

**Sociolinguistic Study of Taboos in Chinese and Igbo Language**  
**言禁忌研究**

**伊博语与汉语中的语**

**Okafor, Miracle Uzochukwu**  
Studies

Department of Chinese  
Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka.

[mu.okafor@unizik.edu.ng](mailto:mu.okafor@unizik.edu.ng)

**Abstract**

The universality of linguistic taboo suggests that almost all languages have words and expressions that are regarded as unsuitable for general use; or themes and topics that are generally not supposed to be mentioned. Therefore, this paper explores the Igbo and Chinese linguistic taboos in cross-cultural communication based on the theories of context and cross-cultural communication. The main objective of this study is to explore all the linguistic taboos that exist in Chinese and Igbo language, and further unfold how to establish a healthy and efficient cross-cultural communication with others to reduce misunderstanding. A descriptive research design was adopted; the data collection was by personal observation (being an Igbo and have lived in China for 6 years), oral interview, and review of literature. Chinese linguistic taboos examined include taboos relating to death, numbers, appellation, eating, gender, sex/ sex organs, disease taboo, and excretion, while Igbo linguistic taboos are related to disease/calamity, dead/death, animals, religion, appellation, and sex/parts of the body. To help reduce or avoid the violation of Chinese or Igbo taboos and improve cross-cultural communication, there is great need to strengthen the study and accumulation of the target culture, gradually enhance the awareness and sensitivity of cultural differences, pay attention to the cultivation of cross-cultural thinking ability, and constantly improve the ability of cross-cultural adjustment.

**KEYWORDS:** Linguistic Taboos, Chinese language, Igbo language, Cross-cultural Communication.

**Introduction and Definition of Linguistic Taboo**

Taboo, as a social phenomenon, had been widely found in all cultures of the world. When this phenomenon extended to language, linguistic taboo came into being. Linguistic taboo plays an important part in the area of taboos, and its emergence, existence, and continuity have their roots in history and society. Thus linguistics and social taboos exist in both Chinese and Igbo languages. Wardhaugh (2000), defines taboo as the prohibition or avoidance in any society of behavior believed to be harmful to its members in that it would cause them anxiety, embarrassment, or shame. It is believed that people can put across their feeling or their thinking toward something through the use of language. They may even show their annoyance, astonishment, hatred, etc. When people are in such condition, they are prone to use some words, gestures, expressions, or other usages generally considered insulting, rude, or vulgar that is called linguistic taboo. Wardhaugh (1992), affirms that taboo is an extremely strong politeness constraint. Certain things are not said, not because they cannot be, but because “people don’t talk about those things” or, if those things are talked about, they are talked about in very roundabout ways. Gao (2013) also agrees with Wardhaugh (1992), that so far as language is concerned, certain things are not to be said or certain objects can be referred to only in certain circumstances, for example, only by certain people, or through deliberate circumlocution, i.e. euphemistically. Fromkin et al. (2007) pointed out that words that are taboo in one locale may be acceptable in another, and vice versa, and the acceptance changes over time. The tabooed items vary from one society to another. With the emergence and development of sociolinguistics, many sociolinguists start to focus on the study of linguistic taboo, and its relationship with culture such as “Sociolinguistics” (Hudson, 1996), “Examples of Historical Taboos” (Chen, 1962), “Word Play: What Happens When People Talk” (Farb, 1974). “Taboo and Chinese Culture” (Wang Jianzhong), “An Introduction to Language and Society” (Trudgill, 1983), “An Introduction to Sociolinguistics” (Wardhaugh, 1992), “An Introduction to Language” (Fromkin and Rodman, 1993).

## **Theoretical Background of the Study on Linguistic Taboo in Cross-Cultural Communication**

The increased contact with other cultures makes it urgent to make concerted efforts in understanding and getting along with people who may either be slightly or vastly different from ourselves. It is impossible to deal with the study of linguistic taboo without considering the theory of contextualism. The theory of context is based on the presumption that can derive meaning from context or reduce it to an observable context. Therefore in this study, it is important to look into theories of context from sociolinguistics and anthropologists.

