

**A SOCIO-LINGUISTIC STUDY OF OATHS PRODUCED BY  
INTERLOCUTERS IN JORDAN**

**OATH EXPRESSIONS AS INDICATORS OF CULTURAL  
VARIATION**

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جامعة فيلادلفيا

نموذج تفويض

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## **DEDICATION**

**For my late parents**

**For my wife whose patience, understanding, support, and most of all love helped me a lot in the completion of this work.**

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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## List of Phonetic Symbols

Arabic Consonants	Phonetic Symbol IPA	Arabic word	Meaning in English	Transliteration
ب	b	بارد	cold	<i>baarid</i>
ت	t	متر	meter	<i>mitr</i>
ث	th	ثلج	snow	<i>thalj</i>
ج	j	جديد	new	<i>jadiid</i>
ح	H	حليب	milk	<i>Haliib</i>
خ	x	خروف	sheep	<i>xaruuf</i>
د	d	دار	house	<i>daar</i>
ذ	ð	ذباب	fly	<i>ðubaab</i>
ر	r	رئيس	president	<i>ra'iis</i>
ز	z	زيتون	olive	<i>zaytuun</i>
س	s	سعيد	happy	<i>saçiid</i>
ش	sh	شعر	hair	<i>shaçr</i>
ص	S	صغير	small	<i>Saghiir</i>
ض	D	ضعيف	weak	<i>Daçiif</i>
ط	T	تفاح	apple	<i>tuffaaH</i>
ظ	DH	ظفر	nail	<i>DHufr</i>
ع	ç	عسل	honey	<i>çasal</i>
غ	gh	غراب	raven	<i>ghuraab</i>
ف	f	فقير	poor	<i>faqir</i>
ق	q	قلب	heart	<i>qalb</i>
ك	k	كبير	big	<i>kabiir</i>
ق (في العامية العربية)	g	قال (في العامية العربية)	said	<i>gaal</i>
ل	l	لحم	meat	<i>laHm</i>
م	m	محطة	station	<i>maHaTTa</i>
ن	n	نمر	tiger	<i>nimr</i>
ه	h	هدف	goal	<i>hadaf</i>
ء	'	مؤمن	believer	<i>mu'min</i>

The following phonetic symbols are used in this study

Arabic Equivalent	Phonetic Symbol IPA	Arabic word	Meaning in English	Transliteration
الفتحة	a	مكتب	office	<i>maktab</i>
ا	aa	باب	door	<i>baab</i>
الضمة	u	سؤال	question	<i>su'aal</i>
و	uu	مقبول	acceptable	<i>maqbuul</i>
الكسرة	i	ملعقة	spoon	<i>milçaqa</i>
ي	ii	بعيد	distant	<i>baçiid</i>
الألف المائلة	ei	بيت (في العامية العربية)	house	<i>beit</i>
الياء الساكنة	y	عين	eye	<i>çayn</i>
الواو الساكنة	w	موز	banana	<i>mawz</i>
الواو العامية	oa	لون (في العامية العربية)	colour	<i>loan</i>

## Phonetic Description

Arabic Consonants	Phonetic Symbol IPA	Description
ب	b	Voiced, bilabial, stop
ت	t	Voiceless, dento-alveolar, stop
ث	th	Voiceless, inter-dental, fricative
ج	j	Voiced, post-alveolar, affricate
ح	H	Voiceless, pharyngeal, fricative
خ	x	Voiceless, uvular, fricative
د	d	Voiced, dento-alveolar, stop
ذ	ð	Voiced, alveolar, fricative
ر	r	Voiced, alveo-palatal, trill
ز	z	Voiced, alveolar, fricative
س	s	Voiceless, alveolar, fricative
ش	sh	Voiceless, alveo-palatal, fricative
ص	S	Voiceless, alveolar, emphatic fricative
ض	D	Voiced, alveolar, emphatic stop
ط	T	Voiceless, dento-alveolar, emphatic stop
ظ	DH	Voiced, alveolar, emphatic fricative
ع	ç	Voiced, pharyngeal, fricative
غ	gh	Voiced, uvular, fricative
ف	f	Voiceless, labio-dental, fricative
ق	q	Voiceless, velar, emphatic, stop
ك	k	Voiceless, velar, stop
ق (في العامية العربية)	g	Voiced, uvular, stop
ل	l	Voiced, alveolar, lateral
م	m	Voiced, bilabial, nasal
ن	n	Voiced, alveolar, nasal
ه	h	Voiceless, glottal, fricative
ء	'	Voiced, glottal, stop

## Arabic Vowels

Arabic Equivalent	Phonetic Symbol IPA	Description
الفتحة	a	Front, nearly half-open, low, unrounded, short
ا	aa	Front, nearly half-open, low, unrounded, long
الضمة	u	Back, nearly close, high, rounded, short
و	uu	Voiced, labio-velar, long
الكسرة	i	Front, open, high, unrounded, short
ي	ii	Voiced, palatal, long

## **ABSTRACT**

### **A Socio-linguistic Study of oaths produced by interlocutors in Jordan**

#### **Oath Expressions as Indicators of Cultural Variation**

**By**

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**Supervisor**

**Professor Mohammad Awwad**

This sociolinguistic study aims at investigating the oath expressions used by Jordanians. It examines the linguistic functions the oaths represent besides the objects sworn by in addition to the phonological, lexical and syntactic features they stand for. The sample of the study consisted of (600) oath expressions collected from different places in North Jordan. Different variables have been taken into consideration such as gender, geographical location, age and degree of formality. The study revealed that oath making achieved four linguistic functions among which emphasis represented more than (50%) whereas humiliation represented lesser than (8%). The study unveils also that females were more polite than males concerning the language functions. Thirteen percent of the total number of the collected data, (78) oaths, represent social and sexual taboos. This component showed that females were more polite compared with males. In addition, among the objects sworn by, the oath words which stand for religion constituted more than (50%) whereas swearing by animals formed the smallest number of the oaths. Moreover, people who occupy prominent jobs did not use nonsensical expressions and used the least number of oaths. On the contrary, school children, university students and laborers, who hit the highest point of using oaths, recorded the uppermost percentage of using taboo expressions. As a final point, the study gave an idea about the degree of formality where (92%) of the oath expressions took place in informal situations.

## Definition of Terms

**Affirmative oath:** an oath taken when we call God to witness the assertion of a past or present fact.

**Civil oath:** an oath taken by a person when called upon as a witness in a court of law.

**Common oath:** an oaths which appears in everyday discourse.

**Conversational oath:** oaths which are used casually in everyday conversations.

**False oath:** the false use of the name of God when swearing.

**Foreswear:** to swear falsely, to undo one's swearing.

**Hippocratic oath:** an oath embodying a code of medical ethics usually taken by those about to begin medical practice.

**Minced oath:** standard and colloquial Arabic oath expressions used side by side in everyday interactions.

**Non verbal oath making:** a non verbal warning or a threat expressed through referring to or holding one of the body parts like the moustache or the beard.

**Oath:** the invoking of God or some sacred or revered person or thing as witness of the truth of a statement.

**Oath making:** the spontaneous and casual use of oath expressions in everyday communication.

**Oath of allegiance:** An oath taken by aliens when they become naturalized citizens.

**Oath taking:** the use of a specific oath formula to affirm that the testimony a person gives is true. In a court of law, for example, every witness must swear or affirm that the testimony he or she gives is the truth. A public official has to take an oath when he/she assumes office.

**Perjury:** the act or crime of knowingly making a false statement while under oath.

**Plurality:** to worship a deity in addition to Allah according to the tenets of Islam.

**Pre-Islamic Arabs:** Arabs who witnessed the period before Islam in which they worshiped idols, the sun, the moon and stars.

**Private oath:** an oath used between private individuals.

**Profane swearing:** a careless and blasphemous use of the name of the divine Being, or anything divine or sacred, by way of appeal or as a profane exclamation.

**Promissory oath:** an oath taken when we call God to witness a declaration which we bind ourselves to execute.

**Public oath:** an oath which is demanded by public authorities.

**Repudiation oath:** in Arab culture, an oath made to divorce one's wife, as a condition to fulfill a promise, a threat or an invitation.

**Swearing:** the casual improper use of the name of God to express anger, displeasure and surprise.

**Swear words:** to use sacred words irreverently, to use obscene language.

**Vain oath:** an attempt to do something that is impossible to accomplish

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Theoretical Background

Oath making as a sociolinguistic phenomenon is deeply rooted in people's social structure all the way through history. From the very beginning of existence, people used to prove the credibility of their promises and actions by means of resorting to different linguistic formulas.

The religious dimension, according to Yetkiner (2004:147) and the Encyclopedia Britannica (2005), can be considered the origin of this social phenomenon. Teachings in the Holy Books of the three heavenly religions forbade swearing by any object except God, an issue which indicates that people through history used to violate God's commandments. This negative social behaviour, from the religious perspective, was expressed by ancient people such as the Germanic tribes, the Romans and the Greeks who used to breach the heavenly teachings and swore by different things they value such as swords and weapons of war.

The Holy Koran swarms with a good number of oath citations and there are various examples on the use of oath making. God swears by Himself and by other different objects such as the fig, the angles, the mountain and the dawn. Al- Gammaz (2001:101-141). In the Gospel and the Torah there are also lots of examples of oaths made by God as in the following examples:

وَالْتِّينِ وَالزَّيْتُونِ

*wa altiini wa alzaytuuni*

By the fig, and the olive.

والفجر وليال عشر.

*Walfajri walayaalin çashr*

By the dawn and seven nights.

Swearing and promises do not only appear in conversational oaths, but also appear in literary works such as poetry and prose. Arabic poetry is strongly flavoured with oaths made by poets past and present. Such oaths are abundant in the poetry of Bashir Bin Burd, Al-Nabigha Al-Thubayni, Ahmad Shawqi and Nizar Qabbani.

This verse of poetry from Ahmad Shawqi's poem (By Allah, night breeze of the Nile):

بِالله يَا نَسَمَاتِ النِّيلِ فِي السَّحَرِ *bil-lahi yaa nasamaati 'alniili fil saHari*

بِالله يَا نَسَمَاتِ النِّيلِ فِي السَّحَرِ هل عِنْدَكُمْ عَنْ الْأَحْبَابِ مِنْ خَبَرٍ؟

*bil-lahi yaa nasamaati 'alniili fil saHari hal çindakunna çanil aHbaabi min xabar*

By Allah, night breeze of the Nile, do you have any news about the beloved?

Arabic songs are a good repertoire of the wide spread of this phenomenon. Um Kulthoom swore by the Lord of Ka'ba in one of her songs. Fareed Al-Atrash swore by the eyes of his beloved and so did Abdelhaleem Hafez who vows by the sky and the soil of Egypt not to let the sun of the Arabs fall down as long as he is alive:

أحلف بسماها وبترابها، أحلف بدروبها وأبوابها، أحلف بالقمح وبالمصنع، أحلف بالمبنى وبالمدفع،  
بولادي بأيامي الجاية ما تغيب الشمس العربية طول ما أنا عايش فوق الدنيا.

*'aHlif bisamaahaa ubitrabhaa, 'aHlif bidruubhaa uabwabhaa, 'aHlif bilgamH  
ubilmaSnaç, 'aHlif bilmabna ubilmadfaç, biwlaadi b'ayyami iljayya maa itghiib ilshams  
ilçarabiyaa Tuul maa 'naa çaayesh foag ildunyaa*

I swear by Egypt's sky and soil, I swear by its roads and gates, I swear by the grain and the factory, I swear by the building and the canon, by my children and the coming days.

Folk literature, a genre that usually celebrates men's affection for the love of women also testifies to the common use of oaths.

National Anthems in the Arab World make use of oaths as well. Oaths in the national anthem of Algeria invoke wrath and revenge (قسما بالنازلات الماحقات والدماء *qasaman bilnaazilaati almaaHiqaat ,wal dimaa'i alzaakiyaat alTaahiraat*) "By the annihilating catastrophes, the destructive and the sweet-smelliness blood..." The national anthem of the UAE also includes a vision for construction and labour (أقسمنا أن نبني نعمل) *'aqsamnaa 'an nabnii naçmal* "We swore to construct and build" An oath is taken in the national anthem of Qatar (قسما بمن رفع السماء قسما بمن

(نشر الضياء قطر ستبقى حرة) "*qasaman biman rafaça alsama' qasaman biman nashara alDiyaa' qatar satabqaa Hur-raa*" "by God who built the sky and spread light Qatar will remain liberated".

Another aspect of this phenomenon is non verbal oath making. People in the Arab World avoid sometimes threatening others overtly by abstaining from uttering oaths. A person may refer to one of his body organs as a sign of threat. To catch the moustache or the beard is an adequate message to the person involved in a quarrel, a dispute or heated discussion that his/her behaviour will not be tolerated and accordingly the punishment he/she deserves is only delayed for a period of time.

People in the Arab World contrast in their use of oath expressions. The researcher's observations of people's talk in Saudi Arabia showed that people refrain from swearing by any object other than Allah. The reason behind this abstention, according to the persons were interviewed, is the religious restriction. People in the Arab World in general and Jordanians in particular "have the tendency to swear by anything, for anything and on any occasion" Abd el-Jawad (2000:237). These oaths are produced either intentionally or unintentionally. All classes of society swear and make oaths. It is natural to hear a five- year old child using the repudiation oath or an unmarried young man swearing by the honour of his daughters. Men and women, young and old, educated and uneducated, poor and rich make oaths to prove the credibility of their words and actions. But their oaths on many occasions do not reflect this dimension. Oaths have become the flavour that spices most of Jordanian's speech acts. In view of this, oath making can reflect people's cultural variation.

## 1.2. Definition of Oath

*Easton's Bible Dictionary* (1897) defines oath as "a sacred or solemn voluntary promise usually involving the penalty of divine retribution for intentional falsity and often used in legal procedures".

To forswear, as defined by (Vine1940:126), is to swear falsely, to undo one's swearing.

*The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* (1948:848) also defines an oath as "Words used in making a solemn promise to do something or solemn



declaration that something is true as a witness". According to this dictionary an oath refers also to swear words and can be used to express "anger and displeasure". An oath also includes the casual improper use of the name of God to express anger and surprise.

An oath according to Davis (1954:570) is an appeal to God in attestation of the truth of a statement. Davis pays no attention to the negative aspect that oaths may include.

An oath as defined in the "New Webster's Dictionary and Thesaurus of the English Language" (1992:691) is "The invoking of God or some sacred or revered person or thing as witness of the truth of a statement".

To swear, according to the same dictionary (1992:998), is "to make a solemn oath, to use sacred words irreverently, to use obscene language, to affirm by solemn oath, to declare forcefully to be true". So the use of swearing in English extends to cover different areas of behaviour to include the innocent and taboo dimensions.

In *The Free On-line Dictionary of Computing* (1993-2007), Denis Howe defines an oath as "a solemn appeal to God, permitted on fitting occasions in various forms and taken in different ways".

According to Thayer (1996:444), to swear is "to affirm, promise, and threaten, with an oath".

*Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary* (1998) defines the word oath as "a commitment to tell the truth". An oath can also include "profane or obscene expression usually of surprise or anger". This dictionary embraces the religious domain an oath might hold as defined in the previous sources. "A solemn promise, usually invoking a divine witness, regarding a person's future acts or behavior".

