

**THE EFFECTS OF FAMILY NORMS ON LANGUAGE USE – IGBO  
LANGUAGE AS A CASE STUDY**

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BENIN CITY, NIGERIA**

**AUGUST, 2023**

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**A PROJECT WORK SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF  
LINGUISTICS STUDIES, FACULTY OF ARTS, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN,  
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## APPROVAL PAGE

This is to certify that this project was carried out by AZUBUIKE NZUBECHKWU, ART1801446 in the Department of Linguistics and African Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin, Benin City.

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## PLAGIARISM CERTIFICATION

I, **AZUBUIKE NZUBECHUKWU**, with matriculation number MAT NO. ART1801446 declare that this work titled “The Effects of Family Norms on Language Use – Igbo Language as a Case Study” has successfully passed the anti-plagiarism test (with a score of .....), and so does not violate any copyright regulations.

Sign: \_\_\_\_\_

**AZUBUIKE NZUBECHUKWU**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **DEDICATION**

This project is dedicated to God Almighty for His grace, wisdom, help and mercies upon my life; for sparing my life to the end of my studies in the University of Benin, for making me to write this project, for giving me goods grade in all my studies and for seeing me through my university days.. To Him alone be all the glory – 1 Tim 1:17/Psm. 115:1.

And also, this project work is dedicated to my late mother, Pastor (Mrs.) Azubuike Praise Ekaete and to my dad who is still alive, Bishop (Dr.) Azubuike J.U Nzewunwa, for their immerse contribution, efforts and supports in my life spiritually, physically, financially, mentally, academically and other wise.

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## ABSTARCT

This study explores the intricate effects of family norms on language use - using the Igbo language as a case study. The theoretical framework employed in this research work is the Ethnography of Communication SPEAKING model proposed by Dell Hymes of 1964. This theoretical framework was deemed suitable and appropriate for this research because it shows that communication is a comprehensive and intricate act that requires an expect manipulation on the part of the speaker and good listening skills on the addressee's part. Oral data were gathered through an oral interview from adult male and female within the ages of forty (40) - sixty (70) years and above of the Igbo language native speakers. Some of the findings of this research includes that in the Igbo family, idioms and metaphor could be employed to share experiences and impact wisdom indirectly. For example, the idiom "mmada aburo chukwu" (No one is God). Also, the intricate interplay between politeness, respect and hierarchy within an Igbo family profoundly influences language use. This linguistics etiquette sustains the rich cultural heritage, fosters strong bonds and upholds the values and harmony across generations. Also, in conversation, it is customary to acknowledge elders first before addressing others. This demonstrates hierarchical structure and respect for age. Depending on the time of day, customary greeting such as "ututu oma" (good morning) or "Ehihi oma" (good morning) are exchanged as a sign of respect for age.

## CHAPTER ONE

### BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

#### 1.0 Introduction

This study is centered on the effects of family norms on language use – Igbo Language as a case study. Family norms play a crucial role in how children acquire their first language. Children learn the language spoken by their family members and caregivers, so family norms regarding language greatly influence a child's language development. Family norms also often dictate the specific dialect or accent spoken within the household. Children typically adopt the speech patterns and pronunciation used by their family members, which can vary based on regional, cultural, or ethnic norms.

Families may have unique vocabulary or slang that reflects their identity and shared experiences. Family norms shape the communication styles and levels of politeness used within the household. Some families may prioritize formal language use, while others may encourage more casual or colloquial speech. In multicultural or multilingual families, norms regarding which languages are spoken and when they are used can greatly impact language proficiency and identity. Families may have norms about which language is used in specific contexts or with certain family members. Family norms can reinforce gendered language roles, with certain speech patterns, vocabulary, or communication styles associated with gender. For example, some families may encourage boys and girls to speak differently or have distinct roles in conversations. Some families have norms that dictate certain topics or words as taboo

or off-limits in conversation. These taboos can influence what is considered appropriate language.

Use within the family. Family norms related to language can be closely tied to cultural identity. Language may serve as a way to preserve cultural heritage, and families may have norms encouraging the use of a particular language to maintain that identity. In multicultural families, code-switching (changing between languages or dialects within a conversation) may be a norm. This can lead to unique language dynamics within the family.

The norms surrounding parent-child communication can impact how children express themselves and interact with their parents. Openness, respect, and listening skills are often influenced by family norms. It's important to note that family norms regarding language are not static and can evolve over time, especially in response to changing cultural, social, and generational influences. These norms can also vary widely from one family to another, even within the same cultural or linguistic background.

The Igbo family norms have a significant impact on language use within Igbo households. Igbo family norms often prioritize the use of the Igbo language as a means of preserving cultural heritage. Children are encouraged to learn and speak Igbo as their first language, which helps in the transmission of Igbo culture, values, and traditions. In many Igbo households, family members may be fluent in multiple languages, including Igbo and a colonial language like English. Family norms dictate

when and how each language is used, often emphasizing the use of Igbo in informal or family settings and English in formal or educational contexts.

Igbo family norms place a strong emphasis on respect for elders and authority figures. The Igbo language has distinct linguistic markers for showing respect, and children are taught to use these markers appropriately in their speech. Igbo family norms often encourage the sharing of oral traditions, including folklore, proverbs, and stories. These traditions are typically transmitted through the Igbo language and play a role in passing down cultural knowledge.

Igbo family norms may influence gender roles in language use. For instance, there are specific Igbo words and expressions used to address elders, and these may vary based on gender. Boys and girls may be taught different speech patterns based on cultural norms. Igbo families often incorporate religious and ritual practices into their daily lives. These practices involve specific Igbo words, chants, and prayers, reinforcing the use of the Igbo language in spiritual contexts.

In multicultural Igbo families, code-switching between Igbo and other languages (such as English or Nigerian Pidgin) is common. Family norms determine when and why code-switching occurs, depending on the social context. Igbo family norms influence communication styles within the household. Conversations may be characterized by a balance between formality and informality, with different norms for addressing parents, siblings, and extended family members. Igbo culture has specific taboos and

euphemisms associated with certain topics, such as death and illness. Family norms guide the use of appropriate language in discussing these sensitive subjects.

The Igbo language is closely tied to cultural identity and a sense of belonging to the Igbo community. Family norms reinforce the importance of speaking Igbo as a way to connect with one's cultural roots. Overall, Igbo family norms promote the use of the Igbo language as a central element of cultural identity, communication, and the preservation of Igbo traditions and values. These norms are essential in shaping language use patterns within Igbo households.

Igbo families have distinct naming traditions, and family norms dictate the selection of Igbo names for children. These names often have meaningful interpretations and reflect cultural values. Storytelling is a common practice within Igbo families, and it serves as a means of passing down history, morals, and wisdom. Proverbs, in particular, are frequently used, and family norms encourage their incorporation into everyday speech.

Igbo family norms promote strong ties with extended family members. Communication with relatives, even those living in different locations, is valued. The Igbo language is often used for such communications to maintain family bonds.

Igbo family norms influence conflict resolution strategies and language use during disputes. There are established norms for addressing conflicts respectfully and seeking resolution within the family unit. The Igbo family norms play a significant role in language use during cultural events and ceremonies, such as weddings, funerals, and

festivals. The Igbo language is integral to these occasions, conveying cultural significance and symbolism.

Elders in Igbo families play a central role in passing down cultural traditions and values. Family norms emphasize the importance of listening and learning from older family members, fostering intergenerational language transmission. Igbo family norms contribute to the preservation of Igbo literature and oral traditions. Families often have storytellers and poets who use the Igbo language to recite epics and narratives that have been handed down for generations.

In response to concerns about language shift towards English or other languages, Igbo family norms may encourage language revitalization efforts, such as language immersion programs for children. Igbo family norms are intertwined with broader community language norms. These norms can vary among different Igbo communities and may influence the specific Igbo dialect or accent used within the family.

In contemporary Igbo families, globalization and increased exposure to other languages and cultures can lead to shifts in language use norms. Families may navigate the balance between preserving Igbo language and adapting to changing linguistic landscapes. Igbo family norms continue to shape language use practices, maintaining the cultural richness and linguistic heritage of the Igbo people while also responding to evolving social and linguistic dynamics.

The Igbo family norms dictate the use of the Igbo language in various cultural rituals and ceremonies, such as the New Yam Festival (Iri Ji), where specific Igbo prayers, songs, and blessings are recited in the native language.

In Igbo households, family norms influence language use during food preparation and culinary practices. Traditional recipes and cooking methods are often passed down through verbal instructions and conversations in Igbo. Family norms guide the use of Igbo language during marriage ceremonies and relationship dynamics. There are specific Igbo marriage vows, expressions of commitment, and traditional practices that involve language use.

Igbo families often share family stories, anecdotes, and historical narratives that contribute to the preservation of family history and cultural knowledge. These stories are typically recounted in the Igbo language. The Igbo naming ceremonies, known as "Igbo Amaka" or "Igu Afa," are significant family events where children are officially named and receive blessings. The Igbo language is central to these ceremonies, as names are chosen and announced in Igbo.

In some Igbo families, traditional medicine and healing practices are passed down through generations. Family norms may involve the use of specific Igbo chants, prayers, and incantations during these practices. Family norms may encourage the development of oratory skills among family members, especially for those in leadership roles. The Igbo language is a vehicle for effective communication in leadership positions.