### **Theory of Context**

Anthropologist Malinowski introduced the notions of "context of culture" and "context of situation" into language study. He states that an utterance "becomes intelligible only when it is placed within its context of situation and that utterances and situation are bound up inextricably with each other and the context of situation is dispensable for the understanding of the words". (Malinowski, 1923: 306-307). This lays a theoretical foundation for language study in sociolinguistics particularly, and it also paves the way for the analysis of linguistic taboos because linguistic taboos, like language, should be studied within the contexts, namely, within linguistic, situational, social, and cultural contexts.

Firth (1935 & 1957) was deeply influenced by Malinowski's studies of language, context, and culture. He set up a framework for the description of the context of situation. Firth pointed out that the use of language is closely connected with context, the situational context in particular. Firth's headings were as follows: The participants in the situation, the action of the participants, other relevant features of the situation; the surrounding objects/events, the effect of verbal action; what changes were brought. Firth's concept of Context covers the context made by linguistic and social factors. Therefore, the process of studying a language is actually to learn how to speak out what the counterpart participants expect one to utter. Once spoken to, one will be put in a certain context, and lose freedom to choose what one wants to say.

Hymes (1974) further developed the theory of context in categorizing the speech situation in terms of a model of eight components with an acronym "SPEAKING", which can be decoded as:- setting and scenes(S), refers to physical circumstances including time and place; participants(P), refers to the speaker, listener, addresser, addressee, etc.; ends(E), refers to outcomes and goals, act sequence(A); refers to form and content, key(K), refers to how the message is conveyed; instrumentalities (I); refers to channels, forms of speech, norms(N), refers to what is expected of the sender; genres (G), categories identified through linguistic terms they use (Hymes, 1974: 60-65). Hymes's analysis of the speech event model will let us see how factors from communication or the linguistic context affect linguistic taboos and how the use of language, in turn, can affect social context.

Anthropologist Edward T. Hall in Hall (1989) illustrates the link between culture and human communication in his concept of high-and-low context, in which he shows how people from different cultural backgrounds learn to concentrate on the aspects of their environments. In Hall's viewpoint, a high-context communication is one in which most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message. A low-context communication is just the opposite; i.e., the mass of the information is contained in the explicit code. Therefore, the level of context determines everything about the nature of communication and the foundation on which all communication rests.

Eggins (1994: 9) came up with the context of culture (genre) on language, by exploring the staged, step-by-step structure cultures institutionalize as ways of achieving goals. Gerot and Wignell (1995:10) state that the context of culture determines what we can mean through; being 'who we are', doing 'what we do',

and saying 'what we say'. The context of culture should be considered in using language because this context determines whether a linguistically-achieved activity type is meaningful (i.e. appropriate) or not in a particular culture. If it is meaningful or appropriate, it means that we can use language to do the activity in the culture. (Sunardi. 2006)

## Literature review

### Universality of linguistic taboo

Almost all languages have words and expressions that are regarded as unsuitable for general use, or themes and topics that are generally not supposed to mention. Different linguistic taboos are formed during distinctive courses of development in a different society and they are usually either avoided or substituted by euphemisms. According to Trudgil (1983), the strongest taboo-words in the English-speaking world are still associated with sex. Crowley (1992) describes how in the Kabana language of Papua New Guinea people typically have personal names that also refer to everyday objects. However, there is also a strong restriction against saying the names of one's in-laws. In Norway, they are mostly expressions connected with the devil, and in Rome and Roman Catholic culture, they are words essentially associated with religion. Fiji islanders could not touch any articles that belonged to the tribal chief or priest. Australian Aborigines must not say the name of the dead person aloud. Muslims and Orthodox Jews must not eat pork or shellfish. Likewise, in feudal China, the names of emperors were taboo, their subordinates and subjects must not be allowed to use them directly. In the west, black cat is a taboo animal. Haas (1951) pointed out that certain language taboos seem to arise from bilingual situations. Thai speakers also often find it difficult to say the English words yet and key because they sound very much like the Thai words "jed", vulgar word for 'to have intercourse,' and khii "excrement". Generally speaking, words about sex and certain parts of the body, bodily excretions, disease and death, physical defects, and old age are regarded as taboo in most countries. However, the attitudes towards shared-taboo (the commonness of taboo shared by different cultures) and the degrees of tabooed things also various from cultures.

