للغة اللطيفة بينما يجب ان يمنع استخدام باللغة غير المهزبة في الاماكن العامه وكما يجب تشجيع اللغة المهزبة في الحياة اليومية.

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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

# **Chapter One**

## **Introduction**

### **1-0 Overview:-**

English language is a very important language and it became the first language in several countries. Polite and impolite languages are used variously among university students.

Euphemism is "conventional politeness especially forms that mark respect for the addressee" (Eckert and Cinet).

Taboo is "words and phrases that people avoid for reasons related to religion, politeness and prohibited behavior" (Yule, 2006:211).

### **1-1 Statement of the problem:-**

The researcher is going to focus on using euphemism and taboo among university students, who do not pay much attention to these two areas. Students must be careful while using taboo words. They must take in to consideration the reasons that make people avoid these words, and do their best to replace them with euphemistic ones.

### **1-2 Objectives of the study:-**

The Objectives of this research are as follows:

- 1-To help students pay more attention to euphemism and taboo.
- 2-To help students to use euphemism in very precise way.
- 3-To encourage using polite language (euphemism) while avoid using impolite language (taboo).

### **1-3 Questions of the study:-**

**This study addresses the following questions:**

- 1-To what extent do students intend to use euphemism?
- 2-To what extent do students intend to use taboo?
- 3-why does using euphemism is required?
- 4-why must students avoid taboo?

### **1-4 Hypotheses of the study:-**

**Based on the questions, the study hypothesizes that:**

- 1-Students do not intend to use euphemism in vast.
- 2-Students intend to use taboo in groups, with close friends, informal meeting...etc.
- 3-Euphemism is required to use because it is useful term for protecting feeling and shows our respect and concern.
- 4-Students must avoid taboo for several reasons such as religion, sex, politeness...etc.

### **1-5 Methodology of the study:-**

In order to achieve its objectives and answer its questions; the researcher will administer a questionnaire for students and then will use the descriptive analytical method to analyze its data to gain results.

### **1-6 Significance of the study:-**

The significance of this research is to encourage using euphemism because it is used in a variety of situations for numerous reasons, such as not to hurt anybody's feelings, not to convey unpleasant message..etc. On the other hand, avoiding taboo for its unpleasant meaning is needed.

### **1-7 Limits of the study:-**

This study is limited to using euphemism and taboo among university students, Khartoum state, Sudan University of Science and Technology, College of Language, third level, 2015.

# **CHAPTER TWO**

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

## Chapter Two

### Literature Review

#### 2-1 Definition of impolite language (Taboo):-

Yule (2006:211) states that “Taboo terms are words and phrases that people avoid for reasons related to religion, politeness and prohibited behavior”.

They are often swearwords, typically ‘bleeped’ in public broadcasting or ‘starred’ in print. In a study of the linguistic differences among ‘Jocks’ (higher status)” and ‘Burnouts’ (lower status) in Detroit high schools, Eckert (2000) reported the regular use of taboo words among both males and females in the lower status group. However, among the higher-status group, males used taboo words only with other males, while females didn’t seem to use them at all. Social class divisions, at least in the use of slang, are already well established during adolescence (Yule, 2006:211).

#### 2-2 Etymology of Taboo:-

Dixon (1988) claims that the term "taboo" comes from the Tongan tapu or Fijian tabu ("prohibited", "disallowed", "forbidden"), related among others to the Maori tapu, Hawaiian kapu, Malagasy fady. Its English use dates to 1777 when the British explorer James Cook visited Tonga. Describing the cultural practices of the Tongans, he wrote:

*Not one of them would sit down, or eat a bit of anything.... On expressing my surprise at this, they were all taboo, as they said; which word has a very comprehensive meaning; but, in general, signifies that a thing is forbidden.*

*When anything is forbidden to be eaten, or made use of, they say, that it is taboo.*

The term was translated to him as "consecrated, inviolable, forbidden, unclean or cursed". Tabu itself has been derived from alleged Tongan morphemes ta ("mark") and bu ("especially"), but this may be a folk etymology (note that Tongan does not actually have a phoneme /b/), and tapu is usually treated as a unitary, non-compound word inherited from Proto-Polynesian tapu, in turn inherited from Proto-Oceanic tabu, with the reconstructed meaning "sacred, forbidden". In its current use on Tonga, the word tapu means "sacred" or "holy", often in the sense of being restricted or protected by custom or law. On the main island, the word is often appended to the end of "Tonga" as Tongatapu, here meaning "Sacred South" rather than "Forbidden South".

## **2-3 Examples of Taboo:-**

Freud (1913) posits that incest and patricide were the only two universal taboos and formed the basis of civilization. However, although cannibalism, in-group murder, and incest are taboo in the majority of societies, modern research has found exceptions for each and no taboo is known to be universal.

Common taboos involve restrictions or ritual regulation of killing and hunting; sex and sexual relationships (primarily incest, necrophilia, miscegenation, adultery, fornication, pedophilia, homosexuality, intermarriage, bestiality, and masturbation); reproduction (abortion, infanticide); the deceased and their graves; as well as food and dining (primarily cannibalism and dietary laws such as vegetarianism, kashrut, and halal). In Madagascar, a strong code of taboos, known as fady, constantly change and are formed from new experiences. Each region, village or tribe may have its own fady.

Taboos often extend to cover discussion of taboo topics, resulting in euphemisms and replacement of taboo words.

The word "taboo" gained popularity at times, with some scholars looking for ways to apply it where other English words had previously been applied. For example, J. M. Powis Smith, in his "The American Bible" (editor's preface 1927), used "taboo" occasionally in relation to Israel's Tabernacle and ceremonial laws.

#### **2-4 Function of Taboo:-**

Dyczok and Gaman-Golutvina (2009:209) state that Communist and materialist theorists have argued that taboos can be used to reveal the histories of societies when other records are lacking. Harris particularly endeavored to explain taboos as a consequence of ecologic and economic conditions.

#### **2-5 Current Status of Impolite Word Taboo:-**

Robert(2007)point out that contemporary multicultural societies have established a number of taboos rooted in the perceived injustice and deleterious effects of modern history, particularly neocolonialism. Tribalism's (for example, ethnocentrism and nationalism) and prejudices (racism, sexism, and religious extremism) are opposed at times reflexively despite the potentially high cost of diverse societies in terms of trust and solidarity.

Frederick (2008)states that Changing social customs and standards also create new taboos, such as bans on slavery; extension of the pedophilia taboo to ephebophilia; prohibitions on alcohol, tobacco, or psycho

pharmaceutical consumption (particularly among pregnant women); and the employment of politically correct euphemisms – at times quite unsuccessfully – to mitigate various alleged forms of discrimination.

Incest itself has been pulled both ways, with some seeking to normalize consensual adult relationships regardless of the degree of kinship (Hari, 2002).

## **2-6 Shunning of Impolite Word Taboo:-**

Taboos arise out of social constraints on the individual's behavior where it can cause discomfort, harm or injury (Allan & Burrige, 2006:1). Some particular topics are constrained or thoroughly censored out mainly because they evoke fear, shame or disgust in participants.