Igbo family norms reinforce the idea that speaking the Igbo language is essential for a sense of identity and belonging to the Igbo community. Language is seen as a key marker of cultural membership.

Igbo family norms also extend to religious practices and beliefs. The Igbo language is used in traditional religious ceremonies, prayers, and invocations, reinforcing the connection between language, spirituality, and culture. Igbo family norms may vary among Igbo communities due to linguistic diversity within the Igbo language itself. The specific Igbo dialect or variation used within a family can reflect regional or community norms.

These effects of Igbo family norms on language use highlight the intricate relationship between language, culture, and family life within Igbo communities. Language is a vital tool for preserving heritage, passing down traditions, and reinforcing cultural identity.

All these and several others is what this study seek to investigate on.

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

The problem statement focuses on investigating how family norms influence language use within a household. This research aims to understand how cultural, social, and generational factors impact the way individuals communicate within their families and how these patterns may affect linguistic development, identity formation, and interpersonal relationships.

### **1.2 Research Questions**

- i. What are some of the family norms in the Igbo family?
- ii. How do family norms regarding politeness, respect, and hierarchy affects the way language is used in different Igbo family settings?

### **1.3 Objectives to the Study**

- i. To investigate on what are some of the family norms in the Igbo family?
- ii. To investigate how family norms regarding politeness, respect and hierarchy affects the way language is used in your family settings?

### **1.4 Research Methodology**

This study tends to investigate the effects of family norms on language use – Igbo Language as a case study. The methodology employed in carrying out this research is a qualitative one.

#### **1.4.1 Research Design**

This study employed the use of qualitative data, making use of oral interviews and conversation in the process of data collection

#### **1.4.2 Data Collection**

Data were gathered orally through an oral interviews from adult male and female within the ages of forty (40) - sixty (70) years and above of the Igbo Language native speakers.

### **1.4.3 Participant Observation**

Participant observation technique was also employed as a form of methodology. Some of the tools used in the analysis of the data includes a phone recorded, a pen and a book.

### **1.5 The Igbo People and Language**

The Igbo language is the principal native language cluster of the Igbo people, a Meta ethnicity from Southern Nigeria. The number of Igboid Languages depends on how one classifies a language versus a dialect, so there could be around 15 different Igboid Languages. The core Igbo cluster or Igbo proper is generally thought to be one Language but there is limited mutual intelligibility between the different groupings [North, West, South and East]. According to Uzandu [2020], a standard literary Language termed “Igbo Izugbe” [meaning “general Igbo”] was its core foundation based on the Owerri [Isuama], Anambra [Akwa] and Umuachi [Ohuhu] dialects, omitting the nasalization and aspiration of those varieties.

However, nobody speaks “general Igbo” natively and it is not accepted by all some are not competent in using it. The largest variety of the Igbo cluster is Ngwu. Research show that, the Igbo or Ibo, one of the largest languages of West Africa, is spoken by 18 million people in Nigeria. It belongs to the Benue-Congo group of the Niger-Congo Language Family. The Language is thought to have originated around the 9th century AD in the area near the confluence of the Niger and Benue rivers, and then spread over a wide area of the South Eastern Nigeria.

Igbo is one of the official Languages of Nigeria. It is spoken in the Southern Delta states of Abia, Anabram, Ebonyi, and Imo, as well as in the Northeast of the Delta state and in the South east of the Rivers state. In the states of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo, Igbo is the most main language of trade and commerce. It is used in media communication such as radio and television in the Southern Delta region.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter is an essential part which deals with the reviews on the work that has been documented by researchers on this study. It also contains the conceptual review of this study and the concern of this present study.

#### **2.1 Conceptual Review**

This conceptual framework seeks to give a detailed review of the following concepts in the study: family, family norms, language use and on the Igbo family

##### **2.1.1 Family**

A family is defined as a group of one or more parents and their Children living together as a unit. A family is also defined as a group of two or more individual that are related by blood, Marriage, birth, adoption and usually living together in the same house.

According to Obi (2018), a family is a social group characterized by common residence, economy, cooperation and reproduction. Nwosu (2020), stated that a Family may consist of couples, a mother, a father, children, a single parent, grandparents and grandchildren.

Eze (2019), defines a family as a unit of two or more persons united by marriage, blood, adoption or consensual union. Basically the family is the most fundamental unit of social organization with which we intimately identify. The Family influences our personal, emotional, intellectual, social development and most importantly our usage of Language.

Onyekwelu (2017), defines a family as a unit consisting of parents and their biological or adopted children living together in a single household. Okonwo (2016), stated that a family structure may include not only parents and children but also grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins, often living together or in close proximity.

According to Okeke (2019), a family is also formed when divorced or widowed parents remarry, combining their biological or adopted children into one household. Igwe (2018), also states that a family may also composed of a couple who are in a committed relationship and may have children through various means, such as adoption or surrogacy.

Achebe (2015), also defined a family as a group of people bounded by cultural norms, traditions, and values, which can vary widely among different societies.

### **2.1.2 Family Norms**

According to Nnaji (2020), family norms are the spoken and unspoken rules of a family culture. Reinforced over time, they operate as invisible constraints on family member's behavior.

Okoro (2020), states that family norms are sets of standards for how members of a particular Family dress, acts and use Language. They also sets limits on what is permissible or impermissible behaviors, attitude and use of Language under different circumstances and conditions. More than rule of etiquette, Family with a guide for Living within and outside the home.

Anya (2016), states that the Igbo family norms is also referred to as family values. According to him, family norms are cultural or traditional values that pertain to Family's structure, function, roles, belief, attitudes, ideals and use of language. Other scholars such as Nwankwo (2019) and Ezeani (2018), define family norms as the moral and ethical principles traditionally upheld and passed on within a Family.

According to Igboanusi (2017), family norms also refers to values especially of a traditional functioning of the Family and strengthen the fabric of society. Family norms are values held to be traditionally taught or reinforced within a Family; such as those of high moral standards and discipline.

Udeh (2016), states that norms are fundamental concept in the Family setting. They are most commonly as rules or expectations that are socially enforced. Norms may be prescriptive encouraging positive behavior; for example DO NOT CHEAT'. The term "norms" or "family norms" is also sometimes used to refer to patterns of behavior and internalized values. Family norms are important for their contribution to social order.

Okafor (2015), stated that family has core values, whether they are articulated or not. These values are clear through the way families behave at home, how they interact

with their community, how they use Language. Okonkwo (2020), states that by reflecting upon and clearly defining your Family values, an individual will have a stronger, healthier relationship with on relative and have a communicative and effectual use of his or her Language.

Okafo (2019) stated that, family norms reflects how you want to raise your children and what kind of adults you would like to see them become. Family norms and values are informed by one's own upbringing, beliefs, political philosophy, religious beliefs, morals, and geography, culture and socio economic circumstances.

### **2.1.3. Language Use**

Language use refers to the ways and manners particular words in a Language in general is used. It further refers to the rules for making Language written and spoken variations are routinely employed by it speakers; that is, it refers to the collective habits of a Language's native speakers" as opposed to idealized model of how a Language works or in the abstract.

Nwachukwu (2018), stated that language use refers to the ways in which words are used by the people who speaks and writes a particular Language.

### **2.14 The Igbo family**

The Igbo family structure is a very important institution in the lives of Igbo people. According to Chukwuemeka (2017), all relationships emanates from the family.

Nwosu (2018), stated that every child birthed in any Igbo family begins to learn about human relationships from within the Family.

According to Anyanwu (2019), the collective view of the family unit, as people of Igbo extraction, is quite different from the view of Western World. To Americans and Europeans, family basically implies one father, one mother and their biological or adopted Children. But, if we observe closely what is implied when Igbo people talk about family, we will see that, to the Igbo people, family refers to a group of people living under one household who may or may not even be related blood or marriage. It is in a family setting as described above that the Igbos differ so much from Western but not so much from the Africans tribes. Normally, these Families are intricate with many different stems and branches.

According to Okoye (2017), polygamy, a practice of having more than one wife or husband at a time is a common thing in many Igbo family and society. This practice in turn makes an average family tree in the Igbo society increase dramatically.

## **2.2 Previous Study**

The effects of family norms on language use has been an interesting area of knowledge, research, and scholarship for very long period of time. Its concept, nature, function and devices have attracted the attention of many scholars from different linguistic background and fields of Human studies. In this review of literature some previous and related study on the effects of family norms on language use as been reviewed.

Chinua Achebe (1953), portrays how family norms are important in the Igbo culture and how they form and affect the use of the language. He illustrates this by showing how Igbo family cultures and norms shapes people and makes them into the people they are now and how they use their Language. According to Ezeoke (2016), Igbo family norms prioritize the use of the Igbo language as a means of preserving cultural heritage. Children are encouraged to learn and speak Igbo as their first language, contributing to the transmission of Igbo culture, values, and traditions.

Nwadike (2020), stated that “Igbo family norms encourage the sharing of oral traditions, including folklore, proverbs, and stories. These traditions are typically transmitted through the Igbo language and play a role in passing down cultural knowledge. Igbo family norms place a strong emphasis on respect for elders and authority figures. The Igbo language has distinct linguistic markers for showing respect, and children are taught to use these markers appropriately in their speech.”

