Appropriate and inappropriate linguistic Behavior and Gender Differences in Arabic	Dr. Mohmoud Ali Kanakri Mu'ta University, Faculty of Arts

ABSTRACT

This paper handles a topic of paramount importance in the filed of sociolinguistics and discourse analysis. It tackles and investigates the notion of appropriateness and inappropriateness forms of language against a number a number of factors, such as contexts, purpose, and speakers. Sex, etc...... . The significance of this topic arises from being a primary aspect of our daily discourse and in revealing some social dimensions associated with it, such as, social and gender roles, social identity and the level of education. furthermore, many modern contributions to language education and awareness depend heavily on the sociolinguistic variation that centered on the notion of appropriateness .

For this purpose five presuppositions (see P.6) raised by Fairclough (1997) have been scrutinized based on collected data from jordanian

speech community. It has been found that these presuppositions have to be amended before they can be applied to Arabic and its speakers .

SYMBOLS USED IN THE PAPER

CONSONANTA

? as in /?ana/	'I'
ð as in /ha ða/	'this'
θ as in / θal āθ	' three'
h as in /hamala/	`(he) carried
C as in /ᶜamila/	`(he)worked
Ṭ as in /ṭālib/	`studebt'

I. Introduction

Cross-sex studies in western societies have received remarkable attention compared to other societies, say Arab societies. In the latter societies undertaking studies that pertain to women, in particular, is subject to severe criticism and encounters stumbling blocks that may sap researches of their incentives to undertake such topics. It is probably justifiable that only a few studies have so far appeared on language and gender relevant to the Arabic society .

One topic that has been ignored by many researchers of Arabic culture is appropriate and inappropriate linguistic behavior of men and woman. Talking is a social process that depends on its success on something that will fit with what people like or expect from speakers. In an attempt to define appropriateness, Fairclough (1997:233-234) states that it is an ideological category, which is linked to a particular partisan position within a politics of language : Thus an appropriate form of language is a form that is used in clearly distinguished contexts according to clear-cut conventions, which is valid for all members of a speech community . This means that particular linguistic forms are perceived as appropriate when they accord with the beliefs, values and view of the world of that culture .

Hymes (1974:75) coined the terms communicative competence' to denote our ability to use language appropriately in different settings. Not only was Hymes interested in the production of sentences, but he was also interested in characterizing the more social-bound aspects like when it is appropriate to talk and when it is appropriate to talk and when to remain silent in different communities, rules for turn-taking amount of simultaneous talk and so on' .

Coupland and jaworski (1997:124) state that appropriateness is a sociolinguistic notion that refers to whether and to what extent something is affective and appropriate to some context. Thus it is apparent that where linguistic forms are appropriate to context, the type of speech that we usually elicit is natural speech. Wolfson states that if speech is considered appropriate to a situation, then it is natural in that context .The context may be formal, informal . However if the norms speaking are uncertain or violated, What one really gets is unnatural speech.[1]

Trudgill (1997:253) states those different situations; different topics and different genres require different linguistic styles and registers. this is so if one aims at appropriate linguistic forms .

The notion of appropriateness should not be confused with correctness; the latter notion is more or less limited to pedagogical situations where students are directed by their instructors to avoid certain unacceptable sound, words and structures.[2]

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[1]See Wolfson (١٩٩٦:١٢٤)

[2]For more see Mackinnon (١٩٩٦:٢٤٣).

The above studies clearly draw a close relationship between appropriateness and contexts, beliefs and values of society. However there is some disagreement as to what is appropriate for different contexts, just as there is disagreement about what is correct.[1] Mackinnon states that what is appropriate is associated with time and place, in the sense that it changes over time. As an example he draws a comparison between the Dictionary of Modern English usage (Fowler 1926) and the Oxford Guide to English (weiner 1983) . Whereas Fowler's appeal to usage is thoroughly elitist, the Oxford Guide is basically democratic; (Mackinnon 1996:356). That is fowler always speaks firmly in his own voice of what is appropriate or inappropriate while the oxford Guide to English always makes recommendations by referencet what people may favor or disfavor of linguistic forms. Fairclough (1997:245) maintains that it is not possible to differentiate appropriate and inappropriate behavior in a clear-cut way in many instances . For example, in cross-gender communication men and women are often not sure how to talk to each other (p.243) Most women in organization have experienced

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[1]Ibid, P. ٣٥٦

sociolinguistic dilemmas and indeterminacy as to what is appropriate or inappropriate (P.244) .