Bakhtiar (2012:9) views that "Taboo language is offensive, dysphemistic and against politeness standards; therefore, it is condemned and replaced by euphemisms. Fatal diseases, death, and holy persons and places are three fear based taboos among Persian speakers which are usually talked about with too much care and highly euphemistically. The unknown sources of some diseases (in the past), the lack of an absolute treatment for them and primarily the association of these with death has led to an evasive language to mention them. Applying medical jargons and circumlocutions are common ways of avoiding this taboo topic.

## **2-7 Taboo and Islamic View:-**

The most vital topic, that Islam has regulated, is Muslim's sexual life. Ashrof (2005: 198) affirms that both Islamic and social norms restrict human sexual life. In this sense, he argues that "Different social orders have integrated the tensions between religion and sexuality in different



ways”. He goes on to claim that “Both Quran 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 explains the above idea as follows:

Additionally, there are many Hadiths which focus on sexual pleasure between a male and his wife. In this sense, Ashrof claims that “The prophet has defined an ideal Muslim male in these words: “The best among Muslims are those who are best towards their wives” (Ibn Majah)”. In all cases so far mentioned above, sexual life remains taboo since religion has put restrictions on it as Ali (2011: 11) affirms “Faith and sexuality are hand in glove concepts of life. It is religion that makes it look alien and taboo”. He concludes his point of view claiming that “Religion regulates sin and virtue, so goes the tradition”. Accordingly, Amer (2008: 21) 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 states: 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 “dirty” since Allah values people who are clean and pure.”

## **2-8 Definition of Polite Word (Euphemism):-**

Almost all traditional definitions of euphemism consider it as a merely lexical substitution which results from the speaker's reluctance to insult the hearer (Crystal, 1992 and Rawson, 1981).

But Allan & Burridge (2006) have adopted a pragmatic approach towards studying euphemisms which is simultaneously both speaker-oriented and hearer oriented.

In other words, euphemism is a face saving mechanism which emphasizes mutual cooperation in a conversation. Quoting Allan & Burridge (2006:32)'s definition of euphemism can illuminate our face-centered discussion of euphemisms: "They are words or phrases used as an alternative to a dispreferred expression. They avoid possible loss of face by the speaker and also the hearer or some third party.

Euphemisms may be used to avoid words considered rude, while still conveying their meaning; words may be replaced by similar-sounding words, gentler words, or placeholders. Some euphemisms have become accepted in certain societies for uncomfortable information; for example, in many English speaking countries, someone may say "the patient passed away" rather than "the patient died". A second example relating uncomfortable information and concealing some degree of truth would be "we put the dog to sleep" rather than "we killed the dog". Euphemisms can be used to downplay or conceal unpalatable facts, such as "collateral damage" for "civilian casualties" in a military context, or "redacted" for "censored".

## **2-9 Etymology of Euphemism:-**

Liddell and Scott affirms The word euphemism comes from the Greek word (euphemia), meaning "the use of words of good omen", which in

turn is derived from the Greek root-words *eû*( "good, well" and *phémē* ) "prophetic speech; rumour, talk". Etymologically, the eupheme is the opposite of the blaspheme "evil-speaking." The term euphemism itself was used as a euphemism by the ancient Greeks, meaning "to keep a holy silence" (speaking well by not speaking at all). Historical linguistics has revealed traces of taboo deformations in many languages. Several are known to have occurred in Indo-European languages, including the presumed original Proto-Indo-European words for bear , wolf , and deer (originally, hart—although the word hart remained commonplace in parts of England until the 20th century as is witnessed by the widespread use of the pub sign The White Hart). In different Indo-European languages, each of these words has a difficult etymology because of taboo deformations: a euphemism was substituted for the original, which no longer occurs in the language. An example in English is donkey replacing the old Indo-European-derived word ass, which coincides with some pronunciations of the word "arse".

## **2-10 Evolution of Euphemism:-**

Euphemisms may be formed in a number of ways. Periphrasis, or circumlocution, is one of the most common: to "speak around" a given word, implying it without saying it. Over time, circumlocutions become recognized as established euphemisms for particular words or ideas.

McCool (1957) views that to alter the pronunciation or spelling of a taboo word (such as a swear word) to form a euphemism is known as taboo deformation, or "minced oath". In American English, words that are unacceptable on television, such as fuck, may be represented by deformations such as freak, even in children's cartoons. Some examples

of rhyming slang may serve the same purpose: to call a person a berk sounds less offensive than to call a person a cunt, though berk is short for Berkeley Hunt, which rhymes with cunt. Bureaucracies such as the military and large corporations frequently spawn euphemisms of a more deliberate nature. Organizations coin doublespeak expressions to describe objectionable actions in terms that seem neutral or inoffensive. For example, a term used in the past for contamination by radioactive isotopes was sunshine units.

Euphemisms often evolve over time into taboo words themselves, through a process described by Quine(1987) , and more recently dubbed the "euphemism treadmill" by Harvard professor Steven Pinker. This is the linguistic process known as pejoration or semantic change. For instance, Toilet is an 18th-century euphemism, replacing the older euphemism House-of-Office, which in turn replaced the even older euphemisms privy-house or bog-house (Bell and Walker (1953). In the 20th century, where the words lavatory or toilet were deemed inappropriate (e.g. in the United States), they were sometimes replaced with bathroom or water closet, which in turn became restroom, W.C., or washroom.

## **2-11 What Makes Polite Word Polite?**

**Bakhtiar (2010:8) sees that** for a linguistic expression to function as a euphemism and to be communicatively efficient, it should necessarily contain some features. These structural traits determine the euphemistic force of a given expression. We examine these crucial features in the form of three principles:

### 2.11.1 Distance Principle:-

Euphemism is an alternative to socially distasteful terms. In contrary to taboo words where the signifier and the referent are closely connected, in a euphemism, this distance is much farther. This very distance determines the mitigating capacity of a euphemistic expression and the amount of a given word's ambiguity in referring to a taboo area. Ambiguity is a defining feature of euphemisms as a linguistic phenomenon, a term acts as a euphemism because, in a given context, it is capable of generating an ambiguity which suggests that there may be a distasteful concept beneath and thus it permits the mitigation of the taboo (Fernandez,2006:16). This contrast between a linguistic term and its taboo referent is satisfactorily maintained through making novel metaphors. For example, "*aslahe*" (weapon) or "*folan*"(an abstract term meaning something unknown)can communicate a taboo body part like "penis", and at the same time function as euphemism in a specific context. Metaphoric euphemisms can maintain their mitigating capacity in a given pragmatic context. The ambiguity resulted from making new metaphoric euphemisms flout the cooperation principle and give rise to conversational implicatures (Brown & Levinson, 1987:216). Nevertheless, it acts in accordance with the politeness principle. Therefore, we can say that euphemism is the representation and the result of politeness principle. Among Persian speakers a euphemistic expression like "*moshkel e zanane*" (a female problem) in a formal and polite gathering is appropriately used to refer to "womb related diseases" which is highly considered taboo. This metonymically based euphemism greatly veils the specific organ to which the problem is pertained (Bakhtiar, 2012:8).

