

A SOCIOLINGUISTIC STUDY OF TABOOS: THE CASE OF THE ÌBÒLÓ DIALECT OF  
YORÙBÁ LANGUAGE

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## CERTIFICATION

This dissertation titled: A Sociolinguistic Study of Taboos: The Case of the Ìbòlò Dialect of Yorùbá Language by Balógun, Bólá Kamal has met the standards and regulations governing the award of a Master of Arts Degree in English Language at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. It is considered satisfactory for its contribution to knowledge and, therefore, approved.

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## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to Almighty God, the Greatest, for giving me the strength and enthusiasm to complete it successfully. It is also dedicated to my late parents: Alhaji Chief Alli Ọ̀nàọ̀lápò Balógun and Alhaja Fatimoh Ọ̀lápéóyè Balógun.

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## ABSTRACT

This study is mainly concerned with a sociolinguistic study of taboos with a particular reference to the Ìbòlò dialect of Yorùbá language. The study is a survey of such words and utterances considered taboos in this community in order to ascertain the specific areas in which such taboos are placed and find out whether they share some resemblance with other languages like English, Hausa and so on, using Halliday's Theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics. The adoption of this model in this analysis is informed by the fact that Halliday in the theory, states that the meaning of an utterance has three (3) dimensions which are mode of discourse, tenor of discourse and field of discourse. The study then samples words and utterances considered taboos and examines them by investigating this use of language inherent in such data in context. Structured interview is used as a means of eliciting information from the subject. Moreover, since the research was all about words and utterances, participant observation method was equally adopted to complement the data collected through questionnaire and interview. With the knowledge of the researcher himself as a native speaker of Ìbòlò dialect, certain words and expressions considered taboos were got from the researcher's father, thus form part of our primary source of data collection. Simple random sampling technique was employed to get the required sample. This means that only a part of the population was selected to represent the whole population. Three hundred (300) respondents who cut across other strata like sex, occupation and educational level were randomly selected. One hundred and sixty (160) of the total population were men while one hundred and forty (140) were women. From the analysis of the data collected, the following findings emanated: that moral, political and cultural factors are the major determining factors for the Ìbòlò speakers' choice of taboos in their daily linguistic interactions, that the interplay between the linguistic items used in the formation of taboos only exists in terms of the semantic meaning which is conventional and the use of euphemisms or circumlocutions as substitutes for taboo words affect their daily interactions with other speakers of Yorùbá language who do not understand the Ìbòlò dialect. The present study also contributes to knowledge in that the strict adherence to taboos can be used to impart and enforce moral rules in any given community in Africa especially now that the contemporary society has been characterised by all kinds of moral decadence. In addition to this, our long lost cultural norms, value systems and tradition which Africans are known for can be resuscitated by embracing the institution of taboos.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background to the Study

Language is one of the most indispensable natural assets of human beings. It is the major tool which humans employ for communication purpose. In other words, it is an instrument used by man to interact with one other and to share their views. Language is an interesting aspect of the human existence. This is because the universal man communicates virtually every second consciously or unconsciously in a given code. This code has been labelled by linguists as language. Human language is within the reach of everyone. This perhaps is why when it is said that language proceeds from the consciousness that thought precedes words or that one must think before speaking, a relationship is then established between the two terms, the existence of which seems so immediate and irrefutable to a point that a further investigation appears to be futile.

However, since language is a “system of conventional spoken or written symbols by means of which human beings as members of a social group and participants in its culture communicate, (*Encyclopaedia Britannica* cited in Syal and Jindal 2001:9) there exists some kinds of relationship among speech sounds, words and syntax of language and the ways in which speakers of the language experience the world and behave in it. This seems to agree with Wardhaugh’s (1986:211) view that the main problem therein includes, among others, deciding the nature of the relationship. Hence, we have the problem of trying to establish where one stands amongst the assumptions of the Whorfian Hypothesis and its numerous counter-claims. According to him, culture refers to the values, norms, and beliefs of the society since Sapir-Whorfian Hypothesis theorises that our language use shapes our

perspectives of the world, it follows then that people who speak different languages have world views.

In their own views, Pride & Holmes (1972:288) assert that “Language inter-penetrates with almost all walks of life and varieties of experience. If this assertion is agreed with, then, one can be allowed to suggest that one of the ways of solving our other problems with respect to the relationship between language and culture is finding suitable ways of demonstrating whether the existence of the relationship is through the medium of taboo or not.