Ivanič (1998: 45) criticized Fairclough by saying that if we take Fairclough's words , then it is impossible He suggests that current interest ; Values, beliefs and practices of particular social groups shape certain discourse characteristics. He also states that conventional genre depends on, first, the social situation in which language is used, and, second, the social purpose of which language is being used in this situation.

In a study on sex differences between men and women, Freed (1996: 67) believes that communicative style are not speech habits or style appropriately associated with one sex or gender over another, but are but are customs related to action, activities and behaviors differently encouraged for men and women ; To Freed gender is not significant variable to be used to interpret men and women linguistic differences . In a study that handles appropriateness of certain linguistic varieties to different contexts and situations, Fairclough (1995:243) spelt out the following presuppositions as a response to and investigation of the Cox Report (1991).

1-There is one-to-one correspondence, or at least, a determonate and well-defined many-to-one, fit between varieties of language and the context/purpose.

2-This determinate fit characterizes all parts of the sociolinguistic order.

3-This fit hold for all members of a speech community.

4-The distinction between appropriate and inappropriate language is clear-cut.

5-Variations of language, contexts, and purposes, are well defined and clearly demarcated entities.

Fairclough states that none of these assumptions can be easily scrutinized . However, he endeavored, to teat them by resort to two sociolinguisitc situations, doctor-patient and cross-gender communication. Fairclough (1995:245) concludes that, first; there is no definite fit between standard English and particular context and purpose. Secondly the frontier Standard English and other varieties has been less stable and more contested in education than in other fields, say law or science. Thirdly there are

different conceptions in the speech community of where standard and other varieties are appropriate. Fourthly there is no clear-cut distinction between appropriate and inappropriate uses of standard and other varieties .

Similar to Levinson, Fairclough raised his suspicion regarding the appropriate language model on similar ground. First, it projects an idealized image of the sociolinguistic order, which is hopelessly at odds with the indeterminacy, unevenness, and diversity. Secondly, it is not only ideological, in that it projects this idealized image of the sociolinguistic order, but it also projects a hegemonic objective an ideal.

The present study endeavors to investigate the five presumptions mentioned above in light of the Arabic culture. The Arabic culture is well defined. It draws its values, beliefs and perspectives from Islam. Such features are crystallized and reflected through Arabic. One obvious example is cross-sex language. There are linguistic forms that are perceived as appropriate . to men while others are appropriate to women. Violation of such a sociolinguistic criterion renders a linguistic form inappropriate. In the collected data for the present study at Mu'ta

University it has been found that expressions, such as /ʔamut taxx/ 'to be shot deat' and /yilⁱan hayati/'cursd my life' are associated with the speech of male speakers, rather than that of female speakers.

The Arabic culture draws clear lines of demarcation between men and woman and assigns distinct social roles to each group. For instance men can be judges, preachers drivers and managers while woman can be nurses schoolteachers in women's school baby-sitters and housekeepers. Women are also expected to be more polite than men are. They are not expected to yell or use taboo words especially in public. Women can cry, weep or sob, but it is disgraceful for men to do. Such assigned social roles make the social structure of the Arab world segregative in essence except for certain types of work where men and woman meet and work together. Eckert (1996:214) states that gender roles and ideologies create different ways for men and women to experience life culture and society; Furthermore, these social roles and certain distinct discourse features foreground different aspects of identity for both men and women. In the Arab world a speaker's identity, and of course his gender, is of great concern and for this reason both men and

woman are so meticulous to maintain their identity and not to lose it. Trabelsi (1991) reports a variation in the use of the diphthongs/aw/and aj/(traditionally associated with women) and monothongs such as /u:/ and /I:/ (associated with men and the level of education) in the speech of young Tunisian women. He refers to this situation as s' phonological identity crisis. Young Tunisian women shift their use of these sounds according to the age of the interlocutor. If the addressee is an old woman, both/aw and / aj/ are used. Otherwise, /u:/ and /I:/ are expected. I do not see this situation as a crisis of identity. It seems that at the time of the study the Tunisian society was undergoing a social change that brought along with it a change of attitude regarding the use of the female diphthongs. The use of /u:/ and /I:/ rather than /aw/and /aj/ have become markers of the youth and the level of education. The relationship between social role, identity and discourse features is a fundamental aspect of how people work, how power is distributed and exercised and how societies progress of change . Following Halliday (1989) Ivanic (1997:40) states that a person's social identity corresponds to three macro-functions of language. First, person's set of values and beliefs about reality. these affect the

ideational meaning he conveys through language. Secondly, a person's sense of his relative status in relation to others with whom he is communicating. This affects the interpersonal meaning expressed by language. Thirdly,a person's orientation to language use . This will affect the way he constructs his message .