According to Okezie (2019), Igbo family norms may influence gender roles in language use. Boys and girls may be taught different speech patterns based on cultural norms, reinforcing gender-specific linguistic roles. Family norms in Igbo culture ensure that cultural knowledge, values, and traditions are passed down through the generations. Language serves as a vehicle for transmitting this cultural heritage.

According to Ezenwa (2018), Igbo culture has specific taboos and euphemisms associated with certain topics, such as death and illness. Family norms guide the use of appropriate language in discussing these sensitive subjects. Igbo family norms extend

to religious practices and beliefs. The Igbo language is used in traditional religious ceremonies, prayers, and invocations, reinforcing the connection between language, spirituality, and culture.

According to Ezeobi (2016), in multicultural Igbo families, code-switching between Igbo and other languages (such as English or Nigerian Pidgin) is common. Family norms determine when and why code-switching occurs, depending on the social context. This reflects the adaptability of the Igbo language to contemporary linguistic landscapes. Elders in Igbo families play a central role in passing down cultural traditions and values. Family norms emphasize the importance of listening to and learning from older family members, fostering intergenerational language transmission.

According to Nwachukwu (2015), Igbo naming ceremonies, known as "Igbo Amaka" or "Igu Afa," are significant family events where children are officially named and receive blessings. The Igbo language is central to these ceremonies, as names are chosen and announced in Igbo, reinforcing cultural and familial ties. Storytelling is a common practice within Igbo families, and it serves as a means of passing down history, morals, and wisdom. Proverbs, in particular, are frequently used, and family norms encourage their incorporation into everyday speech.

According to Okoroafor (2020), Igbo family norms promote strong ties with extended family members. Communication with relatives, even those living in different locations, is valued. The Igbo language is often used for such communications to maintain family bonds. Igbo family norms influence conflict resolution strategies and

language use during disputes. There are established norms for addressing conflicts respectfully and seeking resolution within the family unit, often involving elder mediation.

Ugorji (2014), states that one of the effects of Family norms in the Igbo family system can be seen in the various address form that guides such Igbo Family setting or society. He elaborates further by saying that language may make distinction in terms of the relative social status of interactions in a discourse; and generally interaction events are coordinated by social cultural or linguistics rules in respect to age, authority, status, set, etc.

For example, in Mbieri and other central Igbo communities, the principle is to avoid calling older persons by names, from the Family to the wider community. He cited that in the Igbo Family politeness norms, a woman may not call her husband by name but refers to him and address him simply as “dim”-my husband” or many use any of the following

- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| a] Nna anyi      | “our Father”                                    |
| b] Nna anyi ukwu | “our master”                                    |
| c] Nna m         | “My Father”                                     |
| d] Nna m ukwu    | “My Master”                                     |
| e] Mpa/Nna X     | [where “X” is the name of the first born child] |

Ugorji (2014), further stated that age tanks highest among all social variables such as authority, gender, or sex, etc. that effects the use of language in the Igbo Family norms. According to him, regarding age, in Mbieri and other central Igbo communities Family norms, the principle is to avoid calling older persons by name. Older persons will have any of the application cited in[1 below] precede referential meanings but mark respect, motivated by age.

1. (a) dee/deede            {Chukwuma}
- (b) daa/dada            {Chioma}
- (c) dee                    {Chukwuma/ Chioma}
- (d) ndaa                 {Chukwuma/ Chioma}

In the above example in 1a above, the first is s diminutive of the second, which also applies to (b). Also, females (1a) and (1b) are differentiated by gender. Whereas, (1a) applies to male, (1b) applies onto referents. This is common among Umuahia and Mbaise dialect communities. (1c) and (1d) are other dialects that use “dee”, the application is both male and female referents. The relevant dialects includes Mbieri and the Orlu dialects clusters [Mbieri pronunciation is dédé or déé). Similarly, in dialect that use ndaa, the application is not gender sensitive and thus applies or is application to either.

According to Onyeka (2019), the use of Language in the Igbo Family society may make distinctions in terms of the relative social status interactions in a discourse.

Ezeudu (2018), stated that “family is the bedrock of the society and therefore the stability of any society depends on the strength and cohesiveness of families within that society to which they belong. If families general are stable and progressive, the society to which they belong will manifest these same attributes. The Igbo Family, whether at home or in the diaspora, is an important element in the sustainability of Igbo culture and society.”

Ideh (2016), investigates and discussed the aspects of language use among the Igbo as reflected in their name calling practice. The study also accesses who uses the usage of these alternative names or the euphemistic terms are discussed with the intention of highlighting their pragmatic and cultural importance to the people.

Obi (2018), investigates that the use of personal names is socially restricted among the Igbo. The younger people do not address the elderly ones by their personal names, but the elderly people in the Igbo Family setting can address the younger ones by their names. Also, people of the same age can address one another in the Igbo Family by their personal names. However, in the case of men, they usually use their praise names among one another. The Igbo family norms requires that men are free to address women directly by name, while women are not expected to do the same. Women are traditionally expected to show respect to men when addressing them”.

This study support Nwosu (2017), that in social interactions, respect and difference must be shown to those who are in older than oneself.

Nwachukwu (2014), research work also reveals that, an average Igbo man has many terms used in addressing him by different people in varied context. These terms are society inclined and mostly preferred by the addresser as one get older to save the face. For example, a man is addresses by “di m, nna m Ukwu, oya” chy his wife), “ papa/ nna/ daddy Uche (by his children), oyo (by his in-laws), “papa/nna/ daddy Uche( by his neighbours or younger ones), Ononenyi ( by his mates and older persons). These various terms are used even by non-relative as a mark of respect. In this words, an individual (in the Igbo Family norms) has multiple address terms as alternative to personal names which serve as a politeness marker.

According to Nnaji (2020), Igbo family norms place a strong emphasis on respect for elders and authority figures. The Igbo language has distinct linguistic markers for showing respect, and children are taught to use these markers appropriately in their speech. Igbo family norms often encourage the sharing of oral traditions, including folklore, proverbs, and stories. These traditions are typically transmitted through the Igbo language and play a role in passing down cultural knowledge.

### **2.3 CONCERN OF THE STUDY**

This present study is concerned with the investigation and analysis on the effects of Family norms on Language use- Igbo Language as a case study. The concern of this present study is also to outline some of the various Family norms in the Igbo Nigeria Family setting or society.

Another concern of this present study is to give a brief explanation of what the “Family” is and the important roles it plays on language. And also to explain what family norms are.

The concern of this present studies also seeks to outline the importance of language in the family and in the human society at large.

This project work is very unique because it investigates on the relationship between language use and family norms. Another uniqueness of this project work from previous recommendation and researches is its ability to account in detail and vividly for the Igbo cultural and traditional practices that gave rise to major of the Igbo Family norm in the society and their effects on the Igbo Family norms.

Hence, this study is different from every and any other project works and researches because it show the effect of the Igbo culture in relation to the use of

### **CHAPTER THREE**

# THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

## ETHNOGRAPHY OF COMMUNICATION

### 3.0 Introduction

The theoretical framework employed in this research work is the Ethnography of Communication proposed by Dell Hymes of 1964. This theoretical framework was deemed suitable and appropriate for this research because it shows that communication is a comprehensive and intricate act that requires an expert manipulation on the part of the speaker and good listening skills on the addressee's part.

Ethnography of Communication is a field of study which is concerned primarily with the description and analysis of culture and linguistics is a field concerned among other things with the description and analysis of language code. In the Ethnography of Communication 1964, Hymes launched a new synthesizing discipline within the holistic context of culture, and as it relates to patterns in other component system.

The focus of the ethnography of communication is the speech community, the way communication within is patterned and organized as a system of communication events and the ways in which these interact with all other system of culture.

A primary aim of this approach is to guide the collection and analysis of descriptive data about the ways in which social meaning is conveyed. Among the basic products of this approach are ethnographic description of ways in which speech and other

channels of communication are used in diverse communities, ranging from tribal groups in Africa.

Ethnography of communication has been defined as an approach to understanding society and culture and its reconstruction of an ethnic group in particular and nation in general.

The theory was proposed by Dell Hymes in 1964 and considered a qualitative method in the field of communication as well as cultural anthropology. Dell Hymes (1964), emphasizes that the starting point is the ethnographic analysis of communication conduct of community.

He constructed the SPEAKING Model as a means of portraying a communicative event; this can be used to understand relationship and provide insight on cultural values. This model is discovered as follows: "SPEAKING"

**S = SETTING/SCENE:** just as the name implies, it is where the communicative event takes place, it can be anywhere provided. It can also be called a location

**P = PARTICIPANTS:** These are the people involved in the event, there is usually more than one participant except in a case of soliloquy. Also their roles are deciphered here, it can be speaker, addressee, eavesdropper or an audience.

**E = ENDS:** This implies the results or the outcome of the communicative event. It answers the question of what was achieved

**A = ACTS AND SEQUENCES:** Here the order of speech acts is outlined and as well the acts that make up the speech event

**K = KEY:** The manner and tone of performance by which a message is passed, it could be playful, serious, mocker, angry or sarcastic.

**I = INSTRUMENTALIST:** Here the forms or mediums of communication are determined. It could be speaking, writing or gesture form. More than one form of communication engaged in communicative event. Also, what variety of language was chosen by the participant for this speech event?