In Igbo tribe of Nigeria, taboo words include vulgar words such as words dealing with genital organ, words dealing with delicate subjects, such as *osu* "outcast", *ohu* "slave", etc.; words felt to be too strong or powerful such as *onwu* "death"; swear words, etc. Under Edward T. Hall's theory of context, the acquisition of taboo varies from high context to low context. In high-context cultures such as those of China, Japan, Korea, and most African countries like Nigeria (especially the Igbo), people tend to be more aware of their surroundings and their environment and do not rely on verbal communication as their main information source. In low-context cultures which include America, Canada, Britain, Sweden, Germany, and other European countries, most of the information is contained in the verbal message and very little is embedded in the context or within the participants. Therefore, participants from both low-context cultures may communicate with each other easier than those from high-context cultures.

### Studies on Igbo Linguistic Taboo

Gbenga, et al (2014), classify linguistic taboos in the Igbo society into five categories: morality-related linguistic taboos, veneration-related linguistic taboos, decorum-related linguistic taboos, religion-related linguistic taboos, and fear-related linguistic taboos. The article argues that while religion and decorum-related linguistic taboos are unmentioned and have no permissible alternatives because they are closely tied to different Igbo deities, morality, veneration, and fear-related ones have euphemisms.

Omego, (2014) Examined sex variations in taboo expressions in Igbo culture area. The result of the study proved that sex is a strong linguistic variable that affects speech in the Igbo community and that women in Igbo land are forbidden from using certain taboo expressions, especially in gatherings comprising men and women.

Christian (2018) Conference paper presentation on Types of Taboo Expressions in Igbo Society, agrees with Gbenga, et al (2014) classification of Igbo linguistic taboo expressions by their discourse into five categories: morality-related taboo, veneration-related, decorum-related, religion-related, and fear-related taboo expressions. The result of the research proves that aside from the categories of taboos in Igbo, socially, the styles of discourse have some levels of gender, age, and class-connected taboos, which for instance, as also acknowledged by Omego, (2014) and Okoye (1999), in gender-connected taboos, women in Igbo are forbidden to use the style of discourse that are connected with taboo words especially genital organs in social gathering comprising men and women. The same has to do with class-connected where much younger men can use some certain expressions that are taboo, but in much older men gathering such expressions would be tagged forbidden in the context.

Nneoma (2019) Research on Taboos in Ngwa-Igbo (a dialect of Igbo Language) shows that Ngwa-Igbo speech community is controlled by laws /taboos which are part of the cultural heritage of the Ngwa people and must be observed to avoid the wrath of the gods, that peace is sustained in Ngwa land by obedience to the laws of the land, that some taboos have a minor penalty, while others have a severe penalty, that taboos help in checking the excesses of unruly behaviors by individuals in Ngwa land. The findings of the research prove that Ngwa land has both cultural and linguistic taboo. Cultural taboos ensure that the Ngwa-Igbo land is not desecrated and that linguistic taboos help in determining what a person says in various linguistic contexts.

Anedo (2019) study on Violation of Taboos among Igbo People of Nigeria: Socio-Political Implications observed that violation of taboos among Igbo people has been seen as an agent of disintegration and its observation means progress in the nation's socio-political life. The study further highlights the different types of taboos prevalent in Igbo land, which he divided into general taboos, specific taboos, major and minor taboos. However, Anedo's study of Igbo taboos is mainly from a socio-cultural perspective.

## **Analysis of Chinese and Igbo Linguistic Taboos**

## **Chinese      Linguistic**

### **Taboos**

#### **A. Death Taboo**

In China, people are afraid of death, and they usually try to avoid referring to death directly by the very word "死亡" or "死" in Chinese. According to Chen (2010), there are more than 200 euphemisms related to "death" in Chinese. For example, "逝世- gone", "过去了-passed away", "走了-left", "离开了- left us", "断气儿- give up the ghost", "不出气儿- cannot breath anymore", "不醒了- cannot wake up", "去世-left the world", "谢世- withered", "牺牲 - sacrificed", "长眠 went to long sleep", "老了 got old", "没了 gone", "不在了- no more", "永别了- said goodbye", "香消玉殒a beauty passes away", "升天- ascended to heaven", "归土- returned to soil", "归山-returned to the mountains", "进土- entered the ground", "埋土-buried", "入地- returned to earth", "入土- entered the ground", "见阎王爷去了- went to meet the lord of the underworld", "玩完了- game over", "没命了- not alive", "小命丢了-lost life", etc. Guan (2011) noted that in ancient China, the death of the people of different social status is called differently and people are liable to punishment if the euphemism of death is not correctly used.

