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Four-letter Words and the Urdu Learner's Dictionaries in Pakistan

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Abstract

The paper aims to analyze the way the Urdu learner's dictionaries treat the taboo/four letter words. In the characteristic Pakistani context, most of the taboo words are related to sexual organs, acts and excretions.

In the present study, the macro- and micro-structures of the selected dictionaries have been analyzed to find out (i) whether the taboo words have been included or not (ii) whether meanings have been defined and exemplified in an appropriate manner. It was revealed that the treatment given to the taboo words in the dictionaries selected for investigation was shabby.

This is a matter of grave concern as it is tantamount to depriving the users of the much-needed information about the most important aspect of their lives – sex. It seems that these words have been treated in this way in the dictionaries under the misplaced notions of decency and modesty.

The paper concludes with the observation that the inclusion of the taboo words in the dictionary and provision of explicit and precise information on them will enhance the users' awareness of the word as well as the world.

1. Introduction

Taboo refers to such behavior as is not permissible within a given social context. For example, almost every known society imposes certain restrictions on sexual behavior. Some other major taboos include color, creed and food. Taboos are, in their true essence, social constructions. They are based on and defined by culturally sensitive social factors such as faith, food, sex, status and the like.

The scorn for taboos acts and objects is extended to the words referring to them. Society expects its members to avoid their use in public. Taboo words are considered to be 'obscene', 'offensive', 'vulgar', 'dirty', and even 'filthy' untimely.

A taboo word in society is avoided for fear of losing face by offending the sensibilities of the audience. As social beings, humans can ill afford to violate social conventions

without suffering adverse sanctions. Individuals, therefore, censor their verbal behavior so as to avoid giving offence except when they deliberately intend to offend (McArthur 1998:35). Let us take a solid example. The English loan word in Urdu *taksi* refers to a vehicle ‘taxi’ which may be hired. The word is also used derisively to refer to a woman who sells her body for sex. Note the rhyme ‘taksi’ and ‘sexy’!

One must not lose sight of the fact that for all the disparagement they may invoke, taboos are human behavior. Most of them refer to human instincts and biological functions. At times the need may arise to refer to taboos. In order to avoid public anger and to sound polite and save face, euphemistic words have been coined. For example, the lexical item ‘private parts’ is used to refer to ‘genitalia’ in English. In Urdu, the words *sharmgah* is a euphemistic term for human ‘genitalia’.

2. Sex and Dictionaries

Taboo words pose a peculiar challenge to the dictionary-makers who are faced with the dilemma whether to include the taboo words in their work or not (macro-structural aspect). Neither option is easy. The inclusion of taboo words in the dictionary may hurt the feelings of the public which the dictionary-makers can ill afford as it may mar their reputation and can have an adverse impact on the sale of the dictionary. The exclusion is against the dictates of their conscience since a dictionary is a repository of words, and taboo words are words after all. Interestingly enough, even if the dictionary maker dares to include the taboo words in the dictionary, the problem is far from being over. Another thorny issue crops up: how to define the taboo word (micro-structural aspect)? The lexicographer has to decide whether to define the taboo words by providing explicit and precise information about the taboo words or to use euphemistic words.

2. Urdu Learner’s Dictionaries

Learner’s dictionaries are very hard to come by in Pakistan as the user perspective has not been properly recognized. The blurbs of most dictionaries claim to cater for the needs of every kind of user, such as researchers, scholars, general users, students of all levels. However, the theoretical or empirical evidence needed to uphold the claim is lacking. Listed below are the dictionaries used in the study:

- a) *Jadeed Urdu Lughat- talbah kay liay* (2000) (henceforth the *Jadeed*): The *Jadeed* has been compiled by Ashraf Nadeem. It has been published by the National Language Authority, Islamabad which is an autonomous body working under the Federal Ministry of Education. The dictionary has been chosen for study in view of the fact that it is targeted at learners of Urdu at the secondary level.
- b) *Darsi Urdu Lughat* (2001) (henceforth The *Darsi*): This dictionary has been compiled by two renowned educationists, Muhammsd Ishaq Jalapuri and Taj Muhammad. It has been published by the National Language Authority, Islamabad. The dictionary has been chosen for study since it is targeted at learners as well as teachers of Urdu at the secondary and higher secondary levels in Pakistan.
- c) *Feroz-ul –Lughaat Jadeeds* (2007) (henceforth The *Feroz*): The dictionary has been published by a major publishing house, *Feroz Sons (Pvt) Limited*. It is based on the new computerized edition of the *Feroz-ul –Lughaat Jaame’* (1967) which has been approved for all government departments in Pakistan, including the Education Department. Its image and popularity is very high among learners.