### **2.11.2. Correlation Principle:-**

As it was stated, there is a direct relationship between the euphemistic force of a term and the level of contrast between a signifier and its taboo referent. However, too much distance leading to an uncommon ambiguity runs the risk of not properly communicating and being misunderstood by the hearer(s). A euphemistic term chosen should be relevant to the taboo concept for which it has been substituted and its interpretation in the immediate context should be possible for the audience. If we consider euphemisms as basically metaphorical, there ought to be a similarity between source and target concepts, for example in Persian language, in a statement like "*shab too rakht e khabeshbarounmiad*" (it's raining in his bed at nights), the word "*baroun*" (raining) is interpreted as "urination" because of the similarity which is held between different aspects of these two concepts. On the other hand, substituting the same statement with another word like "*sang*" (stone) in place of "*baroun*" (raining) will never have the same euphemistic effect mainly because the above mentioned aspects of similarity are not observed anymore (Bakhtiar, 2012:9).

### **2-12 Decant and Indecent Word:-**

Wardhaugh claims "Language is used to avoid saying certain things as well as to express them. Certain things are not said, not because they cannot be, but because 'people don't talk about those things'; or, if those things are talked about, they are talked about in very roundabout ways. In the first case we have instances of linguistic *taboo*; in the second we have the employment of *euphemisms* so as to avoid mentioning certain matters directly".

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

embarrassment, or shame. It is an extremely strong politeness constraint. Consequently, so far as language is concerned, certain things are not to be said or certain objects can be referred to only in certain circumstances, for example, only by certain people, or through deliberate circumlocutions, i.e., euphemistically. Of course, there are always those who are prepared to break the taboos in an attempt to show their own freedom from such social constraints or to expose the taboos as irrational and unjustified, as in certain movements for ‘free speech (Wardhaugh, 2006: 238).

Tabooed subjects can vary widely: sex; death; excretion; bodily functions; religious matters; and politics. Tabooed objects that must be avoided or used carefully can include your mother-in-law, certain game animals, and use of your left hand (the origin of *sinister*). Crowley (1992, pp. 155–6) describes how in the Kabana language of Papua New Guinea people typically have personal names that also refer to everyday objects. However, there is also a strong restriction against saying the names of one’s in-laws. What happens, therefore, when you want to refer to the actual thing that your in-law is named after even though you are not using the word as a personal name? For such cases the language has a set of special words which are either words in the Kabana language itself (but with different meanings) or words copied from neighboring languages with the same meanings. For example, the Kabana word for a particular kind of fish is *urae*, so if your in-law is called Urae this fish must be referred to as *moi*, the Kabana word for ‘taro’. The Kabana word for ‘crocodile’ is *puaea* but you cannot use this word if your in-law is called Puaea and you must refer to the crocodile as *bagale*, a borrowing from a neighboring language.

English language also has its taboos, and most people who speak English know what these are and observe the ‘rules.’ When someone breaks the

rules, that rupture may arouse considerable comment, although not perhaps quite as much today as formerly, as when Shaw's use of *bloody* in *Pygmalion* or the use of *damn* in the movie *Gone with the Wind* aroused widespread public comment. Standards and norms change. Linguistic taboos are also violated on occasion to draw attention to oneself, or to show contempt, or to be aggressive or provocative, or to mock authority – or, according to Freud, on occasion as a form of verbal seduction, e.g., 'talking dirty.' The penalty for breaking a linguistic taboo can be severe, for blasphemy and obscenity are still crimes in many jurisdictions, but it is hardly likely to cost you your life, as the violation of certain non-linguistic taboos, e.g., incest taboos, might in certain places in the world.

Haas (1951) states "that certain language taboos seem to arise from bilingual situations. She cites the examples of the Creeks of Oklahoma, whose avoidance of the Creek words *fákki* 'soil,' *apíswa* 'meat,' and *apíssi* 'fat' increased as they used more and more English. A similar avoidance can sometimes be noticed among Thai students learning English in English-speaking countries".

They avoid Thai words like *fag* 'sheath' and *phrig* '(chili) pepper' in the presence of Anglophones because of the phonetic resemblance of these words to certain taboo English words. Thai speakers also often find it difficult to say the English words *yet* and *key* because they sound very much like the Thai words *jed*, a 240 *Words and Culture* vulgar word for 'to have intercourse,' and *khîi* 'excrement.' In certain circumstances, personal names may even be changed as a speaker of one language finds that his or her name causes embarrassment in a different linguistic framework, e.g., the Vietnamese name *Phuc* in an anglophone group.



The late twentieth century may have seen a considerable change in regard to linguistic taboo – in the English-speaking world at least – as certain social constraints have loosened. However, that decline may have been more than matched by the marked increase in the use of euphemistic language, the ‘dressing up’ in language of certain areas in life to make them more presentable, more polite, and more palatable to public taste. Euphemistic words and expressions allow us to talk about unpleasant things and disguise or neutralize the unpleasantness, e.g., the subjects of sickness, death and dying, unemployment, and criminality. They also allow us to give labels to unpleasant tasks and jobs in an attempt to make them sound almost attractive. Euphemism is endemic in our society: the glorification of the commonplace and the elevation of the trivial.

We are constantly renaming things and repackaging them to make them sound ‘better’; we must remember that Orwell’s version of the future relied heavily on characterizing the inhabitants of that future world as having fallen victim to its euphemisms, its renaming of reality to fit a new order of society. It is even possible to argue that ‘politically correct’ language is euphemism in a new guise.

In a series of publications Nadel (particularly 1954) has described how the Nupe of West Africa must be among the most prudish people in the world, distinguishing sharply between expressions that are suitable for polite conversation and those that are not. They constantly resort to circumlocutions and euphemisms in order to avoid direct mention of matters pertaining to parts of the body, bodily functions, sex, and so on. At the same time, however, they show an intense fascination with language and are prepared to discuss various linguistic complexities at length. It seems that they are quite aware of what they are doing when they use circumlocutions and euphemisms. As Nadel says (p. 57), ‘When

they employ metaphors or otherwise manipulate expressions, they are always fully aware of the semantic implications.’ Apparently, the Nupe have developed indirect ways of referring to tabooed matters, ways they can employ on those occasions when it is possible to free themselves from normal constraints, e.g., in certain kinds of story-telling or on specific festive occasions.

Impolite (Taboo) and polite (euphemism) words affect us all. We may not be as deeply conscious of the effects as are the Nupe, but affect us they do. We all probably have a few things we refuse to talk about and still others we do not talk about directly. We may have some words we know but never – or hardly ever – use because they are too emotional for either us or others. While we may find ‘some thoughts too deep for words’ – something hard to prove – others we definitely take care not to express at all even though we know the words, or else we express ourselves on them very indirectly. Each social group is different from every other in how it constrains linguistic behavior in this way, but constrains it in some such way it certainly does. Perhaps one linguistic universal is that no social group uses language quite uninhibitedly. If so, it would be intriguing to hypothesize why this is the case. What useful function does such inhibition serve? (Wardhaugh, 2006: 238).