Language is used to serve a variety of needs which are either negative or positive in every society. In linguistics, it is seen as a double-edged sword that could be used tactfully to soothe, mend, sway or destroy. As a result of unconventional usage of words and utterances, the Ìbòlò people have put in place certain linguistic norms which guide their use of words and expressions at different occasions and with people of different sexes, ages and classes. This assertion agrees with that of Holmes’ (2001) observation that individuals in a community share criterion for language use, such as rules of speaking, attitudes and values as well as of the socio-cultural understanding with regard to speech. This is because language is one of the ways by which the moral conduct of a society is determined.

For example, taboo which is described by Balandier and Magnet (1974) as a prohibition against performing certain acts and motivated by magical or social sanction, has been a way through which a society expresses disapproval of certain kinds of behaviour believed to be harmful to its members either for a supernatural reason or because such behaviours violate a moral code. This is further justified by Familusi (2010) that a taboo is common to all civilisations but it is systemised in many African countries. Among the Yorùbá, Nupe and Hausa, taboos are used to enforce moral rules, although, whether or not they can stand the test of empiricism and logicity is another issue that has not escaped the attention of

researchers. Looking into the realms of the Yorùbá culture, one can find an adequate reason and explanation for a housewife's reluctance in mentioning the names of her in-laws (especially mother, father, brothers and sisters of her husband) and her readiness to use circumlocutions and euphemisms like Bàbá, Dádì, Oko mi, Olówó orí mi, Olúwa mi, Baálé mi, Bàbá wa for her husband as well as for her father-in-law, a euphemism like Bàbá Oko mi or Bàámi is most common. For a mother-in-law, names like Màámi, Màmá, Màmá Oko mi, are used; while brothers-in-law are usually addressed as Bòòdá or Bàbá oko mi and sisters-in-law are addressed as Àntí, Ìyá oko mi or Ìdí-ìlèkè, to avert what Ayegboyin and Jegede (2009 cited in Ajao, 2013) call epidemic, drought, famine, plague, pestilence and other hazards.

The term “taboo” or “tabu” has been considered by Farb (1974 cited in Gu, 2002) to have been borrowed from Tongan, a language of Polynesia and was also believed to have been introduced into English in the Late Eighteenth Century by Captain James Cook (*Encyclopaedia Americana* 1979). There are various manifestations of a taboo as posited by Frazer (1911) and these could be divided into the divisions of tabooed act (which is in case of placing a taboo on eating and drinking certain types of food), tabooed person (which is evident when taboos are placed on human beings, e.g. a woman on menstruation, kings, twins, etc.), tabooed things (which could be seen in the use of certain things and objects like blood on sharp weapons) and finally, the focus of this study, tabooed words (which occur in the case of placing a taboo upon mentioning names of persons, animals, events and things or common words).

From the point of view of Leach (1964), the classification above can be further grouped as behavioural and linguistic taboos. The concern of this work, however, is mainly on the linguistic aspect of a taboo due to the complex interrelationship between it and cultural values which have made its analysis very difficult.

Leach (1964:35) reports Lenenberg thus:

It is hard to talk about the unsayable but I hope I have made my initial point. Taboo is simultaneously behavioural, linguistic and psychological. As an anthropologist, I am particularly concerned with the social aspect of taboo. Analytical psychologists of various schools are particularly concerned with the individual taboos which centre on the oral, anal and genital functions. Experimental psychologists may concern themselves with essentially the same kind of phenomena when they examine the process of forgetting . . . various kinds of muscular inhibition, but all these varieties of regression are so meshed into the web of language that discussion of any one of the three frames, anthropological, psychological, or linguistic must inevitably lead on to some consideration of the other two.

The Ìbòlò community like many other linguistic communities has its own share of the phenomenon of the linguistic taboos. It is observed that the language could have shared and differed in some of the aspects that characterise taboos with other nearby languages and communities. The aspects in which taboos could have affected the linguistic interaction of the people of the Ìbòlò communities include anatomy, sex, games, insults and names. These then constitute the class of words and utterances that are not freely used by Yorùbá language speakers of the Ìbòlò dialect who would carefully avoid such topics at all cost at the slightest hint of verbal impropriety. This is so because it is admitted that the users of the dialect believe that something, somehow catastrophic is bound to happen. It is in relation to this that, Leach (1964:28) describes what happens when verbal taboos are broken as specific social phenomenon which affects both the actor and his hearers in a specific describable way.”

However, the avoidance, the substitution or the replacement of certain words considered taboos for a particular group of people or things, events, games and hygiene at certain linguistic context or in mixed company and the use of euphemism in social interaction among the people of the Ìbòlò community are imperative. This is because a good number of Ìbòlò native speakers of Yorùbá language whether educated or uneducated must adhere to these norms and values, even though, the meaning of some words and expressions replaced with euphemisms at certain linguistic contexts may not be outrightly decoded by a non-Ìbòlò

dialect speaker. It is then assumed that as long as the cultural norms, expectations and contexts remain the major determining factors in the way language is used in the Ìbòlò linguistic community, certain topics, words or expressions that are stigmatised will be considered as taboo and hence will not be spoken of or used in a particular situation. The reason for this is that one will likely portray oneself in the most appropriate manner with regard to one's speech as being culturally non-defiant.