#### **A. Numbers taboo**

Numbers serve the same calculating function in Chinese as in other languages, but due to national psychology, religious belief, and mythology, numbers are endowed with abundant cultural connotations and associations. Chinese people show different taboos and connotations towards the different or identical

numbers to generate their own numeral culture. Numbers 4 “四” and 7 “七” sound like the Chinese characters for “死 death” and “气 anger”, so people do avoid these two characters in general. When choosing a phone number, people rarely choose a number ending with 4 or 7, or hotel rooms that start or end with 4. Some buildings in China intentionally skip the 4<sup>th</sup> floor, because they believe it will bring bad luck, disaster, or death. 73 and 84 are also taboo numbers, there are two reasons for that, first is that 73 “七十四/七三” has close pronunciation with “妻子散了 - wife is dead”, 84 “八十四/ 八四” sounds like “爸死-dad is dead”. Secondly, legend has it that Confucius died at 73 and Mencius at 84. Zhang (2011) states that among old people, they think that 73 and 84 are two key ages. If you are 73 or 84 years old, you will die before the King of hell invites you. Many old people avoid talking their exact ages. Instead of numbers 4 and 7, Chinese people prefer numbers 6, 8 and 9 which has close pronunciation as “利 as in 顺利 successful”, “发 prosperous” and “久 long-lasting or enduring” respectively. Phone numbers or car plate numbers with 6 and 8 at the end are usually sold at high prices.

## **B. Appellation taboo**

China has experienced more than two thousand years of feudalism, attaching great importance to blood ties, social status, and hierarchy. From the monarchs to the commoners, there are strict hierarchical norms. Family emphasizes different hierarchy and rank, the same goes for relatives and friends, old and young, male and female. Therefore, the system of name taboos prevailed in ancient China and some still exist now. Subjects were not allowed to address the emperors by their names. It is considered impolite, disrespectful, ill-bred, or uneducated to call an older person or superior by his or her first name. In China, people use “师傅 master”, “同志 comrade”, “老哥 big brother”, “大姐 big sister”, “老大 big senior/ big boss”, “老板 boss”, “阿姨 aunt”, “叔叔 uncle” etc., instead of their personal names. Also, it is quite common for people to call each other “老 senior/小 small + surname”, such as 老陈, 老黄, 小马, 小张, etc. “老 old/ senior” is widely used as a prefix to Chinese surnames because of the traditional custom of respecting the elderly in Chinese culture. “老” is a symbol of rich knowledge and experience, and also indicates a certain social status of the addressee. In official settings like workplace, school, colleges, etc., the appellation of “surname + title” is quite popular now in China.

## **C. Eating expressions taboo**

In China, it is taboo to say “翻 flip over”. This started among fishermen because of the fear of typhoons and the belief that saying the word might result in their boat or canoe capsizing. They don't also say any word that sounds the same as “翻”. So it became a general tradition in China that once the top side of fish has been eaten, one cannot say “翻过来 turn it over”, instead say “正过来 keep it straight”. In some part of China, during the New Year's Eve dinner, it is taboo to say, “吃完了 finished eating”, instead say “吃余了 I ate surplus”, which means “年年有余 there will be surplus year after year”.

## **D. Gender appellation Taboos**

Gender appellation taboo originates from sexism, mainly refers to the language that despises women. Sex discrimination is still a common social phenomenon in China. In Chinese language, words like “烧饭的 cook”, “母夜叉 hag”, “母老虎 tigress”, “野鸡 pheasant”, “贱人 slut”, “婊子 whore”, etc., are discriminatory gender terms, obviously demeaning, contemptuous, or insulting women. “娘儿们 wives”, “悍妇 shrew”.

## **E. Sex/ Sex organs**

It is rare to hear people talking about sex in the public domain in China. The traditional values of prudence and morality still prevail, which is reflected in language use. In Chinese language, words relating to sex,

sexual organs, and sexual acts are often taken as taboo words and on most occasions replaced by euphemisms. As Chinese society is becoming more open, people would use "下身lower part of the body", "羞处shameful parts", "阴部private parts" etc. to refer to sexual organs. "作爱make love", "同房 share the same room", "房事room affairs", "床第之事bed affairs", "发生关系has relation", "办事do thing", etc., to refer to sexual affairs.

