

Research Article

A Comparative Study of Pejoration in English and Egyptian Vernacular Arabic from a Historical-Sociolinguistic Approach

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Pejoration is an under-researched topic in the Arabic language. This study intends to examine pejoration in Egyptian Arabic, as well as its domains and causes. The study employs a socio-semantic approach for pursuing in-depth investigations of pejoration in Egyptian Arabic. Pejoration was contextually traced with the purpose of revealing how contextual realities, including historical, social, cultural, and even ethical norms, could contribute to the pejorative meaning of given linguistic expressions. The present used a mixed methodology combining qualitative and quantitative approaches. It has been discovered that pejoration in Egyptian Arabic has fallen into several domains such as morphological, prosodic, lexical, metaphorical, and pragmatic through conversational implicature and through slurs. The metaphorical extension of meaning has largely influenced the pejoration process in Egyptian Arabic, and it was found to be high in lexical items charged with sexual connotations. Nouns are more prone to pejoration than adjectives and verbs. Pejoration is largely represented in the vernacular discourse, which contributes to the notable gap between Modern Standard Arabic and Egyptian colloquialism.

1. Introduction

Pejoration is characterized as a type of lexical-semantic change. Words acquire unfavorable connotations that are not inherent in their etymologically original meaning scope. Pejoratives are lexical units, the meanings of which reflect a negative attitude of the members of a given society to the object or phenomenon of reality that they designate. It is understood as a shift in the evaluation of a phenomenon from positive to negative. Pejoration in Egyptian Arabic has recently become a problematic linguistic phenomenon, which has contributed to widening the lexical gap between Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic. In Arabic, the lexical-semantic change is often coupled with polysemy, in which one word may have more than one sense [1–4]. Classical Arabic poetry includes numerous lexical items, the meanings of which have recently been degraded in Egyptian Arabic. The new senses can continue to coexist stably with

the older ones, or they may supplant earlier senses, thereby “taking over” the meaning of the word [5] (p.5). To illustrate, Zaydān [6] stated that the noun “ayn” has 35 senses in Classical Arabic (54). Reference [7] (n.d.372) recorded several senses of ayn such as material support, spring of water, cash money, truth, reality, happiness and delight, and survey. In modern Egyptian Arabic, “ayn” has degraded to mean a jealous person. However, the traditional Arabic studies have focused their attention on polysemy with a less consideration on pejoration as a type of semantic-lexical change [8–10]. In addition, the modern Arabic studies have focused generally on semantic shift with a little interest in studying pejoration. In addition, those studies examining pejoration were abstract in nature and did not examine it exhaustively in Arabic (e.g., [11–15]). There are few studies addressing the semantic differences between the Classical Arabic and vernacular speech and how the vernacular speech could largely contribute to making pejoration in

Arabic (e.g., [16–18]). Even the most comprehensive study done by Stetkevych [19] stated that “in our present inquiry into the newer semantic developments in the Arabic language we shall not take into consideration such extreme differences as those existing between the classical meanings and their colloquial offspring” (67). That is to say, the systematic studies in Arabic addressing the different forms of pejoration are few and limited in their scope. These studies lack using a systematic approach for examining pejoration in Arabic, as they were based on highlighting pejoration in some lexical Arabic items.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate pejoration in the Egyptian Arabic from a historical socio-semantic perspective. It focuses on how the concrete classical items in Arabic have been degraded in meaning when they are abstracted. In other words, a linguistic phenomenon such as a pejoration in Arabic depends largely on the mental development and external changes and influences affecting the conscious and subconscious minds of nations, which ignited the process of pejoration at the vernacular speech level. Anis [20] addresses the issue of the semantic change from the concrete to the abstraction, focusing on the development of the human mind and how it affects the reproduction of new meanings and new concepts for the words. “To him the trend of semantic abstraction accompanies the evolution of the human mind along the course of its growth and maturation” (p.69). To achieve its end, the study addresses descriptions of pejoration on the lexical, phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic levels. Additionally, this study examines the sociolinguistic types of pejoration such as social and moral pejoration to explore how the process of abstraction is processed. In this respect, Stetkevych [19] writes that “Al-Maghribi sees the language as a sociological organism whose growth and evolution are analogous to the growth and evolution of a people or nation” (p.6). Al-Maghribi’s sociological treatment of the Arabic language accounts for the growth and development of Arabic language to derivation from Arabic roots (al-ishtiqaq) and assimilation of foreign vocabulary (al-ta’rib) (p.6). In other words, the semantic change occurred through derivation, which is based on the approximation of older vocabulary to new meanings. However, most of the pejorative lexical items in this study are based on the figurative semantic extensions (al-wad’ bi-almajāz).

This study starts from the premise that pejoration in Egyptian Arabic is predominantly fallen into vernacular discourse. Therefore, a further attention has been given to reveal the connections between vernacular discourse and the Classical Arabic on the one hand and the relationship between the Egyptian vernacular discourse and the sociolinguistic aspects through which pejoration affects people’s perception of the Classical Arabic on the other hand. The vernacular speech has recently been spoken extensively in Egypt among both elite and ordinary Egyptian citizens. “In regard to the language, the argument of evolution in the positive sense is quite often applied even to the emergence of colloquial dialects, to their pressure upon the literary language, and to the subsequent threat of a breach with it” [19].

Ono and Sloop [21] define vernacular discourse as “speech that resonates within local communities. This discourse is neither accessible in its entirety nor is it discoverable, except through texts. However, vernacular discourse is also culture: the music, art, criticism, dance, and architecture of local communities” (p. 20). The overuse of vernacular discourse in media, TV programs, movies, public speech, and so on has largely contributed to undermining the status of fusha (or the Classical Arabic) among the Egyptians. The lack of new teaching methods for teaching Arabic in the Egyptian schools also weakened the status of fusha among the Egyptian learners of Arabic. Therefore, the study attempts to answer the following questions: what is the kind of the relationship between the contextual realities and the pejorative meaning in the Egyptian Arabic? In what ways are Arabic lexical items historically changed? How is a pejorative meaning different from MSA and fusha? What are the different types of pejoration in Egyptian Arabic?