All three dictionaries have been published in the 21st century when information technology has brought an influx of information. It is impossible to hide any kind of information including information on sex, from individuals.

3. The Investigation

In what follows, we shall analyze how dictionaries have treated lexicon related to sex.

3.1 First of all, lexical items relating to ‘penis’ were looked up in the three dictionaries. The search returned the following entries:

English equivalent	Jadeed	Darsi	Feroz
Penis	x	<i>uzv-i-tanaasul:</i> <i>jism ka woh hissah jo nasl baRhanay ka zaree’ah hay.</i> <i>Synonyms: zakar;</i> <i>aalah-i-tanaasul</i>	<i>i. aalt. 1 aalah 2. jehaaz ki rassi 3. bartan 4. aalah-i-tanaasul ka mukhaffaf</i> <i>ii. aalah-i-tanaasul: 1 nasl baRhanay ka auzaar 2 mard ka uzv-i-tanaasul</i> <i>iii uzv-i-tanaasul aala-e- tanaasul; zakar</i> <i>iv. zakar: 1.nar; mard 2 aalah-i-tanaasul</i>

3.1.1 The *Jadeed* does not contain any lexical item referring to ‘penis’. Judged by any standard, the exclusion is disturbing. It is not clear on what ground the compilers took the drastic decision. Perhaps they considered that the teenagers must not be exposed to the words relating to the ‘penis’ even in the print form. This is in sharp contrast with the science books for them which describe the whole reproduction system inside out with pictorial illustrations.

3.1.2 The only lexical item referring to ‘penis’ included in the *Darsi* is the Urdu word *uzv-i-tanaasul*. The entry contains its synonyms also (*zakar; aalah-i-tanaasul*) though they have not been made headwords in the dictionary for reasons known only to the compilers. The definition of the headword is very fuzzy: *jism ka woh hissah jo nasl baRhanay ka zaree’ah hay* (the part of body which is the source of reproduction). All of us know that various parts of body (internal as well as external) make up the reproduction system of males and females in men and animals. It is not clear as to which part, gender or species the definition refers. Also, this organ performs an excretory function - urination. However, the definition contains no reference to the excretory function. The correct definition would run as follows:

nar kay jism ka woh uzv jis say mani aur peshab kharaj hotay hain. (Tr: ‘the part of male body through which semen and urine are discharged’).

3.1.3 The *Feroz* contains four lexical items referring to ‘penis’. The first lexical item is *aalt*. The entry for *aalt* contains four meanings. It is the fourth sense which refers to ‘penis’. It seems that most of the users will not wade through the text to find out the appropriate sense since most users tend to end their search with the first sense (Iqbal 1987). The definition is not satisfactory as it merely leads to another entry: *aala-e-tanaasul*. The definition of the second lexical item *aala-e- tanaasul* is misleading: *nasl baRhanay ka auzaar* (‘a tool of reproduction’). There is a great difference between an *auzaar* i.e. ‘tool’ and an ‘*uzv*’ i.e. ‘organ’ of body.

Also, there is no reference to the gender. As hinted earlier, a number of parts of body make up the reproduction system of males and females in men and animals. The third headword *uzv-i-tanaasul* contains merely synonyms, making the definition a circular one. The fourth headword *zakar* also contains two senses: *nar; mard 2 aalah-i-tanaasul*. The first meaning is the literal translation of the Arabic borrowing and is not used in Urdu. The second sense is a synonym, and not a definition. (For an appropriate definition, see 3.1.2.)

3.2 The second lexical item to be looked up was related to ‘testes’:

English equivalent	Jadeed	Darsi	Feroz
Testes	x	x	<i>i baizah: 1. anDah 2. fautah; khusiah</i> <i>ii. khayah: khusiah; fautah</i> <i>iii fautah: khusiah; khayah</i>

3.2.1 The *Jadeed* contains no entry for ‘testes’. The *Jadeed* seems to have pursued the policy of ‘print black out’ vis-à-vis the words relating to sex.