**N = NORMS OF INTERACTION:** In other words, rules of interaction for interpreting speech acts. It can be based on the specific behavior attached to the impression of non – participants of the communicative activity.

**G = GENRES:** This refers to the form the speech event belongs to.

Cameron (2001), cautions that Hymes model should be more as a guide than a template because consistently following it can develop a confining view of the subject of its study.

The SPEAKING model is of premium value to the ethnography of communication as it helps to make practical observation on the behavior of particular people in a physical setting.

By examination these eight components, the SPEAKING model provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing communication practices within their cultural context.

The SPEAKING model is a valuable tool for studying the intricate ways in which language and communication are influenced by cultural norms and practices.

Ethnography of communication is an approach used in linguistics anthropology to study how people communicate within specific cultural and social context. It focuses on understanding practices, languages and speech patterns are shaped by cultural norms, values and social structures.

These method involves detailed observation, participation and analysis of how language is used in everyday interactions, helping researchers uncover deeper insights into the relationship between language, culture and society.

Researches using this method often engage in participant observation to gain a holistic understanding of how communication functions within a particular community or society.

The ethnography of communication is a research approach that examines how communication patterns, languages and symbols are used within specific cultural groups. It delves into the cultural context of communication, analyzing how social norms, power dynamics and shared meaning influence the way people convey messages.

The following are the reasons for the adoption of this theoretical framework in this study:

- i. It provides a deeper insight into how communication is influenced by cultural norms, values and practices, helping researchers grasp the intricate connections between language and culture.
- ii. It also helps researchers to study communication in real life contexts, revealing how communication is shaped by social dynamics, power, structure and situational factors.
- iii. It enables a comprehensive examination of verbal and non verbal communication, revealing nuances that might be missed by traditional linguistics analysis.
- iv. It also acknowledges that communication is not just about transmitting information but also about expressing identity, establishing relationships and negotiating social roles.

Overall, the adoption of the ethnography of communication offers a comprehensive and culturally sensitive approach to studying how language and communication intersect with culture and society

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

#### 4.0 Introduction

Here is a data presentation between the researcher and the interviewer on the effects of family norms on language use. The data was carried out across participant between b ages 40 – 70 years. :

#### 5.1 Data presentation

Here are the family norms that exists in the Igbo Family.

1. Elders are not address directly by their names.
2. Elders are not address seating down.
3. Younger ones do not raise up their voices when speaking or address elders.
4. Members of the family do not talk while eating.
5. Younger ones do not talk while elders are talking.
6. Abusive words are not used when addressing people.
7. Younger ones do not talk back at our elders when we are been corrected.
8. Younger ones always greet elder every time they see them
9. Elders do not greet children.
10. We do not tell lies with words to our parents, elders, siblings.

11. Elders and parents are not address in an informal or vulgar language.
12. Honorifics are always used or employed when addressing or talking to our parents.
13. We do not look at our parents or elder straight in the eyes when talking.
14. Politeness terms (words) are always used when addressing members of the family.
15. Expressing gratitude and appreciation is fundamental.
16. Family members will use phrases like “Daalu” (thank you), “ndo” (sorry) to show humility and respect in interactions.
17. Waiting for elders to speak before younger members contributes to the conversation is a sign of respect.
18. Compliments and expressions of admiration are given with sincerity and respect. Admiring someone's qualities might be expressed through phrases like "Ochie dike, onye nwere mmadu" (Valiant warrior, a person with a good heart).
19. Emotional expression might be moderated to maintain harmony. Family members avoid raising their voices or showing intense emotions, as this could be seen as disrespectful.
20. Idioms and metaphors could be employed to share experiences and impart wisdom indirectly. For example, the idiom "Mmadu aburo chukwu" (No one is God) emphasizes humility and the acknowledgment of human limitations.

## **4.2 DATA ANALYSIS USING THE ETHNOGRAPHY OF COMMUNICATION (SPEAKING MODEL)**

### **4.2.1 DATA 1**

Using the SPEAKING model from Hymes' ethnography of communication, I will analyze each of the provided Igbo family norms:

1. "Elders are not addressed directly by their names."

Setting: Family interactions

Participants: Family members

Ends: Showing respect and deference to elders

Acts: Avoiding the direct use of elders' names

Key: Recognizing and maintaining hierarchical roles

Instrumentalities: Use of respectful terms or titles

Norms: Cultural expectations of addressing elders

Genres: Conversational norms within the family

### **4.2.2 DATA 2**

2. "Elders are not addressed while seated."

Setting: Family gatherings or conversations

Participants: Family members

Ends: Demonstrating respect for elders

Acts: Standing while addressing elders

Key: Upholding traditional norms of respect

Instrumentalities: Non-verbal cues, such as standing up

Norms: Cultural expectations of addressing elders

Genres: Respectful interactions within the family

#### **4.2.3 DATA 3**

3. “Younger ones do not raise their voices when speaking to or addressing elders.”

Setting: Family interactions

Participants: Younger family members addressing elders

Ends: Showing respect, maintaining harmony

Acts: Speaking softly and respectfully

Key: Demonstrating deference and humility

Instrumentalities: Politeness terms, tone of voice

Norms: Cultural expectations of addressing elders

Genres: Conversational norms within the family

#### **4.2.4 DATA 4**

4. “Members of the family do not talk while eating.”

Setting: Family meals

Participants: Family members during meals

Ends: Promoting good manners and hygiene

Acts: Observing silence while eating

Key: Ensuring orderly and respectful dining

Instrumentalities: Non-verbal cues (e.g., not talking with food in mouth)

Norms: Etiquette related to family meals

Genres: Dining norms within the family

#### **4.2.5 DATA 5**

5. “Younger ones do not talk while elders are talking.”

Setting: Family conversations

Participants: Younger and elder family members

Ends: Demonstrating respect and active listening

Acts: Remaining silent while elders speak

Key: Acknowledging the wisdom and authority of elders

Instrumentalities: Non-verbal cues (e.g., maintaining silence)

Norms: Cultural expectations of respectful listening

Genres: Conversational norms within the family

#### **4.2.6 DATA 6**

6. “Abusive words are not used when addressing people.”

Setting: Family interactions

Participants: Family members

Ends: Promoting respect and maintaining harmony

Acts: Avoiding offensive language or insults

Key: Ensuring respectful communication

Instrumentalities: Use of polite and appropriate language

Norms: Cultural norms against offensive speech

Genres: Polite and respectful conversation within the family

#### **4.2.7 DATA 7**

7. “Younger ones do not talk back at our elders when we are being corrected.\*\*

Setting: Family interactions during discipline or correction

Participants: Younger family members being corrected by elders

Ends: Upholding authority and maintaining discipline

Acts: Respecting correction without arguing or talking back

Key: Reinforcing the role of elders as authority figures

Instrumentalities: Use of respectful language and obedience

Norms: Cultural expectations of respectful behavior during correction

Genres: Norms for receiving correction within the family

#### **4.2.8 DATA 8**

8. “Younger ones always greet elders every time they see them.”

Setting: Family encounters with elders

Participants: Younger family members greeting elders

Ends: Demonstrating respect and acknowledging elders’ presence

Acts: Initiating greetings with polite phrases

Key: Showing deference and maintaining positive relationships

Instrumentalities: Use of respectful greetings (e.g., “Good morning, elder.”)

Norms: Cultural norms of greeting elders with respect

Genres: Greeting customs within the family

#### **4.2.9 DATA 9**

9. “Elders do not greet children.”

Setting: Family interactions

Participants: Elders and children within the family

Ends: Reflecting hierarchical respect

Acts: Elders typically do not initiate greetings with children

Key: Upholding traditional norms of respect

Instrumentalities: Non-initiation of greetings towards children

Norms: Cultural expectations regarding greetings between generations

Genres: Greeting customs within the family

#### **4.2.10 DATA 10**

10. “We do not tell lies with words to our parents, elders, or siblings.”

Setting: Family interactions

Participants: Family members

Ends: Promoting honesty, trust, and maintaining family integrity

Acts: Avoiding falsehoods and deception in speech

Key: Fostering a culture of truthfulness and trust

Instrumentalities: Use of truthful language and avoidance of lies

Norms: Ethical norms against lying within the family

Genres: Honest and trustworthy communication within the family

#### **4.2.11 DATA 11**

11. “Elders and parents are not addressed in an informal or vulgar language.”

Setting: Family interactions

Participants: Family members addressing elders and parents

Ends: Demonstrating respect and maintaining decorum

Acts: Using formal and polite language when addressing elders and parents

Key: Upholding cultural norms of respectful communication

Instrumentalities: Formal vocabulary and politeness terms

Norms: Cultural expectations of respectful speech to elders and parents

Genres: Polite and respectful conversation within the family

#### **4.2.12 DATA 12**

12. “Honorifics are always used or employed when addressing or talking to our parents.”

Setting: Family interactions

Participants: Family members addressing parents

Ends: Showing deep respect and reverence for parents

Acts: Consistently using honorific titles or terms of respect

Key: Emphasizing the importance of parental authority

Instrumentalities: Use of specific honorific titles (e.g., “Nna” for father)

Norms: Cultural norms of addressing parents with honorifics

Genres: Formal and respectful speech to parents within the family

#### **4.2.13 DATA 13**

13. “We do not look at our parents or elders straight in the eyes when talking.”