## 2-14 Previous Studies:-

The researcher chose two studies which are as follow:-

1-The first research title is ((**THE USE OF EUPHEMISMS AND TABOO TERMS BY YOUNG SPEAKERS OF RUSSIAN AND ENGUSH**)) by **Carole Teresa Greene**. This thesis was submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of Master of Arts (in Slavic Linguistics Department of Modern Language and Cultural Studies), Edmonton Alberta 2000. The aim of Carole study was to determine the differences in the use of euphemisms and taboo terms on the topics of sex and death by speakers of Russian and **English**. The survey instrument used was an opinion survey. Four general hypotheses were tested: 1) that female speakers are more inclined than male speakers to avoid the use of taboo terms; 2) that female speakers are likely to find the use of such taboo terms more offensive than male speakers are; 3) that both male and female speakers are more likely to use taboo **terms** in informal rather than formal situations; and 4) that both male and female speakers are likely to find the use of taboo terms less offensive in **informal** situations. The first two hypotheses were not supported by the results, as the males and females avoided taboo terms at the **same** frequency, and perceived the offensiveness of such taboo terms at the same level. The third hypothesis was supported, while the fourth hypothesis **was** supported for the sex terms, but not the death terms. These results indicate that the formality of a situation plays a greater role than gender when it comes to word choice and perceived offensiveness. The differences between Carole study and the current study as what are mentioned below:

Firstly, Carole's study was on the use of taboo and euphemism by the English and Russian speakers, while the current study focuses only on the

English language students. Secondly, Carole's study focuses on two topics sex and death, whereas the current study has no specific topic. Thirdly, Carole's study is an experimental study while the current study is a qualitative study.

2- The second study title is (**A Sociolinguistic View of Taboo Language and Euphemisms in the Algerian Society: Attitudes and Beliefs in Tlemcen Speech Community**) *by* Mrs. Nadia GHOUNANE. This is dissertation submitted in candidacy for the Degree of Master in Language Contact and Sociolinguistic Variation, Democratic and Popular Republic of Algeria, Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Tlemcen University, Faculty of Letters and Foreign Languages, Department of Foreign Languages, English Section, Academic Year 2012-2013. This 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, she has relied on many research instruments in order to test the validity of her 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. Nadia's study differs from the current study in many points as follows:-

First, Nadia's study focuses on the sociolinguistic view on taboo and euphemism, whereas the current study focuses on the use of taboo and euphemism. Second, Nadia's chose's the death and sex topics, while the current study has no specific topic. Third, Nadia chose her participants randomly from Tlemcen society, while the researcher of the current study chose students of English language as her participants.

# **CHAPTER THREE**

## **METHODOLOGY**

## **Chapter Three**

### **Methodology**

#### **3-1 Method:-**

The researcher used the descriptive analytical method to conduct her study.

#### **3-2 Subjects:-**

The sample of this study is the four\_ year students of Sudan University of Science and Technology, Department of English Language. They are 40 students.

#### **3-3 Research Tools:-**

The researcher used a questionnaire as her tool to collect data.

#### **3-4 Validity and Reliability:-**

To test the validity of the questionnaire, the researcher consulted experts who added, omitted, and corrected some of the items of the questionnaire and the researcher took their advice in consideration. For reliability the researcher used the alpha equation to measure it. It is (0.3425).

#### **3-5 Procedures:-**

The researcher distributed copies of questionnaire to the participants in hand to look over the statements. The researcher told the participants that information is only for the present study, and then she collected copies and analyzed them.

**CHAPTER FOUR**

**DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND  
DISCUSSIONS**



## Chapter Four

### Data Analysis, Results and Discussions

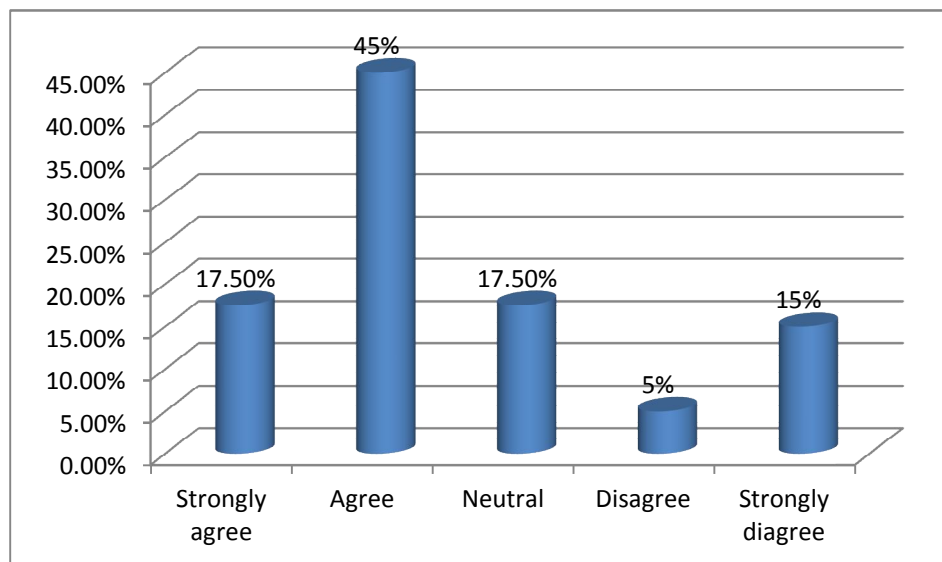
#### 4-1 Analysis and Discussions:-

##### Statement (1) the intended use of euphemism

**Table 4-1** the intended use of euphemism

answer	Frequency	Percentages
Strongly agree	7	17.5%
Agree	18	45%
Neutral	7	17.5%
Disagree	2	5%
Strongly disagree	6	15%
Total	40	100%

**Figure 4-1** The intended use of euphemism



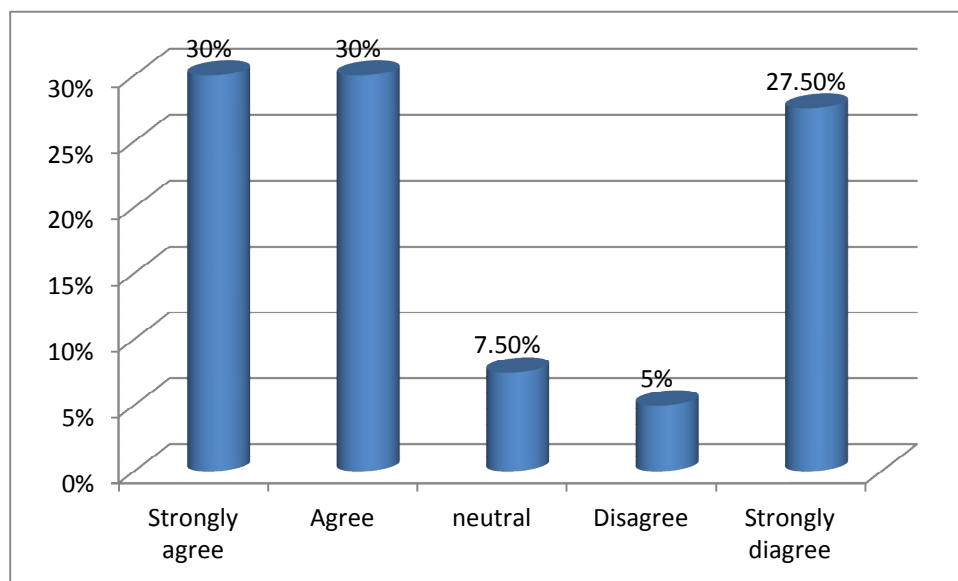
The figure and the table above show that (18) out of (40) of the sample respond with agree. This result assures that subjects don't use euphemism too much and this result asserts the first hypothesis of this study.

