

TABOOS AND THEIR EUPHEMISTIC EXPRESSIONS IN ONICHA-UGBO



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**A PROJECT WORK SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS
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APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that this research was carried out by **OGABU AUGUSTINA CHIDIMMA** in the Department of Linguistics studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin, under my supervisor.

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PLAGIARISM CERTIFICATION

I, **OGABU AUGUSTINA CHIDIMMA** with the Matriculation Number **ART2004756**, have declared that this work titled 'TABOOS AND THEIR EUPHEMISTIC EXPRESSIONS' has successfully passed the anti-plagiarism test of 6% and so does not violate any copyright regulations.

OGABU AUGUSTINA CHIDIMMA

Date:

DEDICATION

This project work is dedicated to God for unmerited grace, and enormous mercies all through my years of struggle and hurts and also to my amazing and wonderful family, the Ogabus.

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I am deeply grateful to God Almighty for His unwavering guidance and support throughout my academic journey. His love and mercy have been my rock, and I am thankful for His presence in my life.

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the use of taboo words and their polite alternatives (euphemisms) in Onicha-Ugbo, a community where Enuani is spoken. The study aims to identify common taboo words and their euphemistic expressions, examine the consequences of using taboo words in conversations, and investigate how euphemisms are used in place of taboo words.

Using Dell Hymes' SPEAKING Model, this research analyzes data collected through interviews with native Enuani speakers and online sources. The results show that taboo words can be grouped into five categories: social, cultural, sex, food, and verbal taboos. Using these taboo words can cause offense and even lead to punishment.

The study finds that understanding the context in which taboo words and euphemisms are used is crucial for effective communication. It highlights the importance of considering the social and cultural norms of the Onicha-Ugbo community when communicating with its members.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Language is a complex and multi-faceted concept that has been studied and analyzed by Linguists, Philosophers, Anthropologists as well as Cognitive Scientists.

Language has existed overtime and is constantly evolving with new words, expressions and meaning and the old words are falling out of use. (Crystal,2020 :77).

Language is believed to be arbitrary in nature in that the relationship that exists between words and their meaning is based on convention and agreement among speakers rather than on any inherent connection. (Scholz, 2015 :105).

Native speakers of languages often apply caution when using language so as not to infringe on the cultural norms by being aware of the cultural nuances and sensitivities that exists in their language, striving to use language that is respectful, considerate and emphatic because violating this standard will be considered a taboo.

Taboo is a cultural prohibition that separates the sacred from the profane and maintains social solidarity. (Alexander,2004 :88-105).

It is also a prohibition that reinforces social hierarchies and maintains cultural norms. (Ortner, 2006 :133).

Taboos are known as swear words or curse words that are considered offensive, inappropriate, forbidden, blasphemous and obscene. They could also be derogatory remarks that are demeaning or dehumanizing to individuals, thus, using these terms in conversations could invite dire consequences.

In order to avoid using these expressions, the use of Euphemistic expressions is employed. What then are Euphemistic expressions? Euphemisms are words or expressions which replace unpleasant or offensive ones, and thereby avoid giving offence causing distress or stirring up hostile or undesirable emotions (Allan & Burrige,2006: 30).

They are polite or evasive words or phrases used, to avoid giving offense. (Aitchison, (2013, pg 151).

Euphemistic expressions can also be defined as mild phrases used to avoid unpleasantness so as to avoid taboo topics, to show respect to the culture of a community or personality of a person, and reduce embarrassment or discomfort.

Examples of these Taboo words and Euphemistic expressions include words or phrases like the english ones below:

- 1a. *Passed away* instead of saying *died*
- b. Economic *downturn* instead of *recession*
- c. *Challenging situation* instead of *crisis*
- d. Unwell instead of *sick*

This study seeks to reveal the use of Euphemistic expressions instead of taboo words as a very common pattern of conversation among the Onicha-ugbo people in Delta state.

They believe that taboo words are offensive to their ancestors and are considered unmentionable, thus, they employ Euphemistic expressions when conversing.

Examples in Enuani language of Onicha-ugbo include the following:

2a. *Àchōmí nyú nsí* (I want to poo) replaced with *Àchōmí jé àzúnò* (I want to go to the back of the house).

This expression is very common in the Onicha-ugbo community and anyone who hears anybody speaking it, will totally understand what the person is saying.

Another example is 2(b) below:

b. *Nzúzú* (stupid person) replaced with *onyé ewéné ísí* (someone that does not use his/her head.)

The Onicha-ugbo people find the first word offensive or very rude whenever you are talking to someone or about someone. It attracts offended eyes but the second expression is mild and one will understand what you're saying without taking offense.

More examples will be introduced in subsequent chapters.

1.1 ONICHA-UGBO AND THE PEOPLE

Onicha-ugbo is a town located in Aniocha north local government area of Delta state. It is surrounded by neighboring towns like Ogwashi-Uku, Issele-Uku, Onicha-Olona, Ezi and Ugboko. It is approximately 45 kilometers (28 miles) from Asaba, the Delta State capital. The people of Onicha-ugbo speak the Enuani dialect which is among the dialects of the Anioma region (Igbo speaking region in Delta state).

The Onicha-ugbo people are ruled by a king called the 'Obi'. They are known for the akwàóchá (white cloth) and èshúlú (beads) attire worn during marriage ceremonies, burial ceremonies and every other nature of ceremony. The people of Onicha-ugbo have an annual festival called 'iwaji' or 'ine' showcasing their cultural heritage and bravery of their ancestors.

Onicha-ugbo people are known for their hospitable nature and they are known to have a flair for formal education which has produced notable individuals occupying prestigious offices in politics in Nigeria and worldwide. The people of Onicha-ugbo are so kindhearted that they assist

the less privileges in Onicha-ugbo to acquire certian necessities of life like education and shelter as well as food.The people of Onicha-ugbo are mostly business-minded and creators of job opportunities for the youths.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.

This study aims to investigate the complex relationship between taboos and their euphemistic expressions, exploring how cultural norms, linguistic patterns, and social contexts influence the creation and use of euphemisms. Specifically, this research seeks to:

1. Identify and analyze the types of taboos prevalent in specific cultural context
2. Examine the linguistic and cultural mechanisms used to create euphemistic expressions for taboos.
3. Investigate the impact of globalization and urbanization on the preservation and transmission of taboo knowledge.
4. Explore the effects of euphemistic expressions on communication, cultural identity, and social cohesion.

By addressing these research questions, this study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the dynamic interplay between taboos, euphemisms, and cultural context, ultimately informing strategies for preserving cultural heritage and promoting effective communication.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In this section, we will be asking some potential research questions that can be explored further regarding taboo and Euphemistic expressions in Enuani language of Onicha-ugbo community.

1. How are the common taboo words and their corresponding euphemistic expressions identified in Enuani language of Onicha-ugbo?
2. What are the consequences of using taboo words in conversations in Onicha-ugbo community?
3. How is euphemism used in place of taboo words in conversations in Onicha-ugbo community?