A Person's social identity is not reflected by the type of clothes he wears and the particular way of life he leads but also by the type of language he uses. This type of language identifies him as different from others in the choice of vocabulary and structures. This can take effect in a number of dimensions such as age geography gender education and class. Thus a certain mode of language is recognized to be appropriate if it matches what people hole of our social identity and us. Any violation by men in the direction of women's language for instance draws smiles and laughter or even rebuke from the members of the speech community. Such type of response by the members of the speech community can be viewed as indirect social punishment or reprimand of such behavior.

The purpose of the present study is to investigate whether there are linguistic forms that

are appropriate to either men or women, whether such linguistic forms are limited to either group, or the sources of such dichotomy. The study emphasizes the degree of appropriateness in Arabic of a particular use, rather than a dogmatic distinction of right and wrong. For this purposes a number of relevant presuppositions have been investigated and analyzed based on real recorded and observed data.

II. PARTICIPANTS AND EMPLOYED METHODS

For the purpose of this study eighty students at two different locations were interviewed and part of their speech was taped, where possible. The total time- length of recording reaches twenty-seven hours. The informants were students at the University of Jordan and Mu'ta University. An equal number of students were interviewed from trhe different locations. Their speech was taped if conversation took place inside the university buildings. However, notes of their speech were taken when interaction took place outside the university halls. Fifteen students were employed to record and take notes of these students' speech. They were asked to run the interview and not to interrupt interaction among participants. While analyzing the collected data a

common point in taped interaction situation was observed; the informants were more comfortable when they were observed outside the university halls and when the tape-recorder was absent.

III. DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

Within this concise description of the Arabic culture and in light of the collected data, we can now scrutinize the validity of those presuppositions posed by Fairclough (1995:243).

The first presuppositions states that there is one-to-one, or at least a determinate and well-defined many-to-one, fit between varieties of a language and the context/purpose. In the collected data at Mu'ta University it has been found that context/purpose is closely linked with the form language that is used that as the discussion of the following examples will show below .

After careful consideration and analysis of the taped conversation and the observed situation, I found that the recorded and observed data collected at Mu'ta University fit with the context and purpose for which it was produced. For instance, in a mixed group a female student gave the following example while talking about freedom at home .

/māma ma btismahali? Ataxxar fi-I-jām^ca /

`my mother does not allow me to stay late at the university` .

This example fits well with the whole discussion that was about freedom given to females university student.

The next example includes a female student who happened to be a daughter of a professor. During the lecture, she raised her hand to ask her father a question :

/ duktour! La-adri biddabt ma ma^cna haõa I-mafhūm/

`Docto, I am not sure what this notion exactly means`

The situation here is not a father-daughter relationship but shows a relationship between a professor and his student. This female student cannot call the professor father though he really is. The situation does not allow the use of this word. The best word that fits this formal context and purpose is doctor or professor. This illustrates clearly that the social role of participants overrides

their personal relationships in determining the appropriate linguistic forms.

It was also found that location and place of living acts as a significant factor in assigning appropriateness or inappropriateness to a certain statement. For instance, in the following statements women at the University of Jordan were heard producing the following sentences:

/yin^{c}an ^{c}umri / `curse my life`

/ya- habībi /   `oph, my love`

/ya-^{c}umri/   `you are my life` (to male students)

/toz/   `nonsense`

/wala   `hey, you`

/?ana earmanih ^{c}ala sigara / `I like very much to smoke a cigarette`

Such utterances are perceived as inappropriate in the second location of this Study-Muta University, while in the first location (the university of Jordan) people tend to accept them more. In the place a woman producing such a difference is that, contrary to Muta, which is considered a traditional place (the capital) comprises an open society

where me and women an mix more freely and have more chances to do so. Thus women in Amman are perceived as more daring and shrewd.