**Statement (2) Euphemism is only uses in formal conversations.**

**Table 4-2 Using Euphemism**

answer	Frequency	Percentages
Strongly agree	12	30%
Agree	12	30%
Neutral	3	7.5%
Disagree	2	5%
Strongly disagree	11	27.5%
Total	40	100%

**Figure 4-2 Using Euphemism**



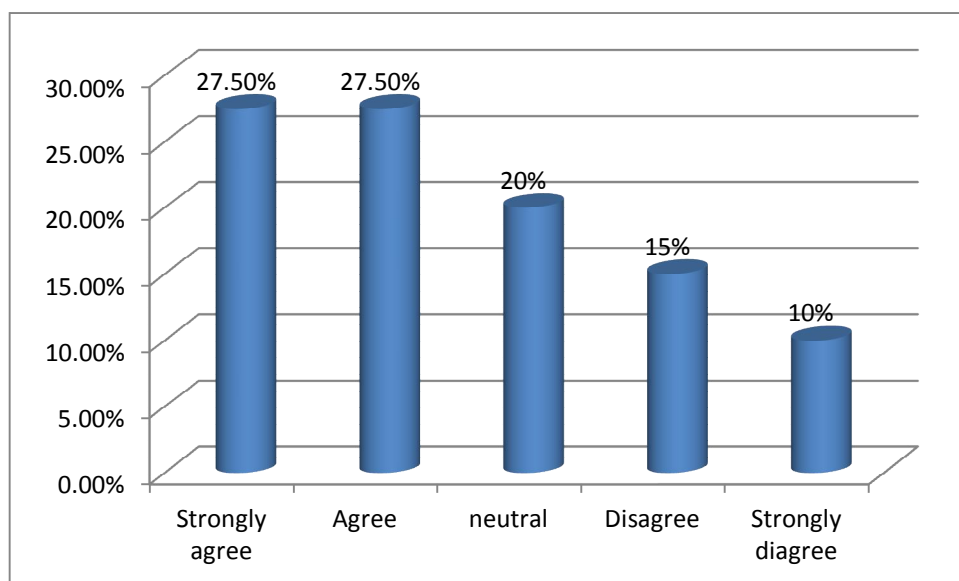
Looking at the results presented in the figure and table above (24) participants agree and strongly agree that euphemism use only in formal conversations while (11) students are disagree; this means most of them intended to use euphemism in formal conversations.

### Statement (3) Euphemism must use in the daily lives.

Table 4-3 Using euphemism in daily lives

Answer	Frequency	Percentages
Strongly agree	11	27.5%
Agree	11	27.5%
Neutral	8	20%
Disagree	6	15%
Strongly disagree	4	10%
Total	40	100%

Figure 4-3 Using euphemism in daily lives.



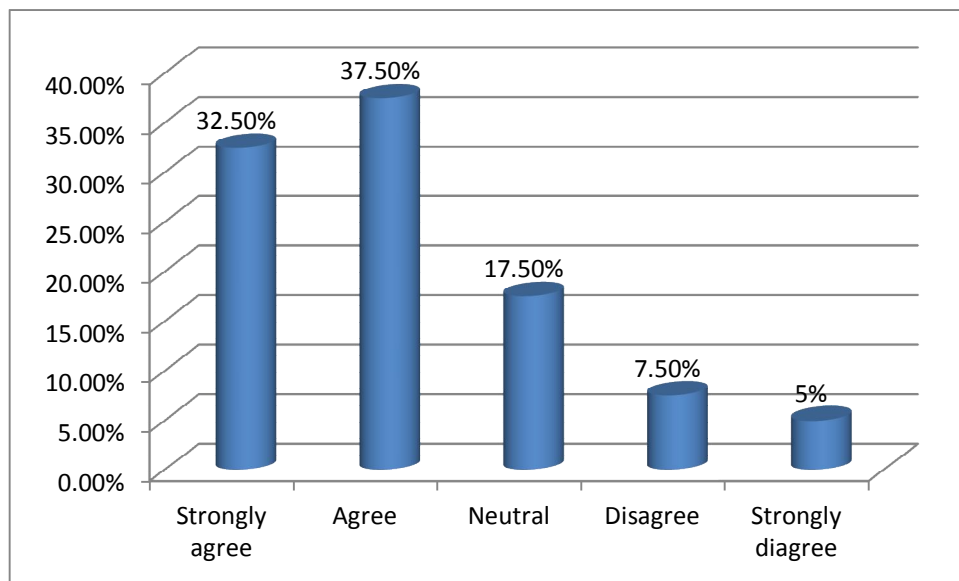
The figure and table above show that (22) students are strongly agree and agree that euphemism is used in daily lives; this is evident by the answer of (35%) students that they must use euphemism in their daily conversations.

**Statement (4) Taboo is uses in informal conversation, in groups and with close friends.**

Table 4-4 Using Taboo

Answer	Frequency	Percentages
Strongly agree	13	32.5%
Agree	15	37.5%
Neutral	7	17.5%
Disagree	3	7.5%
Strongly disagree	2	5%
Total	40	100%