1.4 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this research is to gain an in-depth understanding of the cultural-linguistic practice of the Onicha-ugbo community and its specific objectives are:

- 1) to identify and describe the common taboo words and their euphemistic expressions in Enuani language
- 2) To examine the consequences with using taboo words in conversations in Onicha-ugbo community

- 3) To examine the pragmatic use of euphemism in place of taboo words in the Onicha-ugbo community

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study aims to provide an in-depth understanding of the cultural linguistic practices of the Onicha-ugbo community, focusing on taboo words and their euphemistic expressions in the Enuani language. Specifically, this research seeks to document and analyze common taboo words in Onicha-ugbo and their corresponding euphemistic expressions, as well as investigate the social, cultural, and psychological consequences of using taboo words in conversations within the community. Additionally, this study will examine the context, motivations, and effects of using euphemisms instead of taboo words in Onicha-ugbo, shedding light on the complex relationships between language, culture, and communication.

1.6 METHODOLOGY

This section outlines the research methodology used in this study, covering data collection, methods, and instruments. It explains the types of data gathered, the sources, and the procedures for collecting them.

The data collection methods, including surveys, interviews, and observations, are described, along with the instruments used. The participant selection and measures to ensure data quality and validity are also discussed.

1.6.0 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

This section talks about the methods I employed in the data collection which consists of the primary and secondary data collection.

1. Primary data collection:As part of my research, I decided to gather information from people who are native speakers of the Enuani dialect of Onicha-ugbo. I was lucky to have my parents and my father's sister, who are all fluent speakers, to share their knowledge with me.

I started by having a conversation with my mother. I asked her about words that are considered taboo in our culture and the polite expressions that people use instead. She was happy to share her insights with me, and I learned a lot from our conversation. One of the words she mentioned that are considered taboo words is "nwú or nwúshú" which means to die and can be replaced with "ná ànìmmúo" which means "to go to the land of the spirits"

Next, I spoke with my father, who also shared his knowledge of taboo words and their euphemistic equivalents. He gave me some examples of words that are not supposed to be used in certain situations, and the alternative expressions that people use instead. One of the examples he gave is "kpá nkátá" which means "to chat" and it is replaced with "kwú òkwú" which means to discuss.

To get more information and validate what my parents had told me, I also reached out to my father's sister. I had a phone conversation with her, and she shared some more examples of taboo words and euphemistic expressions. Her input was really helpful in confirming what I had learned from my parents.

As I was gathering all this information, I also took some time to reflect on my own experiences growing up. I thought about the words my parents would use around me, and the ones they would tell me not to use because they were considered taboo. I realized that there are some words that are not supposed to be used in polite conversation, and that using euphemistic expressions is a way of showing respect and avoiding offense.

I wrote down all the information I gathered from my parents and my father's sister, as well as my own reflections and observations. This helped me to create a rich and detailed dataset that I could use for my research.

2. Secondary data collection: As I continued my research, I wanted to gather more information about taboo words and their corresponding euphemistic expressions. I decided to explore online platforms to see what I could find.

First, I did a research on Taboo words and their Euphemistic expressions in Onicha-ugbo, on Wikipedia, but unfortunately, it didn't provide me with the specific information I was looking for. I decided to try another approach.

I joined a Facebook group dedicated to the Onicha-ugbo community, where I connected with native speakers of the Enuani dialect. I asked a question in the group about taboo words and their corresponding euphemistic expressions, and I was thrilled to receive many helpful responses from the group members.

Encouraged by the success of my Facebook inquiry, I decided to try another online platform. I logged onto Nairaland, a popular online forum, and searched for discussions related to taboo words and their euphemistic expressions in Onicha-ugbo. While I didn't receive as many responses as I had on Facebook, the information I gathered was still useful and helped to further enrich my research.

Through these online platforms, I was able to gather valuable insights and information that complemented my primary data collection.

1.6.1 INSTRUMENTS FOR DATA COLLECTION

This section talks about the instruments used in the collection of data. The following instruments were used to collect data:

1. Notepads: for taking down data provided by native speakers
2. Internet: for sourcing additional data from online platforms

3. Phone: for making audio recordings of native speakers' pronunciations and capturing the meanings of taboos and their corresponding euphemistic expressions in Enuani dialect of Onicha-ugbo

1.6.2 SOURCES OF DATA COLLECTION

This section explains where I got the information for my research. I collected data from two main sources: people and online platforms.

1. PEOPLE: I got valuable information from native speakers of the Enuani dialect of Onicha-ugbo which include my parents, who shared their knowledge with me, my father's sister, who also provided helpful insights, members of the Onicha-ugbo group on Facebook, who responded to my questions and shared their expertise.

2. ONLINE PLATFORMS: I also gathered information from online sources, including Wikipedia; Although I didn't find much information here, it was still a useful starting point. I also got information from Facebook; this was a rich source of data, thanks to the helpful members of the Onicha-ugbo group and lastly, Nairaland. I found some useful information on Nairaland which complemented my other sources.

1.6.3 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

After collecting the data on taboo words and their corresponding euphemistic expressions in onicha-ugbo, I employed the following method of data analysis:

1. Categorization: I organized the data into five categories, including social taboos, cultural taboos, sex taboos, food taboos and verbal taboos and I gave the corresponding euphemistic expression for each data as well as their meanings.
2. Transcription: I transcribed each data point to provide pronunciations and meanings after writing out the orthographic forms of these taboo words and their corresponding euphemistic expressions

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of this study extends to various individuals and social contexts within the Onicha-ugbo community. This research is important for:

1. Providing a moral framework that guides individual behaviour and promotes social cohesion in Onicha-ugbo community.
2. Preserving cultural heritage and traditional practices in Onicha-ugbo community
3. Safeguarding essential values and morals that define the Onicha-ugbo community.
4. Facilitating the transmission of moral values across generations in Onicha-ugbo

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a literature review to the research topic, "Taboos and their Euphemistic expressions in Onicha-ugbo". The main objective of this section is to offer a thorough understanding of the concepts and ideas that will be explored throughout this study.

The introduction is divided into three main sections. Firstly, a conceptual review of the study will be presented, providing an overview of the key terms and concepts related to taboos and euphemisms.

Next, a review of existing literature on the topic will be discussed, highlighting the contributions and findings of previous scholars. Lastly, this chapter will examine the current state of knowledge on taboos and euphemisms, identifying patterns, trends, and gaps in the existing research.

2.1 CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

This section will be focusing on some terms which are related and used in this study with the purpose of enlightening and broadening our knowledge about the topic at hand.

2.1.1 TABOOS

The concept of "Taboos" originates from the Polynesian language, specifically the word "tapu," meaning "prohibited" or "forbidden." This term was introduced to the English language by Captain James Cook in 1777. (Sturtevant in purba,1962: 64)

Taboos refer to social or religious practices that restrict certain behaviours, activities, or relationships with people, places, or things. These restrictions help control behaviour and promote peaceful coexistence in societies. Taboos can take various forms, including language, where certain words are considered off-limits.