## 1.2 History of the Ìbòlò Community

Òffà is a major town in the North-Central part of Nigeria. It is located in the South-Eastern part of Kwara State. Òffà, the Headquarters of Òffà Local Government Area of Kwara State, Nigeria, is an ancient town founded by a great archer and hunter called Oláalomí Olófà Gangan, some eight hundred years ago. It shares common boundaries with Èrìn-Ilé, Ìgósùn, Ìpé, Ìlémonà, Ìgbónnà, Òjòkú, Ìkòtún, and Ìjágbo respectively.

Following the incessant inter- and intra-tribal wars of that time, Òffà had to move from its original location to six other locations before it came back to settle down at its first settlement referred to as Òffà-Ilé (the present day Òffà). Prior to the wars that ravaged the Yorùbá race and amongst the Fulani and Nupe, Òffà lorded over the Ìbòlò towns and villages particularly when Òffà became the leader of the Ìbòlò dialectal group which could also be found in Òyán, Òkukù, Ìkìrun, Òsogbo, Ìdó, Ìloòbú, Èjìgbò, and Ìrèsà, all in Òsùn State. Iresa was the first leader of the Ìbòlò, but had to relinquish the position to Òffà when Òffà proved to be more powerful and reliable than Ìrèsà at war front.

The origin of Òffà is Ìlé-Ìfè, the cradle of the Yorùbá race. Oláalomí Olófà Gangan was a direct descendant of Òrànmíyàn, the youngest of the seven children of Odùduwà. Òrànmíyàn was the founder of Òyó and the first Aláàfin of Òyó. This is in line with Olafimihan and Banwo's (2001) submissions. However, other scholars have different views as to where the

speakers of Ìbòlò dialect can be found. Moreso, there are various accounts the researcher got from individual that seems to negate Oláfimíhàn and Banwo's submissions. For instance, some scholars claim that Ìbòlò dialect speakers can be found in some parts of Kogi state and Òşun states respectively. The reason for this as believed by some scholars is that the Olófà Gangan after leaving Òyó moved from one place to another in search of games and that he settled at so many places before finally settled at the present Òffà Ile. His movement from one place to another could be attributed to the spread of Ìbòlò dialect across Òşun, Kwara and Kogi states.

### **1.3 Statement of the Research Problem**

The total avoidance or use of euphemism for words considered as taboos in certain linguistic contexts, or in social interactions among the Yorùbá speakers of the Ìbòlò dialect in some parts of Kwara State, has of late become more pronounced and noticeable. This trend of communication pattern has hindered the effective social interaction in the community especially between the native and the non-native speakers. Hence, it is assumed that it has made many non-native speakers to sometimes find it difficult to understand the communication sequence with the natives since they lack native-like competence in the dialect most especially in the use of the taboo words found in the Ìbòlò expressions.

However, since the Yorùbá nation is a multi-dialect one with multi-dialect groups of individuals with varying qualities and degrees of understanding, what is responsible for the total avoidance or dropping of some words considered most appropriate for certain things, events, games or persons and the reason for the use of coined words or euphemism in some cases for words considered taboos call for concern.

It is against this backdrop that this study attempts to find out the rationale behind the omission or dropping of certain appropriate words and replacing them with the euphemised

ones at a certain linguistic context, thereby, making communication sequence especially between the Ìbòlò native and non-native speakers ineffective. In addition to this, the rationale behind the use of a euphemism for such words and the likely consequences of flouting these norms are necessarily needed to be found out.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

Thus, this study is carried out to find answers to the following questions:

- i What are the Yorùbá taboo words and expressions used mainly by the Ìbòlò people?
- ii What are the factors that determine the Ìbòlò speakers' choice of taboos in their social interactions?
- iii What is the interplay between the linguistic items used in the formation of taboos for elders, opposite sex, political leaders, chief priests, kings, king makers, parts of the body etc.?
- v How does strict adherence to the use of taboos by the Ìbòlò native speakers affect their social interactions with non-native speakers of Ìbòlò dialect?