Figure 4-4 Using Taboo



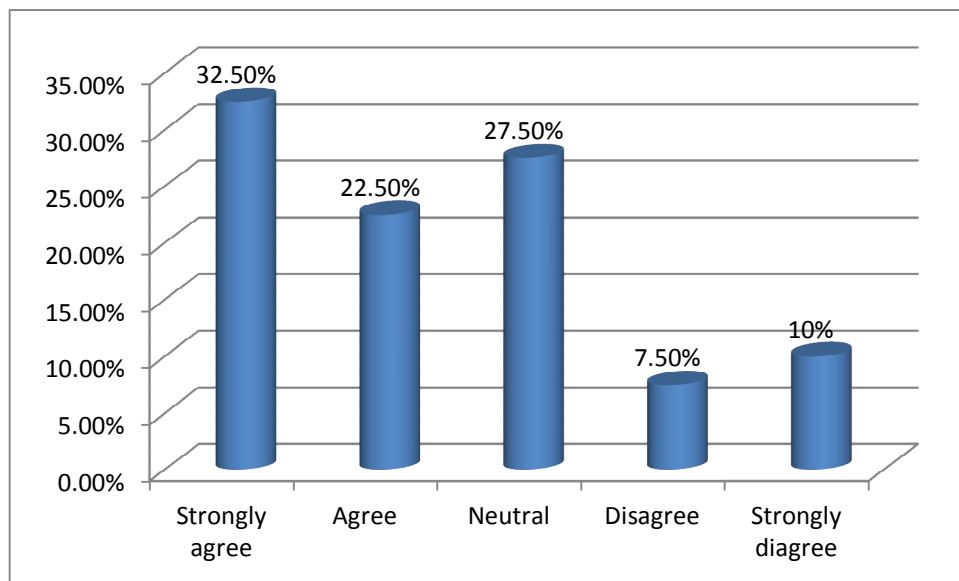
As it is shown in the table and the figure above (15) out of (40) respond with agree that they use taboo in groups, with close friends and in informal conversations; this indicates that most of them avoid using taboo in formal conversations.

**Statement (5) A lot of students use taboo words when they have fights, when they are anger, drank, and ignorant.**

**Table 4-5 Reasons of Using Taboo**

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	13	32.5%
Agree	9	22.5%
Neutral	11	27.5%
Disagree	3	7.5%
Strongly disagree	4	10%
Total	40	100%

**Figure 4-5 Reasons of Using Taboo**



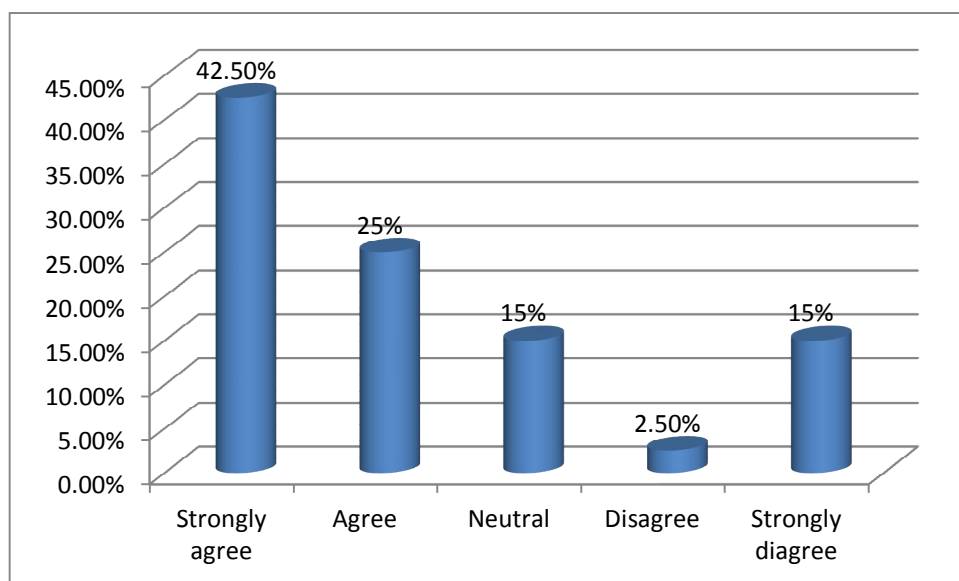
As it was shown above in the table and figure (32.5%) from the sample strongly agree that they use taboo when they have fights; this means fights are one reason of using taboo.

**Statement (6) Attention must be to the use of euphemism.**

**Table 4-6 Attention to Euphemism**

Answer	Frequency	Percentages
Strongly agree	17	42.5%
Agree	10	25%
Neutral	6	15%
Disagree	1	2.5%
Strongly disagree	6	15%
Total	40	100%

**Figure 4-6 Attention to Euphemism**



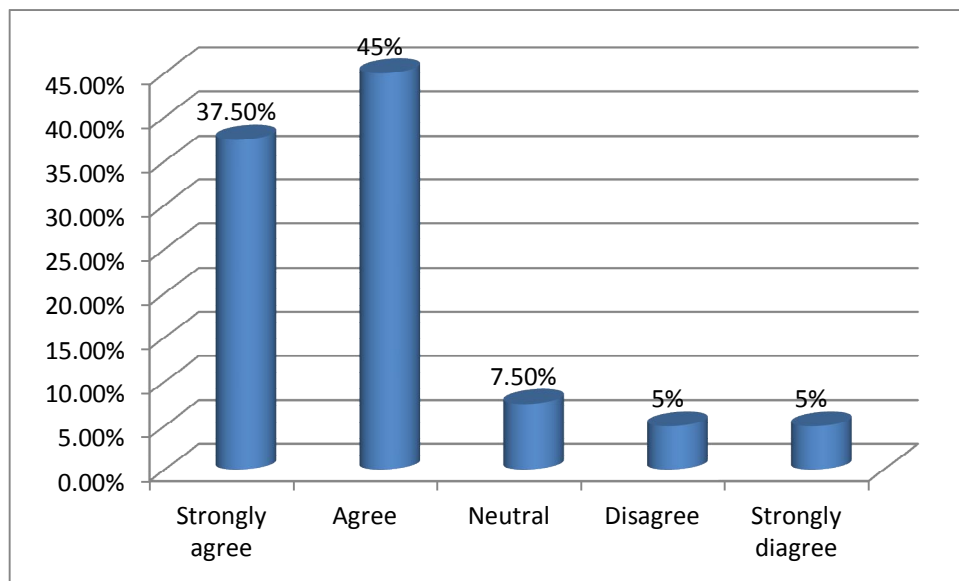
The results above show that (42.5%) of the respondents strongly agree that they must pay more attention to the use of euphemism; this means that euphemism is not used too much.

**Statement (7) Using euphemism protects feelings and changes unpleasant meanings.**

**Table 4-7 Usefulness of Euphemism**

Answer	Frequency	Percentages
Strongly agree	15	37.5%
Agree	18	45%
Neutral	3	7.5%
Disagree	2	5%
Strongly disagree	2	5%
Total	40	100%