In the *Online Etymology Dictionary* (2001), Douglas Harper defines oath as "a solemn attestation of the truth of one's words or the sincerity of one's intentions". This

dictionary refers only to the constructive element of oaths and makes no mention of the gloomy component that oaths might suggest.

According to *Encarta Reference Library* (2004) an oath is “a sworn statement, affirmation, or pledge, usually based upon religious principles and often used in legal matters”. It does not mention any of the dark features that oaths sometimes manifest.

According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (2005) an oath is “a sacred or solemn voluntary promise usually involving the penalty of divine retribution for intentional falsity and often used in legal procedures.” The religious dimension cannot always be considered as the principal rationale behind making an oath. The Germanic tribes, Greeks and Romans swore by different things other than God such as their swords and weapons.

*The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (2006) defines an oath as “a solemn affirmation or declaration, made with a reverent appeal to God for the truth of what is affirmed.” An oath is also “A solemn affirmation, connected with a sacred object, or one regarded as sacred, as the temple, the altar, the Bible, the Koran, etc”. Furthermore, an oath, according to this source is “a careless and blasphemous use of the name of the divine Being, or anything divine or sacred, by way of appeal or as a profane exclamation or ejaculation; an expression of profane swearing”.

*The Google Online Dictionary* (2008) cites different definitions of the noun **oath**. An oath is “a formal promise, especially a promise to be loyal to a person or country.” An oath also according to this dictionary is “an offensive or emphatic word or expression which you use when you are angry or shocked”.

*Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia* (2008), defines oath as “either a promise or a statement of fact calling upon someone that the oath maker considers sacred, usually a god, as a witness to the binding nature of the promise or the truth of the statement of fact. To swear is to take an oath”.

*Merriam Webster Online* (2009) defines an oath as “a solemn usually formal calling upon God or a god to witness to the truth of what one says or to witness that one

sincerely intends to do what one says. It defines the verb swear as “to utter or take solemnly an oath or to assert as true or promise.”

*The Catholic Encyclopedia* (2009) defines oath as “an invocation to God to witness the truth of a statement”.

*Easton’s Bible Dictionary* (2009) defines oath as “a solemn appeal to God on fitting occasions in various forms and taken in different ways”. The dictionary mentions two types of oaths: common oaths which appear in everyday discourse and civil oaths when a person is called upon as a witness in court.

Arabic dictionaries give concise definitions for this concept. According to (Ma’loof 1908: 149) *aqsama*, and *Halafa* mean to swear by God. He adds that *istaqsama* means to have the permission to make or take an oath and *Hallafa*, *aHlafa*, *istaHlafa* mean to get somebody to swear by God. (al-Fayroozabady: 132) also defines **oath** as “to swear by God”. (Ibn Manthoor: 53) likewise states that **oath** is swearing. Other synonyms of the word “oath”, according to Ibn Manthoor, are *qasam* and *yameen*.

What the above definitions of an oath share is the importance of religion and tradition in making it including the profane use of Allah when expressing anger and surprise. These definitions also show making oaths has become an accepted practice in most social secular and legal domains.

### 1.3. Research Significance

Oath making is a phenomenon which is common practice in most of the daily conversations in the Arab communities in general and in the Jordanian community in particular. Oaths play an important role in the social life of the Arabs as they help them achieve different functions. People in the Arab world seem to make oaths for any thing and by any thing on any occasion. "Oaths are used as cohesive devices to establish some sort of relationship between two or more utterances" Abd el-Jawad (2000:237). This phenomenon has culture-specific characteristics as people have certain beliefs, traditions and values that differ from one country to another and from one society to another. As this subject has not received enough attention from a sociolinguistic perspective, this study aims at examining the language of oath making in Jordan taking

into consideration variables such as age, gender, education, social status, formality, informality and place of residence as well as the linguistic features, i.e. syntactical, semantic, and phonological of oaths.

#### **1.4. Statement of the Problem**

Jordanians usually spice their speech acts by adding linguistic formulas as a habit which characterizes most of their verbal interactions. The use of oaths is justified in some circumstances, but its frequent use seems to be meaningless, insignificant and of no value in many other cases. The researcher's observations pertaining to oath making in the Jordanian community inspired him to examine this phenomenon from a sociolinguistic perspective. Previous studies did not cover all the issues related to oath making. Distribution of oaths according to variables of gender, age, education, geographical location, formal and informal discourse was not investigated. Bedouin oaths, which serve as an important cultural index of a considerable part of the Jordanian society, did not receive the attention they deserve. Studies did not only ignore the oaths made by Bedouins, but also those produced by rogue people, which are distinctive in terms of their form.

#### **1.5. Purpose and Questions of the Study**

This study seeks to shed light on oath making in Jordan from a sociolinguistic perspective taking into consideration language function, variation, gender, age, educational background, formal and informal discourse, social status and geographical location. Moreover, the research will emphasize the linguistic features that characterize oath expressions. More specifically, it aims to find answers to the following questions:

- Do the type and frequency of oath making differ significantly in terms of gender, age and social status?
- Do both genders use the same language functions?
- What are the differences between urban, rural, and Bedouin oaths?
- Do female oaths show more politeness than male oaths?
- Do the types of oaths and the frequency of making them differ significantly in terms of formal and informal discourse?
- What are the linguistic features that characterize oath expressions?

## 1.6. Research Methodology

This study is meant as a contribution to descriptive studies in Arabic sociolinguistics. It is a qualitative study of oath making in real life situations as expressed in interviews and recordings of subjects. Systematic observation was used as another source of collecting data by means of a questionnaire by people within their own local circle of families and friends. All oaths were recorded faithfully, transliterated and given both in Arabic and English. The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) was used in the transcription of Arabic speech. Moreover, oaths were categorized in terms of language function, gender, age, language variation (standard and non-standard, i.e. vernacular forms) and geographic location (urban, rural and Bedouin oaths). Furthermore, the oaths were analyzed in terms of their linguistic features: phonological, syntactical and semantic. Proper statistical methods and instruments were used for quantifying the data in the form of tables and charts.

The major limitation of this study is that its scope comprised a small part of Jordan, specifically North Jordan and the Jordan valley. The sample of the study consisted of (600) oath expressions collected from different places in North Jordan represented three geographical locations:

1. Rural: (North Shouneh, Khazma from the Jordan Valley.  
Al-Taibeh and Al-haddadeh from Irbid and Jerash).
2. Urban: (Irbid and Jerash ).
3. Bedouin: (Al-shallaleh and Jerash camp ).

## 1.7. Historical Development of Oaths

Swearing has a very long history according to the Encyclopedia Britannica (2005) and has been in existence for thousands of years. Swearing is more or less being used by nearly all people of the world. In Judaism, Christianity, and Islam oaths have been widely used. In Judaism, two kinds of oaths are forbidden: a vain oath, in which one attempts to do something that is impossible to accomplish, and a false oath, in which one falsely uses the name of God when swearing.

Practices of ancient people contradict the idea which claims that oath making was always considered as a religious act. According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (2005) Germanic tribes, Greeks and Romans swore by their swords or other weapons. They used to invoke a symbol of the power of a war god as a proof of the credibility of their words.

The swearing of an oath before divine symbols possibly dates back to the Sumerian civilization (4th–3rd millennia BC) of the ancient Middle East and to ancient Egypt, where one often swore by his life, or “ankh”, which means “an utterance of life.” In the Hittite Empire of the 14th–13th centuries BC, various oath gods (e.g., Indra and Mithra) were appealed to in agreements between states. Mithra, an Iranian god who became the main deity of a Hellenistic mystery (Salvatory) religion, was viewed as the god of the contract (i.e., the guardian of oaths and truth).

In Eastern religions (e.g., Hinduism), an Indian, for example, might swear an oath while holding water from the holy river Ganges, which is a positive symbol of the divine.

Sharp (1979) quotes verses from the Old Testament in which swearing is prohibited and considered as an evil act. “*But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne*”. (Matthew 5:34) “*But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath; but your yes is to be yes, and your no, no, so that you may not fall under judgment*”. (James 5:12) Sharp asserts that swearing has become a phenomenon instilled in the construction of all communities all over the world. “All around us many of our friends, including tragically, even little children, engage in the most frivolous and profane swearing”. Sharp calls on people to eradicate the weeds of profanity (frivolous swearing), conversational oaths and lies.

The Hippocratic Oath is perhaps the most widely known of Greek medical texts. A new physician was requested to swear upon a number of healing gods that he would adopt a number of professional ethical standards. Little is known about who wrote it or first used it, but it appears to be more strongly influenced by followers of Pythagoras than Hippocrates and is often estimated to have been written in the 4th century B.C. Over the centuries, it has been rewritten often in order to suit the values of different cultures influenced by Greek medicine. Contrary to popular belief, the Hippocratic Oath is not required by most modern medical schools. The following is the Hippocratic oath as translated by the National Library of Medicine, 2002:

"I swear by Apollo the physician, and Asclepius, and Hygieia and Panacea and all the gods and goddesses as my witnesses, that, according to my ability and judgment, I will keep this Oath and this contract. To hold him who taught me this art equally dear to me as my parents, to be a partner in life with him, and to fulfill his needs when required; to look upon his offspring as equals to my own siblings, and to teach them this art, if they shall wish to learn it, without fee or contract; and that by the set rules, lectures, and every other mode of instruction, I will impart a knowledge of the art to my own sons, and those of my teachers, and to students bound by this contract and having sworn this Oath to the law of medicine, but to no others. Whatever I see or hear in the lives of my patients, whether in connection with my professional practice or not, which ought not to be spoken of outside, I will keep secret, as considering all such things to be private. So long as I maintain this Oath faithfully and without corruption, may it be granted to me to partake of life fully and the practice of my art, gaining the respect of all men for all time. However, should I transgress this Oath and violate it, may the opposite be my fate".

Secret societies and organizations usually join themselves by an oath of secrecy. These societies resort to symbols, passwords and handgrips as a means of recognition among their members. Secret societies are usually formed for protective, political, philanthropic or economic purposes. An example of these societies are the Assassins, who were organized in Persia in the 12th century and the Masonic Lodge. James (2008:1-2)

Ibn Hisham (1990:124) mentions some forms of oaths used by people more than two thousand years ago. Two soothsayers *shaq* and *sateeH* who were also famous in oneirocriticism during the reign of the Arab King of Yemen, (ربيعة بن نصر) *rabeeḡatu ibnu nasr*, produced different oaths to assert their interpretation of the king's dream. They swore by the place, the people and the snake. When *sateeH* interpreted the dream, the king asked him if he was sure or not. But his reply was, 'I swear by the snakes between these two volcanic and stony areas that Ethiopians will occupy the land that lies between Abyan and Jorash. To assert his interpretation *sateeH* swore by the sun rise and the sun set.

The other soothsayer swore the following oath, 'I swear by the people between these two volcanic and stony areas that the Negroes will occupy your land between Abyan and Najran' and asserted his interpretation by saying, 'By the God of heaven and Earth'.

During the pre-Islamic era, Arabs used to swear by their lives, honour, swords, and ancestors. Prophet Mohammad forbade swearing by any object except God. Mohammad himself swore only by Allah. When his uncle Abu Talib asked him to quit his mission to avoid the anger of the Arab tribes, he swore the famous oath:

(والله يا عماه لو وضعوا الشمس في يميني والقمر في يساري على أن أترك هذا الأمر ما تركته حتى يظهره الله أو أهلك دونه)

*wallahi yaa ḡammaah law wadaḡuu alshamsa fii yamiinii walqamara fii yasaarii ḡalaa 'an atruka haaḡaa 'al'amra maa tarkatahu Hattaa yuDHhirahu allahu 'aw 'ahlaka duunah*

"Oh my uncle. I swear by Allah, if they (The profane Arabs) put the sun in my right hand and the moon in the other in order to abandon this matter (Mission of Islam), I would never do so until it overwhelms or I perish". (Ibn Hisham 1990:101)

Sarwar (1961:19) in his book *Muhammad the Holy Prophet*, states facts about the religion of the pre-Islamic Arabs: Arabs worshipped idols and deities and showed great respect for them and made Ka'ba the house of the deities of all the Arabs. There were as many deities as there were people and each tribe had its own idol whose shape was pictured according to the imagination of the worshippers. Moreover, the Arabs worshipped the stars, the sun and the moon as they believed that the heavenly bodies



had influence over human affairs. Idol worship and plurality of deities is called (shirk) as mentioned in the Koran and is an unforgivable sin.

In an internet article, Hahn (2008:1-2) criticizes the profane use of the name of God by members of the Masonic Lodge. These members, in fact, according to the writer, do not understand the real meaning included in the oath. Before entering the lodge as an Entered Apprentice (First degree) and before advancing to each of the following degrees, the candidate must agree to take certain oaths binding him to secrecy and loyalty. The oath taken by the candidate is:

"I, (name of the candidate), of my own free will and accord, in the presence of Almighty God, and this Worshipful Lodge erected to him and dedicated to the Holy Saint John, do hereby and hereon (Master presses his gavel on candidate's knuckles) most solemnly and sincerely promise and swear that I will always hail, forever conceal, never reveal any of the secret arts, parts or points of the hidden mysteries of Masonry..".

The candidate for Fellow Craft (Second Degree) makes a vow similar to that taken by the Entered Apprentice and includes the following:

"I furthermore promise and swear that I will not cheat, wrong or defraud a Lodge of Fellow Crafts, or a brother of this degree, knowingly or wittingly. All this I most solemnly and sincerely promise and swear".

Some members of the lodge do not take these oaths seriously and consequently they engage themselves in false, profane and frivolous swearing.

Although oaths have their foundation in religious customs, they have become routine practice in most of the modern non- religious countries. A person serving as a witness in court proceedings often has to swear by making the following oath: "I do solemnly swear that the testimony I am about to give will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. So help me God." The same procedure is followed in All Arab countries where the witness swears the same oath as a proof of his truthfulness. In this legal tradition the witness is required to put the palm of his hand on the holy book while swearing the oath.

According to the *Encarta Reference Library* (2004), "the taking of an oath generally implies some legal or moral sanction for failing to carry out one's sworn pledge. A witness may be charged with the crime of perjury for lying while under oath."

In a court of law, for example, every witness must swear or affirm that the testimony he or she gives is the truth. Public officials, such as the president or vice president of the country have to take an oath when he/she assumes office. Aliens take an oath of allegiance when they become naturalized citizens. Oaths are administered to those entering such institutions as the military, secret societies, religious orders, and marriage. The following is the swearing-in of the new U.S. president, Gerald Ford:

"I, Gerald R. Ford, do solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the office of the President of the United States and will to the best of my ability preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States".