In addition to controlling behaviour, taboos serve other purposes. They can be used for stress relief or emotional release, shared among close groups or friends, or even used to create dark humour. However, violating these taboos can have severe consequences, including ex-communication, imprisonment, or even death.

Interestingly, what is considered taboo varies greatly across societies. For instance, openly discussing bathroom activities may be acceptable in one culture but considered taboo in another. In Onicha-ugbo culture, for example, discussing bathroom activities requires euphemistic expressions, highlighting the importance of cultural context. For example, saying:

3. à chòm í jé àzúnò

| | | | |

I want to go backyard ~ I want to go to the back yard

In place of saying:

à chòmí nyúnsí

| | |

I want to poo ~ I want to poo

Ultimately, taboos play a crucial role in ensuring the proper functioning of societies. They reflect societal norms and customs, highlighting prohibited actions and promoting social harmony. Understanding taboos is essential for grasping the complexities of human societies and how they coexist.

2.1.2 RELIGIOUS TABOOS

Religious taboos refer to practices or actions that are prohibited by a specific religion. These taboos are rooted in the teachings and doctrines of the religion, guiding followers on what to avoid in order to prevent sinful behaviour.

The nature of religious taboos varies significantly across different religions and denominations. For instance, in Christianity, attending church on Saturday instead of Sunday may be considered a taboo, while Sabbath observers view attending church on Sunday instead of Saturday as a taboo. Similarly, Muslims do not observe Christmas, instead celebrating Salah, and participating in Christmas celebrations would be seen as a taboo.

A fascinating example of religious taboos can be found in the Tongo-Tengzuk tribe in Ghana. In their belief system, crocodiles are revered as sacred beings, essentially human entities living among them. Harm or kill a crocodile, and you risk dire consequences - disaster and a curse from the gods.

Some religious taboos in Onicha-ugbo include:

4a. Swearing in God's name. It is preferable you swear with the names of humans or things but not God.

b. Eating of bats.

Religious taboos encompass various practices worldwide, including:

5a. Consuming food restricted by the religion

b. Adultery

c. Homosexuality

d. Marrying outside the faith

e. Killing sacred animals or plants

f. Incest

g. Bestiality

In essence, religious taboos embody the fundamental beliefs and values of a particular faith, outlining what is deemed acceptable and unacceptable within the community.

2.1.3 SOCIAL TABOOS

Social taboos are prohibitions that arise from societal norms and expectations. These taboos are rooted in a society's values and belief systems, providing guidelines for individuals to follow for harmonious living.

Social taboos often overlap with morality and religion, influencing how people perceive what is acceptable and unacceptable. For instance,

6. Homosexuality was once widely considered a social taboo, reflecting societal attitudes shaped by cultural, religious, and legal beliefs.

In various cultures, specific practices or behaviours are considered social taboos. For example,

7a. In Onicha-ugbo, women are prohibited from wearing "ákwàocha" (traditional white cloth) around their necks, as it is reserved for men. Additionally

7b. There are the burial customs, such as requiring a roof over the grave, are strictly observed.

Interestingly, social taboos can change over time. In Western countries like the USA, increased awareness and tolerance have led to a significant reduction in social taboos. However, in other cultures, social taboos remain an integral part of maintaining social harmony.

Ultimately, social taboos reflect a society's collective decisions on what behaviours or practices are unacceptable. By understanding these taboos, we gain insight into the values and norms that shape human interactions within different cultural contexts.

2.1.4 CULTURAL TABOOS

Cultural taboos are a vital aspect of human communication, serving as unseen boundaries that govern our interactions and relationships. These unspoken rules dictate what is deemed acceptable or unacceptable within a particular culture or community.

At their core, cultural taboos are rooted in historical, social, and religious traditions that shape our values and norms. They influence how we perceive and respond to sensitive topics, from death and mourning to sexuality and relationships.

Violating cultural taboos can have serious consequences, ranging from social ostracism to emotional distress. This underscores the importance of being aware of and respecting these taboos, especially when interacting with people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

By recognizing and honouring cultural taboos, we demonstrate our willingness to engage with others in a respectful and empathetic manner. This not only fosters deeper connections and understanding but also promotes a more harmonious and inclusive social environment.

For instance, 8. In the Onicha-ugbo community, there exists a deeply respected tradition regarding the burial of the deceased. Specifically, it is considered a taboo to bury an individual outside of their residential building.

This practice stems from our profound belief in according dignity and respect to the deceased, even in death. To protect the grave from elements, we bury our loved ones within the building, ensuring the roof provides shelter from rain and sun.

Violating this sacred tradition is deemed a serious offense. Those found guilty of doing so will face consequences, including a fine. Furthermore, the corpse will be exhumed, and reburied in accordance with our customary practice.

In conclusion, cultural taboos play a significant role in shaping our interactions and relationships. By embracing and respecting these taboos, we can navigate complex social situations with sensitivity and finesse, ultimately enriching our personal and professional lives.

2.1.5 EUPHEMISM

The term "euphemism" originates from the Greek word "euphēmismos," meaning "sounding good." Euphemisms are mild or indirect words or expressions used to avoid offense, unpleasantness, or sensitivity. This figure of speech substitutes gentle or vague terms for harsh, blunt, or disturbing ones. Payne (britannica.com,2024)

Historically, euphemisms were employed in ancient Greece to avoid offending the gods or convey sensitive information discreetly. Payne (britannica.com,2024). Today, euphemisms serve various purposes, including avoiding offense or controversy, softening unpleasant information,

maintaining social propriety, conveying complex or sensitive ideas, facilitating sensitive discussions, and enhancing diplomatic communication.

Euphemisms are not meant to be interpreted literally. For instance, 9. When someone says "kicked the bucket," it is unlikely you'll picture someone literally kicking a bucket. Instead, you understand it to mean "died." Euphemisms rely on shared understanding of their figurative meaning.

While euphemisms are a type of idiom, not all idioms are euphemisms. Idioms convey meaning, whereas euphemisms aim to avoid offense. Additionally, idioms often have an informal, playful tone, whereas euphemisms are formal and cautious. For example, 10. "at the drop of a hat" means starting a task immediately, but it's not a euphemism since it doesn't relate to a sensitive or taboo subject.

In essence, euphemisms allow us to communicate sensitive information tactfully, maintaining social harmony and avoiding unnecessary offense.

2.1.6 EUPHEMISMS VERSUS IDIOMS

Euphemisms and idioms share several commonalities. Firstly, both concepts rely on indirect communication, conveying meaning through implied rather than explicit language. This

indirectness is rooted in the shared cultural knowledge and context that underpin both euphemisms and idioms.