Setting: Family interactions

Participants: Family members speaking to parents or elders

Ends: Demonstrating humility and respect

Acts: Avoiding direct eye contact when speaking

Key: Acknowledging the authority and wisdom of elders

Instrumentalities: Use of indirect eye contact or averting gaze

Norms: Cultural expectations of respectful non-verbal communication

Genres: Non-verbal communication norms within the family

#### **4.2.14 DATA 14**

14. “Politeness terms (words) are always used when addressing members of the family.”

Setting: Family interactions

Participants: Family members addressing each other

Ends: Promoting polite and respectful communication

Acts: Incorporating polite words and phrases in speech

Key: Fostering harmonious and respectful relationships

Instrumentalities: Use of polite expressions (e.g., “please,” “thank you”)

Norms: Cultural norms of polite communication within the family

Genres: Politeness norms in family conversations

#### **4.2.15 DATA 15**

15. “Expressing gratitude and appreciation is fundamental.”

Setting: Family interactions

Participants: Family members expressing gratitude and appreciation

Ends: Fostering positive relationships, showing appreciation

Acts: Actively expressing gratitude and appreciation

Key: Promoting goodwill and harmony within the family

Instrumentalities: Use of appreciative language (e.g., “thank you,” “I’m grateful”)

Norms: Cultural expectations of expressing gratitude

Genres: Expressions of gratitude within the family

#### **4.2.16 DATA 16**

16. “Family members will use phrases like “Daalu” (thank you), “ndo” (sorry) to show humility and respect in interactions.”

Setting: Family interactions

Participants: Family members using phrases of gratitude and apology

Ends: Demonstrating humility, respect, and empathy

Acts: Utilizing phrases like “Daalu” and “ndo” appropriately

Key: Emphasizing the importance of politeness and empathy

Instrumentalities: Use of specific phrases for gratitude and apology

Norms: Cultural norms of using these phrases in interactions

Genres: Expressions of humility and empathy within the family

#### **4.2.17 DATA 18**

17. “Waiting for elders to speak before younger members contribute to the conversation is a sign of respect.”

- Setting: Family conversations
- Participants: Younger family members waiting for elders to speak
- Ends: Demonstrating respect for elders’ contributions and wisdom
- Acts: Allowing elders to initiate and guide conversations
- Key: Acknowledging elders’ authority and experience
- Instrumentalities: Non-verbal cues (e.g., waiting for cues from elders)
- Norms: Cultural expectations of respecting elders in conversations
- Genres: Conversational norms within the family

#### **4.2.18 DATA 18**

18. “Compliments and expressions of admiration are given with sincerity and respect. Admiring someone’s qualities might be expressed through phrases like “Ochie dike, onye nwere mmadu” (Valiant warrior, a person with a good heart).”

Setting: Family interactions

Participants: Family members giving compliments and expressions of admiration

Ends: Building positive relationships, acknowledging virtues

Acts: Offering sincere compliments with respectful language

Key: Fostering appreciation and respect within the family

Instrumentalities: Use of culturally appropriate phrases of admiration

Norms: Cultural norms of sincere compliment-giving

Genres: Compliments and expressions of admiration within the family

#### **4.2.19 DATA 19**

19. “Emotional expression might be moderated to maintain harmony. Family members avoid raising their voices or showing intense emotions, as this could be seen as disrespectful.”

-Setting: Family interactions

Participants: Family members managing emotional expression

Ends: Preserving harmony and respect within the family

Acts: Exercising emotional restraint and using moderated tones

Key: Avoiding confrontational or disruptive behavior

Instrumentalities: Non-verbal cues (e.g., maintaining calm tones)

Norms: Cultural norms of emotional moderation in communication

Genres: Emotional expression norms within the family

#### 4.2.20 DATA 20

20. “Idioms and metaphors could be employed to share experiences and impart wisdom indirectly. For example, the idiom “Mmadu aburo chukwu” (No one is God) emphasizes humility and the acknowledgment of human limitations.”

- Setting: Family conversations
- Participants: Family members using idioms and metaphors
- Ends: Sharing wisdom, conveying cultural values indirectly
- Acts: Employing idiomatic expressions and metaphors appropriately
- Key: Using figurative language to communicate deeper meanings
- Instrumentalities: Use of culturally relevant idioms and metaphors
- Norms: Cultural norms of using figurative language for teaching
- Genres: Use of idioms and metaphors for indirect communication within the family

These analyses demonstrate how these Igbo family norms align with the SPEAKING model, emphasizing their cultural and communicative significance within Igbo family interactions.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

#### 5.1. Summary

This study aimed at investigating what family norms are, some of the various family norms that exists in the Igbo family and how family norms regarding politeness, respect and hierarchy affects language use in a typical Igbo family system.

This study employed the use of qualitative data, making use of oral interviews and conversation in the process of data collection

Oral data were gathered through phone and tape recorder from adult male and female within the ages of forty (40) - seventy (70) years and above of the Igbo language native speakers.

Here are the some of the findings of this study. In many Igbo family norms, waiting for elders to speak before younger members contributes to the conversation is an assign of respect. This demonstrates attentiveness and values the wisdom of older family members. Igbo names often carry significant meaning. Using someone's full name or including their titles when addressing shows respects for their identity and heritage. Criticizing elders directly might be considered disrespectful. Construction feedback or suggestions are conveyed carefully to avoid offenses. Language use includes frequent expressions of goodwill. Family members might say "odi mma" (it

is well) or “Ihe oma diri unu” (good things happens to you all) to convey positive intentions.

Idioms and metaphor could be employed to share experiences and impart wisdom indirectly. For example, the idiom “mmada aburo chukwu” (No one is God). Elders pass down cultural stories that teach values and life lessons. Younger members listen intently, learning how to investigate life through these narratives. Emotional expression might be moderated to maintain harmony. Family members might avoid raising their voices or showing intense emotions as this can be seen as disrespectful. Various dialects and expressions are celebrated within the Igbo family, fostering a sense of unity while embracing linguistic diversity. The intricate interplay between politeness, respect, and hierarchy within an Igbo family profoundly influences language use. This linguistic etiquette sustains the rich cultural heritage, fosters strong bonds, and upholds the values and harmony across generations.

In conversation, it is customary to acknowledge elders first before addressing others. This demonstrates hierarchical structure and respect for age. Depending on the time of day, customary greetings such as “ututu oma” (good morning) or “Ehihi oma” (good morning) are exchanged as a sign of respect for age.

## **5.2 CONCLUSION**

This study is able to account for the effects of family norms on language use and how family norms regarding politeness, respect, and hierarchy affect language use in the Igbo family.

In the Igbo family, euphemisms might be used to discuss sensitive topics or situations, maintaining harmony and avoiding offenses while still conveying the intended message. Language use emphasizes modesty and humility. Bragging or boasting is discouraged and achievements are downplayed to prevent appearing prideful. Parables and anecdotes are employed to teach moral lessons and values indirectly, fostering deeper understanding and reflection among family members.

Making request is done with politeness and humility using phrases like “I ga eme m” (can you please help me?) show respect for the recipient willingness to assist.

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## APPENDIX 1

### Body of Data

#### Data 1

**Family:** Anayo Family.

**State of Origin:** Imo State

**Gender:** Male

**Age Range:** 45-50 years

**Language used for communication at home:** Igbo Language. **Children:** 4

**Question 1:** What do you understand by family norms?

**Participant:** "Family norms are the shared values, expectations, and unwritten rules that guide how family members interact and behave. They shape our communication styles, decision-making processes, and overall dynamics within the family."

**Question 2:** What are some of the family norms in your family?

**Participant:**

- i. In my family, we do not address elders or elderly people by their names
- ii. In my family, we do not seat down when addressing our elders
- iii. In my family, we do not seat raise up our voices when speaking or talking to elders.

**Question 3:** How does family norms regarding politeness, respect and hierarchy affects the way language is used in your family settings?

**Participant:** "In my family, there are certain norms that guide our usage of language. One of them is the emphasis on using respectful terms when addressing older family members. We are expected to greet them with words like 'Nna' (meaning 'father') or 'Nne' (meaning 'mother'). These terms display a level of respect and recognition for their authority within the family. Moreover, there is an expectation to use polite phrases such as 'ọ dị mma sir' (meaning 'good afternoon sir') or 'ọ dị mma ma'

(meaning 'good afternoon ma') when interacting with elders. This helps to maintain a sense of respect and hierarchy within our family dynamics."

## **Data 2**

Family: **Ngozi Family.**

**State of Origin:** Abia State

**Gender:** Female

**Age Range:** 40 - 45 years

**Language used for communication at home:** Igbo Language. **Children:** 2

### **Question 1: What are family norms?**

**Participant:** "Family norms encompass the cultural traditions and practices that are passed down through generations. They include how we celebrate holidays, express respect for elders, and uphold our cultural identity."

### **Question 2: What are some of the family norms in your family?**

#### **Participant:**

- i. We do not eat while talking and we do not talk while eating
- ii. We do not seat down eating when talking to elders
- iii. We do not address elders by directly their names
- iv. We do not shout at our elderly ones whenever we are talking to them or whenever they are talking to us.