Making oaths is not exclusive to verbal interactions but extends to include painting. The Oath of the Horatii (1784-1785, Louvre, Paris) by French artist Jacques-Louis David was one of a number of paintings commissioned by Louis XVI that were intended to be used to improve public morality through art. The scene shows the three Horatii brothers vowing to sacrifice their lives for their country and is clearly influenced by classical Roman art. *Encarta Reference Library/ The Oath of the Horatii (2004)*

An internet article entitled "Clinton perjury" accessed on September, 3<sup>rd</sup> 2009 states that the U.S. president Bill Clinton was accused of perjury in light of allegations on having sexual relationship with Monika Lewinsky. Bill Clinton admitted having had a relationship that was "not appropriate" with former White House intern Monica Lewinsky. He denied the more serious allegations that he had lied under oath about the relationship and had entreated Lewinsky to do the same. When asked, he apparently denied having an affair with Lewinsky. But finally the fact had appeared. Prosecutors working for independent counsel Kenneth Starr questioned Clinton about his relationship with Lewinsky for about four hours and reached a conclusion that Clinton lied under oath.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1. Studies in Non-Arab Countries**

In an internet article entitled "Allah's Oaths" accessed on January 1st 2008 Shamoun discussed oath making in the three religions and draws a comparison among Islam, Christianity and Judaism. According to the Holy Bible, Jehovah only swears and takes oaths in his own name. The reason why Jehovah does this is because there is no one, or nothing, greater for him to swear by. Jesus specifically says that to swear by anything other than God is evil and relates to Satan. Moses instructed the heads of the tribes of the people of Israel to abide by their vows and oaths. In Islam, the Prophet's teachings concerning oaths, prohibited pluralism. The people of Quraish used to swear by their fathers, but the Prophet condemned such behavior. So, according to Shamoun, the followers of these religions share the belief that God is omniscient.

In a study entitled "The Art of Swearing in Latin", Echols ( 1980:112 ) asserts that "all peoples, past and present, civilized and barbarian, share at least one thing in common: when the need arises, or the humour is upon them, they swear". He mentions examples of the Roman's oaths such as: 'I swear by Jupiter', 'I swear by Jupiter and Mars', 'I swear by Jupiter and all the gods!'

In a study entitled "Negotiating the Truth Through Oath Forms", Masagara (2001:385-401) focuses on the use of traditional oath forms which reflect the value system of African traditional society in general and the Rundi-Rwanda society in particular. Speakers of this society rely mainly on (indahiro) or, as translated into English, traditional oath forms in order to persuade others of the truth of statements they make. The study is based on approximately 20 hours of taped conversations. Masagara analyzed the conversations in terms of their structure. The analysis of the taped conversations revealed that oaths in Rundi-Rwanda are either simple as in the first example or complex as in the remaining examples:

I would rather kill you (than lie to you). This example is formulated as following:

X says to Y that X (agent, oath taker) Tense (v.) Y oath receiver.

This formula reads X says to Y that X would rather kill Y (than lie to you).

I would rather be it that killed my child (than lie to you).

This example is formulated as follows:

X says to Y that X + Tense be + Z (referent= unspecified agent) + tense, V. + X's referent. This formula reads:

X says to Y that X would rather be Z or Z kills X's child

In this example X is the oath taker and X is specified. Moreover X is the second referent and is the entity in the oath that would be affected if X is lying. Y is the oath receiver and Y is not implicated in the oath. Z is neither the oath taker nor the oath receiver. Z is the unmentioned referent and Z is the agent or the conscious initiator of the action that would affect X if X is lying. Other examples mentioned by Masagara are:

I would rather have incestuous relations with my niece (I cannot lie to you).

I would rather cut off (Ntunguka) who gave me cows. Some of the family referents in these oaths are used to invoke violation of sexual taboos or family loyalty.

In a Journal Article entitled "The Mysterious Power of Words in Ottoman Damascus (17th-18th Centuries)" Grehan (2004:2) narrates the following tale that took place in the courthouse of Damascus more than 200 years ago to show the religious power of oaths and tries to fathom the motives lurking behind such behaviour. A defendant who divorced his wife was legally responsible for the unpaid portion of his wife's dowry, which according to the provisions of Islamic law, is owed to the wife at the time of divorce or the death of her husband. The husband insisted that the debt was only fifty piasters, while the real amount was a hundred piasters. The husband abstained from taking an oath when asked by the judge to assert his claim.

Cole (2005:1-9) makes a correlation between making oaths and telling lies. He mentions types of lies in which people in general fall into deception and falsehood. The half truth is when a person tells the truth but not all the truth. The white or innocent lies are those that do not hurt any anyone. There is also the lie to cover for someone else. Another kind of lie is used when a person tries to stretch the truth to make himself look

better or to evoke sympathy for his cause. The silent lie is when a person flatters about another person that is clearly false, but he does not speak up to correct it. These lies, in fact, are mostly associated with oaths. Cole believes that lies and oaths are inseparable.

Gray (2000:1-2) studies the causes that make people swear from a psychological and sociological perspective. There is a strong relation between swearing and social class. "Most swearers come from lower class background and they swear as a means of distancing themselves from mainstream society and affirming their position as members of a particular social group". Swearing may be also beneficial as a means of relieving unexpressed anger. Those who swear regularly suffer less from stress than those who do not.

In a study entitled "Assertiveness and Sincerity" Yetkiner (2004:148-150) studied the use of two terms among Turkish interlocutors; *valla* (By God) and *gerçekten* (really). *Valla* which has preserved its religious connotation is used in informal situations whereas *gerçekten* is rather a formal term used in both oral and written ways of communication. Functional analysis of these sincerity markers were discussed with regard to semantic, syntactic and pragmatic characterization. *Valla* reflects a rather religious perspective denoting an external control, which is God in the regulation of relationship and designation of the speaker's self image, whereas *gerçekten* reflects internal control, namely the individual's beliefs that his/her choice to emphasize sincerity is guided by personal decision and efforts". The analysis showed that the use of these terms serves different functions such as assertion of sincerity, defense against a face threat, response particle, delay device and solidarity device.

Vander (1911:1) classified oaths into four categories. The affirmative oath when we call God to witness the assertion of a past or present fact. The promissory oath when we call God to witness a resolution which we bind ourselves to execute. The private oath which is used between private individuals. The public oath which is demanded by public authorities.

In an article entitled "The Theatrical Rhetoric of Edward III" Leslie (2002:43-56) focuses on the persuasive effectiveness of the play "*The Reign of Edward the Third*" onstage. According to the article, the use of language as a device for persuasion is evident when the characters are involved in persuasive dialogue, especially when using oaths.

*But heaven I call to record my vows.*

At the end of the first scene of the play the Countess threatened to commit suicide as a reaction to the king's pressure to persuade her to break her marriage vows unless the king stops his suits to marry her. The king's surrender appears in the following vow:

"Even by that power I swear, that gives me now  
The power to be ashamed of myself  
I never mean to part my lips again  
In any words that that tends to such a suit".

The function of this vow and the other ones is to persuade the audience that the king keeps his word and respects his promises and accordingly he deserves admiration.

Ted (2007:24-25) focused on swearing in ceremonies in the U.S. His article mentioned the case of Representative Keith Ellison who refused to take his oath of office on the Bible and instead preferred the Koran because Koran does not impose penalties beyond peoples endurance (لا يؤاخذكم الله في اللغو من أيمانكم)

*laa yu'aaxiðkum 'allahu fii allaghwi min 'aymaanikum*

"God does not take you [to task] for what is thoughtless in your oaths" (Al-Ma'ida:89), Help the poor or fast, and you're expiated. Officials in Wisconsin were bothered with their Marriage Protection Amendment in which oath taking is mandatory. Quakers and Anabaptists declined from taking oaths due to their interpretation of the book that people in positions swear on. The article also cites a passage in the Bible wherein Jesus Christ prohibited taking oaths. "If a man vows a vow to the Lord, or swears an oath to bind himself by a pledge," God had commanded, "he shall not break his word".

## 2.2. Studies in Arab Countries

Obeidat (1986:297-298) in a book entitled *A study in the Customs and Traditions of the Jordanian Society*, explored oath making used by Jordanian Bedouins. He tackled the different Bedouin judiciary cases in which the indictor swears an oath in an attempt to convince the judge of his/ her innocence. Bedouins swear by God, by the soil, by the important animals in their life and also by food items.

"والله اللي لا ينهال ولا ينكال"

'wa allaahi illi laa yinhaal walaa yinkaal'

'I swear by Allah Who has never been heaped up or weighed.'

"أحلف بالله، وبسبع جمال محملات غلة أوكل حبة تصرخ واتقول والله، اني ما شقيتله جلد، أو لا  
يتمت له ولد، وأن لا ايدي أومت، ولا حدا ايدي أدمت."

"'aHlif bi 'allah 'usabç ijmaal imHam-malaat ghal-leh 'ukul Hab-beh tuSrux witguul  
wal-lahi in-ni maa shageitlah jild 'ulaa yattamtillah wild wa'an laa iidi awmat ulaa Had  
iidi admat"

'I swear by Allah and seven camels freighted with grain and every grain cries, by Allah, I  
neither cut his skin or orphaned his children and that my hand was never raised against  
(anyone) nor caused anyone to bleed'.

Bedouins also swear by the House (*kaçba*)

"والبيت اللي بناه الله"

"wilbeit il-li banaah 'allah"

'By the House built by Allah '.

Bedouins also vary between swearing by Allah and His creatures. A characteristic of Bedouin oaths is that they are not produced in a traditional way. Bedouins usually resort to alliteration and rhyming in an attempt to practice more influence on the judge. (Obeidat: 297-298)

Al-Tal (2005:89-92) in a book entitled *All that Comes Across the Mind about the Inhabitants of North Jordan*, discusses proverbs produced by the inhabitants of Irbid, North Jordan, in different circumstances. Some of these proverbs include oaths which have different functions. For instance,

"أبود وسبع جدود"

"*abbuud usabç ijduud*"

'I swear by the seven ancestors'

"والله ما بشملها عقصة"

"*wa allah maa bishimilha çugSa*"

'I swear by Allah he will never smell her braid'

These oaths show strong determination not to grant the other party's request'.

"وحيات هالصباح وكل طير بالسما صاح"

"*wi Hyaat haSSabaaH ukul Teir bi samaa SaaH*"

'I swear by this morning and every bird flying and singing in the sky'

Those who make such oaths manipulate nature and some of its objects.

The following oath is made by an angry mother to her disobedient son:

"والله لو بشوفك همدان انتة وولادك ما إطلعت عليك"

"*wa allah law bashuufak hamdaan inta wiwlaadak maa iTTallaçit çaleik*"

'I swear by Allah I will never eye you even though you and your children lie down dead'

Al- Gammaz (2001:101-141) studied the use of particles for swearing purposes in a study entitled "The Phenomenon of swearing in the Holy Quran Via Using the Particles". He traced the phenomenon in the Holy Quran to pinpoint it in the light of rhetorical criteria. The study shows that utilizing this phenomenon serves different functions, depending on the speaker's intention. Some of the functions include conciseness, lightness, and harmony among the words of a swearing expression. Other functions show the aesthetic aspects of a certain image or drawing moral lessons in addition to the general function of emphasis.

It also shows the distribution of the particles in the Holy Quran according to their frequency: *wa*, *bi* and *ta* respectively. Verse (33) in *suurat al- aHqaaf* (الأحقاف), draws a moral lesson in addition to the main function of emphasis. It also shows the distribution of the particles in the Holy Koran according to their frequency: *wa*, *bi*, and *ta* respectively:

"وَيَوْمَ يُعْرَضُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا عَلَى النَّارِ أَلَيْسَ هَذَا بِالْحَقِّ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ وَرَبَّنَا قَالَ فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ"



"wayawma yuḡraDu 'alaḏiina kafaruu ḡalaa alnaari alaysa haaḏaa bilHaqqi qaaluu balaa warabbinaa qaala faḏuuquu al ḡaḏaaba bima kuntum takfuruun".

'And on the day when those who disbelieve will be exposed to the Fire ( it will be said to them: "Is this not the truth?" They will say : "Yes, By our Lord!" He will say: "Then taste the torment, because you used to disbelieve!" (Al- ahqaaf:33)

Lightness and conciseness appear in swearing by different single objects such as a fig, an olive and Mount Sinai as in the following verse from surat *al teen* (التين) verses (2-4) where the swearing verb is absent:

"وَالَّتَيْنِ وَالزَّيْتُونَ. وَطُورِ سِينِينَ. وَهَذَا الْبَلَدِ الْأَمِينِ."

"wa altiini wa alzaytuuni wa Tuuri siiniin wa haaḏaa albaladi al'amiin"

'By the fig, and the olive. By Mount Sinai. And by this city of security (Mecca).' (Al-Teen:2-4)

In the following verse from *suurat Saad* (سورة ص) Verse (82), the particle (*bi*) is used for rhetorical purpose:

"قَالَ فَبِعِزَّتِكَ لأُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ"

"qaala fabi ḡizzatika la'ughwiannahum ajmaḡeen".

'Satan said: "I swear by your Might, I will surely mislead them all'. (Saad:82)

Harmony among sounds is clearly revealed through the repetition of the sound (ت) in verse (83) from *suurat yuusuf* (يوسف):

"قَالُوا تَاللَّهِ تَفَنَّا تَذْكُرُ يُوْسُفَ حَتَّى تَكُونَ حَرَضًا أَوْ تَكُونَ مِنَ الْهَالِكِينَ"

"qaaluu tallaahi tafta'u taḏkuru yuusufa Hattaa takuuna HaraDan aw takuuna mina alhaalikiin"

'They said: "By Allah! You will never cease remembering *yuusuf* (Joseph) until you become weak with old age, or until you be of the dead'. (Khan, and Al-Hilali 1985). (Yusuf:83)

In a study entitled "Swearing in Bashar Bin Burd's Poetry", Shtaiwy" (2004:153-169) traces Bin Burd's\* oaths as a style characterizing most of his poetry. The poet swears "By God ", the Lord of Mohammad as in this verse of poetry:

"والله رب محمد إني بيانة معجب"

"*wallaah-i rabb-u muHammad-in innii bibaanat-a muçjab-uu*"

'I swear by Allah the Lord of Mohammad I am fond of *baana* (his beloved).'

Bin Burd also swears by "the shrine", "the black stone" and "the house"

"إني والمقام والحجر الأسود والبيت مشرف كالسحابة"

"*innanii walmaqaami walHajari al'aswadi walbayti mushrifun kassaHaaba*"

'By the shrine, the black stone and the house (*kaçba*) I am towering like a cloud'

In another verse full of repentance and regret he repeats swearing by Allah to influence the reader or the listener:

"والله والله ما جئته لعمد وما كان من همتي"

"*wa wa allaahi wa allaahi maa ji'tuhu liçamdin wamaa kaana min himmatii*"

'By Allah by Allah I neither committed it with bad intention nor with determination.'

On the other hand, Bin Burd resorted to the use of specific expressions that are not in harmony with Islamic tenets for he was fickle and inconstant in his beliefs. He swore by his life, by the humble sitter at your door as in this verse in which he praises *ibnu barmak*:

"لعمري لقد أجدى علي ابن برمك وما كل من كان الغنى عنده يجدي"

"*laçamrui laqad ajdaa çalayya ibnu barmakin wamaa kullu man kaana alghinaa çindahu yujdii*"

'By my life *ibnu barmak* was so generous with me and not all the rich are so generous'.

Bin Burd also swears by the life of the addressee's father:

"فلا وأبيك ما في العيش خير ولا الدنيا إذا ذهب الحياء"

'Nay by your father's life there is no benefaction neither in life nor in the world if bashfulness is absent'.