2. Review of Literature

Numerous studies dealt with pejoration in various languages and dialects, but there is a scarcity of studies on pejoration in Arabic. Finkbeine et. al [22] remark that “in terminological dictionaries, you will find that pejoration is defined as a semantic property of verbal expressions triggering negative or derogatory connotations” (1). Pejoration starts to occur when words of higher status, both ethically and prestigiously, are relegated historically to words of lower status. “It occurs when a word is used to express negatively loaded values not inherent in its historically original (or historically prior) meaning scope” [23]. Grygiel and Kleparski [24] argue that pejoration is put into force through the extralinguistic elements that engulf the gap between meaning and the external world (89). Beaton and Washington [25] argue that pejoration can be identified by the context surrounding the meaning of the lexical items. In the same vein, Nelson [26] states that pejoration depends strongly on the sociohistorical context.

Finkbeiner et. al [22] remark that “there is not much systematic investigation of pejoration (1).” They write that “Yet there are two tendencies in recent linguistics that have fostered a renewed interest in pejoration (2).” The proponents of the first tendency, including Potts [27] and Gutzmann [28], argue that pejorative language is expressive. Potts attributes six properties to pejorative language: independence, nondisplaceability, perspective dependence, descriptive ineffability, immediacy, and repeatability. These features indicate that pejorative expressions are independent realms of language, as the pejorative connotation is inherent in the lexical item, and context has a diminishing role in identifying pejoration. Gutzmann [28] states that pejoration can be subsumed under the category of expressives. Expressives are defined as a set of words and expressions that convey evaluative attitude and emotions with a high degree of affectedness (4). Finkbeiner, Meibauer, and Wiese note that “pejoration is associated with a cognitive attitude and thus part of a conceptual domain distinct from language. Pejoration is constructional, which is linked to individual

evaluative elements. This attitude can be expressed through language and realized through linguistic means (2).” In this way, Voyer and Techentin [29] state that pejoration may result from a speaker’s ironical tone, which can be easily noticed in the speaker’s accent, pitch, offset, etc. The pejorative tone is also known as unfriendly prosody. “Pejorative meaning can be conveyed through morphological processes of compounding as well as derivation” [30] (p. 2).

However, the proponents of the second tendency [30–35] examined the semantics and pragmatics of ethnic slurs that occur within the context of hate speech. Pejoration is often empowered by its contextual realities. Wedgwood [36] focused on pejoration in moral terms and expressions, and he evaluates lexical items in relation to their rationality and comprehensibility, clarity, meaningfulness, or isolation from the external realities. When meanings are isolated from the external realities, they are incomprehensible and meaningless. Pejoration is identified by the contextual realities surrounding the speakers and hearers. This observation indirectly implies that pejoration develops and grows in a context that is made up of cultural, historical, and social elements. Therefore, pejoration represents how individuals can project the sociocultural realities of their world onto the meaning of words. Greenberg and Harman [37] focused on the conceptual role in semantic change, as the meanings of words are determined by their use. Conceptual role semantics states that meaning results from speakers’ merging thoughts with the symbols representing the words themselves through perceptual representation, recognition of implications, modeling, inference, labeling, categorization, theorizing, planning, and control of the action. In other words, pejoration is a cognitive process governed by the conceptual framework of the speaker, hearer, and world. That is to say, pejoration can be represented in the form of pragmatics where “pragmatic parameters such as speech acts, implicature, and deixis (indexicality) can represent one of the forms of pejorative meaning” [22, 38]. Pejoration can also be represented by a text as a whole, which can take the form of propaganda articles, cyber mobbing, and so on. More importantly, “any semantic change occurs due to a certain association between the old and new meanings, and linguists note three mechanisms of changing the meaning of a word: (1) displacement, association-based shift by similarity, hidden comparison (metaphor), or transfer relative to proximity or adjacency of meaning (metonymy); (2) expansion or narrowing of meaning (generalization and specialization); and (3) connotation (amelioration and pejoration)” [39–41].

3. Theoretical Framework

To address the questions of the study and its problems, this study applied a special lexical-historical and sociological study approach of Stetkevych [19] focusing on Classical language to verify the extent to which the process of abstraction and conceptualization has contributed to the pejorative meanings in the vernacular Egyptian Arabic. Arabic language is a culture-bearing language, which is highly

conceptualized, as the majority of lexical items, which are classically concrete, can be semantically changed through abstraction. Etymology in Arabic addresses how the concrete semantic history of the classical Arabic items is lexically shifted through the process of the linguistic abstraction within the formal scheme of derived molds. Stetkevych [19] writes that “It was agreed that the coining of new vocabulary falls essentially into the realm of *ishtiqaq* and is made up of one of the following principles.” These principles are as follows:

- (1) Actual derivation from existing roots
- (2) Figurative semantic extension (*al-wad’ bi-almajaz*) or through the revival of archaic vocabulary (*gharbib al-lughah*)
- (3) Coining of neologisms, *al-ishtiqaq al-man’awr* or *al-ishtiqaq bi-al-tarjamah*

However, in this study, I focus mainly on how the phenomenon of figurative semantic extension (*al-wad’ bi-almajaz*) played a major role in the pejorative meaning of vernacular Egyptian Arabic. Furayhah [12] states that the figurative semantic extension includes the phenomenon of *al-tas’id*, a form of semantic raising to higher levels, “by which concrete words are abstracted to a conceptual level.” Concrete words are to be semantically elevated or degraded through conceptualization. “Who would nowadays associate the word *reason* (*aql*) with a rope made of hair which was used to tie a camel’s leg? All meanings have their first concrete, tangible stage, but with the progress of life and intellect—and considering the limited number of lexical units—man find himself obliged to use the old lexicon for new meanings by way of semantic extension” [19] (p. 68). Stetkevych [19] writes that “the abstract, conceptualized meaning neither necessarily excludes the primary meaning nor the secondary, metaphorical one. It contains all the semantic possibilities of a word in its many aspects” (69). For example, the classical meaning of the word “*inhadr*” is to “descend” or “to come down” and it was originally limited to the physical act of descending or coming down the slope. However, the word has gained a pejorative meaning through abstraction, as it collocates with “*akhlaqi*” that refers to “*inhidar akhlaqi*,” a moral degradation. In such a context, pejoration is figurative, based on abstraction. Another expression, “*washa*” originally means “to embroider, as a garment; to adorn something”. The word has undergone a semantic degradation through a metaphoric extension as it collocates “*washa*” with “*alkalam*,” which means to adore one’s words with falsehood. In this way, contextual realities surrounding the diachronic development of lexical items are to be considered, including the conceptual role of semantics through which pejoration can be identified by recognizing implications, modeling, inference, labeling, and categorization [42–45].