#### F. Disease taboo

In Chinese, practice to avoid mentioning such taboo words as "病 illness", "伤injury", "残废crippled", are the use of inoffensive terms as "欠安unwell", "不适/不舒服uncomfortable", "小恙indisposed", "微恙little uncomfortable", "挂彩了 wounded in action".

#### G. Excretion

Words like "拉屎defecate", "厕所toilet", "月经menstruation" are taboo words and they are usually avoided on public occasions. Similarly to other taboo expressions mentioned above, euphemisms for, excretory acts abound e.g, "解手relieve oneself", "出去一下go out for a while", "去方便一下go to convenience", "上一号 go to No.1 (poop)", "上二号 go to No.2 (urinate)", "去打个电话 go make a call", "大姨妈来了 big aunt came (menstruation period)"

### Igbo Linguistic Taboos

#### A. Disease/ calamity

- *Afo tookwa gi* (May your stomach be swollen). Having a swollen stomach in Igbo society is a sign of punishment from the gods for an abomination committed. In traditional Igbo society, people with a swollen stomach are sent to the evil forest to die, either naturally or eaten by wild animals.
- *Kitikpa gbagbuo gi* (Leprosy strike you dead). Leprosy is a taboo word and disease in Igbo. People with leprosy are avoided and segregated because it is seen as a punishment from the gods, so, talking about or wishing someone leprosy is a huge taboo.
- *Mmiri rie gi* (be drown in water). Being drowned in water is a terrible calamity that results in death. Those who got drowned are not giving proper burial, they are rather buried at the river bank or close to the water body they were drowned in.
- *Chukwu kpoo gi oku-* (May God burn you to ashes). Igbo people have a strong belief in reincarnation, and it is believed that someone whose corpse is burnt to ashes can no longer reincarnate. Therefore wishing someone to be burnt to ashes is a taboo in Igbo society.
- *Husikwaa anya/ Tagbuokwa onwe gi n'ahuhu* (May you suffer severely in life)

#### B. Dead/ death

Death is something so frightening that people are afraid of talking about or unwilling to mention. For whatever reason, in almost all languages, death is considered a strong taboo because it causes great pain and sorrow to one's family members and friends. Therefore in Igbo, the following expressions are seen as taboo;- *Mmuo* (talking about Ghost); *onwu gbuo gi* (Wish someone death); *Ama gi chikwaa* (May your kindred be wiped out); *Egbe eluigwe gbagbuo gi* (May thunder strike you to death).

#### C. Animals

The names of the following animals are seen as taboo words in Igbo society;

- *Agwọ*- talking about Snake. Snake is one of the dreadful animals in Igbo society because of its poisonous nature. So Igbo people believe that when you talk about snake, it will mysteriously appear and hunt you.
- *Eke lookwaa gi* - May python swallow you

Some animal names when used to refer to someone are considered taboo in that context, such as;

- *Ewu* (goat) goat in Igbo society symbolizes someone very stupid or foolish.
- *Aturu* (sheep) Sheep is a taboo word usually used to refer to a senseless person without ambition or direction.
- *Enwe/mkpi*. (Monkey/he-goat) signifies a monster or An ugly person.
- *Mbe* (Tortoise) Trickster Tricky person.
- *Ezi* (Pig) A dirty and unkempt person.
- *Ikwikwi* (owl) wicked and dubious person. Some Igbo believe that owl is an evil creature which witches and wizard use to perpetrate evil and torment people.

#### D. Religion

*Ita Mmanwu* - This means revealing the name of a person in a Masquerade. Masquerades are highly regarded in Igbo tradition and culture. They are revered and feared. Revealing the name of the person carrying the masquerade, intentionally or unintentionally, is a big sacrilege.

#### E. Appellation

To Igbo people, It is a big taboo for one to call a royalty or parents by their names. It is taboo to address people generally by their personal names without adding the appropriate title first. Some of these titles include; *Eze/ Igwe* (King); *Lọlọ* (Queen); *Ichie*, Chief, *Nze*, *Ozo* (designated titles for titled persons); *Maazi* (Mr.); *Oriaku/Odoziaku* (Mrs.); *Nwaada* (Miss); *Mma/Nne* (Mom); *Nna* (dad); *Dede/Ndaa* (Elder brother, uncle, Kinsmen); *Danne/Ndaa* (Elder sister, Aunt, Kinswomen).