Another similarity lies in their use of figurative language. While euphemisms tend to be more literal, both concepts employ non-literal language to convey meaning. Additionally, both euphemisms and idioms are culturally specific, relying on shared cultural knowledge to convey intended meaning.

Lastly, both concepts offer creative avenues for expression. By leveraging indirect language and figurative devices, euphemisms and idioms enable speakers and writers to craft vivid and evocative language.

Despite their similarities, euphemisms and idioms exhibit distinct differences. One primary difference lies in their purpose. Euphemisms are designed to avoid offense, unpleasantness, or discomfort, often by substituting mild or evasive language. In contrast, idioms aim to convey complex meanings, emotions, or ideas through figurative language.

Another difference arises from their linguistic structure. Euphemisms typically employ substitution, circumlocution, or mild language, whereas idioms often involve metaphors, similes, or other figurative devices.

Tone also distinguishes euphemisms from idioms. Euphemisms tend to be polite, evasive, or diplomatic, whereas idioms can assume various tones, including formal, informal, poetic, or persuasive, depending on the context.

Furthermore, the level of abstraction differs between euphemisms and idioms. Euphemisms tend to be more literal and concrete, whereas idioms often involve more abstract and figurative language.

Lastly, the contexts in which euphemisms and idioms are used differ. Euphemisms frequently appear in formal, professional, or sensitive contexts, whereas idioms are commonly used in informal, conversational, or creative contexts.

2.1.7 EUPHEMISMS VERSUS TABOOS

Euphemisms and taboos share several similarities. Firstly, both concepts involve avoidance, whether it's avoiding certain words, phrases, or topics. This avoidance serves as a coping mechanism, allowing individuals to navigate sensitive or uncomfortable subjects.

Another similarity lies in their cultural significance. Both euphemisms and taboos are deeply rooted in cultural norms, values, and traditions. They reflect the social and cultural context in which they are used.

Both euphemisms and taboos also play a role in shaping social interactions and communication. They influence how individuals interact with each other, what topics are considered acceptable or unacceptable, and how language is used to convey meaning.

Lastly, both concepts are related to emotional sensitivity. Euphemisms are used to avoid causing offense or discomfort, while taboos are often related to sensitive or uncomfortable topics.

Despite their similarities, euphemisms and taboos exhibit distinct differences. One primary difference lies in their purpose. Euphemisms are designed to avoid offense or unpleasantness by using indirect language. In contrast, taboos prohibit or discourage discussion of certain topics or use of certain words.

Another difference arises from their nature. Euphemisms involve using language to avoid offense, whereas taboos involve avoiding language or topics altogether.

The scope of euphemisms and taboos also differs. Euphemisms typically apply to specific words or phrases, whereas taboos can apply to broader topics, concepts, or areas of discussion.

Furthermore, the consequences of using euphemisms versus violating taboos differ significantly. Using euphemisms may be seen as polite or considerate, whereas violating taboos can lead to social disapproval, offense, or even punishment.

Lastly, the language usage associated with euphemisms and taboos differs. Euphemisms involve using indirect or evasive language, whereas taboos often involve avoiding language or topics altogether.

2.1.8 EUPHEMISMS VERSUS METAPHORS

Euphemisms and metaphors also share some commonalities. Firstly, both concepts rely on indirect communication, conveying meaning through implied rather than explicit language. This indirectness is rooted in the shared cultural knowledge and context that underpin both euphemisms and metaphors.

Another similarity lies in their use of figurative language. While euphemisms tend to be more literal, both concepts employ non-literal language to convey meaning. Additionally, both euphemisms and metaphors are culturally specific, relying on shared cultural knowledge to convey intended meaning.

Both euphemisms and metaphors also offer creative avenues for expression. By leveraging indirect language and figurative devices, euphemisms and metaphors enable speakers and writers to craft vivid and evocative language.

Despite their similarities, euphemisms and metaphors exhibit distinct differences. One primary difference lies in their purpose. Euphemisms are designed to avoid offense, unpleasantness, or

discomfort, often by substituting mild or evasive language. In contrast, metaphors aim to create new understandings, explain complex concepts, or evoke emotions.

Another difference arises from their linguistic structure. Euphemisms typically involve substitution, circumlocution, or mild language, whereas metaphors involve comparing two unlike things without using "like" or "as."

The tone of euphemisms and metaphors also differs. Euphemisms tend to be polite, evasive, or diplomatic, whereas metaphors can assume various tones, including formal, informal, poetic, or persuasive, depending on the context.

Furthermore, the level of abstraction differs between euphemisms and metaphors. Euphemisms tend to be more literal and concrete, whereas metaphors often involve more abstract and figurative language.

Lastly, the contexts in which euphemisms and metaphors are used differ. Euphemisms frequently appear in formal, professional, or sensitive contexts, whereas metaphors are commonly used in literature, poetry, advertising, and everyday conversation.

2.2 PREVIOUS STUDIES

This section looks at what other researchers, Nigerian and foreign have said about taboos and euphemistic expressions. We'll discuss their findings and ideas, as well as the year they were published.

Edwards (2021), examines how language both reflects and creates social norms, taboos, and our sense of self. He contends that taboo language encompasses identification and cultural standards in addition to prohibition.

He explores the ways in which language shape's identity, taking into account, elements such as dialect, accent, and language preference. Edwards also looks into the effects of taboo subjects on identity development, including racism, sexuality, and disability.

Musolff (2023), explores the intriguing realm of language and how we employ euphemisms and metaphors to deal with delicate and taboo subjects.

Musolff argues that metaphors have the power to both reveal and conceal taboo concepts, shaping our understanding of complex issues. He examines how euphemistic language, often used to avoid offense, can actually perpetuate stigma and reinforce cultural taboos.

Through the integration of cognitive linguistics, discourse analysis, and corpus linguistics, Musolff offers a thorough comprehension of the intricate connections among metaphor, euphemism, and taboo.

Alexander (2020), illuminates the fascinating realm of taboos, demonstrating how they are established, upheld, and contested via our everyday interactions and cultural customs.

According to Alexander, taboos are performed and reenacted through social interactions, rituals, and symbolic communication rather than being set or inherent. He investigates how taboos are reinforced by cultural customs and behaviours, which give them the appearance of being inevitable and normal.

Alexander illustrates how taboos are enforced through social interactions—from little gestures to elaborate cultural rituals—using real-world examples like,

11a. Gasping to show offence when a taboo word is uttered.

11b. Shaking heads in disapproval when there is a use of taboo words.

He also highlights the significant role that symbolic communication—including language and images—plays in upholding or contesting taboos.

Jacobs (2021), explores the intricate realm of taboos, exposing how social context, power relationships, and cultural norms create and preserve these prohibited areas.

According to Jacobs, taboos are created and negotiated within particular cultural settings rather than being unchangeable or universal. He looks at how cultural norms and values are continually disputed and reinterpreted, as well as how power dynamics affect the creation and upkeep of taboos.

Jacobs explains how culture influences our perceptions of what is and is not acceptable and how we might endeavour to build a society that is more inclusive and egalitarian.