**Question 3: How does family norms regarding politeness, respect and hierarchy impact the way language is used in different family settings?**

**Participant:** "In our family, language usage is influenced by the importance we place on politeness and showing respect to one another. One norm that guides us is the use of honorifics and kinship terms to address family members. For instance, we use terms like 'ụmụ nnọọ' (meaning 'children of the same mother') to refer to siblings, which

emphasizes the bond we share. Additionally, when talking to older family members, we make sure to use 'ọ nūrụ' (meaning 'please') and respectful expressions like 'ọ dị mma nne m' (meaning 'good evening my mother') or 'ọ dị mma nnam' (meaning 'good evening my sibling'). These norms help foster a culture of politeness and respect within our family."

### **Data 3**

**Family:** Nnamdi Family.

**State of Origin:** Anambra State

**Gender:** Male

**Age Range:** 40 - 45 years

**Language used for communication at home:** Igbo Language. **Children:** 2

#### **Question 1: What are family norms?**

**Participant:** "Family norms are the patterns of behavior that become standard within our family unit. They include everything from how we address each other, resolve conflicts, and even how we share meals. These norms create a unique family culture."

**Question 2:** What are some of the family norms in your family?

**Participant:**

- i. We do not use abusive words to communicate language in my family.
- ii. We do not address elders while eating.
- iii. We do not call elders by their immediate names.
- iv. We do not talk while our elders or elderly ones are talking.

**Question 3:** How does family norms regarding politeness, respect and hierarchy affects the way language is used in different family settings?

**Participant:** "The influence of politeness, respect, and hierarchy on language use in my family settings is profound. In our culture, language reflects the hierarchical structure that exists in the family. For example, children are expected to speak to their parents and older relatives using a more formal and respectful tone. We often use

certain phrases like "Nnọ" (meaning "good morning"), "Ọ dị mma?" (meaning "How are you?"), and "I meeela" (meaning "Thank you") to show respect and politeness. Moreover, there are specific terms of address used to denote the different levels of seniority and authority within the family. This ensures that everyone knows their place and understands the importance of showing respect through language."

Data 4

**Family:** Nzewunwa Family.

**State of Origin:** Imo State

**Gender:** Male

**Age Range:** 65 - 70 years

**Language used for communication at home:** Igbo Language. **Children:** 6

**Question 1: What are family norms?**

**Participant:** "Family norms are the patterns of behavior that become standard within our family unit. They include everything from how we address each other, resolve conflicts, and even how we share meals. These norms create a unique family culture."

**Question 2: What are some of the family norms in your family?**

**Participant:** In my family, here are some family norms:

- i. We do not use language/talk while eating.
- ii. We do not swear or use abusive words to each other.
- iii. We always greet elder every time we see them.
- iv. We do not sit down when greeting an elders.
- v. We do not call elders by their direct names.

**Question 3: How does family norms regarding politeness, respect and hierarchy affects the way language is used in your family settings?**

**Participant:** "Politeness, respect, and hierarchy have a significant impact on language use in my family. The language we use is adapted depending on the age and social status of the person we are talking to. For instance, when speaking to elders, we employ more honorifics and expressions of deference, such as referring to them as "Nnaa" (meaning "father") or "Nnayi" (meaning "mother"). We also adjust our communication style to be more formal, using respectful greetings and formal address terms. This ensures we maintain a harmonious and respectful atmosphere within the family, promoting a sense of unity and reverence for our elders."

Another language norm in my family is the high value placed on greetings and respectful language. In Igbo culture, showing respect to elders and others in authority is highly important, and this is reflected in the language used when interacting with them. There are specific greetings and honorifics used when addressing elders or people of higher status, such as "Ndewo" (hello) or "Nnọọ" (greeting) followed by the appropriate title for the person.

#### **Data 5**

**Family:** Ezine's Family.

**State of Origin:** Abia State

**Gender:** Female

**Age Range:** 40 - 45 years

**Language used for communication at home:** Igbo Language. **Children:** 2

#### **Question 1: What are family norms?**

**Participant:** "Family norms are like the social etiquette we follow within our own home. They dictate how we use polite language, express gratitude, and show appreciation for one another. They create a positive atmosphere in the family."

#### **Question 2: What are some of the family norms in your family?**

**Participant:** In my family, here are some family norms:

- i. We do not use foul language.

- ii. We do not tell lies with words to our parents, elders, siblings.
- iii. We do not shout at our parents, elderly ones and siblings.
- iv. We do not sit down while talking or addressing our parents or elders.
- v. We do not talk while eating.

**Question 3:** How does family norms regarding politeness, respect and hierarchy impact the way language is used in different family settings?

**Participant:** “In my family, it is common for children to address their parents or older siblings using specific respectful terms. For example, children often refer to their father as "Nna" or "Papa" and their mother as "Nne" or "Mama," rather than using their actual names. This use of respectful terms not only demonstrates reverence but also reinforces the hierarchical structure of the family.”

“Additionally, in my family Igbo norms, there is a strong emphasis on politeness and indirect communication. It is considered impolite to be too direct or confrontational in speech. Instead, people often use euphemisms, proverbs, or gentle speech to convey their thoughts or requests. This linguistic norm promotes harmony, avoids conflict, and preserves a respectful tone in communication”.

These language norms within my family reflect the cultural values of respect, hierarchy, and collectivism. They emphasize the importance of maintaining harmonious relationships, reinforcing social structure, and preserving cultural identity.

#### **Data 6**

**Family:** Nwaogu Family.

**State of Origin:** Ebonyi State

**Gender:** Male

**Age Range:** 50 - 55 years

**Language used for communication at home:** Igbo Language. **Children:** 3

**Question 1: What are family norms?**

**Participant:** “Family norms involve the allocation of roles and responsibilities among family members. They determine who takes care of certain tasks, how decisions are made, and how we support each other in our individual roles.”

**Question 2:** “What are some of the family norms in your family?”

**Participant:** In my family, here are some family norms:

- i. We do not shout at elders.
- ii. We do not use vague words (impolite words) when using language.
- iii. We always greet our elder when we see them.
- iv. We do not call elders by their immediate or direct names.
- v. In my family, elders do not greet children.

**Question 3:** How does family norms regarding politeness, respect and hierarchy impact the way language is used in different family settings?

**Participant:** Certainly! In my family where politeness, respect, and hierarchy are strongly emphasized, language use is characterized by formal titles when addressing elders, careful choice of words to avoid sounding impolite, and a tendency to speak deferentially to those in higher positions within the family. For instance, a child might address their grandparents as "Grandfather" or "Grandmother," use honorifics like "sir" or "ma'am" when speaking to parents, and structure sentences to convey humility and respect. This emphasis on family norms could lead to a more structured and formal communication style within the family unit.

## **Data 7**

**Family:** Obi's Family.

**State of Origin:** Anambra State

**Gender:** Male

**Age Range:** 40 - 45 years

**Language used for communication at home:** Igbo Language. **Children:** 3

**Question 1: What are family norms?**

**Participant:** “Family norms are what we learn as we grow up in our family. They teach us how to interact with others, express ourselves, and navigate relationships. They’re the foundation of our socialization process.”

**Question 2: What are some of the family norms in your family?**

**Participant:** In my family, here are some family norms:

- i. We do always greet our elders when we wake up in the morning. We do not allow our elders to greet us first.
- ii. We do not talk back at our elders when been corrected.
- iii. We do not correct our elders.
- iv. We do not sit down talking while an elders is standing.

**Question 3: How does family norms regarding politeness, respect and hierarchy impact the way language is used in different family settings?**

**Participant:** “Certainly, in my Igbo family, the emphasis on politeness, respect, and hierarchy would extend to various aspects of language use and communication. Children would be expected to use formal greetings and expressions when addressing elders, such as "Nnoo" (welcome) or "Dalunu" (thank you). The use of honorifics would be crucial, and individuals might be referred to by their titles or roles within the family, like "Onye isi" (the head of the family).”

Additionally, when sharing opinions or ideas, individuals would likely employ a more indirect and humble approach, avoiding overly assertive language. For example, a younger family member might express their thoughts by saying, "If I may suggest, it seems to me that..." to show respect for the wisdom and experience of their elders.

The hierarchical structure would also impact decision-making conversations. Major decisions might involve a collective discussion led by the head of the family, where deference to their authority is paramount. Even disagreements might be couched in

respectful language, using phrases like "I may be mistaken, but I have a slightly different perspective."

### **Data 8**

**Family:** Uche's Family.

**State of Origin:** Imo State

**Gender:** Female

**Age Range:** 40 - 45 years

**Language used for communication at home:** Igbo Language. **Children:** 2

### **Question 1: What are family norms?**

**Participant:** "Family norms are the ways we express love and care for each other. It could be through hugs, verbal affirmations, or acts of service. These norms reinforce the bonds we share as a family."

### **Question 2: What are some of the family norms in your family?**

**Participant:** In my family, here are some family norms:

- i. We do not address our parents and elders in an informal language.
- ii. We do not talk while eating on the dining.
- iii. We do not lie to our parents using language.
- iv. We do not sit down talking while elders are standing.

**Question 3: How does family norms regarding politeness, respect and hierarchy impact the way language is used in different family settings?**

**Participant:** The following are how family norms regarding politeness, respects and hierarchy affects language use in my family:

- I. **Formal Address:** “Elders and authority figures would be addressed using specific titles or honorifics like "Nna" (father) and "Nne" (mother), followed by their first name. This shows a deep respect for their roles within the family.”
  