The socio-semantic historical framework focusing on the transformation from abstract to concrete requires us to study pejoration in Egyptian Arabic through phonological, prosodic, morphological, lexical, metaphorical, and pragmatic analysis. Phonological pejoration is represented in

ironical tone where many prosodic elements constitute the impression of prosodic pejoration, e.g., accent, pitch, length, and offset. Pejorative speaking is understood as expressing a negative attitude and degrading the person or object spoken about [46–48]. This type of pejoration relates to the tone of the speaker that reflects his perception. “When considering speech perception, most people would likely agree that the tone of voice used to produce an utterance is relevant to some extent to interpret its meaning” [29] (p.227). Prosody is defined as “the melodic contour and rhythm of speech” [49] p. 73). Identifying the prosodic tone depends on the sounds of the speakers ranging from sarcastic, neutral, or sincere. In addition, prosodic pejoration is governed by “non-linguistic features mainly include paralinguistic features, such as the expression of attitudes and intentions, but also the involuntary disclosure of information about the speaker’s sex and age, as well as his current emotional state” [47] (p. 23).

Pejorative meaning in Egyptian vernacular discourse can be conveyed by morphological processes of compounding and derivation. Compounding is known as *naht* where a single new word is formed out of two different words, which are conveniently shortened (*manhut*). To illustrate, compounding in Arabic has been reflected in many words such as “*dar’ami*,” “*hawqalah*,” “*basmagi*,” “*turshagi*,” “*baltagi*,” and “*turshagi*.” Pejoration in the vernacular discourse can be shown either in the head; sometimes, non-head is pejorative, and the derivational pejoration is made by expletive insertion. In other words, the pejorative meaning in the vernacular Egyptian is made by compounding two words, which contributed to making a single word with a new meaning out of two different words. The types of “*naht*” used include *al-naht al-wasfi* where suffixes and prefixes are added to lexical items forming new words with a pejorative meaning, e.g., “*basmagi*,” an illiterate or ignorant person, and a thug *baltagi*. Another type of *naht* that causes pejorative meanings is “*al-naht al-iismi*” where two words are compounded together making a new meaning such as *kus umak*, fuck your mother, *ibn mitnaqah*, son of bitch, *arb’ah rishah*, and Egyptian Copts as the nominal compounding attach to them derogatory connotations. In addition, “*al-naht al-nisbi*,” the relative compounding, is applicable to numerous derogatory words in the vernacular Egyptian such as “*mashkalji*,” troublemaker, “*qawmaji*,” nationalistic, “*turshagi*,” pickler, “*kuftagi*,” meat baller, “*shurbaji*,” soap maker, “*watnji*,” patriotic, “*Arbaji*,” vulgar, and “*khudraji*,” a green grocer. “*Al-naht al-nisbi*,” the relative compounding, expresses the relation of somebody or something to a place, profession, and so on. Though these words are based on *al-naht al-nisbi*, the relative compounding expresses the relation of someone to a profession; they are used in vernacular Egyptian speech to describe someone with a bad quality. To illustrate, “*turshaji*” refers to untidy and disorganized man, “*kuftagi*” refers to unprofessional person, and so on. *Naht* is used extensively in the Egyptian colloquialism to express pejorative mean.

Pejoration in Egyptian Arabic is also examined through the conceptual metaphor of Lakoff and Johnson [50]; Lakoff and Turner [51]; and Kövecses [52]. Lakoff and Johnson

define the term metaphor as “understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another” or as a mapping or set of correspondences between two conceptual domains to which they refer as the source and target domains. Pejoration is derived from the power of irony, which often emerges by the contradiction between literal content and vocal expression [47, 53, 54].

This study focuses on the pragmatic potential of such pejoratives in a text that implies actualizing negative emotions and evaluative meanings (disgust, abhorrence, indignation, condemnation, etc.) and making a statement ironic or sarcastic. Finkbeiner et al. [22] argue that “negative evaluation is expressed in speech acts. For instance, slurring may constitute such a pejorative speech act” (7). Slurs are conceived of as illocutionary force indicating devices that may signal—in certain contexts—that an act of slurring has been carried out [30, 55–57]. Finkbeiner et al. [22] argue that “pejoration may arise indirectly, e.g., by conversational implicature” (8). This study also adopts Kleparski’s [58] classification of pejoration, which is made up of the following elements: social pejoration, aesthetic pejoration, behavioural pejoration, and moral pejoration. However, it specifically focuses on social pejoration and moral pejoration. Through resorting to the historical semantic framework of analysis, the study focuses on tracing pejoration in different types of semantic fields, such as the moral semantic field, and the sexual semantic field in contemporary Egyptian Arabic [59–62].

4. Methodology

The study resorted to using a mixed methodology combining qualitative and quantitative approaches, which is based on observation of the lexical-historical change occurring to the vernacular Egyptian speech. The methodology used is based on an authentic material that describes accurately how the Egyptians understand and use the Arabic language in their daily speech and how the difference is between the Modern Standard Arabic and the Egyptian vernacular speech. Indeed, there is no corpus that has collected the vernacular Egyptian speech because Arabic corpora have focused on both the Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic. There is a wide gap between the meaning of the lexical items in the Classical and Modern Standard Arabic and the Vernacular Egyptian speech. Therefore, the online translation programs fail to decode the meanings of vernacular Egyptian speech. Facebook algorithms do not succeed in deciphering the colloquial Egyptian Arabic used in Facebook. Accordingly, the researchers were obliged to collect the corpus of the study manually from interviews with Egyptians, asking them about how to use a number of words in their daily lives based on a discursive framework. The researchers also used authentic videos on YouTube that describe the authentic life of the Egyptians and their natural speech. These interviews and videos were the only available channels that provide me with the limited corpus of my study. To assert the principle of pejoration in the Egyptian vernacular speech, the collected data were examined in their context. Each pejorative item is proven by its context. The

number of the pejorative lexical items under this study is few. Therefore, the sample of the study is not representative. However, this is due to several reasons. Firstly, there is no Arabic corpus concerned with the authentic Egyptian vernacular speech. Tracing pejoration in Arabic does not require examining a huge amount of words, as focusing on only one a number of words in vernacular Arabic can be representative. The main objective of this study was to draw the attention of the researchers and lexicographers toward the sharp meaning difference between Modern Standard Arabic and vernacular Egyptian speech. Therefore, focusing on the pejoration at a narrow scale can be helpful and guiding to the phenomenon. Therefore, this study employed a descriptive analysis methodology, including observation, comparison, and interpretation of the obtained facts, setting the scene for a clear idea of the linguistic phenomenon under study.