It is taboo to tell someone “Nne gi” or “Nna gi” (your father/ your mother) or insult someone's parents in the context of an argument, disagreement, quarrel, etc. Parents are well respected and honored in Igbo society. Telling someone "your father" or "your mother" is not just demeaning but heartbreaking and most times the result is very deadly.

#### F. Sex/ Parts of the body

In Igbo society, words related to sex, sexual organ, and sexual affairs as profane and dirty words. Those related to excrement are regarded as inelegant; People usually avoid using such words directly, especially in a formal context. But as it is a daily act of human beings, it is impossible for us not to talk about it. Therefore, various euphemisms used to replace excretion words are created. These taboo words include; *Akwuna* (Flirt, Harlot, Promiscuous person); *Amu* (Penis); *Otu* (Vagina); *Onu nsi* (Anus); *Ara* (Breast); *Akpa amu* (Scrotum); *Nso* (Menstruation); *Ira otu* (Have sex); *Inyu nsi* (To defecate).

#### Countermeasures to Linguistic Taboos in Cross-Cultural Communication

Generally speaking, all linguistic taboos should be avoided in cross-cultural communication. The following are ways to reduce or avoid violating the linguistic taboos in Chinese and Igbo language.

#### **A. Strengthen the study of Chinese and Igbo culture**

Language is not only an important carrier of culture but also an indispensable part of the culture. To strengthen the learning and accumulation Chinese culture is a fundamental and long-term strategy to avoid taboos and improve communication effectiveness in cross-cultural communication. It is almost impossible to learn Chinese well without understanding Chinese culture. On the other hand, the more profound and detailed understanding of the history, culture, tradition, customs, habits, and lifestyle of China, the more accurate you will be able to understand and use the language correctly. Foreigners who chose to reside in Nigeria either temporarily or permanently should be given a free mandatory lesson on taboos in Nigeria, especially in Igbo society.

#### **B. Cultivate the ability of cross-cultural thinking**

Through the appreciation of literary works, we can also cultivate the ability of cross-cultural thinking. The cultivation of cross-cultural thinking ability is helpful for us to understand cultural differences, solve cultural conflicts, and achieve effective communication in cross-cultural communication.

#### **C. Training on sensitivity to cultural differences**

In addition to gradually cultivating the awareness and sensitivity of cultural differences through reading cultural books and appreciating literary works, it is a popular practice to strengthen cross-cultural communication and cultural sensitivity training. Through lectures, reports, case studies, watching video materials, participating in situational dialogue, e.t.c; we should strengthen the understanding of foreign culture, improve the sensitivity of intercultural communicators to cultural differences, and reduce or avoid the phenomenon of culture shock in the process of intercultural communication.

#### **D. To expand the knowledge of linguistics taboos and their corresponding euphemisms.**

In daily work and life, we should learn more about these taboos and their corresponding euphemisms, and constantly expand the accumulation of these two aspects, to reduce or avoid the violation of appellation taboos and the cross-cultural communication barriers caused by them.

#### **E. Pay attention to the cultivation of cultural adjustment ability**

The ability of cultural adjustment refers to the ability of the participants to adjust their communication behaviors according to the cultural characteristics or cultural conflicts in the cross-cultural environment. It is based on the understanding of a certain culture and closely related to personal psychological quality, including psychological adjustment ability and flexible adaptability. In case of cultural conflicts such as appellation taboos, good psychological adjustment ability can timely adjust psychological state, reduce psychological pressure, stabilize communication emotions, shorten the duration of the conflict, and accelerate the recovery of normal communication. In a multicultural context, it is very important to have a strong ability of cultural adjustment, which directly affects the success of cross-cultural communication.

### **Conclusion**

Taboos exist in Chinese and Igbo languages. People who engage in communication in either language or culture will show "avoidance" behavior to certain topics and certain words in that language system. They should be unwilling, unable, or afraid to talk freely about those topics or use those words. From this study, it was established that taboo words are commonly avoided with the use of euphemisms. Knowing euphemism will be of great help when one has to utter words that are considered insulting or offensive. Therefore, there is a need for further research on Chinese and Igbo euphemism and polite expressions.