- II. ii. **Greetings and Farewells:** “Polite greetings play a significant role in Igbo culture and in my family. When entering a room, family members greet with "Ndewo" (hello) or "Kedu" (how are you?). When leaving, they say "Ka omesia" (goodbye) and express gratitude for the hospitality received.”

## **Data 9**

**Family:** Nnamdi Family.

**State of Origin:** Imo State

**Gender:** Male Family

**Age Range:** 45 – 50 years

**Language used for communication at home:** Igbo Language. **Children:** 3

### **Question 1: What are family norms?**

**Participant:** “Family norms are not static; they can evolve over time. They’re how we adapt to changing circumstances and integrate new family members. They provide a sense of continuity while allowing for growth.”

### **Question 2: What are some of the family norms in your family?**

**Participant:** In my family, here are some family norms:

- i. We do not revile at our parents and elders when talking or using language.
- ii. We do not allow our parents and elders to greet us we greet them.
- iii. We always use honorifics when addressing or talking to our parents.

**Question 3:** How does family norms regarding politeness, respect and hierarchy impact the way language is used in different family settings?

Participant:

- i. **Indirect Communication:** Instead of directly stating opinions or desires, communication might involve subtlety and implication. This prevents the appearance of challenging authority. For instance, if a young family member wants to express disagreement, they might say, "I'm just thinking, but could there be another way to approach this?"
- ii. **Respectful Tone and Nonverbal Cues:** Language use would be accompanied by a respectful tone and body language. Making direct eye contact with elders might be seen as impolite, so individuals might use downcast eyes to show respect.

**Data 10**

**Family:** Chima's Family.

**State of Origin:** Ebonyi State

**Gender:** Male

**Age Range:** 40 - 45 years

**Language used for communication at home:** Igbo Language. **Children:** 4

**Question 1: What are family norms?**

**Participant:** "Family norms contribute to building our family's unique identity. They make us who we are as a unit, reflecting our values, traditions, and the way we relate to one another."

**Question 2: What are some of the family norms in your family?**

**Participant:** In my family, here are some family norms:

- i. We do not look at our parents or elder straight in the eyes when talking.

- ii. We always use polite terms (words) when talking to each other's in the family.
- iii. We do not fight each other with our words when talking; we do not slander or kill with our words
- iv. We do not allow our parents or elders to greet us. We are expected to greet them whenever we see them.

**Question 3:** How does family norms regarding politeness, respect and hierarchy impact the way language is used in different family settings?

**Participant:**

- i. **Storytelling and Proverbs:** Elders often share wisdom through stories and proverbs. Family members would listen attentively and use these proverbs to convey messages indirectly. For instance, if discussing a difficult decision, someone might use the proverb "Eji ama onye kpatara m oke" (Two heads are better than one) to suggest collective decision-making.
- ii. **Hierarchy in Decision-Making:** Family decisions would involve a hierarchical structure. The head of the family would guide discussions, and younger members would express opinions with deference. Decisions might be phrased as suggestions or requests for guidance, rather than demands.

**Data 11**

**Family:** Arinze's Family.

**State of Origin:** Anambra State

**Gender:** Male

**Age Range:** 45 - 50 years

**Language used for communication at home:** Igbo Language. **Children:** 5

**Question 1: What are family norms?**

**Participant:** “Family norms act as guidelines for how we should behave and interact within the family. They establish boundaries, expectations, and the kind of behavior that is considered acceptable and respectful.”

**Question 2:** What are some of the family norms in your family?

**Participant:** In my family, here are some family norms:

- i. We do not use abusive words on the female gender.
- ii. We do not sit talking while an elder is standing.
- iii. We do not look at elders into their eyes when talking or when elders are talking.
- iv. We do not talk while eating.

**Question 3:** How does family norms regarding politeness, respect and hierarchy impact the way language is used in different family settings?

**Participant:**

- i. Special Occasions:** During ceremonies or important family events, individuals might use highly formal language and gestures to show respect and honor the occasion.
- ii.** Overall, language use within my family reflects a deep appreciation for cultural values, respect for elders, and a harmonious hierarchical structure that promotes unity and tradition.

## **Data 12**

**Family:** Alonze’s Family.

**State of Origin:** Imo State

**Gender:** Male

**Age Range:** 60 - 65 years

**Language used for communication at home:** Igbo Language. **Children:** 4

**Question 1: What are family norms?**

**Participant:** “Family norms provide consistency in the values we uphold as a family. They ensure that regardless of external influences, we maintain a shared set of principles that guide our actions and decisions.”

**Question 2: What are some of the family norms in your family?**

**Participant:** In my family, here are some family norms:

- i. We do not look at our parents and elders eye ball to eye ball whenever they are talking.
- ii. We do not interrupt our elders whenever they are talking.
- iii. We do not always raise up our hands for permission before talking.

**Question 3: How does family norms regarding politeness, respect and hierarchy impact the way language is used in different family settings?**

**Participant:**

- i. **Expressions of Gratitude:** Expressing gratitude and appreciation is fundamental. Family members would use phrases like "Daalu" (thank you) and "Ndo" (sorry) to show humility and respect in interactions.
- ii. **Use of Titles:** Addressing people by their titles and roles is a way of acknowledging their status and authority. Elders are be referred to as "Nwanne m" (my sibling) or "Ochie dike" (valiant warrior) to emphasize their importance.
- iii. **Listening before Speaking:** Waiting for elders to speak before younger members contribute to the conversation is a sign of respect. This demonstrates attentiveness and values the wisdom of older family members.

**Data 13**

**Family:** Mr. John's Family.

**State of Origin:** Imo State

**Gender:** Male

**Age Range:** 65 - 70 years

**Language used for communication at home:** Igbo Language. **Children:** 6

**Question 1: What are family norms?**

**Participant:** "Family norms play a crucial role in transmitting our cultural heritage. They are the means through which traditions, languages, rituals, and customs are passed from one generation to the next."

**Question 2: What are some of the family norms in your family?**

**Participant:** In my family, here are some family norms:

- i. Expressing gratitude and appreciation is fundamental
- ii. Family members will use phrases like "Daalu" (thank you), "ndo" (sorry) to show humility and respect in interactions.
- iii. Waiting for elders to speak before younger members contributes to the conversation is a sign of respect.

**Question 3: How does family norms regarding politeness, respect and hierarchy impact the way language is used in different family settings?**

**Participant:**

- i. **Naming Conventions:** Igbo names often carry significant meaning. Using someone's full name or including their titles when addressing them shows respect for their identity and heritage.
- ii. **Politeness Particles:** In Igbo, there are particles like "o" or "kwa" that are used to soften requests and statements, adding a polite and deferential tone to conversations.

- iii. **Avoiding Direct Criticism:** Criticizing elders directly might be considered disrespectful. Constructive feedback or suggestions are conveyed carefully to avoid offense.

#### **Data 14**

**Family:** Akachukwu's Family.

**State of Origin:** Abia State

**Gender:** Female

**Age Range:** 40 - 45 years

**Language used for communication at home:** Igbo Language. **Children:** 4

#### **Question 1: What are family norms?**

**Participant:** "In my opinion, family norms are norms that provide consistency in the values we uphold as a family. They ensure that regardless of external influences, we maintain a shared set of principles that guide our actions and decisions." "Family norms foster a sense of belonging and identity. They define who is considered part of the family and help newcomers understand the dynamics, expectations, and ways of interacting."

#### **Question 2: What are some of the family norms in your family?**

**Participant:** In my family, here are some family norms:

- i. We do not sit down while addressing our parents and elders.
- ii. We always show appreciation by saying "Imela" (thank you) to our elders and parents.
- iii. We do not use abusive words when talking or addressing people in our family.

**Question 3: How does family norms regarding politeness, respect and hierarchy impact the way language is used in different family settings?**

**Participant:**

- i. **Expressions of Well-Wishing:** Language use includes frequent expressions of goodwill. Family members often say "O di mma" (it's well) or "Ihe oma diri unu" (good things happen to you all) to convey positive intentions.
- ii. **Sharing Experiences through Idioms:** Idioms and metaphors could be employed to share experiences and impart wisdom indirectly. For example, the idiom "Mmadu aburo chukwu" (No one is God) emphasizes humility and the acknowledgment of human limitations.
- iii. **Listening Before Speaking:** Waiting for elders to speak before younger members contribute to the conversation is a sign of respect. This demonstrates attentiveness and values the wisdom of older family members.

**Data 15****Family:** Elisabeth's Family.**State of Origin:** Anambra State**Gender:** Male**Age Range:** 40 -45 years**Language used for communication at home:** Igbo Language. **Children:** 3**Question 1: What are family norms?**

**Participant:** "Family norms reflect the core values and beliefs that are important to our family. They serve as a mirror that reflects what we hold dear and how we express those values in our daily lives."

**Question 2: What are some of the family norms in your family?**

**Participant:** In my family, here are some family norms:

- i. The use of inclusive pronouns like "umu" (children) or "idi" (people) when addressing a group.

- ii. In conversation it is customary to address elders first before addressing others.
- iii. Depending on the time of the day, customary greeting such as “otutu oma (good morning) or “Ehihie oma” (good evening) are exchange as a sign of respect and consideration.

**Question 3:** How does family norms regarding politeness, respect and hierarchy impact the way language is used in different family settings?