He also uses the particle *ta* where he reveals his suffering of a physical disability; blindness:

"تأسى على فقده العيون تالله ما في البلاد شيء"

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\* **Bashar Bin Burd:** an Arab poet during the period from the end of the Umayyad State until the beginning of the Abbasid State. His blindness in addition to his ugly appearance made him suffer from a psychological complex which influenced his poetry. Bin Burd was famous of his defamatory verse.

"*falaa wa'abiika maa fii al çayshi xayrun walaa al dunyaa iðaa ðahaba al Hayaa'u*"

"*tallaahi maa fii albilaadi shay'un ta'saa çalaa faqdihi alçuyuuunu*"

'By Allah there is nothing in the world the absence of which eyes regret.'

Bin Burd resorted to this style highly loaded with oaths, to confirm the authenticity of his declarations.

Abdel Rahman (1983:7-30) in a study entitled "The Connotation of *çamru* in Oath Making and Invocation in The Ignorance Era Poetry", discusses the use of the word *çamru* ُ عمر in Arabic poetry. This word means: (By the life of). It occurred in the Holy Quran in a single verse:

"لَعَمْرُكَ إِنَّهُمْ لَفِي سَكْرَتِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ"

"*laçamruka innahum lafii sakratihim yaçmahuun*"

'Verily, by you (O Mohammad) in their wild intoxication, they were wandering lost'

(*al-Hijr:71*) (الحجر).

This expression is exclusively used by *Allah*. (Khan and Al-Hilali 1985).

Poets in *al-jahiliyya* Eara used ُ عمر *çamru* to swear in situations of momentous and grave events as in the poetry of *al-naabigha al-ðubyaani* النابغة الذبياني that famous Arab poet from *al-jahiliyya* Eara.

"لَعَمْرِي وما عُمرِي علي بهين لقد نطقت علي الأقرارع"

"*laçamrii wamaa çumrii çalayya bihayyinun laqad naTaqat çalayya alaqaariçu*"

'I swear by my life, which is not trivial to me, that misfortune has encircled me.'

In addition, swearing with this word occurs with wisdom associated with death and tragedy as in the poetry of *abuu ðu'ayb alhuðalii* أبو ذؤيب الهذلي:

"لَعَمْرُكِ والمنايا غالبات لكل بني أب منها ذنوب"

"*laçamruka walmanaayaa ghaalibaatun likulli banii abin minhaa ðanuubu*"

'By your life disasters are always victors and every person has a great share of them.'

Poets also used swearing by *çamru* for defamatory purposes as in this verse of poetry by *alaçshaa* الأعشى *alHaarith bin waçila* الحارث بن ولة in which he defames

"لَعَمْرُكِ ما أشبهت ولة في الندى شمائله ولا أباه المجالدا"

"*laçamruka maa ashbahta waçlata fee al nadaa shamaa'ilahu walaa abaahu*

*almujaalidaa*" 'By your life his traits neither resembled *waçila* in generosity nor his father (your grand father) the brave fighter.'

In a study entitled "A Linguistic and Sociopragmatic and Cultural Study of Swearing in Arabic", Abd el-Jawad (2000:217-240) discussed the issue of swearing in daily conversations in Jordan. Abd el-Jawad analyzed a corpus of oaths exchanged by interlocutors in real life situations. This analysis revealed that oaths vary in terms of form, usage and function. The oaths have a three-part structure, realized linguistically by the particle followed by what is sworn by and then the speech act intended. The study shows the different referents used by interlocutors and the functions oaths serve in the Jordanian society. However, the study ignores some important aspects related to the issue of swearing. For example, it does not show the distribution of the sample of study by age, gender, religion, education and residence.

In a book entitled *Folk Literature in Jordan*, Al-Amad (1983:174-177) discusses different types of folk art in Jordan. Oaths appear in folk songs in colloquial Jordanian Arabic; *alçataabaa*, and *aldalaaçiin* \* as in the following examples:

يا طولك طول نخلة بباب جامع  
يا خدك لحمر من كل ورد جامع  
أنا والله لاركع لك بكل جامع  
وجامع حبيبي ما يقربه حدا  
يا ميجنا

"Yaa Tuulak Tuul naxleh ibbaab jaamiç  
Yaa khaddak laHmar min kul ward jaamiç  
ana wa Allah larkaçlak ibkul jaamiç  
ujaamiç Habiibi maa yigrabu Hadaa  
yaa miijanaa"

---

\* *alçataabaa*, and *aldalaaçiin*: two kinds of songs from folk literature in Jordan usually sung by men in wedding processions in which they show their affection for the love of women.

---

Your height is like that of a palm tree at a mosque's gate  
 Your red cheeks have taken from all roses  
 I swear by Allah I will kneel down for you at each mosque  
 And none can approach my sweetheart's mosque

طلعت ع الدرج طخة ع طخة      وطيت ع قلبي ما قلت أخوا  
 والله يا ابنية لنصباك فخة      واصيدك صيد الحجل يا اعيونا

*"Tilçit ça aldaraj Taxxa ça Taxxa, waTTeit çagleibi maa gult il'axxa  
 wallah ya ibnayya la anSublik faxxa, waSiidik Seid ilHajal ya içyuunaa"*

'She ascended the stairs step by step. I stepped on my heart and didn't moan. I swear by Allah I will set a trap for you and hunt you the way partridges are hunt. Oh my eyes!'

Oath making also appears in the Bedouin poetry.

" يا عقاب أحلف لك ثلاثة بالأديان حياة النبي والبيت وأربع أصحاب

*"yaa içqaab aHlif lak thalatha bi aladyaan Hayaat alnabi walbeit waarbaç 'aSHAab"*

'Oh *Içqaab* I swear to you three time by religions; the life of the prophet, the House (*kaçbaa*) and the four companions of the prophet.'

Salman (1989:292-298) in a book entitled *Five Years in East Jordan*, discusses the religious beliefs of Bedouins in shrines. Their respect for and belief in the sanctity of holy places and holy people make them fear swearing near these shrines. The writer narrates a tale that shows how the chief of the tribe of (*alçazaazmeh*) did his best to avoid false swearing at the shrine of *abuu raghiif*. In order to settle a dispute over a piece of land between two Bedouin tribes (*alçazaazmeh*) and *alshawaabkeh*, a judge asked the chief of the (*alçazaazmeh*) tribe, to whom the land does not belong, to take an oath. The man's fear of taking the oath made him exploit the croak of a raven that was hovering over the disputed land at that moment, for an attempt to convince the audience and the judge of his claim and at the same time to avoid any consequences of taking the following oath:

"وحياة العود والرب المعبود وحياة أبي رغيف إنه من حين نعق غرابها العازمي كرابها وأنا  
 واضعها بالعيون السود والرابع القعود."

*"wiHyaat ilçuud wi irrab ilmaçbuud, wiHyaat abii raghiif innu min Hiin naçaq  
 ighraabha ilçaaazmi karraabha wanaa waDiçha bi liçyuun issuud wi irrabiç liqçuud"*

'I swear by the stick, the worshipped Lord and (abii raghiif), since the raven croaked and hovered over it, (*alçazaazmeh*) cultivated the land and I swear by the sitting people.'

In his book *The Style of Swearing and its Association with the Conditional in the Context of the Holy Quran*, Oan (1995:22-27) mentions many examples of implicit oath expressions from the Holy Quran in the context of:

1. *al-miithaaq* الميثاق (Covenant):

"قَالَ لَنْ أَرْسِلَهُ مَعَكُمْ حَتَّى تُؤْتُونِ مَوْثِقًا مِنَ اللَّهِ لَتَأْتُنَّنِي بِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ يُحَاطَ بِكُمْ"

"*qaala lan ursilahu maçakum Hattaa tu'tuuni mawthiqan mina allahi lata'tunnaanii bihi illaa an yuHaaTa bikum*"

'He (*yaçquub*) Jacob said: "I will not send him with you until you swear a solemn oath to me in the name of *Allah*, that you will bring him back to me unless you are yourselves surrounded (by enemies, etc.).' (Yusuf:66).

"وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ عَاهَدَ اللَّهُ لَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّكَ مِنَ الْفِتَنِ إِلَّا شَرًّا لَمْ تَكُنْ مِنَ الْصَّالِحِينَ"

"*waminhum man çaaahada allaaha la'in ataana min faDlihi lanataSaddaqanna walnakuunanna mina alSaaliHiin*" (*al tawbah*: 76)

'And of them are some who made a covenant with *allah* (saying): "If he bestowed on us of His bounty, we will verily, give *Sadaqah* (*zakaat* and voluntary charity in *allah*'s Cause) and will be certainly among those who are righteous.'

2. *laa jarama* لا جرم (Un-doubtfulness)

"لَا جَرَمَ أَنْ لَهُمُ النَّارُ"

"*laa jarama anna lahumu alnnaar*" (*al-naHil*: 62)

'No doubt for them is the fire.'

3. *alshahaada* الشهادة (Bearing witness)

"وَيَذَرُ عَنْهَا الْعَذَابَ أَنْ تَشْهَدَ أَرْبَعَ شَهَادَاتٍ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ"

"*wayadra'u çanhaa alçaðaaba an tashhada arbaça shahaadaatin bi allaahi innahu lamina alkaaḍibiin*" (*al-nuur*: 8)

'But she shall avert the punishment (of stoning to death), if she bears witness four times by Allah that he (her husband) does not speak the truth).'

#### 4. *waḡada* الوعد (Promising)

"وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ"

"*waḡada allaahu allaḡiina aamanuu minkum*"

Allah has promised those among you who believe. (*al nuur: 54*)

#### 5. *alkitaab* الكتاب (Commitment)

"قُلْ لِمَنْ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ قُلْ لِلَّهِ كَتَبَ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ لِيَجْمَعَ كُفُّكُمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ"

"*qul liman fii alsamaawaati wa al'arDi qul lillaah kataba ḡalaa nafsihi alraHmata layajmaḡannakum ilaa yawmi alqiyaamati*"

'To whom does all that in the heavens and the earth belong? Say: "To *allah*. He has prescribed Mercy for Himself. Indeed He will gather you together on the day of resurrection.'

(*al anAaam:11*)

The word commitment in this context means making a promise, pledge, oath; contract to do something.

#### 6. *alqaDaa'* القضاء (Decree)

"وَقَضَيْنَا إِلَى بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ فِي الْكِتَابِ لَتُفْسِدُنَّ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَّتَيْنِ"

"*waqaDaynaa ilaa banii isra'iila latufsidunna fi 'alarDi marratayn*"

'And we decreed for the Children of Israel in the Scripture, that indeed you would do harm mischief on the earth twice'. (*al israa':4*).

#### 7. *alta'aḡḡun* التآذن (Declaration)

"وَإِذْ تَأَذَّنَ رَبُّكَ لَيَبْعَثَنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ مَنْ يَسُومُهُمْ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ"

"*wa'iḡ ta'aḡḡana rabbuka layabḡathanna ḡalayhim ilaa yawmi alqiyaamati man yasuumuhum suu'a 'alḡaḡaab*"

'And (remember) when your Lord declared that He would certainly keep on sending against them (i.e. the Jews), till the Day of Resurrection, those who would afflict them with a humiliating torment'. (*al-aḡraaf:167*) (Khan and Al-Hilali 1985).

In an internet article entitled "Is Repudiation Oath Considered Swearing by Objects Other Than God?" accessed in November 2007, Bin Baaz differentiates

between oath making and making a conditional repudiation oath. A repudiation oath is one of the most commonly used formulas in the Arab world, especially among males; to swear to divorce one's wife when prefacing different speech acts. Bin Baaz does not consider repudiation oath as swearing compared to unlawful swearing with things other than God which leads the swearer to pluralism (shirk). On the contrary he considers it as a suspension to divorce one's wife for the purpose of achieving different functions such as: urging, believing, accusing of lying and prohibiting. He mentions different examples such as:

علي الطلاق ما أكلم فلاناً

*"çalayyi iTTalaq maa 'akallim fulaanan"*

'I swear to divorce of my wife I will never talk to X.'

"علي الطلاق ما تكلمين فلاناً"

*"çalayyi iTTalaq maa tukallimiin fulaanan"*

'I swear to divorce you if you talked to X.'

"بالطلاق ما أفعل كذا"

*"bi alTalaq maa 'afçal kaḏaa"*

'I swear to divorce my wife I would not do...'

"علي الطلاق ما تذهبي إلى كذا وكذا"

*"çalayyi iTTalaq maa tiḏhabii ilaa kaḏaa wa kaḏaa"*

'I swear I will divorce you if you go to...'

He also adds that in case the condition is not fulfilled this does not mean that the oath maker should divorce his wife but to grant pardon according to Islamic jurisprudence.



## CHAPTER THREE

### FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS OF OATH MAKING

#### 3.1. Introduction

Oath making, like most other speech acts, in Arabic, reflects the influence of religion on the speech behaviour of the community. It is regarded as an integral part of people's entire tradition. It plays a significant role in every aspect of our life. The formulas of oaths derive their sociocultural significance not only from their religious background but also from other social, cultural, and political factors. These oaths may provide the hearer with a certain amount of indexical information about the oath maker. They emphasize the individual's as well as the society's values and ideals.

##### 3.1.1. Emphasis

As part of their confirmation and persuasion strategies, speakers may basically preface their speech acts with an oath to emphasize the statement they have made. However it should be pointed out that swearing is not in such cases meaningless. It might be used as a politeness marker as in this dialogue:

أبوك موجود؟

*'abuuk mawjuud?*

Is your father in?

لا والله ما هو هان.

*laa wal-lahi maa huu haan.*

No, I swear by Allah he went out.

Thus we're talking here about a functional shift rather than meaninglessness. It is more or less like "I'm afraid he's out." A total of 53.5% of the data collected represents this function. (See table 1 page 33). The following are some of the emphatic oaths:

والله العظيم.

*Wallahi alçaDHiim*

I swear by Allah the Great.

قسما بالله.

*qasaman bil-laah*

I swear by Allah.

وحياة أولادي هذا اللي صار.

*wiHyaat 'awlaadi hað a il-li Saar*

I swear by my children this is what has happened.

وحياة لحيتك ما زليت في كلمة.  
*wiHyaat liHytak maa zaleit fii kilmeh*

I swear by your beard all what I have just said is all true.

Another aspect of emphasizing oaths is the frequent use of the repudiation oath by male Jordanians, a phenomenon worthy of discussion. The influence the repudiation oath plays in the Jordanian community is larger than that of any other oath, simply because the future of the wife involved is mortgaged with the fulfillment of the oath. Men in general have the tendency to use the divorce oath to intensify their claims, promises invitations and threats as explained in the following examples:

علي الطلاق غير أخرج بيتك.  
*çalayyeh iT-Talaaq xeir akhrib beitalak*

I would divorce my wife if I didn't ruin your house.

علي الطلاق إلا تتغدى عندي.  
*çalay-yeh iT-Talaaq il-laa titghadaa çindi*

I would divorce my wife if you didn't have lunch with me.