In Nigeria, several scholars have explored the concept of taboos and their relationship with euphemistic expressions. Notably, Oyekanmi (2021), provides valuable insights into the Yoruba language and culture.

Oyekanmi examines how the Yoruba people employ indirect language to navigate sensitive subjects such as death, sex, and spirituality, revealing how euphemisms shape social norms and reinforce cultural values. Her research highlights the significance of euphemisms in maintaining social harmony and upholding taboos in Yoruba society. Previous studies have explored euphemisms and taboos in Nigerian contexts.

Fayoyin(2024), examines how Nigerian media uses euphemistic language to navigate cultural sensitivities when reporting on sensitive topics like sexuality, violence, and corruption. Fayoyin analyzes the impact of political, economic, and social factors on media representation.

Similarly, Edeh (2022), delves into Igbo culture and spirituality. Edeh explores taboos surrounding life events, sacred objects, and spaces, revealing how these taboos reinforce Igbo traditional religious beliefs, shape cultural norms, and maintain social order.

These studies demonstrate how euphemisms and taboos shape public discourse and cultural norms in Nigeria, influence media representation and journalistic integrity, reflect power dynamics and economic interests, reinforce traditional religious beliefs and social balance in Igbo culture.

These research works provide valuable insights into the complex relationships between euphemisms, taboos, culture, and media in Nigerian societies.

2.3 CONCERN OF THE PRESENT STUDY

This study investigates the employment of euphemisms in Onicha-ugbo as a substitute for taboo words, examining their role in facilitating effective communication, as well as the motivations and methods behind their usage with a view to showing how the people of Onicha-ugbo use

euphemisms in different situations and how these expressions help the Onicha-ugbo people communicate effectively, build strong relationships and help maintain their cultural identity.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This study adopts the theoretical framework of Dell Hymes' (1972) theory of SPEAKING. Hymes' theory was developed to analyze communication and understand the complex dynamics of taboo conversations and euphemistic expressions.

Hymes' SPEAKING model (1972), is a valuable tool for identifying and labeling the components of linguistic interaction. The model is based on Hymes' view that speaking a language correctly requires not only learning its vocabulary and grammar, but also understanding the context in which words are used.

The SPEAKING model consists of 16 components, which can be applied to various types of discourse. Hymes connotes the acronym SPEAKING under which he grouped the 16 components within the right divisions. They include:

Setting and Scene

The setting refers to the time and place of a speech act, including the physical circumstances. For example, a family reunion might be held in a living room. The scene, on the other hand, refers to

the psychological or cultural definition of a setting. In the case of the family reunion, the scene might be formal, informal, playful, or serious.

Participants

Participants refer to the speakers and audiences involved in the communication. Linguists make distinctions within these categories. For example, the audience can be distinguished as addressees and other hearers.

Ends

Ends refer to the purposes, goals, and outcomes of the communication. For instance, an aunt might tell a story to entertain the audience, teach the young women, and honor the grandmother.

Act Sequences

Act sequences refer to the form and order of the event. For example, the aunt's story might begin as a response to a toast to the grandmother. The story's plot and development would have a sequence structured by the aunt.

Key

Key refers to the clues that establish the tone, manner, or spirit of the speech act. For instance, the aunt might imitate the grandmother's voice and gestures in a playful way or address the group in a serious voice emphasizing the sincerity and respect of the praise the story expresses.

Instrumentalities

Instrumentalities refer to the forms and styles of speech. For example, the aunt might speak in a casual register with many dialect features or use a more formal register and careful grammatically "standard" forms.

Norms

Norms refer to the social rules governing the event and the participants' actions and reactions. For instance, in a playful story by the aunt, the norms might allow many audience interactions and collaborations. On the other hand, a serious formal story by the aunt might call for attention to her and no interruptions as norms.

Genre

Genre refers to the kind of speech act or event. For example, the aunt might tell a character anecdote about the grandmother for entertaining. Different disciplines develop terms for kinds of speech acts and speech communities; sometimes, they have their own terms for types.

The SPEAKING model can be used in the development of this work as it develops effective context-sensitive approaches for discussing taboos. It recognizes and respects cultural differences in taboo communication and teaches euphemistic expressions and context-appropriate language use.

Using Dell Hymes' SPEAKING model to analyse taboos and their Euphemistic expressions in Onicha-ugbo, we can have the following background information:

Setting (S): Onicha-ugbo villager's compound, outdoors, surrounded by traditional homes and gathering areas.

Participants (P): Family members (parents, uncles, aunties) and invited guests, including community elders and friends of the deceased.

Ends (E): Comforting the deceased person's family, sharing condolences, and discussing funeral arrangements.

Act Sequence (A): Conversational, with alternating speakers sharing stories, memories, and words of comfort.

Key (K): Sad, respectful, and empathetic tone.

Instrumentalities (I): Local dialect, using euphemistic expressions like "na animmo" (go to the land of the spirit) to refer to death.

Norms (N): Cultural and social norms of respect, empathy, and communal support in times of grief.

Genre (G): Informal, conversational narrative, with elements of condolence.

Sample conversation:

12. Uncle: Diokpa à náná ànim mó kà mmòà fú ùdó

Elder	has	gone	the land	may	soul his	find	peace
of the dead							

~Elder has gone to the land of the dead. May his soul find peace.

Auntie: isé. Káyín fú úmé í dú wé n'ògèní ífé síké.

| | | | | | | | | |

Amen. May find strength to support them this thing hard

Period

~Amen. May we find the strength to support the family during this difficult time.

Community elder: áyí gé dú wé, kà íwú àni áyín sílí. áyín

| | | | | | | | | |

We will help them as culture land our is We

ámálózò ónyé ányí

| | |

not forget person ours

~ We will help them as our culture demands. We will not forget our loved one.

This setting illustrates how the SPEAKING model can be applied to understand the complex dynamics of communication in a specific cultural context, using euphemistic expressions to navigate sensitive topics like death.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This section presents a tabular representation of common taboo expressions in Onicha-Ugbo, along with their corresponding euphemistic expressions. The table provides a detailed breakdown of each expression, including their meanings, pronunciation and transcription. This section also provides sample conversations that demonstrates the socio-cultural effects of using taboo language and the reasons for replacing them with euphemistic expressions.

4.1 DATA PRESENTATION

The data presented in this section is categorized into five distinct groups based on their manifestation and contexts of use. These categories include social taboos, where community members navigate sensitive topics such as family conflicts or social hierarchy. Cultural taboos are also explored, involving discussions of sacred rituals, ancestral worship, or other culturally significant practices. This section also deals with sex taboos, where individuals employ euphemisms to discuss reproductive health, relationships, or intimacy. Food taboos are another category, encompassing conversations about forbidden foods, dietary restrictions, or culinary

practices. Lastly, verbal taboos are examined, including the use of profanity, insults, or other forms of prohibited speech.