**Figure 4-7 Usefulness of Euphemism**



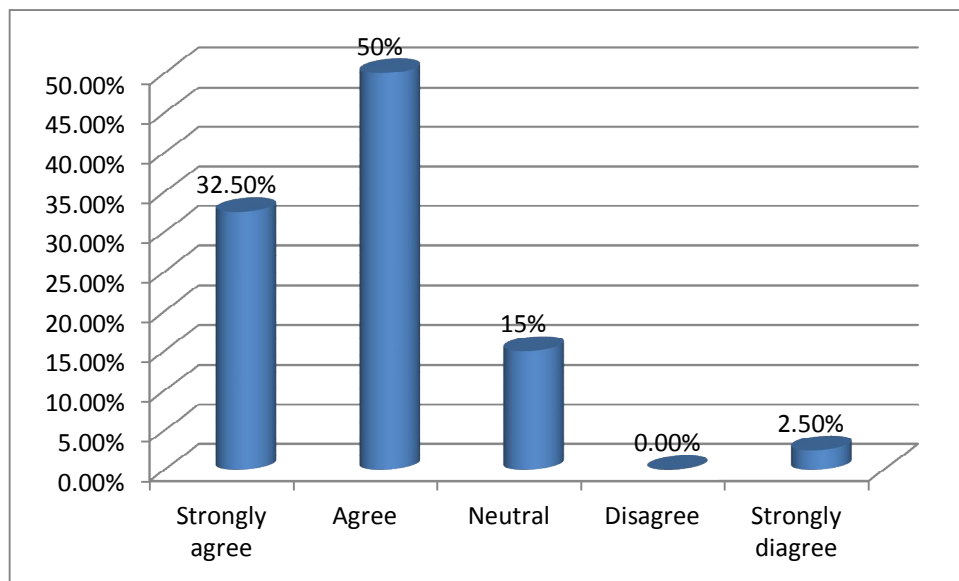
The figure and table above show that (45%) of the sample agree with the usefulness of euphemism in protecting feelings and changing unpleasant meanings; this indicates that people like avoiding insults and unpleasant meanings.

**Statement (8) Euphemism is very advantageous to show respect and concern.**

**Table 4-8 Advantages of Euphemism**

Answer	Frequency	Percentages
Strongly agree	13	32.5%
Agree	20	50%
Neutral	6	15%
Disagree	0	0.0%
Strongly disagree	1	2.5%
Total	40	100%

**Figure 4-8 Advantages of Euphemism**



As it is noted, the results above show (50%) of the participants agree with the advantages of euphemism; this means that euphemism has advantages such as protecting feelings and showing concern.

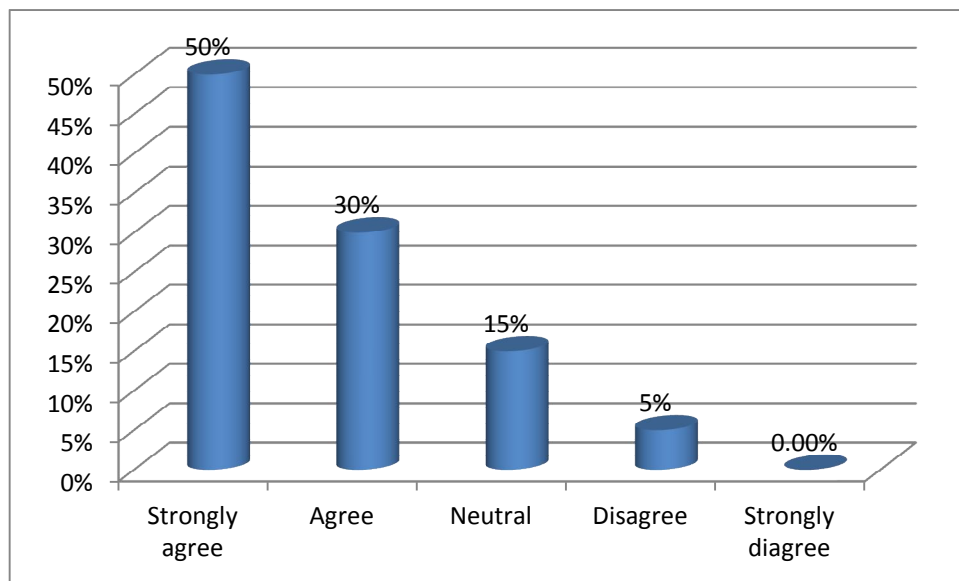


**Statement (9) Euphemism is required to be used while speaking about sensitive topics such as death and relations.**

Table4-9 Requirement of Euphemism

Answer	Frequency	Percentages
Strongly agree	20	50%
Agree	12	30%
Neutral	6	15%
Disagree	2	5%
Strongly disagree	0	0.0%
Total	40	100%

Figure 4-9 Requirement of Euphemism



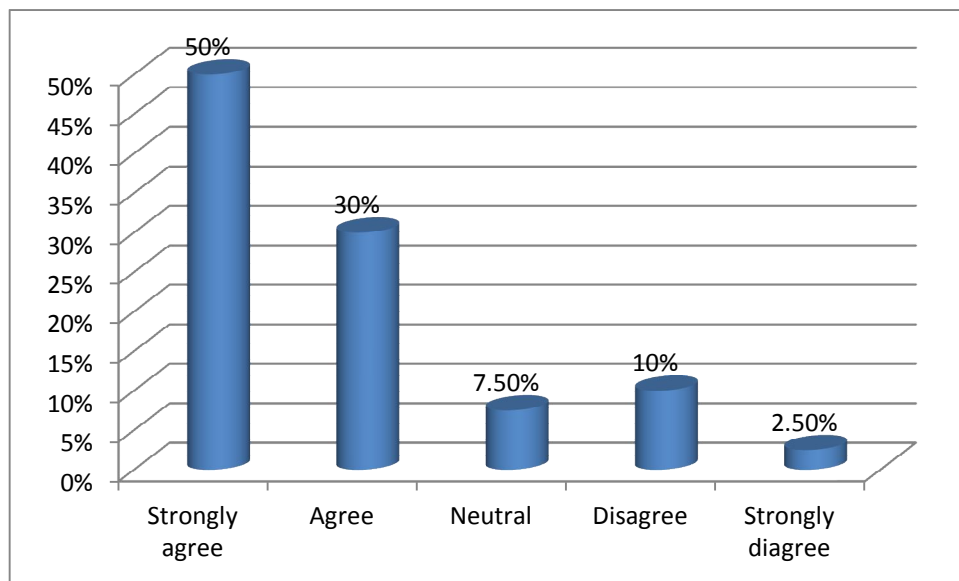
The diagram and table tend to shed light on the strongly agree of (50%) of the population on the requirement of using euphemism; this means that euphemism is required to be used ,while speaking about sensitive topics.

**Statement (10) People avoid taboo for reasons such as religion, politeness...etc.**

Table 4-10 Requirement of Euphemism

Answer	Frequency	Percentages
Strongly agree	20	50%
Agree	12	30%
Neutral	3	7.5%
Disagree	4	10%
Strongly disagree	1	2.5%
Total	40	100%