When negation is accompanied with emphasis, the oath maker usually uses an oath which reflects gravity, seriousness, intensity and earnestness. Honour represents the top value in the Arab World. It is inherited through generations thousands of years ago. It is one of most important ideals Arabs show pride of and willingness to sacrifice for. In the following example the oath maker involves the honour of his close female relatives to negate an accusation and to confirm the credibility of his words:

بشرفي ما هو أنا اللي حكيت عنك.  
*bisharaḫi maa huu 'naa il-li Hakeit çan-nak*

I swear by my honour it is not me who backbit you.

Oath adds strength to the intended act and sends a clear message that the oath maker is seriously threatening the other party. The same practice can be observed when the oath maker makes a threat and usually engages an object which ranges in its value according to the situation. Sometimes the oath maker swears by the most dignified and important

object in his community. But on other occasions he resorts to the most trivial and insulting object as in these examples:

والله لأخلي إلهي ما يشتري يتفرج عليك.

*wal-laahi l'axal-li 'l-li maa yishtiri yitfar-raj çaleik*

I swear by Allah I'll make a scene and put you to shame.

قسما بديني إلا غير أمسح فيك الأرض.

*qasaman bidiini 'l-laa gheir 'msaH fiik il'rD*

I swear by my religion I'll mop the floor with you.

وحياة كندرتي ما بتقدر تضرب بسه.

*wiHyaat kundarti maa btiqdar tuDrub bissah*

I swear by my shoes you dare not hit a cat.

The oath maker shifted swearing by the sacred to swearing by the trivial and most insulting object in the Arab culture. This shift implies an escalation in the degree of anger and challenge.

Expressing generosity in the Jordanian society mostly goes with oath making. But the seriousness of the swearer depends on different factors such as the intonation of the oath, the object he swears by and the relationship of the interlocutors. Intonation is primarily a matter of variation in the pitch level of the voice. Intonation conveys differences of expressive meaning (e.g., surprise, doubtfulness, seriousness). In many languages, intonation serves a grammatical function, distinguishing one type of phrase or sentence from another. Thus, (علي الطلاق ما بتدفع) denotes seriousness when spoken with a rising tone, but another oath expression with a falling tone such as (بالله تخلي علينا) indicates moderation and less intensity.

The following oaths are arranged according to their degree of seriousness:

علي الطلاق ما بتدفع.

*çalayyeh iT-Talaaq maa btidfaç*

I would divorce my wife if you paid.

وحياة اولادي ما بتدفع.

*wiHyaat iwlaadi maa btidfaç*

I swear by my children you will not pay.

بالله تخلي علينا.

*bil-laah itxal-li çaleina*

By Allah, let me pay.

### 3.1.2. Humour

Humor is words or actions intended to cause laughter. Humour has been portrayed as the quality of arousing people's feelings of amusement to engage and entertain them in an effort to make them laugh. This function expresses 17.66% of the total number of the collected oaths. (See table 1 page 33). Oaths can be used as an end in themselves to express humour as in this example:

أقسم بأعضاء الكلب.

*uqsim biaçDaa' ilkalb*

I swear by the dog's organs.

Expressing sarcasm is one of the aspects associated with oath making which aims at arousing humour.

والله ويتلوي يا دالية.

*wallah witloalaHi yaa dalyeh*

By Allah, sway you vine (beautiful girl/woman).

This is originally taken from songs in wedding processions called *zaffah*. It is sung in the midst of joyful excitement. It is, however, sometimes used sarcastically to mock and devalue a person or his act.

### 3.1.3. Praising

As defined in Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, praising is "the act of making positive statements about a person, object or idea, either in public or privately". Expressing admiration, flirtation and appreciation by Jordanians involve different body parts which depict woman's beauty and charm such as the face, the eyes, cheeks, neck, hair etc. Actually, this practice is not restricted to women. Males, young and old, may receive praise through admiring their appearance, achievement or behavior. However, praising is used also to emphasize the gravity of actions and expression. This function forms 21% of the total number of oaths. (See table 1 page 33). The following are examples of this function:

وحياة هالشفايف.

*wiHyaat halshfayef*

I swear by those (beautiful) lips.

وحياة عينيكي.

*wiHyaat çineiki*

I swear by your eyes.

وحياة هالliche الغانمة.

*wiHyaat hal-liHyeh 'ilghanmeh*

I swear by this worthy beard.

وحياة جمالك.

*wiHyaat jamalik.*

I swear by your beauty.

### 3.1.4. Humiliation

Humiliation is "to reduce to a lower position in one's own eyes or others' eyes". Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary (2009). This function is the least frequent of occurrence. It represents 7.83% of the overall number of the collected oath data. (See table 1 page 33).

Some people resort to different techniques to humiliate others. Pointing to a person's dignified body part and combining it with an insulting object, is one of the techniques used by Jordanians to humiliate others. In the following example there is a combination of something dearly valued for men as a sign of manhood the "moustache" with a sign of disrespect the "shoe" to express insult.

وحياة شنبك وصرمايتي.

*wiHyaat shanabak uSurmayti*

I swear by your moustache and my shoe.

وحياة كندرتي إنك ما بتسوى تكة سيجارة.

*wiHyaat kundarti in-nak maa btiswaa tak-kit siigara*

I swear by my shoe that you are not worth the ash of a cigarette.

The praising examples mentioned in 3.1.3. may hold bad intention especially when the person being praised is ugly or does not deserve this flattering.

### 3.2. Analysis of Language Functions

Analysis of figures in table (1) below shows that expressing emphasis recorded the highest frequency of occurrence comprising 53.5% of the total number of the oaths recorded. The second function of highest frequency of occurrence is "praising" comprising 21% of the total number of the collected data. Expressing humour occupied the third rank forming 17.66% of the total number of oaths. Humiliation occupied the lowest rank recording 7.83%. See table ( 1 ) below.

**Table (1) Frequency and Distribution of Language Functions**

No.	Functions	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
1	Emphasis	321	53.5%	1
2	Humour	106	17.66%	3
3	Praise	126	21%	2
4	Humiliation	47	7.83%	4
Total		600	100%	

#### 3.2.1. Gender Differences

A careful study of figures in table (2) below, reveals that expressing emphasis recorded the highest frequency of occurrence among males and females comprising 53.5% of the total number of the oaths recorded. As can be seen from the same table, expressing emphasis recorded convergent percentages. The second function of highest frequency of occurrence is "praising" comprising 21% of the total number of the collected data. The table shows divergent results between males and females. About one third of the previous percentage was for females against two thirds for males. Expressing humour occupied the third rank among males and females oaths forming 17.66% of the total number of oaths. Males had the lion's share of this percentage recording 14.5% of the oaths whereas only one fifth of the same percentage was recorded for females. Using humiliating expressions was exclusively for males. This means that females were more conservative which indicates that they were more polite than males. See table ( 2 ) below.

The following are illustrative examples of female oath expressions:

وحياة اولادي.

*wiHyaat iwlaadi*

I swear by my children.

وحياة هالنعمة.

*wiHyaat halniçmeh*

I swear by this benefaction.

**Table (2) Frequency and Distribution of Language Functions According to Gender**

No.	Function	Gender				Total		Rank
		Male		Female				
		Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	
1	Emphasis	175	29.16%	146	24.33%	321	53.5%	1
2	Humour	87	14.5%	19	3.16%	106	17.66%	3
3	Praise	87	14.5%	39	6.5%	126	21%	2
4	Humiliation	41	6.83%	6	1%	47	7.83%	4
Total		390	64.990%	210	34.990%	600	100%	

### 3.2.2 Age Differences

The single observation that can be deduced from the figures is the disagreement of the percentages of two functions (humiliation and humour), expressed by people under 18 years, with the results of the same functions used by the members of the other age categories. The only justification is that children and teenagers of this category are not mature enough to realize the significance of praising in this stage. Moreover, expressing humour in this age requires a reasonable level of courage to avoid the negative consequences of using such expressions. See table ( 3 ) below.

**Table (3) Frequency and Distribution of Language Functions According to Age**

No.	Function	Age								Total	
		6-18		19-35		36-50		51& over			
		Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Fre q.	Per.
1	Emphasis	98	16.33%	91	15.16%	73	12.16%	59	9.83%	321	53.5%
2	Humour	17	2.83%	37	6.16%	31	5.16%	21	3.5%	106	17.66%
3	Praise	15	2.5%	41	6.83%	35	5.83%	35	5.83%	126	21%
4	Humiliation	9	1.5%	15	2.5%	13	2.16%	10	1.66%	47	7.83%
Total		139	23.160%	184	30.650 %	152	25.310%	125	20.820%	600	100%

### 3.2.3. Geographical Location Differences

The only important observation table (4) reveals is the low percentage of humiliation oaths used by Bedouins. Bedouins, from this result show a considerable reservation in using such oaths for they know very well the legal cost of disrespecting others. See table ( 4 ) below.

**Table (4) Frequency and Distribution of Language Functions According to Geographical Location**

No.	Function	Geographical Location						Total	
		Urban		Rural		Bedouin			
		Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.
1	Emphasis	95	15.83%	114	19%	112	18.66%	321	53.5%
2	Humour	39	6.5%	34	5.66%	33	5.5%	106	17.66%
3	Praise	51	8.5%	41	6.83%	34	5.66%	126	21%
4	Humiliation	24	4%	14	2.33%	9	1.5%	47	7.83%
Total		209	34.830%	203	33.820%	188	31.320%	600	100%

### 3.2.4. Social Status Differences

Frequency and distribution of language functions according to social status of table (5) show that people who occupy prominent jobs used the least number of oaths whereas school children, university students and laborers hit the highest point of using oaths. This behaviour can be attributed to the experience people of prominent jobs gain



through interacting with members of high social class in addition to their educational background. Lack of this experience, on the other hand, leads to misconduct which may appear in expressions such as the following:

ورحمة شرفك.

*'urahmit sharafak*

By the death of your honour.

See table ( 5 ) below.

Table (5) Frequency and Distribution of Language Functions

According to Social Status

No.	Function	Social Status																				Total	
		Doctors		University Professors		School Teachers		Laborers		University Students		School Children		Traders		Farmers		Shepherd		Without a job			
		Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.		
1	Emphasis	19	3.16%	15	2.5%	23	3.83%	39	6.5%	33	5.5%	58	9.66%	35	5.83%	46	7.66%	32	5.33%	21	3.5%	321	53.5%
2	Humour	3	0.5%	4	0.66%	12	2%	24	4%	16	2.66%	27	4.5%	7	1.16%	6	1%	3	0.5%	4	0.66%	106	17.66%
3	Praise	8	1.33%	9	1.50%	12	2%	18	3%	27	4.5%	12	2%	18	3%	7	1.16%	8	1.33%	7	1.16%	126	21%
4	Humiliation	3	0.5%	1	0.16%	3	0.5%	8	1.33%	7	1.16%	9	1.5%	7	1.16%	5	0.83%	2	0.33%	2	0.33%	47	7.83%
Total		33	5.5%	29	4.83%	50	8.33%	89	14.83%	83	13.83%	106	17.66%	67	11.16%	64	10.66%	45	7.5%	34	5.66%	600	100%

## CHAPTER FOUR- THE OBJECTS PEOPLE SWEAR BY

### 4.1. Introduction

An oath has been defined as a solemn appeal to divine powers for their backing of what one says or does. Most of the definitions of an oath in the first chapter agree on the religious background of oaths in addition to the profane use of Allah when expressing anger and surprise. People in the past swore by many different objects. They swore by idols, heads of fathers, weapons of war etc. The objects sworn by have been extended in contemporary Arab communities to include any object one can imagine. This dramatic shift can be attributed to a shift from religious to secular practice.

#### 4.1.1. Allah and Allah's Attributes

Two hundred and fifteen oaths involved the name of Allah and His attributes have been encountered in the data. As can be seen from Table (6) the name of Allah is the most frequent object sworn by. It represents 35.83% of the collected oaths. (See table 6 page 49). To highlight this observation, the following are illustrative examples:

والله ما كسرت القلم.

*wal-laahi maa kasart algalam*

I swear by Allah I didn't break the pencil.

But when the swearer intends to strengthen his words he/she usually adds extra descriptions or attributes of Allah either before or after the name.

والله العظيم

*wal-lahi alḥaDHiim*

By the Almighty Allah.

The verb أقسم *uqsim* (I swear) is frequently used before the name of Allah or His excellent names.

أقسم بعزة الله

*uqsim biḥiz-zat al-laah*

I swear by the glory of Allah.

### 4.1.2. Prophets

Muslims believe in all prophets and messengers which means that they do not leave out any of them. Seventy four oaths used the names of prophets and messengers representing 12.33% of the collected data. (See table 6 page 49).

وحياة سيدنا محمد.

*wiHyaat siidna muHam-mad*

I swear by our master Mohammad.

وحياة عيسى وموسى.

*wiHyaat çiisaa umuusaa*

I swear by Isaac and Moses.

وحياة الاثنتين وثلاثين نبي.

*wiHyaat alithnein uthalathiin nabi*

I swear by the thirty two prophets.

### 4.1.3. Holy Books

The religious background of Jordanians encourages them to swear by the Koran as the overwhelming inhabitants of Jordan are Muslims. On the other hand, Christians, besides swearing by the Virgin Mary, they also swear by the Gospel and the cross. The results of the study showed that 8.16% of Jordanians swore by holy books. (See table 6 page 49).

وحياة القرآن.

*wiHyaat alqur'aan*

I swear by the Koran.

وحياة المصحف.

*wiHyaat almuSHaf*

I swear by the Koran.

وحياة هالختمة.

*wiHyaat halxitmeh*

I swear by the Koran.

وحياة الإنجيل.

*wiHyaat ilinjiil*

I swear by the Gospel.

أقسم بالكتب السماوية التي نزلهن ربنا.

*'uqsim bilkutub 'ilsamaawyeh 'illi nazalhin rabna*

I swear by the Heavenly Books revealed by Allah.

وحياة المية وأربع عشرة سورة.

*wiHyaat ilmy-yeh 'uarbaṭaṭṣhar suura*

I swear by the hundred and fourteen suuras.

#### 4.1.4. Divorce

One of the most commonly used swearing formulas in Jordan , mainly among mails, is the divorce oath. When the need arises, the person intensifies his action or promise by swearing to divorce his wife as a condition to fulfill his vow. This category came in the fourth rank where forty three oaths representing 7.16% were recorded in the collected data. (See table 6 page 49). The following are illustrative examples:

علي الطلاق ما راح أكلمك بالمرة.

*ṣalayyi iT-Talaaq maa raaH 'akalmak bilmar-rah*

I swear I will divorce my wife I will never talk to you at all.

علي الطلاق من ذراعي الا غير أمسح فيك الأرض.

*ṣalayyi iT-Talaaq min ḏraaṣi il-laa gheir amsaH fiik il'arD*

I swear by the divorce of my arm I will wipe the floor with you.

#### 4.1.5. Family and Relatives

Close relatives in the Jordanian customs and traditions enjoy a great amount of respect and love by the other members of the family. Forty one oaths representing 6.83% were encountered in the collected data. (See table 6 page 49). The following oaths exemplify Jordanian's pride in their relatives:

وحياة أولادي.

*wiHyaat 'awlaadii*

I swear by my children.

وحياة أبوك.