Table 1. SOCIAL TABOOS

This section looks at social taboos, or things we shouldn't say or do in social situations. It covers relationships, asking questions, making requests, and everyday conversations. By knowing what is polite and what is not, we can get along better with others.

TABOOS	GLOSS	EUPHEMISTI C EXPRESSION	GLOSS	TABOO TRANSCRI PTION	EUPHEMISM TRANSCRIPTIO N
Wá ná	Run (Slang)	Gbá òsó	Run (Formal)	/wáná/	/gbósó/
Kúdó mmádu	Meet Someone	Fú mmádù	See Someone	/kúdómádù/	/fúmàdù/
Jé àní mmádù	Travel	Jé ózì	Went on an errand	/jànìmádù/	/jòzì/
Kpám̀bà	Date	Kp̀oyī	Befriend	/kpám̀bà/	/kp̀oyī/
Kp̀á nkátá	Chat	Kwú ókwú	Discuss	/kp̀ākátá/	/kwókwú/
Káká	How far	Kákínò/Kákúnú nò	How are you(sing/plr)	/káká/	/kákínò,kákúnúnò/
Tùfiákwà	God forbid	Ómágá	Impossible	/tùfiákwà/	/ómágá/
Yúmaí	That is your business	Óbásínálím	I don't have a say in that	/yúmaí/	/óbásínálím/
Kó ísì	Scratch hair	Kp̀achá ísì	Cut hair	/koísì/	/kp̀achísì/
Kp̀á ntütü	Plait hair	Mé ntütü	Do hair	/kp̀ātütü/	/métütü/
Ìjinti ?	Do you have ears?	Iyá nú?	Are you listening?	/ìjinti/	/ìyánú/
Kp̀uchí ònweí	Cover yourself	Yílí ákwà	Wear a cloth	/kp̀uchōweí/	/yilákwà/
Wé lím	Carry me	Bú lím	Lift me	/wèlím/	/búlím/
Ákwà	Clothes	Ífè wé yi	Something that is worn	/ákwà/	/iféwéyi/
Wùzó	Stand	Chélím	Wait for me	/wùzó/	/chélím/
Ngèlísì	Head cloth	Ìchòfò	Scarf	/gélísì/	/ìchòfò/
Nyélimák á	Help me	Dūm	Assist me	/yélimáká/	/dūm/
Lá úlá	Sleep	Dínàní	Lie down	/lúlá/	/dínàní/
Ngwóngw ó	Luggage	Ákpá	Bag	/gwóngwó/	/ákpá/
Nú	Get married	Gbá ákwúkwó	Perform marital rites	/nú/	/gbákwúkwó/
Nòdú àní	Stay on the ground	Dónàní	Sit down	/nòdàní/	/dónàní

Table 2. CULTURAL TABOOS

This table lists words that are considered taboo in our culture, along with alternative words that can be used instead. It highlights words that are considered to be too sacred to use for people, and those that are not suitable to use in public. Using these alternative words helps us show respect and follow cultural norms.

TABOOS	GLOSS	EUPHEMISTIC EXPRESSION	GLOSS	TABOO TRANSCRIPTION	EUPHEMISM TRANSCRIPTION
Fú ógè	See your period	Nō ógè	Be on your period	<i>/fógè/</i>	<i>/nógè/</i>
Fé mmádù	Worship someone	Nwé nsópúlú	Have respect	<i>/fémádù/</i>	<i>/wésópúlú/</i>
Ní mé úló	Inside dream	Ní mé úlá	Inside sleep	<i>/nimúló/</i>	<i>/nimúlá/</i>
Ífèwéyí nùkù	Panties	Shimí	Underthings	<i>/ifèwéyínùkù/</i>	<i>/shimí/</i>

Table 3. SEX TABOOS

This table contains words that are considered too explicit or sexual to be used openly. To avoid offense, these words have been replaced with alternative expressions that convey the same meaning but in a milder way.

TABOOS	GLOSS	EUPHEMISTIC EXPRESSION	GLOSS	TABOO TRANSCRIPTION	EUPHEMISM TRANSCRIPTION
Kúdó	Meet	Nòchímé	Go close	<i>/kúdó/</i>	<i>/nòchímé/</i>
Mbà	Boyfriend	Òyì nwóké	Male friend	<i>/mbà/</i>	<i>òyìwòkè/</i>
Kíssí	Kiss	Sūsūmmònú	Rub lips	<i>/kíssí/</i>	<i>/sūsūmmònú/</i>

Table 4. FOOD TABOOS

This table contains words related to food, cooking, and eating that are considered taboo. To avoid offense, these words have been replaced with alternative euphemistic expressions, providing a more socially acceptable way to refer to these everyday concepts.

TABOOS	GLOSSES	EUPHEMISTIC EXPRESSIONS	GLOSSES	TABOOS TRANSCRIPTION	EUPHEMISM TRANSCRIPTION
Lí nní	Eat food	Lí ífé	Eat something	<i>/líni/</i>	<i>/lífé/</i>
Òsikápá	Rice	Nkpúluósísí	Tree seed	<i>/òsikápá/</i>	<i>/kpúluósísí/</i>
Sí nní	Cook food	Sí ífé	Cook something	<i>/síní/</i>	<i>/sífé/</i>

Table 5. VERBAL TABOOS

This table identifies hurtful and insulting words that are considered off-limits. To encourage kindness and respect, it offers alternative phrases that can be used instead, promoting a more thoughtful and inclusive way of communicating.

TABOOS	GLOSS	EUPHEMISTIC EXPRESSION	GLOSS	TABOO TRANSCRIPTION	EUPHEMISM TRANSCRIPTION
Òfú ónyé	Someone	Òfú mmádù	Somebody	/òfóyé/	/òfúmádù/
Nwátá nwányì	Small girl	Nwáagbo	Young girl	/wátàwāyì/	/wāgbó/
Ájómádù	Bad person	Ójònjò	Mean person	/ájómádù/	/ójònjò/
Nsógbú	Problem	Ēkúlékú	Trouble	/sōgbú/	/ēkúlékú/
Ónyé ùlió	Beggar	Àkpíliógónógó	Long throat	/ónyùlió/	/àkplílogónógó/
Ūbúlù	Brains	Úché	Sense	/ūbúlù/	/úché/
Ísí úkú	Big head	Ísí shínè	Plenty head	/isiúkú/	/isishiné/
Nwátà	Child (Informal)	Nwándú	Child (formal/	/wátà/	wādú/
Ūmú áká	Children (informal/	Ūmúndú	Children (formal)	/ūmuáká/	/ūmūdú/

Ónyé ntú	Liar	Ónyé áyé kwú Éziókwú	Someone that doesn't say the truth	<i>/ónyéntú/</i>	<i>/óyáyékwúeziókwú/</i>
Ánú ókwú	Stubborn	Ánú ífè	Doesn't listen to things	<i>/ánuókwú/</i>	<i>/ánuífè/</i>
Nákīwì	Be a waste	Mébi	Spoilt	<i>/nákīwì/</i>	<i>/mébi/</i>

4.2 DATA ANALYSIS

This section examines the taboo words presented in Section 4.1 as well as their corresponding euphemistic expressions, exploring their usage in various contexts. Sample conversations are provided to illustrate these contexts and demonstrate the reasons for employing euphemistic expressions. The analysis of these sample conversations is guided by Dell Hymes' SPEAKING Model, which provides a framework for understanding the social and cultural factors that influence communication.