3.2.2 The *Darsi* also contain no entry for ‘testes’. The exclusion is inexplicable. The target users of the dictionary are learners and their teachers at Secondary and Higher Secondary school levels. They need information about the body organs and their functions. The exclusion of the names of sex organs from the dictionary is a serious inadequacy and disservice to the language, to say the least.

3.2.3 The *Feroz* contains three lexical items referring to ‘testes’. The first one is *baizah*. The definition contains only synonyms. The first sense *anDah* is the most known sense and refers to a ‘fowl’s egg’ and is hardly used to refer to ‘testes’. The second and third lexical items also contain synonyms. As the *Feroz* contains no illustrations –either verbal or pictorial illustration- the user may find serious difficulties in deciphering the precise meaning and function of the headword. An appropriate definition would read as follows:

nar kay zakar ka saath do baizvi ghudood jin say mani banti hay ‘two oval glands behind the penis of the male which produce semen’.

3.3. The dictionaries under study contained the following lexical items related to ‘semen’:

English equivalent	<i>Jadeed</i>	<i>Darsi</i>	<i>Feroz</i>
Semen	<i>x</i>	<i>nutfah: mard ka woh pani jis say hamal qrar pata hay</i>	<i>i. dhaat: 1 woh ma'dni jauhar jis mein pighalnay ki khusoosiyat ho jaisay sona, chandi 2 pashaab kay saath khararj honay wala sfaid maadah; *mazi; mani</i> <i>ii. mani: dhaat; nutfah</i> <i>iii.nutfah: 1. mani 2. aulaad</i>

3.3.1 The *Jadeed* does not contain any entry for ‘semen’.

3.3.2 The lexical item referring to ‘semen’ included in the *Darsi* is the Urdu word *nutfah*. The definition is highly vague: *mard ka woh pani jis say hamal qrar pata hay* (‘the water of man which causes pregnancy’). It does not state from where the water emerges which causes pregnancy. One can question whether semen is merely ‘water’. In fact, it is a thick fluid. Its smell is stinking. It is produced in the testes. It is discharged through the penis at the time of intercourse or wet dream. It contains sperms. This brings us to the correct definition of the lexical item *mani*:

kaseef badboodar mai' jo khusion mein banta' hay aur jamaa' ya ehtlaam kay waqt zakar say kharaj hota hay. Aurat kay anDay say nutfah milnay say nya bachcha paida hota hay. (‘the ill-smelling thick fluid which is produced in the testes and is discharged through the penis at the time of intercourse or wet dream. It contains sperms which fuse with the egg of the female to form a new baby’).

3.3.3. The *Feroz* contains three lexical items referring to ‘semen’. The first lexical unit is *dhaat*. Its first sense *woh ma'dni jauhar jis mein pighalnay ki khusoosiyat ho jaisay sona, chandi* (the mineral extract which may melt, for example, gold, silver) is the most known sense. It does not have any sexual connotation. The second sense *pashaab kay saath khararj honay wala sfaid maadah* is not appropriate as it is believed to be a symptom of weakness of sexual potency.

The entry contains two synonyms *mazi; mani* out of which the first one has not been made a headword in the dictionary. It is a rare lexical item. How the non-native users will be able to decipher its meanings is not clear. The second lexical item *mani* contains only synonyms: *dhaat; nutfah*. As noted earlier the lexical item *dhaat* hardly has any sexual connotations.

The entry for the *nutfah* which is the third lexical item referring to ‘semen’ contains the following meaning: 1. *mani* 2. *aulaad*. So the definition has become circular in the first instance and too broad in the second instance which is, in fact, figurative meaning – ‘children’. The user is not expected to find much help from the dictionary!

3.4. The search for the lexical items related to ‘copulation’ yielded the following results:

English equivalent	Jadeed	Darsi	Feroz
Copulation	X	x	i. jimaa : <i>mard ka aurat say suhbat karna. hambistar hona; mubashrat; mujame’at</i> ii. suhbat : 1 <i>dosti</i> ; 2 <i>saath</i> . 3 <i>mehfil</i> 4 <i>hambistri</i> iii. mubashrat : <i>hambistri; jimaa</i> iv. mujame’at : <i>hambistri</i> v. hambistri : <i>jimaa</i> ; <i>mjame’at</i>

3.4.1 The *Jadeed* sticks to the policy of exclusion and does not contain any entry for ‘copulation’.

3.4.2 There are many terms in Urdu denoting sexual intercourse (see 3.4.3). However, the *Darsi* contains none. If the compilers consider the lexical items relating to ‘copulation’ as obscene which must be kept away from the users, they are mistaken. The users do study about their body organs in Biology and Physical Education classes at high and higher secondary school level.