#### **1.5 Aim and Objectives**

The aim of this study is to investigate and examine the sociolinguistic effect of taboos as used among the Ìbòlò people of the Yorùbá land. The specific objectives of the study, therefore, are to:

- i Examine the Yorùbá taboo words and expressions used mainly by the Ìbòlò people;
- ii Identify factors that determine the Ìbòlò speakers' choice of the taboos in their daily social interactions;
- iii Identify the extent of use of taboo words and expressions among the Ìbòlò dialect speakers of Yorùbá language : and
- iv Identify the functions and meanings of linguistic tokens as used by Ìbòlò speakers in their taboo words and expressions.



### **.1.6 Justification for the Study**

The adherence to taboo by deliberately omitting, dropping or substituting words considered taboos with euphemism during inter-personal discourse has generated many linguistic studies by students in the fields of Humanities and the Social Sciences. This is in a bid to provide answers to the deliberate act of breaking communication sequence amongst the natives where taboos are being held at high esteem. Uzoezie (2001) cited in Motanya (2012 : 13) states that,

Every interlocutor wishes to achieve a desired communicative goal; he aspires to maximise mutual comprehension and communication efficacy by exploiting to the full linguistic resources at his disposal. The rules for their appropriate choice and use constitute part of the speaker's communicative competence.

The Ìbòlò dialect speakers of the Yorùbá language are not in any way exempted from this. A close examination of how the speakers observe these rules show a lot of non-conventional constructions of thoughts which in other linguistic contexts would have led to some level of misunderstanding or communication breakdown between interlocutors of mixed company.

### **1.7 Significance of the Study**

The study is significant because it addresses the unconventional use of words and expressions that have come to be considered as taboos because they have been recognised as improper by convention in certain domain of usage. The phenomenon, taboo, is considered to be functional as it serves as a check and balance system for regulating the behaviour of the Ìbòlò people in their norms and culture. Wardhaugh (1986) confirms this that the intricate nature of the relationship between language and culture has long been recognised. However, it could be assumed that there is a vacuum in the linguistic studies of the Ìbòlò dialect which the current study fills.

## **1.8 Scope of the Study**

Since taboos are a universal phenomenon, this work will, therefore, focus on taboos in Yorùbá community with a special reference to the Ìbòlò community in particular. In other words, this study is intended to make a survey of such words considered taboos in this community in order to ascertain the specific areas in which such taboos are placed and to investigate the various factors that have led to the creation of the phenomenon in the community and as well, see whether it reflects the values and belief of the Ìbòlò people in particular and Yorùbá in general or there are other reasons behind it. However, for the purpose of this study, only the sociolinguistic approach is involved at the level of the analysis.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

Most of the linguistic works that centre on taboos could be said to have been mostly pure anthropological works with few of them having interest in the discussion on linguistic taboos. This chapter, therefore, reviews some of those materials as relevant to this study. In this respect, the review focuses on such relevant topics as the overview of sociolinguistics and taboos. Other aspects also considered in the chapter are the review of earlier works as well as the theoretical framework for the analysis of the work.

#### **2.1 Conceptual Review**

##### **2.1.1 Sociolinguistics**

‘Sociolinguistics and language and society, according to Isabela (2011) are terms that are often used to refer to an interdisciplinary field of research in which Linguistics, Sociology and other Human Sciences join together to study verbal and other human conducts. Based on Isabela’s view, the term Sociolinguistics started to be used in the 1960s mainly to refer to a broad area of studies in language and society on the Atlantic. The author claims that it embraced Variationists, Sociolinguistics, Ethnography of Communication, Anthropological Linguistics, Symbolic Interactionism, Conversation Analysis, Discourse Analysis and so on. In order to refer to this coalition, Bucholtz, and Hall (2008:404) for example, use the term Sociocultural Linguistics’ mainly for reasons of clarity. The term Sociolinguistics’, Bucholtz, and Hall *ibid.* say is increasingly used, particularly in Linguistics in the USA to define the study of how variations in language relate to sociocultural phenomena. However, in Europe,

Coupland and Jaworski (2009:2) conclude that ‘Sociolinguistics’ is now a broad and vibrant interdisciplinary project working across the different disciplines that were its origins.

Therefore, in a sociolinguistic study, the use of taboo words could be said to belong to a language variation topic. Besides the existence of language, language itself cannot be separated from the society. According to Yule (2010), Sociolinguistics is a subfield of the Linguistics studies which focuses on language and how it deals with the social and cultural phenomenon in the society.

Sociolinguistics as a field of studies explores the field of language, society, and things which are related to the social sciences, especially Psychology, Anthropology, and Sociology. The assertion made by Yule seems to agree with the opinion of Trudgill (2000) that, the study of Sociolinguistics is related to culture so that it can affect the way in which people speak or talk since according to Trudgill, such a study is determined by the social context.