Figure 4-10 Requirement of Euphemism



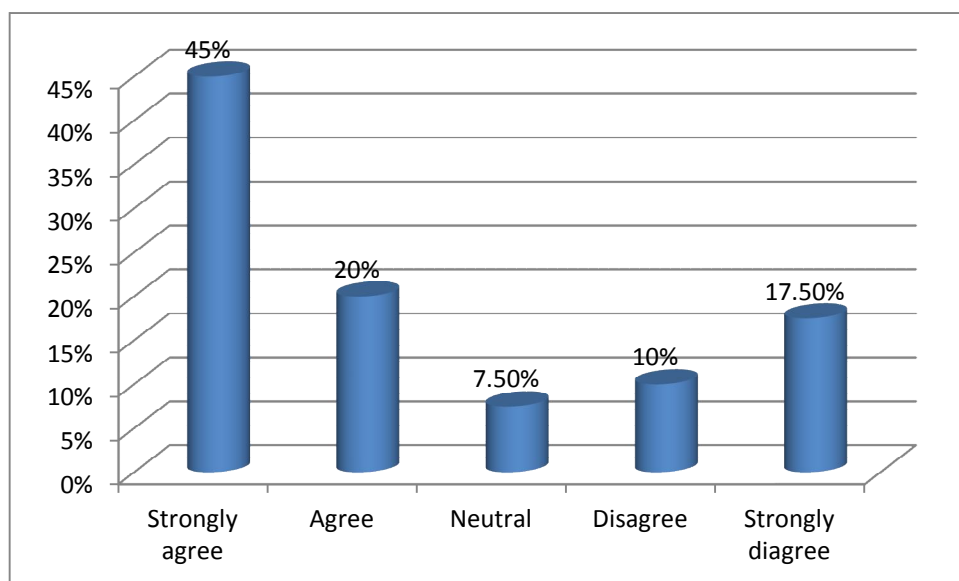
Based on the result in the figure and table above (50) of the population strongly agree that religious, politeness, etc. are reasons which restrict them of using taboo; this indicates that taboo is impolite and religiously is unacceptable.

**Statement (11) Taboo must be forbidden in public places.**

**Table4-11 Forbidden of Taboo**

Answer	Frequency	Percentages
Strongly agree	18	45%
Agree	8	20%
Neutral	3	7.5%
Disagree	4	10%
Strongly disagree	7	17.5%
Total	40	100%

**Figure 4-11 Forbidden of Taboo**



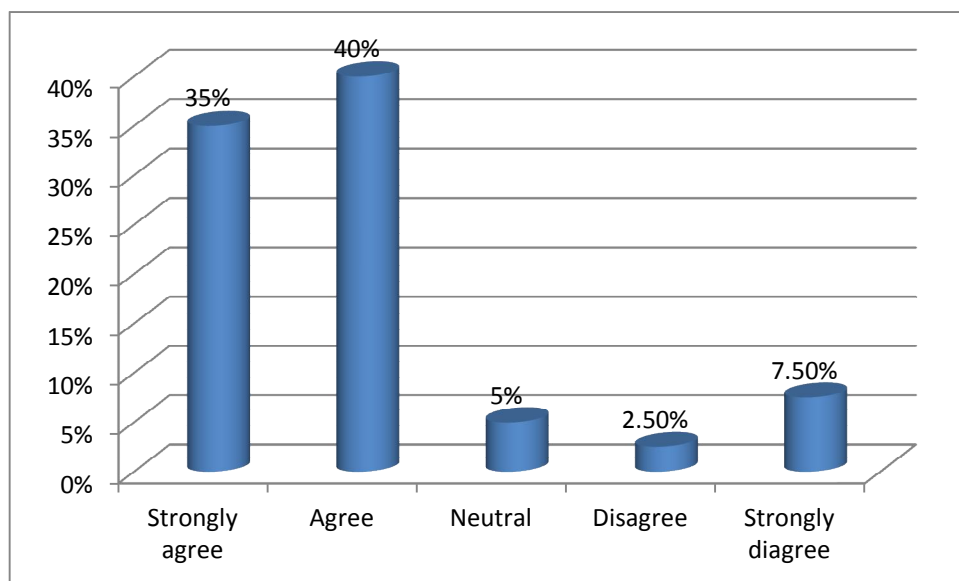
The table and figure above show that (18) out of (40) students strongly agree of making taboo forbidden in public places; this means that taboo is unacceptable to be used in public places.

**Statement (12) Taboo must be avoided for their unpleasant meanings.**

**Table4-12 Avoiding Taboo**

Answer	Frequency	Percentages
Strongly agree	14	35%
Agree	16	40%
Neutral	2	5%
Disagree	1	2.5%
Strongly disagree	7	7.5%
Total	40	100%

**Figure 4-12 Avoiding Taboo**



The table and figure above show that (40%) respondents agree of avoiding taboo for their unpleasant meaning; this indicates that people dislike unpleasant and bad meaning.

### 4-3 Testing Hypotheses

After the analysis and discussion, the researcher has reached to the following results:-

1-Subjects don't use euphemism very much; this result asserted the first hypothesis.

2-Participants use taboo in groups in informal conversations, and with close friends; this result assures the second hypothesis.

3-The sample agree to the use of euphemism in protecting feelings and shows respect and concern.

4- Religion, politeness, etc .are reasons which restrict people from using taboo; this result agree with the fourth hypothesis.

5-Results strongly assure the four study hypothesis.

6-Some population doesn't agree that they only use euphemism in informal conversations.

7-Fights, anger, and ignorant are reasons of making people use taboo.

8-Participants agree of making taboo forbidden in public places.

9-Subjects agree to the unpleasant meaning of taboo.

10-Respondents agree to the possibility of using euphemism in their daily lives.

**CHAPTER FIVE**

**CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND  
SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES**

## **Chapter Five**

### **Conclusions, Recommendations, and Suggestions for Further Studies**

#### **5-1 Introduction:-**

This is the final chapter of the study. It consists of the Conclusions, Recommendations, and Suggestions for further studies.

#### **5-2 Conclusions:-**

After the analysis of data the researcher reach to this conclusion:

- 1-The sample do not use euphemism in vast.
- 2-Euphemism is protecting feelings and shows respect and concern.
- 3-Participants agree of making taboo forbidden in public places.

#### **5-3 Recommendations:-**

Depending on the results of the study, the recommendations are as follows:-

- 1-People should pay more attention to euphemism for wider usage.
- 2- People should pay more attention to avoid using taboo.
- 3-Taboo should be prohibition in public places.
- 4-people should encourage using euphemism in their daily lives.

#### **5-4 Suggestions for Further Studies:-**

- 1- Researchers can do experimental studies on taboo and euphemism for deeper examination to these areas.

2- Other groups can be examined rather than students could be teachers, doctors, engineers, and workers, etc.



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- 2- [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taboo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taboo), 27-6-2015.

# **APPENDIX**

**Name:** .....**Age:**.....**Gender:** .....

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
1-people do not intend to use euphemism in vast.					
2-People use euphemism only in formal conversations					
3-People must use euphemism in their daily lives.					
4-People use taboo in informal conversation, in groups and with close friends.					
5-A lot of people use taboo words when they have					

<p> fights. </p>					
<p> 6-People must pay more attention to the use of euphemism. </p>					
<p> 7-Using euphemism protects feelings and changes unpleasant meanings. </p>					
<p> 8-Euphemism is very advantageous to show respect and concern. </p>					
<p> 9-Euphemism is required to be used while speaking about sensitive topics such as death and relations. </p>					
<p> 10-People avoid taboo for reasons such as </p>					

religion, politeness...etc.					
11-Taboo must be forbidden in public places.					
12-People must avoid taboo for their unpleasant meanings.					