Forty men and women informants from both locations were asked to classify whether the following recorded statements are either appropriate and provided or inappropriate and provide an explanation for their classification:

CONTEXT 1: a man is talking to a woman

/min wein? ištareiti blūztik?/

`from where have you bought your blouse?`

CONTEXT 2: a man is talking to a woman

/sinsāli? Ahsan min sinsālik/

`my necklace is better than yours`

CONTEXT 3: a woman is talking to a man

/? Ana ?Amut ṭaxx/

`I die Shot`

CONTEXT 4: a woman is talking to a man

/? eiš ya- rxīṣ ?/

`what is up, cheap (person)?`

CONTEXT 5: a woman is talking to a man

/keif ša°ri l- youm?/

`how is my hair today?`

CONTEXT 6 : a man is talking a woman

/lieš ma b-tišrabi? ahwih?/

`why don't you drink coffee?`

CONTEXT7 : a woman is talking to her boyfriend

/hassa badrubak mūs/

`bewara, I may stab you with a knife` (kidding)

Seventy percent (14 woman) of the Amman women believe that the above statements are appropriate and their acceptability depends on the social relationship between speakers. In these sentences the relationship seems to be very close to trigger the use of these sentences. Twenty five percent (5 women) of these women classify these sentences as inappropriate. They state the

producers of such statements must be boy friends and girl friends, a situation they reject of opposes our religion and traditions . Only five percent classify this statements in a different mode. They state that all the examples are inappropriate expect for example (6). They believes that these statements are personal, and is not acceptable for woman to ask or say such statements to a strange man . Our traditions do not allow us to say these sentences to men . sentience (6), on the other hand, is a neutral statements, not a personal statement. Thus it is considered appropriate.

Men, on the other hand, gave a different response. Sixty percent (12 men) believe that all the above statements are appropriate, while forty percent (8 men) believe that these statements are inappropriate as they represent an illegal relationship (boy friend and girl friend relationship). Their judgements of whether an utterance is appropriate or inappropriate are drawn on our Jordanian customs and traditions in which such relations is not generally approved. Such male informants believe that such linguistic behavior is rather bizarre, especially in the case of participating women expected to be polite and consequently the statements used are viewed as inappropriate.

The above examples illustrate that a from of language is associated with both context/purpose and the above examples illustrate that a form of language is associated with both context purpose and Gender of speakers . Thus presupposition (5) seems to be valid. Such relationship is similar to what Halliday (1989:5) and others call the cotext of situation. This sort of relationship partially expresses the meaning of a linguistic choice and form Bakhtin. (1981:273-274) states that each word tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life. Furthermore Halliday (1988,1989,1993) adds that grammatical structures also carry the taste of the contexts in which are used.

Despite the above evidence and contrary to presupposition (1), it is hard to argue that the relationship between a linguistic from and context/purpose is completely appropriate one-to-one or many –to-one since there are other factors such as gender and age, that have to be considered here. This means that given a certain context a speakers may use a linguistic from that may match his purpose and context but it is still considered inappropriate, since it opposes the social to his gender. In the collected data from the University of Jordan, my informants criticized or looked

down upon a male speakers saying to a female speakers that/sinsāli ?ahla min sinsalik/ my necklace is better than your's or/kan Bāba ? ā ᶜid lamma hakat ma ᶜI ṣāhibit/my father was there my girl-friend talked to me./ ya-rey tyitla ᶜli blūzehmitil blūztik / I wish a blouse like yours Such utterances do not accord with the gender roles of Jordanain male speakers, since they are limited to female speakers.

Furthermore, one has to recall that despite the diglossic situation in the Arab World, the interrelaionship that holds between a longuistic from, context / purpose and one's gender is well-established. Both Arab and non-Arab researchers, such as Abd-el Jawad(1981), Bakir (1986), Ferguson(1959, 1970) and Schmidt (1974) have attested this . The frontier between standard from and non-standard forms, what is appropriate to a context and purpose and what is inappropriate is stable and well defined. In the collected data in both Amman and Mu'ta it was noticed that, first, vernacular froms increase when the interview occurs outside the university doors. This in more true in the case of men . Secondly , the use of the vernacular decreases when The subject of discussion is education. Thirdly, the use of the vernacular increases when men to each other, but

decreases when a man talks to a woman . For instance, in one situation, the frequency of occurrence of [č], a comman rural sound, was found to be high while a rural student was taking to another from a similar rural area. The frequency of this sound in fifteen minutes as (14) times. However, when one of these students started talking to a female student, the frequency decreased to only (3) times. This covers presupposition (2) above. Thus, The linguistic from that can be neatly matched with context/purpose and one's gender can be characterized as appropriate. This line of argument does not apply to men and woman only, but to all other social groups. It also goes without saying that there is nothing inherent in any verbal communicative task or style that is itself inherently male or female. It is indeed society that sets distinct systematic verbal and non- verbal patterns for each gender to follow .