3.4.3 The *Feroz* contains three lexical items referring to ‘copulation’. The first lexical unit is ‘*jimaa*’. The definition contains four synonyms: *mard ka aurat say suhbat karna. hambistar hona; mubashrat; mujame’at*. The second lexical item given is *suhbat*. The entry contains four synonyms: *dosti; saath; mehfil; hambistri*. The appropriate synonym happens to be the last one, making it a matter of chance for the target users to select the required sense. The third, fourth and fourth lexical items *mubashrat, mujame’at* and *hambisti* also contain synonyms. It seems that the dictionary-makers do not realize the difference between the dictionary and the thesaurus. An appropriate definition would run as follows:

furj mein zakar ka dalna aur furj mein mani ka kharaj hona (‘the insertion of the penis into the vagina and the ejaculation of the semen into the vagina’).

3.5. The dictionaries under study contained the following lexical items related to ‘vulva’:

English equivalent	Jadeed	Darsi	Feroz
Vulva	X	Sharmgah : <i>aurat aur mard kay jism kay woh hissay jinhain chchupana wajib hay. ☀ <u>muslmanon ko hukm hay keh who apni sharmgahon ki hifazt karein</u></i>	I andaam-i-nihaani : <i>aurat ki sharmgah. furj</i> ii sharmgah : <i>andaam-i-nihaani. baul-o-braaz ki jagah</i> iii furj : 1. <i>shigaaf</i> ; <i>soraakh</i> 2. <i>aurat ka andaam-i-nihaani</i>

3.5.1 The *Jadeed* does not contain any lexical item referring to ‘vulva’.

3.5.2 Neither of the proper Urdu lexical items denoting ‘vulva’ i.e. *furj, andaam nihani* has been included in the *Darsi*. A very vague term *sharmgah* has been made the head word. It has been defined in an imprecise manner: *aurat aur mard kay jism kay woh hissay jinhain chchupana wajib hay* (‘the parts of the body of a man and woman which ought to be hidden’). The illustrative sentence *muslmanon ko hukm hay keh woh apni sharmgahon ki hifazt karein* (‘the Muslims have been ordained to guard their private parts’) makes it amply clear that the definition relates to another lexical item *satr*. The parts of body which ought to be hidden (called *satr*) vary depending upon gender. For

men, it is necessary to cover their body from navel to knees. As far as women are concerned, they must cover their body from head to foot save face, hands and feet, though some schools of Islamic thought maintain that they must hide even their faces, hands and feet also. The definition does not contain any reference to the excretory functions of ‘vulva’. A more appropriate lexical item *furj* should have been made the headword which should have been defined as follows:

maadah kay jism ka woh uzv jis say haiz, bachcha aur peshab bahar nikaltay hain. (Tr: ‘the part of female body through which menses, baby and urine are discharged’).

3.5.3 The *Feroz* contains three lexical items referring to ‘vulva’. The first lexical unit is *andaam-i-nihaani*. The definition contains two synonyms: *aurat ki sharmgah*; *furj*. Interestingly enough, *furj*, in turn, contains *andaam-i-nihaani* as definition. The definition has become circular. To get precise information in the *Feroz* about the organ referred to seems very difficult for the users, most of whom happen to be non-native speakers of Urdu in Pakistan.

The second lexical item *sharmgah* is a very broad term. The definition contains merely synonyms which do not give precise information (*andaam-i-nihaani*; *baul-o-braaz ki jagah*). The lexical item *sharmgah* refers not only to vulva but to other body organs i.e. ‘penis’, ‘testes’ and ‘anus’ which are considered to be *satr* (organs which, according to the Islamic injunctions, ought to be covered from other persons). In fact, the second sense in the entry does refer to the anus as well: *baul-o-braaz ki jagah* (the place of urination and feces). The third lexical item referring to ‘vulva’ in the *Feroz* is *furj*. The first sense is the literal translation of the Arabic borrowing: *shigaaf* (fissure) and *soraakh* (hole). The second sense is a synonym, and not a definition.