4.1. Research Data

4.1.1. *Data.* Data are collected by examining selected authentic videos spoken by both ordinary and elite Egyptian speakers. These videos represent different channels of vernacular discourse ranging from Electro Mahragan songs, which is a genre of Egyptian electronic dance music, sexy phone calls, popular Egyptian movies, talk shows, traditional songs, and religious TV programs.

4.1.2. *Criteria Used for Collecting Data.* The criteria used for collecting data can be summed up as follows: (1) saliency: it explains how the selected data are important to demonstrate pejoratives; (2) comprehensiveness of data: the collected data belong to both formal Arabic language and dialectal terms and expressions. The collected data trace pejoration in both Classical Arabic and vernacular speech. (3) Scope of distribution: how available and popular data are. The pejorative words are used by bloggers, films, fiction, and in people's daily conversations. (4) The historical extension of the data: the collected data belonged to the period of Classical Arabic and the period starting from the twenty-first century. (5) The indexicality of language: the collected data consider the condition in which pejorative meaning has replaced the original meaning in Classical Arabic.

4.2. Procedure of Analysis

4.2.1. *The First Step.* The first step is collecting pejoratives in the Egyptian Arabic in both vernacular discourse and MSA.

4.2.2. *The Second Step.* Pejorative items are detected in YouTube, a channel that represents an authentic source for contextually tracing pejorative meaning.

4.2.3. *The Third Step.* The pejorative items detected in YouTube channels are historically traced using the Doha Historical Dictionary of Arabic that helped trace pejoration

occurring to a set of Classical Arabic words and how different their meanings are from the past to the present.

4.2.4. *The Fourth Step.* Dividing the collected data, namely pejorative lexical items, into different types of pejoration, as each type is not only determined by certain linguistic features but also by contextual realities. The contextual realities surrounding the pejorative lexical items can be demonstrated. The analysis of the pejorative lexical items takes into account the dominating cultural values of the speakers, the historical period in which the pejorative is articulated, the pitch and the tone of the pejorative lexical items, the situation of the pejorative item, and whether it is sarcastic, comic serious, or neutral, which help us understand the nature of pejoration in the Egyptian Arabic, its types, and its development and its impact on MSA and the Classical Arabic. To illustrate, when identifying phonological pejoration, one should determine both the speaker's context and pitch and tone. Pejoration in pragmatics is often identified by contextual realities surrounding the situation as a whole. Metaphorical extension of meaning causing pejoration is conceptually reframed into the mind of the speaker. Reframing process rested upon the contextual realities surrounding the speakers.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1. *Phonological Pejoration.* The prosodic features of the 12 lexical items are analyzed in Table 1. Each of the 10 words was put into two sentences, one Standard Arabic and one Egyptian vernacular with the pejorative sense. In this study, the WASP application version 1.80 was used. WASP application is actually a spectrogram for recording, displaying, and analyzing speech, developed at University College London. This software was utilized to precisely identify the prosodic features of each given word in both its standard neutral/positive sense and its pejorative sense. Based on the results obtained from this software, the length of the Egyptian vernacular pronunciation was slightly shorter in duration than the MSA pronunciation; i.e., the tempo was faster. They also show that pitch is a lot higher in the vernacular.

In Table 1, prosodic pejoration has been clearly reflected in the following items.

Ex.1: in Classical Arabic, in *Lisan al-Arab Dictionary*, *khibrāh* means "knowledge and experience." By the end of the twentieth century, *khibrāh* has had a semantic shift in the vernacular Egyptian Arabic, especially when it is used with a sarcastic tone, as the meaning of which has been degraded and it becomes equivalent to slut girl. To illustrate, let us consider the following dialogue taken from an Egyptian movie titled, "*Al-tagrūwbah al-dinmarkīyah*" *Danish Experience*, starred by Adel Imam, which can give an example of how neutral words can be degraded and acquire sexual connotations through metaphorical extension of meaning. Adel Imam: Bahaa (the groom) *shāklūh mish hā-yashār-fanah. Il-līlādī, bī-ilkītīr ha-yadīha missed call, būs yad inta wā hūa, awaz youm gawzkūm, kul wahid fikim yū'af fī*

TABLE 1: Prosodic pejoration.

	Lexical item	Neutral tone, meaning in classical and MSA transliteration	Sarcastic tone, pejorative meaning
Ex. 1	Khibrah	Knowledge	“Khibrah” means slut or perverted girl
Ex. 2	Rakab	To amount the back of a horse, to ride a camel, to travel, to make up his mind	To fornicate someone
Ex. 3	Lūbu’ah	“Lioness”	A prostitute
Ex. 4	Shimal	Left	A prostitute
Ex. 5	Bī’ah	Environment	A rude and low-class, and vulgar people
Ex. 6	Barakah	“Blessings,” “plenty,” prosperity	An elderly worthless man
Ex. 7	Mūtakhalif	Means lagging behind	A backward or mentally retarded
Ex. 8	Ars	A court of a house	A pimp
Ex. 9	Bālah	“Unripe green date”	An asshole guy
Ex. 10	Shādh	A stray man irregular	A homosexual

alkūsha dhai al-‘asd. Bahaa, it seems that he will not be able to deflower her tonight; instead, he will give her a missed call. Look, my boys, I want you to be like lions at your wedding parties. His son: bus ya-bābā, al-arūsa dhai al-asdah. Look my father, the bride seems to be like a lioness (connotative of a whore). The father: al-wād bayin alih ha-yahnag il-līlād. The groom seems to be unable to deflower the bride. The bride: hahhhhhh (laughs with a sexual overtone). The bride laughed with sexual overtones staring at the family members of Imam. The father and his sons: ilbint dī khibra, khibra, khibra, al-ad’a di mish ad’a awal dūkhla. She is an unchaste girl, a slut, a slut; it seems from her posture that she is not a virgin. Abbas (Stepfather of the bride: eib, eib, ‘alikūm, intum gayāin ti-bawzū al-farh. Shame upon you! Shame upon you! you have come to spoil the wedding party. The father (addressing Hamdi, the father of the groom): shūf ya-hamdi ana amīl khatīrk, wa-khatīr - ibnak, wa-khatīr ilbint al-khibrah di, il dhai alas! fāg’ah al-gad’a dah a’m hābib fīna dhai al-wābūr, mīn dah-ya-hamdi? Look, Hamdi, I am just considering your feelings, the feelings of your son, and the feelings of this beautiful slut girl. However, this man started shouting suddenly at us out of the blue. Who is this man? Hamdi: da Abbas, jūiz um al-arūsa. He is Abbas, the stepfather of the bride. The father: ah hūa dah al-mīrabyīha, a’shan kidah ilbint tīlāt khibrah. Oh, he is the one who brought her up so that she becomes a slut. The father addressing the bride: mish inti khibrah yahabibi. Lol, Are not you a slut? The bride: ah ana khibrah ahi’a ahi’a, ah’a. Yes, I am a slut! Hahahha. The stepfather: khibrah eih ya u’s taz, ihna arūstana khibrah, dī safalah, wa l’alt adab. Slut, what do you mean sir? You mean that our pride is slut? What you say is brusque and lacking decorum. Before analyzing the dialogue, it is important to set the background to the dialogue. The context is a wedding party where Adel Imam and his four sons were present in a wedding party. The situation is that the bride starts dancing in a sexual style at the presence of the attendees that attracts the attention of Imam’s family. The whole situation was comic and cynical. A clear example of how words of positive semantic values have recently been degraded and have acquired sexual connotation is the Arabic word “khibrah,” which is frequently used in the above dialogue. In vernacular Egyptian speech, the noun “khibrah” converts into adjective and becomes equivalent to “slut.” What is obviously remarked is that the context has reshaped and colored the meaning of a lexical