**Participant:**

- i. **Maintaining Emotional Balance:** Emotional expression might be moderated to maintain harmony. Family members might avoid raising their voices or showing intense emotions, as this could be seen as disrespectful.
- ii. **Celebrating Language Diversity:** Various dialects and expressions might be celebrated within the family, fostering a sense of unity while embracing linguistic diversity.
- iii. In summary, the intricate interplay between politeness, respect, and hierarchy within an Igbo family profoundly influences language use. This linguistic etiquette sustains the rich cultural heritage, fosters strong bonds, and upholds the values of unity and harmony across generations.

**DATA 16**

**Family:** Ezinne’s Family.

**State of Origin:** Imo State

**Gender:** Male

**Age Range:** 55 - 60 years

**Language used for communication at home:** Igbo Language. **Children:** 2

**Question 1: What are family norms?**

**Participant:** “Family norms are norms in a family that enhance communication by establishing a common ground for understanding. They determine how we listen, express ourselves, and handle disagreements. They ensure that our communication is respectful and effective

**Question 2:** What are some of the family norms in your family?

**Participant:** In my family, here are some family norms:

- i. Compliments and expressions of admiration are given with sincerity and respect. Admiring someone's qualities might be expressed through phrases like "Ochie dike, onye nwere mmadu" (Valiant warrior, a person with a good heart).
- ii. Emotional expression might be moderated to maintain harmony. Family members might avoid raising their voices or showing intense emotions, as this could be seen as disrespectful.
- iii. Idioms and metaphors could be employed to share experiences and impart wisdom indirectly. For example, the idiom "Mmadu aburo chukwu" (No one is God) emphasizes humility and the acknowledgment of human limitations.

**Question 3:** How does family norms regarding politeness, respect and hierarchy impact the way language is used in different family settings?

**Participant:**

- i. **Inclusive Pronouns:** The use of inclusive pronouns like "ụmụ" (children) or "ndị" (people) when addressing a group emphasizes unity and acknowledges the collective identity of the family.
- ii. **Acknowledging Elders First:** In conversations, it's customary to acknowledge elders first before addressing others. This demonstrates the hierarchical structure and respect for age.
- iii. **Customary Greetings:** Depending on the time of day, customary greetings such as "Ututu oma" (good morning) or "Ehihie oma" (good evening) are exchanged as a sign of respect and consideration.
- iv. **Intergenerational Storytelling:** Elders often share stories of cultural history and family lineage. This not only passes down knowledge but also maintains a connection to the past and reinforces the importance of respect for traditions.

## **Dada 17**

**Family:** Alio's Family.

**State of Origin:** Delta State

**Gender:** Female

**Age Range:** 40 - 45 years

**Language used for communication at home:** Igbo Language. **Children:** 5

### **Question 1: What are family norms?**

**Participant:** "Family norms are norms that are instrumental in building trust and respect among family members. When everyone follows the same norms, it creates an environment of predictability and reliability, fostering stronger relationships."

**Question 2: What are some of the family norms in your family?**

**Participant:** In my family, here are some family norms:

- i. Depending on the time of day, customary greetings such as "Ututu oma" (good morning) or "Ehihie oma" (good evening) are exchanged as a sign of respect and consideration.
- ii. In my family, we do not talk to strangers disrespectfully.
- iii. In my family, we do not tell lies to our parents, pastors, teachings and elders.
- iv. In my family, we do not talk back at elders whenever we are been corrected by them.

**Question 3:** How does family norms regarding politeness, respect and hierarchy impact the way language is used in different family settings?

**Participant:**

- i. **Use of Euphemisms:** Euphemisms might be used to discuss sensitive topics or situations, maintaining harmony and avoiding offense while still conveying the intended message.
- ii. **Modesty and Humility:** Language use emphasizes modesty and humility. Bragging or boasting is discouraged, and achievements are downplayed to prevent appearing prideful.
- iii. **Sharing through Parables:** Parables and anecdotes are employed to teach moral lessons and values indirectly, fostering deeper understanding and reflection among family members.

- iv. **Formal Requests:** Making requests is done with politeness and humility. Using phrases like "I ga-eme m" (Can you please help me?) shows respect for the recipient's willingness to assist.
  
- v. **Group Decision-Making:** Major decisions within the family are often made collectively, involving input from various members while still respecting the authority of the elder or head of the family.
  
- vi. **Blessings and Well-Wishing:** Blessings are a significant part of language use. Elders often bestow blessings upon younger family members as a way of conveying love, goodwill, and protection.

## **Data 18**

**Family:** Melody's Family.

**State of Origin:** Imo State

**Gender:** Female

**Age Range:** 65 - 70 years

**Language used for communication at home:** Igbo Language. **Children:** 6

### **Question 1: What are family norms?**

**Participant:** "Family norms are norms that contribute to shaping our individual identities and characters. They influence our personality traits, how we handle challenges, and the values we carry into the wider world."

### **Question 2: What are some of the family norms in your family?**

**Participant:** In my family, here are some family norms:

- i. We do not call or address elders directly by their names.
- ii. We do not sit down while addressing elders in a conversation.
- iii. We do not talk when eating.
- iv. We do not use abusing words when addressing words when addressing members of the family.
- v. We do not tell lies to our parents and elderly ones.
- vi. We do not address our parents looking into the eyes when talking to them.  
We bow down our head.

**Question 3:** How does family norms regarding politeness, respect and hierarchy impact the way language is used in different family settings?

**Participant:**

- i. **Ceremonial Language:** During rituals and ceremonies, specific ceremonial language is used to invoke blessings, connect with ancestors, and honor the spirits. This language is treated with the utmost respect.
- ii. **Cultural References:** Incorporating references to Igbo folklore, myths, and historical figures in conversations adds depth and reinforces cultural identity within the family.
- iii. The combination of these language practices not only reflects the values of politeness, respect, and hierarchy but also serves as a way to maintain cultural heritage, pass down wisdom, and strengthen the unity of the Igbo family.

- iv. **Role-Specific Vocabulary:** Different family roles might have specific vocabulary associated with them. For instance, addressing an elder sister might involve using "Ada" (sister) followed by her name.
  
- v. **Expression of Admiration:** Compliments and expressions of admiration are given with sincerity and respect. Admiring someone's qualities might be expressed through phrases like "Ochie dike, onye nwere mmadu" (Valiant warrior, a person with a good heart).
  
- vi. **Acknowledging Ancestors:** Language use might include references to ancestors and their wisdom, showcasing the family's reverence for their lineage and heritage.

## **Data 19**

**Family:** Chimeremueze's Family.

**State of Origin:** Imo State

**Gender:** Female

**Age Range:** 40 -45 years

**Language used for communication at home:** Igbo Language. **Children:** 4

### **Question 1: What are family norms?**

**Participant:** "Family norms are norm within a family system that encourage accountability within the family. They hold us responsible for our actions and words, fostering an environment where we take ownership of our behavior and its impact on others."

### **Question 2: What are some of the family norms in your family?**

**Participant:** In my family, here are some family norms:

- i. We do not use abusive words on our elders and shout at them when talking.
- ii. When we wake up in the morning we must ensure to greet our parents and elderly siblings/ persons.
- iii. We do not encourage stealing in our family.
- iv. We do not talk to elders sitting down.

**Question 3:** How does family norms regarding politeness, respect and hierarchy impact the way language is used in different family settings?

**Participant:**

- i. Addressing Concerns Indirectly:** Raising concerns or issues is done with care to avoid challenging authority. Family members might frame their concerns as questions or suggestions, ensuring a harmonious exchange.
- ii. Teaching through Metaphors:** Metaphors and symbolic language are used to teach life lessons. For instance, the proverb "Ebe obara na-akụ amụ n'ọnu" (Where the strong person is bitten by an ant) teaches humility and the unpredictability of life.
- iii. Ritualistic Language:** During traditional ceremonies or rituals, language takes on a ceremonial tone, using specific phrases and expressions that have been passed down through generations.
- iv. Display of Empathy:** Empathy is conveyed through language in a way that shows understanding and support. Phrases like "Achoro m" (I sympathize) are used to express condolences.

## **Data 20**

**Family:** Chimeremueze's Family.

**State of Origin:** Imo State

**Gender:** Female

**Age Range:** 40 -45 years

**Language used for communication at home:** Igbo Language. **Children:** 4

### **Question 1: What are family norms?**

**Participant:** "Family norms is defined act as a cultural compass that guides us in our everyday interactions. They help us navigate situations, make decisions, and respond to challenges while staying true to our family's values."

### **Question 2: What are some of the family norms in your family?**

**Participant:** In my family, here are some family norms:

- i. We do not sit down when addressing or talking to elders.
- ii. We do not talk when eating.
- iii. We also use honorifics in my language to address our elders.

**Question 3:** How does family norms regarding politeness, respect and hierarchy impact the way language is used in different family settings?

**Participant:**

- i. **Family Nicknames:** Special nicknames might be used within the family, reflecting endearment and reinforcing the family's close bond.
- ii. **Respecting Elders' Privacy:** Language use extends to respecting the privacy of elders. Personal matters might be discussed discreetly or privately to maintain dignity and respect.

- iii. **Formal Acknowledgment:** When receiving guidance or advice from an elder, family members might formally acknowledge their words with phrases like "Ome ka omesia" (May your words remain with you), showing appreciation and recognition.