3.6. The dictionaries under study contained the following lexical items related to ‘breast’:

English equivalent	Jadeed	Darsi	Feroz
Breast	x	x	<i>pistaan</i> : <i>aurat ki chchati kay donon taraf kay gol ubhaar jin mein doodh hota hay</i>

3.6.1 The *Jadeed* contains no lexical item referring to ‘breast’.

3.6.2. The *Darsi*, also, contains no lexical item referring to ‘breast’. One wonders on what ground the compilers decided to banish terms referring to breast. The term *pistaan* is fairly frequent in use.

3.6.3. The lexical items referring to ‘breast’ in the *Feroz* is *pistaan*. The definition is, surprisingly, very precise: *aurat ki chchati kay donon taraf kay gol ubhaar jin mein doodh hota hay* (‘two round projections on the breast of the woman which contain milk’). One wishes the compilers had taken pains to provide definitions and not synonyms in case of other headwords as well.

3.7. The dictionaries under study contained the following lexical items related to ‘anus’:

English equivalent	Jadeed	Darsi	Feroz
Anus	X	X	i. <i>dubur</i> : <i>chootaR</i> ; <i>maq’ad</i> ii. <i>maq’ad</i> : <i>dubur</i> ; <i>koon</i> iii. <i>koon</i> : <i>maq’ad</i> ; * <i>safrah</i>

3.7.1 The *Jadeed* contains no lexical item referring to ‘anus’.

3.7.2 There are many terms in Urdu denoting ‘anus’ (see 3.7.3). However, the *Darsi* contains none. The exclusion is unjustified.

3.7.3 The *Feroz* contains three lexical items referring to ‘anus’. The first lexical item referring to ‘anus’ in the dictionary is *dubur*. The entry contains two synonyms as definition: *chootaR*; *maq’ad*. The first synonym *chootaR* has not been made headword in the dictionary. The second lexical item *maq’ad* contains two synonyms as definition: *dubur*; *koon*. The same things happens in the third lexical item *koon* which contains two synonym *maq’ad*; *safrah* out of which the latter one has not been made headword in the dictionary. A curious user will not be able to get any kind of help if s/he intends to look up what *chootaaR* and *safrah* mean.

3.8. The dictionaries under study contained the following lexical items related to ‘feces’:

English equivalent	Jadeed	Darsi	Feroz
Feces	x	<i>pakhanah</i> : <i>1 peiT say kharaj honay wala fuzlah ☀ bachay nay pakhanay say kapRay kharaab kar liay hain 2 pakhanah karnay ki jagah ☀ ham nay ghar ki chchat par pakhanah bana rakha hay</i>	i. <i>braaz</i> : <i>paakhaanah, maila; nijaast</i> ii. <i>paakhaanah</i> : <i>gooh; gandgi; fuzlah</i> iii. <i>gooh</i> : <i>pakhanah; fuzlah; maila;</i> iv. <i>fuzlah</i> : <i>pakhanah</i>

3.8.1 The *Jadeed* contains no lexical item referring to ‘ejaculation’.

3.8.2 The *Darsi* contains only one lexical item referring to ‘feces’: *paakhanah*. The entry contains two meanings. The first one is: *peiT say kharaj honay wala fuzlah* [‘the waste excreted from the belly’]. The entry contains one verbal illustration also: *bachay nay pakhanay say kapRay kharaab kar liay hain* [‘The child spoiled his clothes with feces’] the second sense is very uncommon: *pakhanah karnay ki jagah* [‘the lavatory’]. The illustration *ham nay ghar ki chchat par pakhanah bana rakha hay* [‘we have a lavatory upstairs’] substantiates the meaning.

3.8.3 There are four lexical items in the *Feroz* referring to ‘feces’. The first one is *braaz*. It occurs only in the compound: *baul-o-braaz* [urine and feces]. The entry contains three synonyms as definitions: *paakhaanah, maila; nijaast*. The most known meaning of *maila* is ‘dirty’ whereas *nijaast* is a broad term and means ‘any kind of grunge’. The second lexical item in the dictionary referring to feces is *paakhaanah*. The entry contains three synonyms as definitions: *gooh; gandgi; fuzlah*. The third lexical item *gooh* is an offensive word and is generally avoided. The fourth lexical item. *fuzlah* also contains just one synonym as definition: *pakhanah* making the definition a circular one and hence confusing for the users.