item and made it compatible with the current sociological realities.

In the above dialogue, the lexical item, “yashrafanah,” which is derived from the root, “sharaf” an equivalent of “honor,” has been contextually degraded to mean “to deflower his bride.” The concept of honor is no longer focused on the chastity of the girl, but it has come to include the ability of the groom to deflower his bride at the wedding night. This may reflect the change in the value system and the mores of the contemporary Egyptian society. In Classical Arab Community, the concept of honor has nothing to do with the ability of the groom to deflower his bride. Patai [63] writes that “what is even more remarkable is that the sharaf of men depends almost entirely on the ird of the women of their family. True, a man can lose his sharaf by showing lack of bravery, or by lack of hospitality” (100). In the ancient Arabic culture, “honor” refers to courage, hospitality, pride, dignity, and protecting the ird. However, in contemporary Egyptian Arabic, the scope of meanings has been enlarged to include even sexual connotation.

The question posed here is as follows: how can the audiences’ collective minds detect the sexual connotation in such moral terms and expressions such as khibra and sharaf? How can Egyptians perceive moral terms and expressions with the meaning of unchaste girl, sexually perverted girl? The idea to be addressed is why khibrah is used frequently in the media and in vernacular speech with the meaning of slut. The semantic lexical change occurring to the lexical items dealing with women is attributed to dominating social and culture values [64, 65]. In addition, the sexual connotation in khibrah can be interpreted in relation to conceptual metaphor. Khibrah is equivalent to an expert. The concept of experience is degraded to imply sexual connotation. As such, “khibrah” has become equivalent to a sexually active woman who is experienced in having lavish promiscuous sexual relationships.

Most importantly, why is “khibrah” given such a sexual and immoral connotation despite the fact that the term in itself has no connection with sex or sexuality? This can be analyzed in connection with the theory of conceptual blending [66], which helps explain the complex reasoning process that provides the juxtaposition of differing pragmatic associations found in such a term as khibrah. It seems that pejoration is affected by the surrounding realities and the societal schema of the semantically degraded words [67]. The socially

degraded words are conceptually constituted into the minds of the receptors due to changes in the social structure of societies in which morals and ethics have deteriorated and lost their values in the eyes of people. Miller and Swift [69] (p.50) argue that language is a cultural vehicle that reflects the current societal values. Language has turned into a vehicle that transmits the ideology of a society and its culture, as the lines of demarcation between culture and language have disappeared. Actually, language has not been derogated, but the societal and cultural values have. The situation was comic and sarcastic as well. There is a discrepancy between the literal meaning of the words and the social context [68] (p. 124). In the pejorative sense, the pitch is significantly higher, and the utterance duration is smaller. In Egyptian Arabic, the high pitch can be regarded as a kind of irony. Pejorative meaning is both figurative and prosodic in the sense that there is a metaphoric extension to the meaning. The figurative extended meaning has gained its pejoration from its phonological change that gives it a sarcastic tone.

Ex. 2. In the Classical Arabic, *rakab*, based on a neutral tone, means “to subdue, to amount the back of a horse, to ride a camel, to travel, to make up his mind.” Pejoration is a figurative based on the transformation from concreteness to abstractness. The concrete concept of *rakab*, which means “to amount the back of a horse or an animal,” has been conceptually abstracted that refers to have a sexual intercourse with a woman or man. That is to say, the word has been semantically changed into a different meaning with a pejorative meaning in the vernacular Egyptian Arabic that means “to fornicate.” Contextually, in an interview with more than 50 Egyptians belonging to different classes of the society, they were asked about the vernacular meaning of the word “*rakab*” and they almost agreed that it means to fornicate someone. The interviewed group also explains that in the vernacular Egyptian Arabic, “*markūb*,” which is the participle of “*rakab*,” has two meanings: the first is gay and the second is shoes. The interpretation of meaning is based on both of the tone of the speaker and the context in which the lexical item has been articulated. “*Rakabni al-mūrgiyaha*” is a collocation used metaphorically that portrays the sexual intercourse as a kind of playing on the swing.

Ex. 3. In the Classical Arabic, *lūbu’ah* refers to “lioness.” In Modern Standard Arabic, it means a prostitute. It is phonologically changed from *lūbu’ah ti labwaha*. “Contextually, it is semantically degraded to mean, a prostitute.” Pejorative meaning is inextricably linked to the phonological change from *lūbu’ah* to *labwah*.

Ex. 4. In the Classical Arabic, *shīmal* refers to left. Almighty God said that “When the two receivers receive, seated on the right and on the left” (Surat qaf, 17). In vernacular Egyptian, *shīmal* means prostitute.

Ex. 6. In the Classical Arabic, *bi’ah* is derived from the Arabic root *ba’ah*, which means to acknowledge and admit. It has recently changed to mean “an environment.” In MSA, it refers to an environment. In vernacular Egyptian, *bi-bi’ah* is used to describe immoral, rude and low-class, and vulgar people.

Ex. 7. In the Classical Arabic, “*barakah*” refers to blessings, plenty, and prosperity. It also refers to the milking sheep. “*Barakah*” has recently degraded in the vernacular Egyptian Arabic that it refers to an elderly worthless man. It also refers to a naïve person and mentally retarded people.

Ex. 8. In the Classical Arabic, *mūtakhirif* means lagging behind. Almighty God said, “And [He also forgave] the three who were left behind [and regretted their error] to the point that the Earth closed in on them” (Altawba, 118). In MSA, *mūtakhirif* means a mentally retarded.