*wiHyaat 'abuuk*

I swear by your father.

Sometimes the oath maker swears by a dignified body organ of his family member.

من رأس أبي.

*min raas 'abuuy*

I swear by my father's head.

ورحمة أبي.

*'raHmit 'abuuy*

By the mercy encircled my father.

#### 4.1.6. Important People

Important people of the Jordanian society play an essential role in their oaths. Thirty seven oaths involved the names of important people representing 6.16% of the collected data. (See table 6 page 49). This category includes holy men, leaders, heroes etc. In contrast, some people swear by insignificant persons of bad reputation or sometimes enemy figures to arouse humour or to criticize a particular situation.

وحياة جلاله سيدنا.

*wiHyaat jalalit say-yidna*

I swear by his Majesty the King.

Shrines in Jordan are mostly connected with holy men such as Prophet Mohammad's companions and people known for their good reputation and deeds. People in North Shouneh in general swear by معاذ بن جبل *Mu'ath Bin Jabal* and some of the inhabitants of Jerash swear by الشيخ نجيب *Sheikh Najeeb* while some old Bedouins swear by أبو

جرير *abu jreir*.

وحياة سيدي معاذ.

*wiHyaat siidi muḥaaḏ*

I swear by my master *muḥaaḏ*.

#### 4.1.7. Body Organs

Swearing by body parts envelop any body organ one can imagine. People in Jordan do not only swear by those organs that represent dignity and honour such as the head, the beard, the face and the moustache but they also swear by organs which represent

insult, indignity and humiliation such as the foot, buttocks, and pudendum. The list also comprises other organs that represent strength, bravery, sacrifice and benefaction such as the arm, blood and the chest. Thirty five cases representing 5.83% of the sample of the study were recorded. (See table 6 page 49).

وحياة هالشنب.

*wiHyaat halshanab*

I swear by this moustache

على رقبتني إنه زيت زيتون.

*çala ragbati in-nuh zeit zatuun*

On my neck it is genuine olive oil.

من ذراعي.

*min ðraaçii*

I swear by my forearm.

وحياة هال جدائل.

*wiHyaat hal jadayel*

I swear by these braids.

وحياة هالحلابات

*wiHyaat halhal-laabaat*

I swear by my breast.

In fact we cannot expect such an oath from a girl or a lady. This oath is usually said by an old woman from a rural or Bedouin area.

ودم أبو عمار.

*udam 'abuu çam-maar*

I swear by the blood of 'abuu çam-maar.

In addition to the previous list, scoundrels frequently resort to taboo words and swear by those trifle body organs such as the buttocks and pudendum. Using such organs aims at humiliating the addressee and arousing humour. Moreover, involving such body organs with females can be categorized under sexual harassment.

من رجلي.

*min rijli*

I swear by my leg.

#### 4.1.8. Moral Values

Cultural and social ideals and values are often suitable objects sworn by in Jordan. People in Jordan swear by the honor of their parents, sisters and daughters. Sometimes people just swear by these values themselves. Thirty one cases representing 5.16% of the total number of oaths have been encountered. (See table 6 page 49).

بشرفي.

*bisharafi*

I swear by my dignity.

وعرض خواتي.

*uçarDH xawaati*

I swear by the honour of my sisters.

والأمانة.

*Wil'amaaneh*

I swear by the faithfulness.

وحياة الأخوة

*wiHyaat 'al'uxuw-wah*

I swear by the brotherhood.

وشرف خواتي.

*usharaf xawati*

I swear by the honour of my sisters.

#### 4.1.9. Food Items

Food items and drinks play an important role in Jordanians' oaths. People in Jordan appreciate food items and drinks for they are considered the sinew of life and also because they are the creation of Allah. They also swear by benefaction which includes all of the food items and drinks. Thirty four cases representing 4.33% of the collected data have been uncovered. (See table 6 page 49).

وحياة هالنعمة.



*wihyaat halniçmeh*

I swear by this benefaction.

وحياة هالزاد.

*wiHyaat halzaad*

I swear by this food.

وحياة هالقهوة وله يصير دمي زيها.

*wiHyaat halqahweh wal-la iySiir dam-mi zayhaa*

I swear by the life of this coffee or my blood is converted into like it.

#### 4.1.10. Important Holy Places

The oaths sworn by are influenced by Jordanians religious environment. Since shrines are part of the dogma of Muslims all over the world, it is natural to hear an oath which involves one or more of the Muslim holy places. Only thirteen oaths representing 2.16% of the sample of the study were revealed. (See table 6 page 49).

وحياة الكعبة.

*wiHyaat alkaçbeh*

I swear by Ka'ba.

وحياة الأقصى الشريف.

*wiHyaat al'aqsaa alshariif*

I swear by the holy Aqsa.

وحياة قبر الرسول.

*wiHyaat qabir al-rasuul*

I swear by the tomb of the prophet.

ومقام أبو عبيدة.

*'umaqaam 'abuu çubaydah.*

I swear by the shrine of Abu Obaydah.

#### 4.1.11. Objects of the Globe and Natural Phenomena

The list of "the objects sworn by" extends to include objects of the globe. In spite of the religious restrictions imposed on using these objects when making oaths, many Jordanians swear by them. Since Allah in the Koran swore by these objects, many

Muslims do not find any harm to swear by the sky, the earth, the mountain etc. as illustrated in the following examples:

(والسماء وما بناها)

*walsamaa'i wamaa banaahaa*

I swear by the sky and the One Who built it.

This category formed 1.83% of the oaths encountered in this study. (See table 6 page 49).

وحياة تراب فلسطين.

*wiHyaat itraab falasTiin*

I swear by the sand of Palestine.

وحياة هالغروب.

*wiHyaat halighruub*

I swear by this sunset.

وحياة هالمطر النازل.

*wiHyaat halmaTar ilnaazil*

I swear by this falling rain.

#### 4.1.12. Important Dates

Important dates like the Day of Resurrection, Ramadan, Friday etc. occupy an important part of Muslims' belief. Jordanians refer to these dates when making oaths. The influence of Koran on people's behaviour pertaining to oath making is evident through the overestimation of many important dates by Allah such as:

(ليلة القدر، شهر رمضان، يوم القيامة، اليوم الموعود)

(The night of Decree, the month of Ramadan, the Day of Resurrection)

(والسماء ذات البروج واليوم الموعود)

*walsamaa'i that alburuuj walyawm almawçuud*

By the heaven holding the big stars and by the Promise Day. (the Day of Resurrection). These oaths represent only 1.5% of the encountered cases. (See table 6 page 49).

وحياة هالشهر الفضيل.

*wiHyaat halshahr alfaDHiil*

I swear by this holy month.

وحياة اليوم اللي نجى فيه ربنا موسى من فرعون.

*wiHyaat alyoam 'illi naj-jaa fiih rabnaa muusaa min firṣoan*

By the day on which allah saved Moses from Pharaoh.

#### 4.1.13. Animals

Swearing by animals, which constitutes 0.50% of the overall number of objects sworn by, have been found to be the least frequent. (See table 6 page 49). Illustrative examples are the following:

وحياة حمار جارنا.

*wiHyaat iHmaar jaarnaa.*

I swear by our neighbour's donkey.

وناقة سيدنا صالح.

*'unaaqit siidnaa SaliH*

I swear by the she-camel of our master Salih.

#### 4.1.14. Miscellaneous

Objects other than those mentioned above constituted 2.16% of the overall number of objects. (See table 6 page 49). They include different things such as vehicle spare parts, stones, nails etc. Some people in Jordan swear by different objects whose meanings are either unknown or ambiguous. Some mechanics, for instance, swear by car spare parts while some builders swear by bricks.

Crank, and gear are vehicle spare parts and are used by people in general and labourers and mechanics in particular when making oaths. These ambiguous oaths, in fact, denote the real objects when used by mechanics or people who deal with vehicle spare parts. But sometimes "crank" and "gear" have a sexual connotation when used by people who are not necessarily familiar with their meaning.

وحياة هالحجر.

*wiHyaat halHajar*

I swear by this brick.

وحياة هالمسمار.

*wihyaat halmusmaar*

By the life of this nail.

وحياة شبابي.

*wiHyaat shabaabi*

By the life of my youth.

An interesting oath was sworn by a Bedouin in a judiciary case when asked to swear by Allah to deny an accusation of theft brought against him. He told the judge that he was willing to swear by Allah. When the judge suspected his credibility he asked him to swear by the coffee pot of *Ibn Sa'eed* (A very important and famous tribe chief in the Jordanian desert), the defendant abstained from doing so for fear that a punishment would befall him.

Another remarkable observation is the elusion made by some religious people to avoid swearing by objects other than Allah. They swear by meaningless objects such as الضمان *alDamaan* and use empty expressions like الطرشاق *alTurshaq* or they sometimes change one sound in the swear word to deceive the addressee to make him/her believe that the oath is a real one; الطلاب *alTalaab* instead of الطلاق *alTalaag*).

علي الطلاب.

*çalay-yeh alTalaab*

I swear by alTalaab.

Some people in Jordan use real statements which hold the meaning of an oath. A fezzed person may swear the following oath without any fear of being penalized by Allah because he really puts the tarboosh on his head and the listener accepts the statement as an oath.

علي الطربوش

*çalay-yeh alTarbuush*

Al tarboosh on me.

Someone told me that he puts some genuine olive oil on his neck and swears an oath when selling non-natural olive oil. This expression, in fact, is used to cheat customers who perceive it as an oath. The use of the preposition (على) (on) with a body organ implies that the said expression is an oath.

على رقبتني إنه زيت زيتون.

*çala ragbati in-nuh zeit zatuun*

On my neck it is genuine olive oil.

Swearing by the life of people is frequent in the Jordanian society as the following examples illustrate:

وحياتك.

*wiHyaatak*

I swear by your life.

An oath was sworn by an old man when a newly graduated doctor was talking about the hazards of smoking. The old man lit a cigarette and swore the following oath:

وحياة شهادتك واللي أعطاك إياها.

*wiHyaat shihaadtak wil-li açTaak iy-yahaa*

I swear by your certificate and the one who awarded it to you.

The functions of the last two oaths are praising and mocking respectively. However, (By your life) is sometimes used for mocking according to the situation and the relation among the interlocutors.

## 4.2. Analysis of the Objects Sworn by

Comparison of the objects sworn by, without analyzing the effects of gender, age, social status and the geographical location, yields the following results reported in descending order:

Swearing by Allah and His attributes comprises 35.83% of the overall sample, swearing by prophets 12.33%, swearing by holy books 8.16%, swearing by divorce 7.16%, swearing by relatives 6.83%, swearing by important people 6.16%, swearing by body organs 5.83%, swearing by moral values 5.16%, swearing by food items 4.33%, swearing by important places 2.16%, swearing by objects of the globe 1.83%, swearing by important dates 1.50%, swearing by animals 0.50%, swearing by miscellaneous objects 2.16%.

The three most frequent occurrences in the examined corpus are swearing by Allah, prophets and the holy books respectively. These three categories comprise more than 56% of the examined data. This is attributed to the religious background of Arabs in general and Jordanians in particular. See table ( 6 ) below.

**Table (6) Frequency and Distribution of the Objects Sworn by**

No.	Object Sworn by	Frequency	Percentage
1	Allah and Allah's Attributes	215	35.83%
2	Prophets	74	12.33%
3	Holy Books	49	8.16%
4	Divorce	43	7.16%
5	Family and relatives	41	6.83%
6	Important People	37	6.16%
7	Body Organs	35	5.83%
8	Moral Values	31	5.16%
9	Food Items	26	4.33%
10	Important Places	13	2.16%
11	Objects of the Globe	11	1.83%
12	Important Dates	9	1.50%
13	Animals	3	0.50%
14	Miscellaneous	13	2.16%
Total		600	100%

#### **4.2.1. Gender differences**

The figures show close results in most of the objects sworn except three categories; body organs (1% for females versus 5% for males), divorce (0% versus 7%) and moral values (0.5%. versus 4.55) This denotes that females are more conservative in swearing by such objects. See table ( 7 ) below.

**Table (7) Frequency and Distribution of the Objects Sworn by According to Gender**

No.	Object Sworn by	Gender				Total	
		Male		Female			
		Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.
1	Allah and Allah's Attributes	93	15.5%	122	20.33%	215	35.83%
2	Prophets	33	5.5%	41	6.83%	74	12.33%
3	Holy Books	23	3.83%	26	4.33%	49	8.16%
4	Divorce	43	7.16%	0	0%	43	7.16%
5	Family and relatives	22	3.66%	19	3.16%	41	6.83%
6	Important People	17	2.83%	20	3.33%	37	6.16%
7	Body Organs	29	4.83%	6	1%	35	5.83%
8	Moral Values	27	4.5%	4	0.66%	31	5.16%
9	Food Items	11	1.83%	15	2.5%	26	4.33%
10	Important Places	5	0.83%	8	1.33%	13	2.16%
11	Objects of the Globe	7	1.16%	4	0.66%	11	1.83%
12	Important Dates	5	0.83%	4	0.66%	9	1.50%
13	Animals	2	0.33%	1	0.16%	3	0.50%
14	Miscellaneous	9	1.5%	4	0.66%	13	2.16%
Total		326	54.290%	274	45.610%	600	100%

#### 4.2.2. Age Differences

The divorce oath is exclusively used by the members of the second three categories (age 19 and above). Only 0.66% of children and teenagers used the divorce oath. Swearing by body organs is mostly used by people falling between 6-35 (the first two categories). See table ( 8 ) below.

**Table (8) Frequency and Distribution of the objects sworn by According to Age**

No.	Object Sworn by	Age								Total	
		6-18		19-35		36-50		51& over			
		Fr eq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.
1	Allah and Allah's Attributes	61	10.16 %	53	8.83%	54	9%	47	7.83%	215	35.83%
2	Prophets	15	2.5%	17	2.83%	20	3.33%	22	3.66%	74	12.33%
3	Holy Books	11	1.83%	12	2%	12	2%	14	2.33%	49	8.16%
4	Divorce	4	0.66%	13	2.16%	14	2.33%	12	2%	43	7.16%
5	Family and relatives	12	2%	13	2.16%	10	1.66%	6	1%	41	6.83%
6	Important People	6	1%	9	1.5%	10	1.66%	12	2%	37	6.16%
7	Body Organs	11	1.83%	12	2%	6	1%	6	1%	35	5.83%
8	Moral Values	6	1%	11	1.83%	9	1.5%	5	0.83%	31	5.16%
9	Food Items	5	0.83%	7	1.16%	6	1%	8	1.33%	26	4.33%
10	Important Places	2	0.33%	2	0.33%	3	0.5%	6	1%	13	2.16%
11	Objects of the Globe	2	0.33%	2	0.33%	3	0.5%	4	0.66%	11	1.83%
12	Important Dates	1	0.16%	3	0.5%	2	0.33%	3	0.5%	9	1.50%
13	Animals	0	0%	1	0.16%	1	0.16%	1	0.16%	3	0.50%
14	Miscellaneous	2	0.33%	3	0.5%	5	0.83%	3	0.5%	13	2.16%
Total		138	23%	158	26.33%	155	25.83%	149	24.83%	600	100%

#### 4.2.3. Geographical Location Differences

Bedouins showed conservation in swearing by body organs. On the other hand, Bedouins recorded double the oaths represented food items compared with those used by people living in urban places. When I asked some of the chief tribes about the reason, they told me that Bedouins in general make every effort to get food. They struggle and roam different places searching for pasture and water. So food items, especially dairy products, are highly appreciated by them. See table ( 9 ) below.