3.9. The dictionaries under study contained the following lexical items related to ‘ejaculation’:

English equivalent	Jadeed	Darsi	Feroz
Ejaculation	x	x	<i>enzaal</i> : <i>1 utrna 2 mani niklna</i>

3.9.1 The *Jadeed* contains no lexical item referring to ‘ejaculation’.

3.9.2 The *Darsi* has not included any lexical item for reasons best known to the compilers.

3.9.3 There is only one lexical item in the *Feroz* referring to ‘ejaculation’ i.e. *enzaal*. The entry contains two senses (i) *utrna* (ii) *mani niklna*. The first sense is literal and is rare. The second one is more common. The definition *mani niklna* (‘the discharge of semen’) does not specify the precise time when this happens. As a matter of fact, semen is discharged at the time of copulation as well as during wet dream. The first kind of ejaculation is *enzaal* (‘ejaculation’) whereas the second one is *ehtlaam* (‘wet dream’).

3.10. The dictionaries under study contained the following lexical items related to ‘wet dream’:

English equivalent	Jadeed	Darsi	Feroz
Wet dream	X	X	<i>eHtlaam: khaab mein naapaak hona</i>

3.10.1 The *Jadeed* contains no lexical item referring to ‘wet dream’.

3.10.2 The *Darsi* has not included any lexical item relating to ‘wet dream’. At puberty, it is natural for boys to have wet dreams. They need information on the bodily function.

The exclusion of the lexical item *eHtlaam* is perplexing.

3.9.3. The lexical item included in the *Feroz* referring to ‘wet dream’ is *eHtlaam*. The meaning given in the entry is vague: *khaab mein naapaak hona* (to become unclean during dream). The definition is impersonal and it is not possible to figure out whether it is about the male or female gender. The entry does not explain how one becomes ‘unclean during dream’. A proper definition would run like this:

Jinsi khaab mein bay ikhtyar mani ka nikalna: (involuntary discharge of semen during a sexual dream).

3.11 The dictionaries under study contained the following lexical items related to ‘menses’:

English equivalent	Jadeed	Darsi	Feroz
Menses	X	<i>haiz: auraton ko jo mahwari khoon aataa hay; ayyaam-i-mahwari</i>	<i>i. haiz: woh khoon jo aurton ko har maheenay aata hay. mahwaari</i> <i>ii. mahwari: 1 wazeefah jo naukron ko maheenah guzarnay kay ba'd daitay hain 2. haiz jo aurton ko har maheenay aata hay</i>

3.11.1 The *Jadeed*, contains no lexical item referring to ‘menses’

3.11.2 The *Darsi* contains only one headword relating to ‘menses’: *haiz: auraton ko jo mahwari khoon aataa hay; ayyaam-i-mahwari*. The definition is ambiguous. It bears no clue as to what kind of blood it is; from where it is discharged; why it is discharged. As is well known, only certain women at certain age release menses. A proper definition would run as:

taqreeban har chaar hafton kay ba'd baalagh ghair Haamla aurat ki bachcha dani say furj kay rastay nikalnay walay khoon aur raishay ka bahau (‘the discharge of blood and sloughed off tissue from uterus, discharged through the vagina of the adult woman, who is not pregnant, after about every 4 weeks’).

3.11.3 The lexical items related to ‘menses’ include *haiz* and *mahwari*. The definition of the lexical item runs as *woh khoon jo aurton ko har maheenay aata hay. Mahwaari* (‘the blood which women discharge every month’). The definition is vague. The definition of the second lexical item *mahwari* is even cumbersome. The first definition of the word *mahwari* is very hardly used: *wazeefah jo naukron ko maheenah guzarnay kay ba'd daitay haini* (the monthly salary of the servants’). The more frequent meaning *haiz jo aurton ko har maheenay aata hay* has been entered as the second sense and, hence, is less likely to attract the users who tend to finish their search with the first definition. The definition is insufficient.

3.12. The last lexical items to be checked were the ones related to ‘Puerperal hemorrhage’:

English equivalent	<i>Jadeed</i>	<i>Darsi</i>	<i>Feroz</i>
Puerperal hemorrhage	<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>

3.12.1` The *Jadeed* contains no lexical item related to ‘puerperal hemorrhage’.