Ex. 9. In the Classical Arabic, *ars* refers to a court of a house. It also means “to dry the meat” by putting it into an open space. It also refers to a large piece of wood used for making the ceiling. In vernacular Egyptian Arabic, it means Pimp.

Ex.10. In the Classical Arabic, *balah* refers to “unripe green date.” This word maintains its classical denotation. In vernacular Egyptian Arabic, it has gained a different and degraded connotation, which means “an asshole guy.”

Ex. 11. In the Classical Arabic, *shādh* refers to the swarming locusts, a stray man, and irregular terms and expressions. The lexical item *shādh* has semantically degraded as it is used to refer to “homosexual” or “gay.”

5.2. *Morphological Pejoration.* Table 2 is explained as follows.

Ex. 1. Head is pejorative. Alkhoury [70] states that *kus* is a vernacular Arabic word that means vagina. It acquired a derogatory and insulting connotation when it is compounded with the *ʾp*, which is equivalent to mother. It means “son of bitch.” *kus u’maq* is considered to be one of the most widespread taboos in Egyptian culture, which means “fuck your mother.”

Ex. 2. Non-head *mitnākah* is pejorative. In the Classical Arabic, *mitnākah* is derived from the root, *nak*, which was originally used as a polite expression that means “to have sexual intercourse with one’s own wife.” “It also means to fall asleep and to rain.” The word has recently lost its polite form and turned into a taboo, and it has become publicly avoided as it is classified as a taboo. So, *ibn Mitnāqah* means son of bitch.

Ex. 3. Head *hāl* “is pejorative.” *Hāl sha’raha* is composed of two lexical items: *hāl wa sha’raha*. When they are compounded together, *hāl* gives a pejorative meaning, which means a slut who breaks the code of conduct of her society.

Ex. 4. Non-head “*rishah*” is pejorative. In the Egyptian vernacular discourse, “*arb’ah rishah*” refers to the Egyptian Christians, which is a religious satire against the Copts.

Ex.5. Non-head *zarkah* is pejorative. In the Egyptian vernacular discourse, *azmah zarkah* is a pejorative description that refers to Christians as slaves and second-class citizens. It also has a satirical tone. *Azmah* means bone, and *zarkah* means dark blue. However, when they are compounded, they are purposefully used to satirize the Christians of Egypt, dehumanize them, and relegate them to a lower status like slaves.

Ex. 6. Head *Tawīl* is pejorative. In the Classical Arabic, the expression *Tawīl ‘alyad* refers to a generous person. This positive meaning is clearly stated in a prophetic Hadith, as

TABLE 2: Compounding (naht) and derivational pejoration.

	Compounding	Type of compounding
Ex. 1	Kus u'maq	Head is pejorative
Ex. 2	Ibn mitnāqah	Non-head pejorative
Ex. 3	Hal sha'raha	Head is pejorative
Ex. 4	Arb'ah rishah	Non-head pejorative
Ex. 5	Azmah zarkah	Non-head pejorative
Ex. 6	Tāhat al-tārbydhaza	Head is pejorative
Ex. 7	Tawīl 'alyad	Head is pejorative
Ex. 8	Basmaji	Derivational compound by adding the suffix "ji" to the end of "basma" to be basmaji
Ex. 9	Baltaji	Derivational compound by adding the "suffix" "ji" to the end of the word "balta." "Balta" means an ax.

Prophet Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him) uses the expression Tawīl 'alyad, as a metonymy for generosity, kindness, and gratitude. However, it has recently been degraded in its semantic value to mean a light-fingered or sexual harasser.

Ex. 7. Basmaji is a derivational compound by adding the suffix "ji" to the end of "basm" to "basmji." Basmji is a part of a vernacular discourse, which has recently been used in MSA, and it also means illiterate.

Ex. 8. Baltaji is a derivational compound by adding the "suffix" "ji" to the end of the word "baltah." "Baltah" means an ax. Baltaji is used in both vernacular discourse and MSA to mean thug or bully.

5.3. *Lexical Pejoration.* The pejorative meanings of these lexical items are identified by their contextual realities. Some of these lexical items derive their pejorative meanings from metaphorical conceptual domains, or metaphorical extension of meaning, social values, culture-specific matters, religious references, and symbols. Therefore, the lexical pejoration can be represented in the Egyptian Arabic by the following categories: metaphorical conceptual domains, social values, and culture-specific matters, and religious references and symbols.

5.3.1. *The Conceptual Metaphor and Pejoration of Female-Related Terms in Egyptian Arabic.* There are many examples of lexical items that have been recently derogated through the metaphorical extension of meaning and the majority of these terms are female-related terms of abuse. The female pejorative terms are mostly fallen into the figurative dimension of the language use [26]. The conceptual metaphor has been traced in the pejorative meaning of several lexical items connoting prostitution and sexuality, as shown in Table 3. The study proposed the following model for analyzing the metaphor of prostitution in Egyptian vernacular discourse.

Metaphor of prostitution can be subsumed under the following models.

- (A) The metaphor of physical riding or amounting a human body
- (B) The metaphor of sexual ecstasy
- (C) The metaphor of shame and vice resulting from committing an immoral act of sexual intercourse

Ex. 1. Shīmal means left. The conceptual metaphor of Shīmal has its roots in Qur'an, and its meaning is specifically derived from the Islamic religious background, as Almighty God said, "And the companions of the left—what are the companions of the left?" The companions of the left refer to vicious, immoral, and disobedient people. The negative implications of the word "left" have affected the collective consciousness of Muslims to the extent that they use it to describe everything vicious or immoral. Therefore, the metaphor of the concept "left" has been semantically extended to be an equivalent of "prostitute in the vernacular Egyptian discourse." The derogatory meaning has been coupled with a transformation from the concrete meaning of the lexical item Shīmal to its abstract meaning. What is remarkably noticed is that the process of the abstraction of the lexical items is distinguished for being reproductive, creative, and regenerative where a multitude of meanings can be produced from such a concrete lexical item. To illustrate, the concrete word, Shīmal, when it is abstracted it gets conceptually linked to numerous negative qualities such as prostitution, deception, and gayness.

Ex. 2. In Classical Arabic, Sāqitah refers to something falling down. Prophet Muhammad said that "Having gone to bed, encountering a fruit falling down on my bed, starting to eat it, I have abstained from eating it for fear that it may be a charity." Therefore, the metaphor of falling down is related to prostitution that makes a woman fall down from her higher and lofty position to a lower status. The metaphor of falling down is extended to include other meanings such as indecency.