**Table (9) Frequency and Distribution of the Objects Sworn by According to Geographical Location**

No.	Object Sworn by	Geographical Location						Total	
		Urban		Rural		Bedouin			
		Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.
1	Allah and Allah's Attributes	62	10.33%	79	13.16%	74	12.33%	215	35.83%
2	Prophets	21	3.5%	28	4.66%	25	4.16%	74	12.33%
3	Holy Books	16	2.66%	20	3.33%	13	2.16%	49	8.16%
4	Divorce	12	2%	17	2.83%	14	2.33%	43	7.16%
5	Family and relatives	9	1.5%	17	2.83%	15	2.5%	41	6.83%
6	Important People	10	1.66%	16	2.66%	11	1.83%	37	6.16%
7	Body Organs	13	2.16%	15	2.5%	7	1.16%	35	5.83%
8	Moral Values	12	2%	11	1.83%	8	1.33%	31	5.16%
9	Food Items	6	1%	8	1.33%	12	2%	26	4.33%
10	Important Places	3	0.5%	4	0.66%	6	1%	13	2.16%
11	Objects of the Globe	2	0.33%	3	0.5%	6	1%	11	1.83%
12	Important Dates	2	0.33%	4	0.66%	3	0.5%	9	1.50%
13	Animals	0	0%	1	0.16%	2	0.33%	3	0.50%
14	Miscellaneous	4	0.66%	4	0.66%	5	0.83%	13	2.16%
Total		172	28.630%	227	37.770%	201	33.460%	600	100%

#### 4.2.4. Social Status Differences

The results did not show any noteworthy results. See table ( 10 ) below.

Table (10) Frequency and Distribution of the Objects Sworn by According to Social Status

No.	Object Sworn by	Social Status																				Total	
		Doctors		University Professors		School Teachers		Laborers		University Students		School Children		Traders		Farmers		Shepherd		Without a job			
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%		
1	Allah and Allah's Attributes	20	3.33	14	2.33	16	2.66	26	4.33	28	4.66	33	5.5	24	4	20	3.33	21	3.5	13	2.16	215	35.83
2	Prophets	2	0.33	3	0.5	6	1	9	1.5	10	1.66	13	2.16	10	1.66	11	1.83	6	1	4	0.66	74	12.33
3	Holy Books	2	0.33	1	0.16	3	0.5	7	1.16	6	1	15	2.5	2	0.33	5	0.83	5	0.83	3	0.5	49	8.16
4	Divorce	1	0.16	2	0.33	3	0.5	10	1.66	6	1	9	1.5	7	1.16	3	0.5	1	0.16	1	0.16	43	7.16
5	Family and Relatives	1	0.16	3	0.5	5	0.83	7	1.16	6	1	6	1	7	1.16	3	0.5	2	0.33	1	0.16	41	6.83
6	Important People	1	0.16	1	0.16	3	0.5	10	1.66	4	0.66	7	1.16	6	1	3	0.5	1	0.16	1	0.16	37	6.16
7	Body Organs	0	0	1	0.16	4	0.66	5	0.83	6	1	6	1	4	0.66	6	1	1	0.16	2	0.33	35	5.83
8	Moral Values	2	0.33	2	0.33	3	0.5	5	0.83	6	1	4	0.66	3	0.5	1	0.16	1	0.16	4	0.66	31	5.16
9	Food Items	0	0	0	0	2	0.33	3	0.5	5	0.83	5	0.83	2	0.33	5	0.83	2	0.33	2	0.33	26	4.33
10	Important Places	0	0	0	0	2	0.33	3	0.5	2	0.33	2	0.33	1	0.16	1	0.16	1	0.16	1	0.16	13	2.16
11	Objects of the Globe	0	0	0	0	2	0.33	2	0.33	1	0.16	2	0.33	1	0.16	1	0.16	1	0.16	1	0.16	11	1.83
12	Important Dates	0	0	0	0	2	0.33	2	0.33	0	0	2	0.33	1	0.16	1	0.16	0	0.16	1	0.16	9	1.50
13	Animals	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.16	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.16	0	0	1	0.16	3	0.50
14	Miscellaneous	0	0	0	0	2	0.33	3	0.5	1	0.16	2	0.33	2	0.33	1	0.16	1	0.16	1	0.16	13	2.16
Total		29	4.8	27	4.47	53	8.8	93	15.45	81	13.46	106	17.63	70	11.61	62	10.28	43	7.27	36	5.92	600	100%

### 4.3. Analysis of Social Taboos

Only 78 Taboo Words were recorded in this study representing 13% of the total number of oaths. Social taboos (56.41% ) Sexual taboos (43.58%). See table ( 11 ) below.

**Table (11) Frequency and Distribution of the Taboo Words.**

No.	Taboos	Total	
		Freq.	Per.
1	Social Taboos	44	56.41%
2	Sexual Taboos	34	43.58%
Total		78	100%

#### 4.3.1. Social Status Differences

People who occupy prominent jobs did not use nonsensical expressions and used the least number of this type (2.560% for doctors versus 2.560% for university professors). On the contrary, school children, university students and laborers, who hit the highest point of using oaths, recorded the uppermost percentage of using taboo expressions (20.500%, 14.100%, 12.810%). See table ( 12 ) below.

Table (12) Frequency and Distribution of Taboo Words According to Social Status

No.	Taboos	Social Status																				Total	
		Doctors		University Professors		School Teachers		Laborers		University Students		School Students		Traders		Farmers		Shepherd		Without a job			
		Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.		
1	Social Taboos	2	2.56%	2	2.56%	5	6.41%	6	7.69%	6	7.69%	7	8.97%	5	6.41%	4	5.12%	4	5.12%	3	3.84%	44	56.41%
2	Sexual Taboos	0	0%	0	0%	3	3.84%	4	5.12%	5	6.41%	9	11.53%	6	7.69%	3	3.84%	2	2.56%	2	2.56%	34	43.58%
Total		2	2.560%	2	2.560%	8	10.250%	10	12.810%	11	14.100%	16	20.500%	11	14.100%	7	8.960%	6	7.680%	5	6.400%	78	100%

### 4.3.2. Gender Differences

Eleven oaths of the overall number of cases were social taboo expressions produced by females whereas males recorded triple this number of oaths.

Females did not use any sexual expressions. In contrast, males recorded 34 cases which proves again that females are more polite than males. See table ( 13 ) below.

**Table (13) Frequency and Distribution of the Taboo Words According to Gender.**

No.	Taboos	Gender				Total	
		Male		Female			
		Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.
1	Social Taboos	33	42.30%	11	14.10%	44	56.41%
2	Sexual Taboos	34	43.58%	0	0%	34	43.58%
Total		67	85.880%	11	14.100%	78	100%

### 4.3.3. Geographical Location Differences

Bedouins recorded the least number of taboo expressions while about double this number was recorded in urban and rural places. A Bedouin chief tribe attributed this result to the legal cost Bedouins may give in return of using such expressions. See table ( 14 ) below.

**Table (14) Frequency and Distribution of the Taboo Words According to Geographical Location.**

No.	Taboos	Geographical Location						Total	
		Urban		Rural		Bedouin			
		Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.
1	Social Taboos	19	2.43%	16	2.05%	9	1.15%	44	56.41%
2	Sexual Taboos	13	1.66%	13	1.66%	8	1.02%	34	43.58%
Total		32	41.02%	29	37.17%	17	21.79%	78	100%

#### 4.3.4. Age Differences

Children and teenagers recorded the highest number of taboo expressions (34 oaths representing 43.580%). See table ( 15 ) below.

**Table (15) Frequency and Distribution of the Taboo Words According to Age.**

No.	Taboos	Age								Total	
		6-18		19-35		36-50		51& over			
		Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.
1	Social Taboos	18	23.07%	12	15.38%	8	10.25%	6	7.69%	44	56.41%
2	Sexual Taboos	16	20.51%	8	10.25%	7	8.97%	3	3.84%	34	43.58%
Total		34	43.580%	20	25.630%	15	19.220%	9	11.530%	78	100%

## CHAPTER FIVE: LINGUISTIC FEATURE ANALYSIS

### 5.1. Introduction

The findings of linguistic feature analysis in this study fall into four major parts:

1. Phonological Features
2. Lexical Features
3. Syntactic Features
4. Standard versus Nonstandard

#### 5.1.1. Phonological Features

Words in the corpus on which this study is based have been thoroughly investigated in relation to rhyme and alliteration. They are considered as significant musical tools serving as attention-attracting devices in the language of oaths. They are used or quoted as eye-catching words to create a center of attention to the reader. This agrees with Al-Khatib (1998: 85) who regards both rhyme and alliteration as attention- getting devices.

##### 5.1.1.1. Rhyme

أبود وسبع جدود.

*ab-buud usabç ijduud*

I swear by the seven ancestors.

وحياة هالغروب وكسرات القلوب.

*wiHyaat halighruub 'ukas-saraat ligluub*

By this sunset and the catastrophes.

والله اللي لا ينهال و لا ينكال.

*wa allaahi illi laa yinhaal ulaa yinkaal*

I swear by Allah Who has never been heaped up or weighed.

### 5.1.1.2 Alliteration

وحياة شهر شعبان الفضيل.

*wiHyaat shahir shaçbaan alfaDiil*

I swear by the holy month of Sha'ban..

أرحمة روح رئيسنا أبو عمار.

*'uraHmit roaH ra'iisnaa 'abu çam-maar*

By the mercy enveloped the soul of our president Abu Ammar.

## 5.2. Lexical Features

### 5.2.1. Repetition and extra emphasis

علي الطلاق، علي الطلاق.

*çalay-yi ilTalaaq çalay-yi ilTalaaq*

The divorce have effect on me, the divorce have effect on me.

والله العظيم، والله العظيم.

*wallahi ilçaDHim wallahi ilçaDHim*

I swear by Allah the Almighty, I swear by Allah the almighty

والله ثم والله.

*wallaahi thum-ma wallahi*

I swear by Allah, I swear by Allah.

والله وتالله وبالله.

*wallahi watallahi wabillahi*

I swear by Allah, I swear by Allah, I swear by Allah.



### 5.3. Syntactic Features

On the syntactic level, the data have been investigated according to sentence classes.

#### 5.3.1 Sentence Type and Discourse Functions

##### 5.3.1.1. Statements

##### 5.3.1.2. Commands

##### 5.3.1.3. Questions

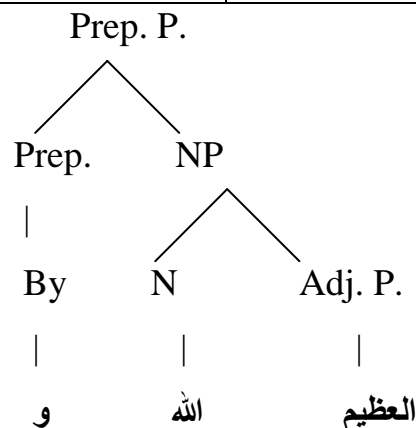
##### 5.3.1.4. Protasis

##### 5.3.1.1. Statements

Statements are realized linguistically by a covert 1st person pronoun followed by a preposition then the object sworn by followed by the speech act as exemplified in this table:

$S \rightarrow NP [V+swear] Prep. P.$

Oath in Arabic	Transliteration	Oath in English	Structure
أقسم بالله.	<i>uqsim billaah</i>	I swear by Allah.	Covert 1st Person Sing Pron + V + P.P.
أقسم برب الكون.	<i>'uqsim birab alkoan</i>	I swear by the Lord of the globe.	Covert 1st Person Sing Pron + V + P.P.
أقسم بالله العظيم.	<i>uqsim billaah alḥaDHiim</i>	I swear by Allah the Great.	Covert 1st Person Sing Pron + V + P.P.+ Adj



##### 5.3.1.2. Commands

Commands are linguistically realized by two forms

- 1) Base form verb followed by a preposition then the object sworn by.
- 2) Base form verb followed by (a preposition) and a possessive adjective then the object sworn by.

Oath in Arabic	Transliteration	Oath in English	Structure
قُولِ وَالله.	<i>quul wallah</i>	Say "by Allah".	V + Prep + N
إمسِكْ عَلَى شَنْبِكَ. إمسِكْ شَنْبِكَ.	<i>'imsik çala shanabak</i>	Hold your moustache.	V + Covert 2 <sup>nd</sup> Person Singular Pro. + Prep + N
إحلف بشرف أمك.	<i>'iHlif bisharaf 'am- mak</i>	Swear by your mother's honour.	

### 5.3.1.3. Questions

Questions are linguistically realized by three forms:

- 1) Preposition followed by the object sworn by followed by a noun and a possessive pronoun.
- 2) Preposition followed by a base form verb.
- 3) Preposition followed by a base form verb followed by a covert second person singular pronoun followed by a preposition then a noun and an overt second person pronoun.

Oath in Arabic	Transliteration	Oath in English	Structure
----------------	-----------------	-----------------	-----------

بشرف أمك؟	<i>bisharaf 'amak</i>	Do you swear by the honour of your mother?	P.P. + N + Possessive Pro.
بحياة خواتك؟	<i>biHyaat xawaatak</i>	Do you swear by your sisters?	
بتحلف؟	<i>ibtiHlif?</i>	Do you swear?	Prep + V + Covert 2nd Person Pronoun
بتمسك على شنبك؟	<i>ibtimsik çala shanabak?</i>	Will you hold your moustache?	Prep + V + 2 <sup>nd</sup> Pers Pron + V1 + Possess Pron + N

Checking the seriousness of others to ascertain the truth being transmitted through using the interrogative form is common in the Jordanian culture as in this dialogue between two children:

أبوي اشترى سيارة جديدة كلفته عشرين ألف دينار.

*abuuy ishtaraa say-yaraa ijdiideh Haqhaa kal-lafatuh çishriin 'alf diinaar*

My father bought a new car cost him JD twenty thousand.

بحياة خواتك؟

*biHyaat xawaatak*

Do you swear by your sisters?

بتحلف؟

*ibtiHlif?*

Do you swear?

بتمسك على شنبك؟

*ibtimsik çala shanabak?*

Will you hold your moustache?

بشرف خواتك؟

*bisharaf xawaatak*

Do you swear by the honour of your sisters?

#### 5.3.1.4. Protasis

Conditionals are syntactically realized by two forms:

1. Verb base form followed by a covert 2<sup>nd</sup> Person pronoun followed by an adjective (divorce word) then the conditional particle followed by a preposition followed by base form verb then second person singular pronoun followed by a prepositional phrase and a noun then a second person singular pronoun.
2. Verb base form followed by a noun followed by a preposition followed by a noun then the conditional particle followed by a negative past verb phrase and a second person singular pronoun.