3.12.2. The *Darsi*, too, contains no lexical item related to ‘puerperal hemorrhage’.

3.12.3 Surprisingly enough, the *Feroz* contains no lexical item related to ‘puerperal hemorrhage’.

The lexical item related to ‘Puerperal hemorrhage’ is ‘*nifaas*’. It is a very frequent word. In Pakistan, a number of girls are married in their teens. As a result, they do bear babies and discharge ‘puerperal hemorrhage’. By excluding the lexical item relating to ‘puerperal hemorrhage’, the compilers have denied the users of their right to know about their bodies.

4. Discussion

The preceding description and analysis of lexical items related to sex in the Urdu learner’s dictionaries demonstrates the dictionary-makers have excluded taboo words from learner’s dictionaries, in particular the ones published by the National Language Authority. The compilers have acted against the principle of completeness of description of language as a dictionary is supposed to be the repository of the language. (Jackson 2002:162; Moyo 2005). One is reminded of Farooqi (1990) who rightly observes that

‘Urdu presents a number of problems to the dictionary maker. Some of these are there because lexicographers have so far chosen to ignore the living reality of the language.....Yet others owe their origin to the fact that most lexicographers had but a dim idea of what a dictionary should be..... They were not clear about what kind of words should be entered. They often failed to distinguish between “definition” and “meaning”, and frequently satisfied themselves with offering an equivalent or approximate translation instead of definition or meaning’.

The dictionary makers have ignored ‘the living reality of language’ by excluding the four-letter words. The taboo words are very much a part of language. The learners ought to know these words vis-à-vis their meanings and usage notes. Particularly, the non-native speakers must know different aspects of these words, such as, when to use and when not to use these words? An out of context use of these words may lead to loss of face and even breakdown of communication.

The treatment meted out to the taboo words in the Pakistani dictionaries is in sharp contrast to the way the taboo words have been treated in general purpose dictionaries like the *Farhang-e-Asafiyya* by Sayyad Ahmad Dehlavi (1888-1901) and *Nur-al-Lughaat* by Nayyar Kakorvi (1922-1934) in which, according to Farooqi (1990) ‘the outlawed ones are so common, that one wonders if the compilers knew what they were doing’.

The treatment of the four-letter words in the learners is another demonstration of the fact that adolescents and teen-agers are ‘often fed misleading and insufficient information about sex’ (Malik 2004). The exclusion of the four-letter words from a dictionary cannot be justified in any way especially in view of the fact that the many of the words studied in the current investigation such as *zakar*, *furj*, *nutfah*, *mani*, *haiz*, *dubur*, *maq’ad*, *mubasharat* and *jimaa*’ have been borrowed from the Holy Quran as well as in other religious literature including books of Ahadith (the traditions of the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him). It will not be out of place to mention that the Holy book describes even the posture of copulation of Adam and Eve as well as the process of ejaculation. Zaakir (1985) struck the right note when he observed that

‘To me, a dictionary-maker should not consider any word to be ‘vulgar’.
Every word used by the speakers is sacred to her/him. Not withstanding

the fact that the criteria of obscenity continue to change, the duty of a dictionary-maker is to provide information on words and not to pronounce judgment as to which word is vulgar and which is not'.

5. Conclusion

The inadequacies pointed out above show that the taboo words have been given a very inapt treatment in the Pakistani dictionaries. It is safe to conclude that to deprive the users of the word knowledge amounts to depriving them of the world knowledge. It is suggested that the taboo words be included in the next editions of these dictionaries. Moreover, the future compilers should also refrain from, banishing the taboo words from their dictionaries.

Note:

In English, most of the unmentionable words consist of four-letter words, for instance, 'cock', 'cunt', 'fuck', and 'shit' though other non-four-lettered-words such as, 'ass', 'bitch', 'bastard', 'bollocks', 'motherfucker', 'prick', and 'wanker' are also treated in the same manner. Also, such words may also be racially or religiously prejudiced. (Andrea Millwood-Hargrave 2000).

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10 : 10 October 2010

Mahmood Ahmad, Ph.D. Scholar and Zafar Iqbal, Ph.D.

Four-letter Words and the Urdu Learner's Dictionaries in Pakistan

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