It seems that the neutral lexical items have been charged with negative references when describing the woman and such negative evaluation is metaphorically extended to connote the negative perception [69]. Looking up the famous traditional Arabic lexicon of In Ibn Manzur [71], one can find that the word jarriyah was originally used to describe a little girl or a beautiful young woman or a virgin young beautiful girl, the meaning of which can be given in the following Hadith: the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said to his companion Gaber: "afla, jarriyah tūl'abuha wa tūl'abuk." If the contemporary reader attempts to understand the meaning of jarriyah as given in Modern Standard Arabic, they may misunderstand the speaker's message and distort it. The contemporary meaning of the word jarriyah refers to odalisque or concubine in harem. The classical meaning of the word used in the Prophetic

TABLE 3: Metaphorical extension of meaning and pejoration.

	Original meaning	Metaphorical extension and pejoration
Ex.1	Shīmal means left	The conceptual metaphor of shīmal has its roots in Qur'an
Ex.2	Sāqitah	In Classical Arabic, sāqitah refers to something falling down

Hadith is a beautiful virgin unmarried young girl. Therefore, the Hadith should be understood as follows: “You have to get married to a young, beautiful and virgin girl to court her and court you.”

5.3.2. *Women Are Animal Metaphors: Pejoration.* The names of animals have been subjected to pejoration through metaphorical extension when describing a woman. When addressing pejorative issues, it seems that there is a negative reciprocal relationship between women and animals [72, 73]. According to Lakoff and Turner [51], the animal metaphor’s mechanism is based on the Great Chain Metaphor; this is understood as a kind of cultural model that locates the different forms of being (human, animals, plants, complex objects, and natural). Kieltyka [74] suggests that the Great Chain of Being Metaphor allows us to comprehend general human character traits in terms of well-understood nonhuman attributes; conversely, it allows us to comprehend less well-understood aspects of the nature of animals and objects in terms of better-understood human characteristics. In the Egyptian vernacular discourse, the domain of animals provides a rich source for negatively charged meanings insulting women. Bergvall et al. [75] suggest that semantic derogation through metaphor is a power play designed to keep women in their linguistic place (Table 4).

Ex. 1. Būmah (owl) is a symbol of pessimism in Arabic culture. It always lives in abandoned and gloomy places; therefore, it is a metaphor describing woman as gloomy and ominous who turns her husband’s life into hell.

Ex. 2. Mi’azah (goat) is a metaphor for an ugly woman in Egyptian culture. The goat is notorious for its ability to corrupt the farms and spoil their harvests. In addition, the goat is also known for its ugly appearance. It is a symbol of ugliness in the Egyptian culture. These two qualities are metaphorically attributed to the woman. She is not only ugly but also spoils everything she encounters.

Ex. 3. Kalbah, doggess, is a metaphor for vicious, immoral, and bitch. This statement can be pragmatically interpreted in connection with conventional implicature that such a kind of job requires an immoral and vicious woman. This pejoration can be metaphorically analyzed in terms of conversational implicature, as it is conventional in the Egyptian culture that the dog has negative and insulting connotations when it is used to describe man or woman.

5.4. *Pejoration in Pragmatics: Pejorative Words Used as Slurs.* The Egyptian vernacular discourse abounds with pejorative words that are used as slurs and insulting words such as ars, balaha, bī’ah, and mūtakhalf and so (see Table 1). The lexical item falāh is equivalent to a farmer in MSA; however, it has acquired a negative connotation in vernacular discourse to mean an uncouth, crude, or ill-bred person. In the same

vein, the Arabic word Mu’alim, which is equivalent to teacher, has also been degraded to refer to low social scale jobs such as a butcher, greengrocer, and coffee shop manager. The Egyptian movies used the word “Mu’alim” extensively with meanings different from “teacher.” The conversational implicature can show the degradation in the lexical item “mu’alim.”

5.5. *Pragmatics in Pejoration: Conversational Implicatures.* Words such as bīh, afandi, and pasha were Turkish titles given to the locals during the Ottoman colonization of the Arab world. These titles were used to provide their holders with higher social status and privileges that ordinary people did not have. However, in the Egyptian vernacular discourse and sometimes in MSA, these words could have been used to address ordinary or normal people; sometimes, they are used to connote negative meaning. That is to say, Pasha is a Turkish title bestowed in Egypt on the landlords who owned large properties and real estate. The abolition of the feudal system in Egypt following the 23rd July Revolution was accompanied by the upheaval of social structure. Such a dramatic change in the social system was manifested in the language itself.

To illustrate, the word pasha was degraded to be given to any person with a low social status, and this can be directly revealed by conversational implicature. That is to say, in the Egyptian daily speech, including the language of the Egyptian movies, the language of contemporary mahraganat songs—the songs of mahraganat lie in the popular (sha’bi) neighborhoods and slums of Cairo—words such as pasha, sheikh, rayis, afandi, and bīh are used with a sarcastic tone, yielding opposite meanings. Borkowska and Kleparski [23] write that “Note that society often reverses itself over the course of time, and words—which were once disapproved of—may become respectable while others that had social favor may lose it” (p.37). To illustrate, Egyptians use the lexical item “pasha” as a title given to any person regardless of their social position, and the contextual reality is used as a parameter to identify the degree of pejoration. The Egyptians use the lexical item “pasha” when addressing a policeman, and it is also used when addressing a salesperson or even a friend or a stranger. It is used to convey a sarcastic message to the receiver. In the same vein, it can be used to connote sexual reference when addressing a female. In other words, it can be an equivalent of “guy,” but it has a sarcastic tone. In Classical Arabic, the lexical item shiyakh originally refers to an older man who is highly respected in his community or in his tribe. For example, people always use the expression, shiyakh al-qabiylah, when referring to the head of the tribe. Muslim jurists and scholars were also given this title. However, it was recently degraded to be used as a title for mocking people.

TABLE 4: Metaphorical extension and pejoration.