Oath in Arabic	Transliteration	Oath in English	Structure
تكوني طالق إذا بتروحي على دار أهلك.	<i>itkuuni Taaliq iḏaa bitruuHi çala daar 'ahlik</i>	You would be divorced if you went to your family's house.	V + Covert 2 <sup>nd</sup> Person pronoun + Adj. + If + Prep. + V + Prep. + P.P. + N + Covert 2 <sup>nd</sup> Person P.
أكون شنبى على مرة إذا ما ربيتك.	<i>'ikuun shanabi çala mara 'ḏaa maa rabeitak</i>	My moustache would be a woman's if I did not discipline you.	V + N + Prep. + N + If + VP + Covert 2 <sup>nd</sup> Person pronoun

#### 5.4. Standard Versus Nonstandard

Holmes (2001:29) argues that "people generally admire the high variety even when they can't understand it. Attitudes to it are very respectful. It has prestige in the sense of high status". Jordanian society can be considered as a diglossic community. Two language varieties are used in Jordan; standard and colloquial Arabic. People in Jordan may switch code within a social situation to achieve a particular function. Jordanians, in general, express generosity and selflessness in a variety of ways. Inviting others to take food or offering the front seat in a vehicle to be occupied by a friend requires, sometime, the use of a minced oath in which standard and colloquial Arabic are used side by side. About 92% of the oaths were recorded in informal situations. See table ( 16 ) below.

The following dialogue is an explanatory example of both standard and nonstandard Arabic forms in the examined data.

(س): تعال إركب قدام

*taçaal 'rkab qud-daam*

X: Come and take the front seat.

(ص): لا والله غير إنت اللي تركب.

*laa wal-laah gheir 'inta 'il-li tirkab*

Y: No, I swear by Allah you take the front seat.

(س): وحياة اللي جمعنا من غير ميعاد غير تركب

قدام.

*wiHyaat 'il-li jamaçnaa min gheir miçaad gheir tirkab qud-daam.*

X: By the life of Who joined us without prior arrangement you will take the front seat.

(ص): يا زلمه خلص إركب إنت.

Y: You take the front seat.

*yaa zalameh xalaS 'rkab 'inta*

(س): أقسم بآيات الله غير تركب قدام.

*uqsim bi'aayaat allah gheir tirkab qud-daam.*

X: I swear by the miracles of Allah you will take the front seat.

Other examples are the following:

أقسم بالله العظيم.

*'uqsim bil-laah alçaDHiim*

I swear by Allah the Almighty.

أعزة الله.

*'uçiz-zat allaah*

I swear by the glory of Allah.

بتحلف بشرف أمك؟

*btiHlif bisharafak 'am-mak*

Do you swear by your mother's honour.

أقسم برب الكعبة.

*'uqsim birab alkaçba*

I swear by the Lord of *kaçba*.

**Table (16) Frequency and Distribution of the Degree of Formality.**

No.	Taboos	Total	
		Freq.	Per.
1	Formal	44	7.33%
2	Informal	556	92.66%
Total		600	100%

#### 5.4.1. Gender Differences

Males recorded about 62% nonstandard oaths of the total number against 31% for females. See table ( 17 ) below.

**Table (17) Frequency and Distribution of the Degree of Formality According to Gender.**

No.	Taboos	Gender				Total	
		Male		Female			
		Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.
1	Formal	21	3.5%	23	3.83%	44	7.33%
2	Informal	369	61.5%	187	31.16%	556	92.66%
Total		390	64.990%	210	34.990%	600	100%

#### 5.4.2. Geographical Location Differences

The least number of formal oaths was recorded in Bedouin places (**0.33%**). The three geographical locations showed convergent results related to nonstandard oaths with about 185 oaths for each. See table ( 18 ) below.

**Table (18) Frequency and Distribution of the Degree of Formality According to Geographical Location**

No.	Taboos	Geographical Location						Total	
		Urban		Rural		Bedouin			
		Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.
1	Formal	23	3.83%	19	3.16%	2	0.33%	44	7.33%
2	Informal	186	31%	184	30.6%	186	31%	556	92.66%
Total		209	34.830%	203	33.820%	188	31.320%	600	100%

### 5.4.3. Age Differences

Children and teenagers recorded the least percentage of formal oath expressions. See table ( 19 ) below.

**Table (19) Frequency and Distribution of the Degree of Formality According to Age.**

No.	Taboos	Age								Total	
		6-18		19-35		36-50		51& over			
		Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.
1	Formal	4	0.66%	8	1.33%	15	2.5%	17	2.83%	44	7.33%
2	Informal	135	22.5%	176	29.3%	137	22.83%	108	18%	556	92.66%
Total		139	23.160%	184	30.650%	152	25.310%	125	20.820%	600	100%

#### **5.4.4. Social Status Differences**

The study did not show any significant results. See table ( 20 ) below.



Table (20) Frequency and Distribution of the Degree of Formality According to Social Status

No.	Taboos	Social Status																				Total	
		Doctors		University Professors		School Teachers		Laborers		University Students		School Students		Traders		Farmers		Shepherd		Without a job			
		Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.		
1	Formal	2	0.33%	7	1.16%	13	2.16%	2	0.33%	6	1%	4	0.66%	4	0.66%	2	0.33%	1	0.16%	3	0.5%	44	7.33%
2	Informal	31	5.16%	22	3.66%	37	6.16%	87	14.5%	77	12.83%	102	17%	63	10.5%	62	10.33%	44	7.33%	31	5.16%	556	92.66%
Total		33	5.49%	29	4.82%	50	8.32%	89	14.83%	83	13.83%	106	17.66%	67	11.16%	64	10.66%	45	7.49%	34	5.66%	600	100%

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **6.1. Findings and Recommendations**

The purpose of the analysis of this study is to investigate the language of oath making in Jordan taking into consideration variables such as age, gender, education, social status, formality, informality and place of residence. The study aims at identifying the linguistic functions the oaths represent besides the objects sworn by in addition to the phonological, lexical and syntactic features they stand for. The analysis has revealed that oath making fulfills four linguistic functions among which emphasis constituted the prevailing one. Furthermore, the analysis has shown that fourteen objects are used with oath expressions three of them, which represent the religious domain, are more frequently sworn by than others.

##### **6.1.1. Sociolinguistic Functions**

1. Emphasis is the most dominant function. It constituted 53.5% of the overall number of oaths. Expressing humiliation, on the other hand, represented only 7.83%.
2. Both males and females recorded convergent results with regard to expressing emphasis. On the other hand, males used more humour oaths than females.
3. Females nearly abstained from using humiliating expressions whereas males had the lion's share concerning this function.
4. Children and teenagers recorded less frequent use of praise expressions due lack of experience in recognizing their significance.
5. Bedouins used few oaths related to humiliation for they know very well the legal price of degrading and disrespecting others.
6. People who occupy prominent jobs used the least number of oaths whereas school children, university students and laborers reached the peak of using oaths.

## **6.2. Linguistic Features**

### **6.2.1. Sentence Type and Discourse Functions**

The most frequent class of sentence is the statement followed by conditionals then commands and finally question.

### **6.3. Phonological Features**

Rhyme and alliteration are mainly employed as musical tools serving as attention-attracting devices in the language of oaths. The number of rhymed oaths and alliteration is very limited in this study. Only six cases have been encountered.

### **6.4. Lexical Features**

1. The three most frequent objects sworn by in the examined corpus are swearing by Allah, prophets and the holy books. These three categories comprised more than 56% of the examined data. This is attributed to the religious background of Jordanians.
2. The figures showed close results in most of the objects sworn except three categories; body organs (1% for females versus 5% for males), divorce (0% versus 7%) and moral values (0.5% versus 4.55) This denotes that females are more conservative in swearing by such objects.
3. The divorce oath is exclusively used by people above 19. Only 0.66% of children and teenagers used the divorce oath. Swearing by body organs is mostly used by people falling between 6 and 35.
4. Bedouins showed conservation in swearing by body organs. On the other hand, Bedouins recorded double the oaths represented food items compared with those used by people living in urban places.

5. Only 78 oaths have been recorded in this study representing 13% of the overall number of oaths that stand for social and sexual taboos.
6. Eleven oaths were social taboo expressions produced by females whereas males recorded triple this number of oaths.
7. Females did not use any sexual expressions. In contrast, males recorded 34 cases which proved that females are more polite than males.
8. People who occupy prominent jobs did not use nonsensical expressions and used the least number of taboo expressions. On the contrary, school children, university students and laborers recorded the uppermost percentage of using this type of oaths.
9. Bedouins recorded the least number of taboo expressions while about double this number was recorded in urban and rural places which is attributed to the legal cost Bedouins may give in return of using such expressions.
10. Children and teenagers recorded the highest number of taboo expressions compared with the other age categories.
11. About 92% of the oaths were recorded in informal situations.
12. Males recorded about two thirds of nonstandard oaths of the total number against one third for females.
13. The least number of standard oaths was recorded in Bedouin places. The three geographical locations showed convergent results related to nonstandard oaths.
14. Children and teenagers recorded the least percentage of standard oath expressions.

15. Repetition, as a narrative device, has been used for the purpose of emphasis.

Only three cases have been encountered representing 0.5% of the overall number of oaths.

## **6.5. Recommendations**

Due to the importance of the issue of oath making and in light of the previous discussions and conclusions, the following recommendations may prove useful for future research.

1. As this study is mainly and exclusively concerned with oath making in North Jordan, it is recommended that future research investigates this linguistic phenomenon in other areas of Jordan.
2. A study of oath making from a psycholinguistic perspective is recommended.
3. More research on oath making in other places of the Arab world is recommended.
4. Comparative studies with other cultures should be conducted.

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## دراسة لغوية اجتماعية لتعابير القسم المستخدمة في المجتمع الأردني

إعداد

عبد الباسط عبد الله حسين

إشراف أ.د. محمد عواد

هذا البحث عبارة عن دراسة لغوية اجتماعية لتعابير القسم المستخدمة في المجتمع الأردني. هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى معرفة الوظائف اللغوية التي تمثلها تعابير القسم المستخدمة والأشياء التي يقسم بها الناس والنسب المئوية التي تمثلها إضافة إلى سماتها اللغوية والنحوية والصوتية. وقد اشتملت الدراسة على (٦٠٠) قسم تم جمعها من أماكن متفرقة في شمال الأردن. تضمنت الدراسة عدة متغيرات مثل الجنس والموقع الجغرافي والفئة العمرية إضافة إلى الموقف الذي استخدم فيه القسم سواء كان رسمياً أم غير رسمي. وقد أظهر تحليل البيانات أن تعابير القسم تحقق أربع وظائف لغوية مثل التأكيد أكثر من نصفها بينما مثل التحقير أقلها ونسبة دون (٨%). وقد مثلت التعابير المحظورة ما نسبته (١٣%) من عددها البالغ (٧٨) قسماً وقد أظهرت الدراسة أن الإناث كن أكثر تأدباً من الذكور فيما يتعلق بتعابير القسم المتعلقة بالعبارات الاجتماعية و الجنسية المحظورة حيث كشفت أن (١١) تعبير فقط من العبارات المحظورة اجتماعياً كانت للإناث مقابل (٣٣) تعبير للذكور. أما العبارات الجنسية المحظورة فقد مثلت تعابير الذكور منها (٤٣ و ٥٨%) فيما لم تسجل الإناث أية عبارة تذكر. أما من حيث الأشياء المقسم بها والتي كان عددها (١٣) فقد احتلت الأشياء المتصلة بالدين أكثر من النصف فيما كان القسم بالحيوانات أقلها ومثل فقط نصف في المئة. من ناحية أخرى بينت الدراسة أن أصحاب الوظائف المرموقة كانوا الأقل في استخدام القسم مقارنة مع أصحاب المهن الأخرى حيث سجل طلاب المدارس والجامعات والعمال النسبة الأعلى. وقد كشف تحليل البيانات أن أكثر من (٩٢%) من تعابير القسم المستخدمة تمت في مواقف غير رسمية.

## APPENDIX

*Please fill this questionnaire carefully and meticulously. Your Cooperation is highly appreciated.*

This questionnaire aims at studying and analyzing the oath expressions used by Jordanians within their own local circles of families and friends, place of work and means of transportation. The study specifically seeks to answer the following questions:

- 1- Do the type and frequency of oath making differ significantly in terms of gender, age and social status?

- 2- Do both genders use the same language functions?
- 3- What are the differences between urban, rural, and Bedouin oaths?
- 4- Do female oaths show more politeness than male oaths?
- 5- Do the types of oaths and the frequency of making them differ significantly in terms of formal and informal discourse?
- 6- What are the linguistic features that characterize oath expressions?

Gender			
Male		Female	

Age							
6-18		19-35		36-50		51-above	

Geographical Location			
Urban		Rural	

Situation in which the oath was used	
Formal	Informal

Occupation: .....

Oath:

.....

.....

### For the Researcher's Use The Objects Sworn by

Allah	prophets	People	Relatives	Divorce	Body Organs	Food Items	Holy Books	Dates	Natural Phenomenon	Places	Values	Animals	Miscellaneous

Linguistic Function			
Emphasis		Praise	

Phonological Features	Rhyme	
	Alliteration	

Lexical Features	Taboos	
	Social	Sexual

Sentence Class			
Statement		Command	

Syntactic Formula: .....

**يرجى تعبئة هذه الإستبانة بدقة وعناية شاكرا لكم حسن تعاونكم.**

تهدف هذه الإستبانة إلى دراسة وتحليل تعابير القسم المستخدمة من قبل المواطن الأردني في أماكن تواجده داخل الأسرة وضمن المحيط الاجتماعي ومكان العمل وفي المواصلات العامة...الخ. وبالتحديد تسعى الإستبانة إلى الإجابة على الأسئلة التالية:

١. هل نوع وتكرار القسم يختلف بشكل أساسي من حيث الجنس والعمر والمكانة الاجتماعية؟
٢. هل يستخدم الذكور والإناث نفس الوظائف اللغوية للأيمان المستخدمة؟

٣. هل هنالك فرق بين الأيمان المستخدمة في المدينة والبادية والريف؟  
 ٤. هل تميل الإناث إلى التأدب أكثر من الذكور في الأيمان المستخدمة من قبلهن؟  
 ٥. هل يوجد فرق بين الأيمان المستخدمة في المواقف الرسمية وغير الرسمية؟  
 ٦. ما هي الخصائص اللغوية التي تميز تعابير القسم؟

الجنس			
ذكر		أنثى	

العمر			
١٨-٦	٣٥-١٩	٥٠-٣٦	٥١ فما فوق

المنطقة			
مدينة	قرية	بادية	

الموقف الذي استخدم فيه القسم			
رسمي		غير رسمي	

المهنة: .....

نص القسم:

.....  
 .....

#### لاستخدام الباحث

الأشياء المقسم بها:

لغة	الرسائل	أشخاص	أقارب	الطلاق	الجسم	أعضاء	الطعام	أنواع	السمولية	الكتب	تواريخ	كيفية	ظواهر	مهمة	أماكن	قيم الحياة	حيوانات	متفرقات

الوظيفة اللغوية			
التأكيد	الفكاهة	الإعجاب	التحقير

السمات الصوتية	السمات السجع
	الجناس

السمات المفرداتية		التعابير المحظورة
	اجتماعية	جنسية

نوع الجملة			
خبرية	أمر	استفهام	شرط

الصيغة النحوية: .....