In a similar development, Holmes (2003) theorises that people who study linguistics will probably be concerned with describing people’s different social contexts. Holmes further argues that Sociolinguistics also tries to investigate the use of language to convey messages. As language functions to convey messages; there must be social interactions between the members of a community. Those social interactions can indicate the relationship of the people who are involved. Thus, Sociolinguistics is essential in explaining the interaction between the members of the society.

In an attempt to give a more detailed explanation on what the concept of Sociolinguistics entails, Chalka (1983) states that Sociolinguistics is a study in which people use language in social interactions. She further asserts that language can maintain every social institution in human endeavours. To her, people use language for different purposes, it can be used to “carry on love or to “carry out hate” and reveal their identity, characters and background

without realising that they are doing so. In other words, since communication uses language as its own medium, it will, of course, involve the distinctive personality, attitudes and beliefs, as well as the emotions of the speakers in the society. Therefore, in Sociolinguistics, there are two important aspects to be identified; the language used and the society that uses the language. This seems to be a reflection of Wardhaugh's opinion when he states that Sociolinguistics is concerned with investigating the relationship between language and society with the goal being a better understanding of the structure of language and how it functions in communication.

As upheld by Wardhaugh (2006), one of the most popular hypotheses proposed by Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee-Whorf is widely known as Sapir-Whorf hypothesis says that the structure of language can affect the society by influence or can even control them. In other words, this hypothesis is concerned with the possibility in which human's view is influenced by the language. According to Lee-Whorf and Sapir cited in Wardaugh (2006), there are three effect of the society on language and the ways in which the environment is reflected in language. These are:

- i. The Physical environment in which a society is reflected by its language. For example, in English, there is only one word for any kind of snow. However, Eskimos have several names for the word snow since most parts of their environment are surrounded by snow;
- ii. The social environment can also be reflected in the language and often it has on the structure of the vocabulary. An example of this is the characteristic vocabulary of a coast tribe, such as the Nootka Indians with their precise terms for many species of marine animals, vertebrate and invertebrate animals; and
- iii. The values of a society. Different societies may value certain things and do them in a certain way.

Going by the various submissions, views and opinions of scholars as presented above, it could be deduced that the only probable or central idea therein is the relationship that exists between language and society and how language is used in a way that conforms to the norms and values of the society. In buttressing this, Wardhaugh (2006) claims that the two aspects of linguistic behaviour which he identifies from the social point of view as the role played by language in conveying information about the speaker are reflections of the fact that there is a close relationship between language and society. He concludes that language cannot be studied without the society for it can only exist with human society.

However, almost all of the societies that exist in this world have the same requirements of the categorisation of good and bad language. Good language is usually measured when someone speaks properly and politely on a subject matter. It can be added here that a good language should contain some dense meaning which shows beautiful words. On the other hand, bad language is considered to be non-standard or dirty words and wrongly-used ones which sometimes result in the annoyance of the hearers. The use of bad language in this sense can be tantamount to the use of words considered taboo in the Ìbòlò community.

### **2.1.2 Taboo**

Individuals in community share criteria for language use such as the rules of speaking, attitudes and values as well as those of the socio-cultural understanding with regard to speech. This perhaps is why Holmes (2010) submits that a taboo in relation to language is one of the ways by which the moral conduct of a society is determined. A taboo can then be seen as one aspect of the social structure that reflects both in language and action. It can also be characterized as being concerned, according to Akindele and Adegbite (1999), with some behaviour that are forbidden or regarded as immoral or improper. Humphries (1999) further refers to a taboo as that which ultimately expresses a society's concern for themselves and

acts as a forward line of defence. From the foregoing discussion, it can be added that taboos are utterances that are culturally disallowed from being used by members of a linguistic community in order to regulate the behavioural conducts of the people in the community.

Among the Yorùbá, especially the Ìbòlò speakers of the South Western part of Nigeria, there are a large number of taboo words relating to the various aspects of the people's lives such as sex, food, hygiene, death, name, animal, kinship and so on. The Ibolò dialect speakers in Yorùbá land, for instance, do not often describe or mention the genitals by their real names. This perhaps is why the use of vulgar or obscene words (òrò rírùn) among the Ìbòlò speakers is considered bad and as such a taboo.

### **2.1.3 Origin of Taboo**

The term Taboo has been considered by Farb (1974) to have been borrowed from Tongan, a language of Polynesia and was also believed to have been introduced into English in the late 18th Century by Captain James Cook as cited in *Encyclopaedia Americana* (1979). What is considered as one of the most pioneer works on taboo is the famous work of an anthropologist, Frazer (1911). Going through his work, one would deduce that the author shares the view of the time that taboo as a phenomenon was only confined to the lives of the 'natives' or 'savage races' of the world.