## References

- Anedo, A.A.O (2019). *Violation of Taboos among Igbo People of Nigeria: Socio-Political Implications*. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335224288\\_Violation\\_of\\_Taboo\\_among\\_Igbo\\_People\\_of\\_Nigeria\\_Socio-Political\\_Implications](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335224288_Violation_of_Taboo_among_Igbo_People_of_Nigeria_Socio-Political_Implications)
- Chen Ruixue (2010). *The Similarities And Differences Between English And Chinese Language Taboos From The Perspective of Cultural Differences*. *Border Economy and Culture*. Issue 7, No.7. Pg.100-101.
- Chen, Y. (1962). *Examples of Historical Taboos*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company.
- Christian, N. (2018). *Types of Taboo Expressions in Igbo Society*. USA: World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology International Journal of Cognitive and Language Sciences Vol:12, No:3.
- Crowley, T. (1992). *An Introduction to Historical Linguistics*. Auckland: Oxford University Press.
- Eggins, S. (1994). *An Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics*. London: Pinter Publisher Ltd.
- Farb, P. (1974). *Word Play: What Happens When People Talk*. New York: A. A. Knopf.
- Firth, J.R. (1935). *The Technique of Semantics*. In *Papers in Linguistics 1934-1951*. Oxford University Press.
- Firth, J. R. (1957). "A Synopsis of Linguistic Theory, 1930-1955" in J.R. Firth et al. *Studies in Linguistic Analysis*. Special volume of the Philological Society. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Fromkin, V. & Rodman, R. (1988). *An Introduction to Language* (4th. ed.). Fort Worth: Holt, Reinhart & Winston.
- Fromkin, V., Robert R., and Nina H. (2007). *An Introduction to Language*. Eight Edition. United States: Wadsworth.
- Gao Chunming (2013). *A Sociolinguistic Study of English Taboo Language*. Theory and Practice in Language Studies. Finland: Academy Publisher. Vol. 3, No. 12, pp. 2310-2314.
- Gbenga, F., Ngozi, K., Ikechukwu, N., Florence, N. (2014) *Linguistic Taboos In The Igbo Society: A Sociolinguistic Investigation*.  
[https://www.academia.edu/40583700/LINGUISTIC\\_TABOOS\\_IN\\_THE\\_IGBO\\_SOCIETY\\_A\\_SOCIOLINGUISTIC\\_INVESTIGATION](https://www.academia.edu/40583700/LINGUISTIC_TABOOS_IN_THE_IGBO_SOCIETY_A_SOCIOLINGUISTIC_INVESTIGATION)

- Gerot, L & Wignell, P. (1995). *Making Sense of Functional Grammar : An Introductory Book*. Sydney: Gerd Stabler.
- Guan ChengYong (2011). *Analysis of Chinese Euphemism*. Overseas English map bridge. Pg. 249-250
- Haas, M. R. (1951). *Interlingual Word Taboos*. America Anthropologist, 53: 338–44 in Hymes (1964a).
- Hall, E. T. (1989). *Beyond culture*. New York: Doubleday.
- Hudson, R. A. (1996). *Sociolinguistics*. 2nd eds. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hymes, D. (1974). *Foundations of sociolinguistics: An ethnographic approach*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Nneoma F. U. (2019). *Taboos in Ngwa-Igbo*. Journal of Language and Linguistics. No. 6. July., Pg. 118-128.
- Malinowski, B. (1923). *The Problem of Meaning in Primitive Languages*. In C. Ogden, and A. I. Richards, (Eds.) *the Meaning of Meaning*. London: Paul Trench and Trubner.
- Omego, C.U. (2014). *Sex Variations in the Use of Taboo Expressions in Igbo Community: A Manifestation of Gender Inequality*. Ethiopia: An International Journal of Language, Literature, and Gender Studies. Vol. 3 (2), Serial No 8., Pg. 146-166.
- Sunardi. (2006). *Interpersonal Relationships between Native Speaker and Non-native Speaker in An English Casual Conversation*. Unpublished Master Thesis. Postgraduate Program, Semarang State University.
- Trudgill, P. (1983). *Sociolinguistic: An Introduction to Language Societ* Harmondsworth: Pelican, 1983.
- Wardhaugh, Ronald. (1992). *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. Second Edition. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Wardhaugh, R (2000). *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics* (Third edition). Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Zhang Jinghui (2011). *The Comparison of Chinese and English Linguistic Taboos*. Chinese Journal of Foreign Language Education and Teaching. Vol. 11. Pg. 28-29.