	Original meaning	Conceptual metaphor of animals and pejoration
Ex. 1	Būmah (owl)	Būmah (owl) is a symbol of pessimism
Ex. 2	Mi'azah (goat)	Mi'azah (goat) is a metaphor for an ugly woman in Egyptian culture
Ex. 3	Kalbah, doggess	Kalbah, doggess, which is a metaphor for vicious, immoral, and bitch

What is strikingly remarkable in the abovementioned examples is that the vernacular Egyptian speech employs dysphemism to give pejoratives. For example, the speaker uses the lexical item “asdah” instead of saying “labwah” to describe the bride as a slut. Dysphemism has become overlapped and intertwined with pejoration. The lexical Arabic item, “khibrah,” is also a dysphemism expression standing for the lexical item “slut” or “prostitute.” The same case applies to the lexical item “yashrafanah,” which is also a dysphemistic expression for “deflowering the groom at the wedding night.” Therefore, sometimes pejoratives are used as dysphemism expressions in the vernacular speech to communicate the message of the speakers both wittily and indirectly. The lexical items balahah, rakab, al-murjiyaha, saqitah, ars, shadh, and so on are all pejoratives of positive and neutral items, and their pejorative meanings have gone through dysphemism and conceptual metaphor. The makers of the vernacular Egyptian discourse have processed the pejorative meaning via using unconsciously dysphemism and figurative extension of meaning. Language cannot be processed without being related to its context; therefore, any attempt to understand why a neutral or positive word turns negative should be based on “a series of cognitive primitives such as prototype-based reasoning, including the activation of stereotypes, ideal cases, and radial categories” [51]. Ožóg [65] states that culture is responsible for shaping language in the minds of the receptors through its value system. In turn, Bynon [76] stresses the following:

It must not, on the other hand, be forgotten that the lexicon is the part of a language which has the most direct links with the spiritual and material culture of its speakers and that semantic developments may only be comprehensible by reference to the cultural background (63).

The social and cultural values of a society, the socioeconomic realities, and public discourse constitute the collective consciousness of people, which is mainly responsible for shaping the conceptual system of the users of a particular language. The cultural and moral disintegration and sheer condition of paradoxical value systems are always accompanied with relegating ethical and moral expressions to a degraded and lower status. The idea of repression including sexual, social, and political suppressions is often coupled with a psychological projection, which is reflected through pejorative meanings. The sexual repression entails charging neutral and moral words with sexual connotations.

6. The Limitations of the Study

The study focused only on pejoration types in vernacular Egyptian Arabic, and it does not address the causes of

pejoration in vernacular discourse adequately. In addition, the study did not explain why the pejoration tends to be existed in the vernacular Egyptian more than it exists in the Modern Standard Arabic.

7. Conclusion and Implications

Pejoration in the Arabic language can take the following linguistic forms: phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, textual, and discursive. Pejoratives are extensively shown in phonological pejoration. In the vernacular Egyptian Arabic, phonological pejoration can appear in prosodic pejoration, compounding pejoration, and derivational pejoration. Pejoration can be highly shown in prosodic examples where a sarcastic or ironical tone can be frequently used to cause pejoration for any given lexical item. Pejoration is highly represented in the vernacular discourse. The majority of these words are nouns followed by verbs and adjectives. Pejoration in Arabic can also be shown in the metaphorical extension of meaning. The conceptual metaphor has been shown in the pejorative meaning of several lexical items connoting prostitution and sexuality. Positive lexical items designating women have been charged with negative elements. Pejoration in pragmatics is extensively detected in the Egyptian Arabic. Pejoration in pragmatics can take several forms such as indirect speech acts, slurs, and conversational implicatures. The metaphorical method of derivation reveals the effectiveness of the etymology of the Egyptian vernacular discourse outside of the formal root derivation. In fact, it is not even a modern approach, since much of the early Classical Arabic terminology in theology, philology, and the sciences owes its existence to this method. The modern contributions to it are only one of the definition and of systematic analogical application. The moral and neutral lexical items have recently been turned into degraded terms and expressions concerning their own contexts.

Pejoration in Arabic can also be shown in the metaphorical extension of meaning. The conceptual metaphor has been shown in the pejorative meaning of several lexical items connoting prostitution and sexuality. The metaphorical conceptual domains or extension of meaning, social values, culture-specific matters, religious references, and symbols are considered significant avenues of pejoration in Egyptian Arabic. Metaphorically extended pejoratives are largely influenced by the dominating stereotypes, the social values, the culture-specific matters, the religious references, and symbols. Pejoration is largely represented in the Egyptian vernacular discourse, and it is frequently driven by the contextual realities surrounding the lexical item. The majority of the Classical Arabic lexical items may be subject to pejoration in the Egyptian vernacular discourse, and this

can be called temporal pejoration, and the pejoration in Egyptian vernacular discourse seems to occur at a high scale; however, it does not restrict the use of the classical meaning, nor did it replace it. The pejoratives in MSA are few, and in most cases, they maintain their original senses. Lexical items used to evaluate women are more prone to sexual pejoration than similar lexical items used to evaluate men. The metaphorical extension of meaning is highly stressed in the Egyptian vernacular discourse, where the names of animals, machines, and tools are metaphorically extended to be symbols of pejoration standing for women.

It is noticed that the pejoration process of moral lexical items has increased since later years in the twentieth century. It seems that pejoration is affected by the surrounding realities and the societal schema of semantically degraded words. The socially degraded words are conceptually constituted into the minds of the receptors due to changes in the social structure of societies in which morals and ethics have deteriorated and lost their value in the eyes of people. The degradation in meaning of Egyptian words can be attributed to two major causes, which are closely interdependent. The first major cause is the norms of socialization prevalent in the society, and the second is the attitude of individuals. The attitudes of individuals in a certain society are largely influenced by the norms of the prevalent social values and ethics. When the value system collapses, moral and ethical values are regarded by societies as signs of vulnerability, weakness, naivety, and foolishness. Therefore, people project their negative reception of the collapsed value system unconsciously onto the moral lexical items and strip these terms of their hitherto positive connotations and replace them with distinctly negative connotations. These social norms, value systems, and ethics would considerably shape the speakers' perceptions of lexical items.

8. The Recommendations of the Study

Since the Classical Arabic has been almost abandoned in schools and mass media and is sometimes publicly ridiculed, the pejoration in vernacular discourse can be turned into a threatening phenomenon for the next generations where the vernacular pejoratives are expanded substituting the Classical meaning in MSA. Therefore, the study recommends using more innovative methodologies for teaching Arabic in the schools. Mass media should present its programs using Classical and Modern Standard Arabic. The movies should also maintain an acceptable standard of the Arabic language. Several pejorative lexical items have already replaced the original meaning. The degradation of moral lexical items is a kind of unconscious revolt against the collapse of moral values and that people project their negative reception of the collapsed value system unconsciously onto the moral lexical items and strip these terms of their hitherto positive connotations. Words acquire new connotations that are mostly negative to make language consistent with its surrounding realities [77–79].

Data Availability

The data that support this study are available in the article.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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