Frazer (1911 cited in Steiner, 1956:97) is said to have dropped such Eurocentric stance as evidenced by his submission after his various researches thus:

I share what I believe to have been at the time the current view of anthropologists, that the institution in question was confined to the brown and black races of the pacific ... and I came to the conclusion, taboo is only one of a number of similar system of superstition which among many, perhaps among all races of men have contributed in large measure under many different names and with many variations of details, to build up the complex fabric of society in all the various sides or elements of it which we describe as religious, social, political, moral and economic.

Every community in Yorùbá land has its own peculiar form of taboo words. In the Ìbòlò community, the Ìbòlò speakers believe in the reality of the taboo and do not consider it as superstition but they believe that the keeping of such words gives joy, happiness, wealth, comfort and long life. According to (Idowu and Dopamu 1980), breaching of taboos brings disaster not only to the particular person or community but also to the persons around. Thus, the Ìbòlò adage says, “bí ará ilé ẹni bá ńjẹ kòkòrò, bí aàbá kílò fun, igbe rẹ ò ní jẹkí asùn lóru” (if our neighbour eats the inedible and we do not warn him/her, the shout of pains at night will not allow us to sleep). In other words, a taboo is what is forbidden in the religious context but not because of any superstition as asserted by Frazer earlier but because of their belief in their culture and the traditional ways of lives. In supporting this view, Alade (2007:24) makes reference to a saying in Yorùbá: Ó jẹ èèwò’ (when a person does something forbidden). He also holds the beliefs as Awolalu and Dopamu that a taboo embraces everything, which can be conceived as a sin, an unethical thing or something that contravenes the norms and values of the traditional institution and the society. They convey the message that in a breach of any of them, one has personally offended someone in the course of violating it. Thus, èèwò òrìsà, as put by Alade, (2007:24) means what the divinity abhors or an abomination. To him, it is a perversion or an abomination to the deity or divinity. This assertion justifies a taboo as a forbidden act in the religion or custom of a society which can be in form of an action, eating, touching or speaking. In other words, every aspect of human existence and day to day activities is attached to some dos and don’ts according to the cultural tenets of such a society.

As it has been earlier noted by Steiner (1956) that a taboo cuts across the whole community in the world, this, in essence, means that a taboo is not peculiar to the Ìbòlò speakers alone. This explains why the concepts of taboos are seen in the works of both Africans and non-African scholars from the western world. For instance, Wardhaugh (1986) sees taboos as the



way in which a society expresses its disapproval of certain kinds of behaviour believed to be harmful to its members, either for supernatural reasons or because such behaviour violates a moral code. Consequently, so far as a language is concerned, certain things are not to be said or certain objects can be referred to only in certain circumstances, for example, only by certain people or through deliberate circumlocutions, i. e. euphemistically.

Wardhaugh's conception of taboos shows that a taboo has to do with the social life of a group of people towards the promotion of peace and mutual co-existence of people in the society. This does not end in behaviours alone. It also covers the use of language in expressing one's mind or passing one moral lesson or the other. A taboo then stands to direct the society's speech by approving and promoting the kind of utterances that are believed not to be harmful or violating the society moral and spiritual belief and to disapprove and frown at, such that are harmful to the societal life.

In the same vein, Bloomer and Bloomer (2007:102) consider raising a topic on taboo or uttering words considered as one face-threatening act in the process of talk-management. They state that all languages have taboo words; words which are socially proscribed and whose utterance can give offence". The offence, according to them, varies according to the context of the situation, the speaker, the place where the word is uttered, the person spoken to and any who might overhear. The idea of Wardhaugh is a reflection of Balandier and Magnet (1974:314) and Bloomer and Bloomer (2007:102) that; taboo is a way in which a society expresses disapproval of certain kinds of behaviour believed to be harmful to its members, either for supernatural reason or such behaviour violates a moral code. Accordingly, Familusi (2010:105-109) sees taboo as thus: "Taboos are used to enforce moral rules among the Yorùbá , whether or not they can stand the test of empiricism and logicity is another issue that has not escaped the attention of scholars" .

Familusi, just as other scholars, agrees to the fact that taboos are mainly used to curb human excesses in a society. The imposition of taboo in many Ìbòlò societies can be summarily put as “a machinery of check and balance”.

In their own views, Akmajian, Farmers and Harnish (2004 cited in Fakuade et al., 2012) consider taboo words as those words that are to be avoided entirely or at least in mixed company. Mbaya (2002:224-225) is of the opinion that “taboos are those words or expressions in language which are avoided as a result of their indecency, shocking character or immorality and in order not to hurt the other members of the society”. The submission of Mbaya seems to agree with the position of other scholars. This is because, most of the words labelled as taboos are being considered by many scholars to have fallen on “indecency, or immorality”. To Robin (1980:29), a taboo is seen as only a case of putting some inhibition upon the normal use of the tabooed items that bring their existence about mainly because ... if they are not said at all, they could hardly remain in their language”.