In the sample conversations, taboo words and their corresponding euphemistic expressions are highlighted in bold letters to illustrate the transition from taboo language to euphemistic alternatives.

4.2.0 SOCIAL TABOOS

Social taboos are the unspoken rules that tell us what to do and what not to do when interacting with others, helping us navigate complex social situations and relationships. They guide our behaviour, language and communication, teaching us what is considered polite or impolite, acceptable or unacceptable, in different contexts and cultures. By following these unwritten rules, we can avoid offending others, build stronger relationships, and contribute to a more harmonious and respectful community.

Examples of some social taboos includes:

13 a. **Kpámbà _kpōyī**

| |

Date befriend

b. **Kpá nkàtá_kwú ókwú**

| | |

Chat talk discuss

Analysis of Social Taboos Using Dell Hymes' Speaking Model

SETTINGS

Outside the family house in Onicha-ugbo

PARTICIPANTS

1. Father
2. Chidimma
3. Chidimma's friend, Oge

ENDS

Discussing about school

ACT SEQUENCE

Conversational, with speakers sharing their ideas

KEY

1. Chatty tone
2. Friendly tone

INSTRUMENTALITIES

1. Local dialect

2. Using Euphemistic expressions like "Kwú Ókwú" to refer to "discuss"

NORMS

Social norms of using accepted terms for particular words

GENRE

Informal, conversational

14. Sample Conversation

Chidimma: Kí kà waá kwùzì nà únò ákwúkwò táni?

| | | | | | | |

What did they teach at house book today

~what did they teach at school today?

Chidimma's friend: Ífè wá kwùzì ànyí é shíké tání

| | | | | | |

What they teach us is much today

~what we were taught were much today

Chidimma's father: Kíkí émé nèzí?

| | |

What are you doing outside?

~what are you doing outside?

Chidimma: Mú nà òyím à **Kpá nkàtá** ~ Mú nà òyím é **kwú ókwú**

| | | | | | | | |

I and my are chat ~ I and my are talk discussion

friend

friend

~I and my friend are chatting.

~ I and my friend are discussing

Taboo Language

If Chidimma were to use the term "Kpá nkàtá" (meaning "Chat"), her father would consider the discussion irrelevant and ask her to enter the house. Therefore, in public settings, it is more appropriate to use the term "Kwú Ókwú" (meaning "Discuss") instead of "Kpá nkàtá".

4.2.1 CULTURAL TABOOS

Cultural taboos are customs or practices that are considered sacred or spiritually significant within a culture. They dictate what is acceptable or unacceptable behaviour, often revolving around spiritual objects, rituals, or ancestral figures. Respecting these taboos is crucial for building trust, avoiding offense, and fostering cross-cultural understanding.

Examples of some cultural taboos

15 a. **Fú ógè** _ **Nō ógè**

| | | |

See period be period

~see your period _ be on your period.

b. Fé mmádù _ Nwé nsópúlú

| | | |

Worship human have respect

~worship someone _ respectful

Analysis of Cultural Taboos Using Dell Hymes' Speaking Model

SETTINGS

On the streets of Onicha-ugbo

PARTICIPANTS

1. Mr. Odeiga
2. Mr. Chekwube
3. Chidimma

ENDS

Discussing respect and Chidimma's behavior towards her elders

ACT SEQUENCE

Conversational

KEY

1. Respectful tone
2. Pleased tone

INSTRUMENTALITIES

1. Local dialect
2. Using Euphemistic expressions (e.g., "Nwe nsópúlú" to refer to respect)

NORMS

Cultural norms for the term "respect" and encouragement of respectful acts

GENRE

Encouragement, Formal

16. Sample Conversation

Chidimma: Uwaómá Diokpa, Uwaómá Diokpa

| | | |

Greetings elder, greetings elder

~Greetings elder, greetings elder

Diokpa Odeiga & Diokpa Chekwube: Uwaómá b̀ezé nwàm

| | |

Greetings received my child

~Greetings received my child.

Diokpa Chekwube: Chidimma é fé mmádù ~ Chidimma nwè nsópúlú

| | | | | |

Chidimma is worship someone ~ Chidimma have respect

~Chidimma worships someone ~ Chidimma is respectful.

Diokpa Odeiga: Éziókwú. ó wéká nsópúlú

| . | | |
True she has respect

~ Truly, she's respectful.

Taboo Language

In Onicha-ugbo, using "Chidimma é fé mmádù" (Chidimma worships someone) to mean respect is considered taboo. The word "fé" (worship) is sacred and only used in addressing God, such as "fé chúkwú" (worship God).

4.2.2 SEX TABOOS

Sex taboos are societal norms that regulate discussions and behaviours related to sex and intimacy. These unwritten rules vary across cultures and communities, influencing what is deemed acceptable or unacceptable in terms of public displays of affection, sexual education, and personal relationships. Respecting these taboos is essential for maintaining social harmony, personal relationships, and cultural sensitivity.

Examples of some sex taboos

PARTICIPANTS

1. Father
2. Ada
3. Ada's boyfriend

ENDS

Ada introducing her boyfriend to her father

ACT SEQUENCE

Conversational exchange involving questions and responses

KEY

1. Explanatory tone
2. Questioning tone by Ada's father

INSTRUMENTALITIES

1. Local dialect

2. Using Euphemistic expressions (e.g., "Oyi nwoke" to refer to boyfriend)

NORMS

Respecting cultural norms related to sex and relationships

GENRE

Questions, explanation with elements of respect for tradition

18. **Sample Conversation**

Ada: Útóm, kákínò?

| |

Honey how are you?

~Honey,how are you?

Ada's boyfriend: \bar{A} nò̀m ófú́má

| |
I am fine

~I am fine

Ada's father: Ada, ónyé kó bù?

| | | |
Ada who is he?

Ada: **Mbàm** kó bu ~ **Òyì** **nwókém** kó bù

| | | | | |
My Boyfriend is he friend my man is he

~His is my boyfriend. ~ He is my male friend

Taboo Language

Ada avoided using "Mbà" (a more direct term for boyfriend) and instead used "Òyì nwókém" (a more euphemistic expression). This is because relationship topics are sensitive especially in conversing with elderly people and require coded language, leaving the listener see infer the intended meaning within the context.

4.2.3 FOOD TABOOS

Food taboos influence how we refer to certain foods, varying across cultures and communities. Using acceptable terms is crucial for cultural sensitivity, social harmony, and effective communication.