The above discussion will automatically erode Fairclough's (1992 : 42) statement that indeterminacy, heterogeneity and struggle characterize the matching of language to context .

In the Arabic culture the distinction between appropriate and inappropriate language is obvious

and clearly demarcated . As indicated before, the linguistic situation in Arabic is diglossic where both Standard Arabic (H) and Colloquial Arabic (L) are assigned distinct functions and uses. Thus what is appropriate in H is inappropriate in L and vice versa. For instance, it is inappropriate for a parent to warn his son of a coming car by saying :

/ Ya bunayya ? iyyaka w-al-sayyerah / `My son, beware of the car!'

It is hardly appropriate for his matter to hear a sportman on a playground using Standerd Arabic with one another , unless they are serving some ironical purpose is doing so . Thus inappropriate language could be a source of humor or may give the impression that the speakers is pompous, inept or rude.

A further example from the compiled data involves a male speakers asking a female speakers in a mixed group :

/min wayn ? ištareiti blūztik / `from where you – bought your – blouse ?'

From where did you buy your blouse ?

This question is considered inapporiate for a male speaker to raise since it is very much related to the common type of questions that woman usually raise or ask

I would like to argue that appropriate can turn into naturalized attitudes as soon as it becomes common in language use , and thus it could shape practices directly and could generate theories and doctrines of sociolinguistic practice . As Fairclough (1997) and Hymes (1972) state , appropriate language belongs to the domain of language attitude : it is a sort of judgement made by members of speech community about language use

Thus we can say with some confidence (as in presupposition 4) and based on substantial evidence that the line of demarcation between appropriate and inappropriate forms is clear- cut , though some speakers may consciously violate it for certain purposes . Levinson (1983 : 24) states that speakers might violate the convention in order to communicate particular meanings . Le page (1978) gave a different reason for such violation ; he stated that certain speakers my use inappropriate linguistic forms for the sake of

resembling as close as possible the group with home they like to identify .

IV. CONCLUSION

The present paper has attempted to handle a topic that is significant in discourse . It has tried to draw a clear line of demarcation between appropriate and inappropriate language in light of collected data from Arabic . The central part of the paper is an investigation of five presumption have to be revised based on the following conclusion. Based on the current linguistic social situation in the Arab World, and Jordan in particular , the study concludes that , first, appropriateness on its own cannot offer a reasonable explanation for why it is this linguistic form rather than another that is categorized as appropriate . There are other variables that are involved in this matter and have to be taken into consideration, such as, gender, age, social class, education, topic and adaptation to other's speech with home one likes to associate or to gain approval (Accommodation theory, Giles and Powesland , 1975) . Thus the date from Jordanian Arabic suggests that Freed's (1996: 68) statement that gender is not a

significant variable and that men's and women style are merely symbolically associated with activities in which men and women participate cannot be held and maintained . Furthermore, Languages vary with respect to what is appropriate on inappropriate . Secondly, the form of language a speakers selects does not fulfill his purpose only , but it also conveys his identity or image of himself . Thus language functions as an index of one's social class, states, region of origin , gender and age .Jordanian speakers are so careful not to be confused to convey his/her image, identity and gender. Thirdly, an appropriate or inappropriate language is clear to all members of the Jordan society, expect probably for those illiterate speakers who have no access to Standard Arabic. Most members of the Jordanian sociolinguistic order can isolate those linguistic forms that are perceived to be appropriate for and in accord with the beliefs, views and cultural norms of the Jordanian society. In all the contexts in which my informants speech was taped or observed, it was clear to them that the form of language they chose is a well- defined form of Arabic used properly in those contexts. In most of these contexts the form of Arabic was the vernacular . But there were also cases where

informants were observed to shift into Standard Arabic where the situation or purpose required it. In other words, the entities of language or dialect, context, purpose and type of speaker were all clear and well- defined to them probably unconsciously . Thus we conclude that presupposition five is valid Fourthly, appropriate and inappropriate language ha to be interpreted in a larger framework that includes, in addition to language, culture, religion, and social values . thus this topic is complex in nature due to the interrelationship of various variables and dimensions.

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