Here, the position taken by Robin seems to differ from others’ view because he refused to see the role or the functions that taboos perform in a linguistic context by merely referring to it as a case of putting some inhibition. Nevertheless, he joins other scholars in other areas by accepting that taboo is found in all languages and that the deviation from the sanction can lead to prosecution or public shame.

The position taken by Robin is seen to be opposed by Akmajian et al. (2004) who states that what counts as taboo is defined by culture and not by anything inherent in the language itself”. Thorpe (1967: xiii) cited in Okunola (2005:6) just like Fakuade and Mbaya see taboo as:

*Àwọn èèwò ní ilẹ̀ Yorùbá jẹ́ ọ̀nà kan tí ań gbà k ọ̀ àwọn ọmọ wéwé àti ọ̀dọ ọ̀nń ní onírúúrú ọ̀nà tí a ń gbà hùwá nínú ilé, ní ọ̀dè, láàrìn àwùjò, nínú ilù tàbí ibi èsìn.*

Translation:

Taboos in the Yorùbá society are a way by which the Yorùbá people teach the younger children and youth the different manner of behaviour at home, outside, in the society, within the town and in religious worship.

From this, it could be said that a taboo is a way of bringing up an individual member of the community in the ways and manner, acceptable to the general life of such a society. In other words, a taboo is a way of correcting the younger generation of any Ibolo to prepare them for the large societal demand.

In his own view, Oladele (1986:308) posits that Èèwò jé ìdérùbà tàbí ìkìlò fún omodé tàbí ògbèrì” (Taboo is an act of instilling fear or warning on children and non-innate).

The idea of Oladele is similar to that of Thorpe and other scholars as all seem to see a taboo as an instrument of warning and corrections in the ways of life of people in a speech community. However, taking a close examination of the submission made by Thorpe and Oladele, one is compelled to ask whether a taboo is meant for only the children, the youth and the novice in the Ìbòlò community. This is the major weakness or inadequacy of their submissions because taboos are meant for all, irrespective of age or social status in the Ìbòlò linguistic community.

Generally, the prohibition inherent in a taboo contains the idea that breaking the taboo automatically causes some kind of trouble to the offender, for example, lack of success in hunting or fishing, sickness or the death of a relative. Usually, these sorts of misfortune would be considered an accident or a bad luck. However, at times, the person or society searched for the reason behind the misfortunes, and thus inferred that they, in some way had committed a breach of taboo (Encyclopaedia Britannica Online).

(Stentrom 2017 cited in Allan 2019) is also of the opinion that what is seen as taboo varies not only with time and from person to person but also the situation. This then means that situation is an important factor determining the use of a taboo in a given society.

Jean-Mark (2019) again asserts that the taboo applies to instances of language behaviour which are perceived in some way harmful to an individual or their community. This assertion further testifies to the fact that a taboo is utterance placing a restriction on the expression of certain words considered abnormal in a given linguistic community.

Abijo and Akandeo (2018) further view a linguistic taboo as a cultural product or specialised term that sanctions the enunciation of certain offensive statements. A taboo can then be said to be an integral part of culture which guides or regulates the conduct of an individual in a speech community.

#### **2.1.4. Purpose of Taboo**

Taboos are not placed on things or words as argued earlier for nothing. Taboos placed on words, things, persons etc. play important roles in the lives of people using them generally and specifically on the Yorùbá speakers of the Ìbòlò dialect. A taboo is very useful in Ibolò expressions and this is posited by Oyetade (1994) by dividing the taboo expressions in Yorùbá language into four categories.

Adeyanju, (2004) from Oyetade's point of view, tries to consider the purpose of taboo in English and Yorùbá from a sociolinguistic perspective. He asserts that a taboo can be used in the Yorùbá language to guide against an obscene use of the language. According to Oyetade (1994:21), the words that we speak have a long-lasting effect on the hearer. They can either edify or corrupt the minds depending on whether our expressions are chaste or vulgar".

From the foregoing discussion, one can see that the imposition of a certain type of taboos on certain Ìbòlò expressions helps in guiding its speakers to avoid utterance of certain tabooed words capable of bringing disrespect and disharmony amongst the people. Similarly, Adeyanju, (2004:21) further suggests that:

If members of the society are immoral in their linguistic behaviours through the use of obscene and offensive expressions, that society will invariably experience a high degree of moral decadence because moral values are best propagated through the instrumentality of language. The tool that most languages employ to accomplish this is the phenomenon of taboo.