The way we talk about food is governed by unwritten rules that differ from one culture to another. Being mindful of these food taboos helps us show respect, avoid offense, and communicate effectively.

Examples of food taboo includes

19 a. Lí nní_ Lí ífé

| | | |

Eat food eat something

~Eat food ~ eat something

b. Òsìkápá_Nkpúluósísí

| |

Rice Tree seed

~ Rice ~ Tree seed

Analysis of Food Taboo Using Dell Hymes' Speaking Model

SETTINGS

Outside the family house

PARTICIPANTS

1. Chidimma

2. Chidimma's friend, Oge

ENDS

Discussing about food

ACT SEQUENCE

Questions and answers between participants

KEY

Chatty tone

INSTRUMENTALITIES

1. Local dialect
2. Using Euphemistic expressions (e.g., "Nkpulosisi" to refer to rice)

NORMS

Cultural norms of respect

GENRE

Informal

20. **Sample Conversation**

Chidimma: Kíkà nneí sì?

| | |

What your mom cook

~ What did your mom cook?

Oge: Nném sí **osikapa** ~ Nnem si **Nkpúluósísí**

| | | | | |

My mother cook rice ~ my mother cook tree seed

My mother cooked rice ~ my mom cook tree seed

(My mom made tree seed)

Taboo Language

Oge avoided using "Òsikápá" (the common term for rice in Idoma land, Benue state) and instead used "Nkpúluósísí" (a euphemistic expression). This is because many people are familiar with the term "Òsikápá", so using "Nkpúluósísí" helps maintain secrecy and avoid revealing the food being discussed.

4.2.4 VERBAL TABOOS

Verbal taboos, meanwhile, prohibit the use of derogatory language, insults, or profanity, promoting respectful communication and social harmony.

Verbal taboo can also be called Linguistic taboo and they can be classified as:

_Nominal Taboo: These are taboos surrounding the use of certain names or labels to refer to someone.

21 a. **Òfú ónyé** _ **Òfú mmádù**

| | | |

One person one human

~One person _ one human

b. **nwáta nwányi** _ **Nwáagbó**

| | |

Small girl young girl

~ Small girl _ young girl

_Pejorative Taboo: These are taboos that relate to insult.

Examples are:

21 c. **Ónyé** **ùlió** _ **Akpiliógónógó**

| | |

Someone who begs throat long
~Beggar _ long throat

d. **Ájómmádù** _ **Ójònjò**

|

|

Bad person

mean person

~Bad person _ mean person

Analysis of Verbal Taboo Using Dell Hymes' Speaking Model

SETTINGS

Family house in Onicha-ugbo

PARTICIPANTS

1. Chidimma

2. Oge

ENDS

Discussing Chidimma's gluttonous behavior

ACT SEQUENCE

Begging attitude and words of insult

KEY

Mild insulting tone

INSTRUMENTALITIES

1. Local dialect
2. Using Euphemistic expressions (e.g., "Akpiliogonogo" to refer to gluttonous attitude)

NORMS

Respecting cultural norms and using mild verbal words

GENRE

Informal with elements of laughter

22. Sample Conversation

Chidimma:	Bíkó	nyém	ánú	òzò
	Please	give me	meat	again

~ please give me meat again

Oge: **Ónyé** **ùlió** óbúná kítàa kí lì ánú shíákpá?

| | | | | | | | | _

Someone who begs is it not now you eat meat big?

~Beggars, didn't you just finish eating big meat?

Àkpíliógónógó, óbúná kítàa kí lì ánú shíákpá?

| | | | | | | | |

Throat long, is it not now you eat meat big?

~Long throat, didn't you just finish eating a big meat?

Taboo Language

Oge avoided using "ónyé ùlió" (meaning beggar) to describe Chidimma's behaviour, as this term is reserved for street beggars and would be considered inappropriate and insulting in this context. Instead, Oge used the euphemistic expression "Àkpíliógónógó" (long throat) to convey the idea of gluttony in a more playful and less offensive manner.

4.3 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study reveal that the collected data on taboos and their corresponding euphemistic expressions can be categorized into five distinct sections.

These categories include social taboos, which pertain to everyday life interactions; cultural taboos, which comprise words forbidden by custom or deemed too sacred for human reference; sexual taboos, which involve explicit words considered offensive; food taboos, which encompass prohibited food names and cooking or eating actions; and verbal taboos, which involve insulting words replaced with euphemistic alternatives.

A thorough analysis of sample conversations has also brought to light the socio-cultural implications of using taboo words, particularly in interactions with elderly individuals. The significance of employing euphemistic expressions to facilitate smoother communication, avoid causing offense, and prevent punishment has been underscored by this study.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.1 SUMMARY

This research study examines the substitution of taboo words with euphemisms in the Enuani language of the Onicha-Ugbo people in Nigeria.

Chapter one provides an overview of the research topic, highlighting the significance of euphemisms in maintaining social harmony. Chapter two employs a comprehensive literature review which helped in synthesizing existing knowledge on taboo words, euphemisms, and polite language, providing a foundational understanding of the subject matter.

In chapter three, the theoretical framework is grounded in **Dell Hymes' theory of SPEAKING**, which facilitates an in-depth examination of conversation dynamics and the role of euphemisms in communication.

While in chapter four, there was a data analysis presenting a nuanced exploration of taboo words and euphemisms in the Onicha-Ugbo language, illustrating how euphemisms are strategically employed to uphold cultural norms and promote social cohesion.

5.2 FINDINGS

This study's research questions and objectives guided the collection of responses from personal and online interviews. The findings are presented below:

1. Using taboo words in Onicha-Ugbo can lead to offense and often times attract punishment. It could also lead to damage of relationships.
2. Taboo words and euphemistic expressions can be identified through observations of social interactions between native Enuani speakers, particularly between elders who uphold community culture, and distinguishing their conversations from those of the younger generation.
3. In Onicha-Ugbo, euphemisms are used instead of taboo words through:
 - a. Indirect language: Instead of using direct and explicit language, individuals employ indirect expressions to convey their message. This approach enables them to communicate effectively while avoiding offense.
 - b. Avoiding derogatory remarks: Onicha-Ugbo's cultural norms emphasize the importance of respectful communication. As such, individuals carefully avoid using derogatory remarks or words that may be perceived as insulting or hurtful else could lead to disagreements and problems in society.

c. Polite language: Polite language is a hallmark of communication in Onicha-Ugbo. By using polite expressions and courteous tone, individuals demonstrate respect for their listeners and avoid causing unintended offense.

5.3 CONCLUSION

This study has shed light on the various taboo words and their corresponding euphemistic expressions in Onicha-Ugbo, spanning multiple contexts. While this research provides valuable insights, it is not exhaustive, and future studies can build upon this foundation to uncover more nuances. This work aims to contribute meaningfully to the field and provide a useful reference for future researchers exploring similar topics.

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