A taboo can then be used to enforce norms or courtesy and as a strategy of politeness among interlocutors. In addition, *the Encyclopaedia Britannica* (13th ed. 53.), the following points are identified as the purpose of taboos among those who seriously use them:

- i. Protection of important persons, chiefs, priest and things against harm;
- ii. Safeguarding of the weak; women, children and common people generally from the powerful magical influences of chiefs, priests, wizards, witches and gods;
- iii. Provision against the dangers incurred by handling or coming in contact with corpses, eating certain food, etc.;
- iv. Guarding the chief acts of life; birth initiation, marriage and sexual functions against interference;
- v. Securing of human beings against the wrath of gods or spirits; and
- vi. Inculcating morals in the minds of people in a given speech community etc.

The purpose of taboo as enunciated above is summarily pointed out by Burland (1974:76) as social barriers and protector of property. In Ibolo communities, a taboo is seen and regarded as carrying out the stated purposes.

### **2.1.5 The Role of Verbal Taboos in the Yorùbá Community**

As earlier pointed out, a linguistic taboo is universal as the different societies of the world make use of it. These roles according to Taiwo (1977:43) are described thus; “these taboos are the outcomes of an attempt of the Yorùbá society to teach their offspring the things that are forbidden by their culture, tradition and belief. In his view, Trangott (1984) notes that what is considered taboo at one time or by one group varies enormously, but verbal taboo is present in all cultures. Many people in Britain and America have a taboo about matters such as sex and excretion so that a term like a toilet is avoided and replaced by bathroom... and both bathroom and toilet are in turn replaced by ridiculous euphemisms like a powder room or little boy’s room.

These views support the universality of a verbal taboo as well as the role it plays in order to avoid reckless or loose speeches; to neutralise unpleasant situations and make them more presentable. Just like in the Ìbòlò community, teaching or inculcating of morals is one of the basic principles of taboos. This notion, according to Thorpe (1967) is meant to enable one to know the importance of the societal-cultural beliefs and traditions.

Accordingly, Opatotun (1991:125) sees the role of taboo as some kind of warning introduced by our fore-fathers as a religion and tradition, for peaceful co-existence as directed by the individual conscience. The warning is again emphasised by Opatotun as a principal role of taboo. This warning is instituted by the elders to oversee the behaviour of the society in guiding and correcting the social vices and reckless speeches among the people. The author further posits that Yorùbá taboos are the outcomes of a careful observation of the elders from their long-term experiences. It is noteworthy to state here that in the Ìbòlò community, words are not just inhibited for nothing’s sake, words that are considered taboos are meant to

perform a particular role in the lives of the inhabitants. Taiwo, Thorpe and Opadotun's views are a true reflection of what is obtainable in the Ìbòlò community.

### **2.1.6 Classification of Taboos**

In an attempt to classify linguistic taboo which this study centres on Trudgill (1974:29) assert that "Taboos are associated with things that are not said and in particular with words and expressions that are used. The question here is what are these words that are not supposed to be said? To answer this question, Steiner (1975) classifies verbal taboos into the following categories:

#### **2.1.6.1 Personal Names**

Under this division, it was considered that personal names are taboos because they are highly regarded by the communities he refers to as The Savages. This is common among the Australian Aborigine's style of personal names being kept secret because of fear of sorcery. This case can also be seen in Africa, Asia, East India and specifically, apparently clear in the Ibolo community where appellations are kept secret. Sometimes, children are named after other relations, e.g. father, mother, uncles or grandparents. This is usually evident in the middle names given to children in this category. For example, if a child is named after any of his/her dead parents, the child will be called Bàbá túndé (if male) and Ìyábò (if female).

#### **2.1.6.2 Names of Relations**

The submission here is that there is a prohibition on the names of relations, especially by marriage. This affects a newly married woman in relation to her husband's relatives as she is not expected to call these individuals by their family names. Thus, she creates new names for each of the young relatives in the family as found in Ìbòlò communities. Furthermore, names

of other family members like husbands, (Bàbá) wives, (Ìyàwó) first child, (Àrólé) etc. are taboo in places like East India, New Guinea, Australia and of course among the Ìbòlò people.

#### **2.1.6.3 Names of the Dead**

The view here is that a taboo is placed on the mentioning of the names of the dead by the communities of the Aborigines, American Indians, and others mainly because of their fear of the ghosts of the dead. This was so engraved in their hearts that namesakes of the dead change their names. If the name of the deceased is that of a common object, such a name will be dropped and another substitution will be made for it. This, therefore, brings about modification of the language of the community affected from time to time or impeding of the historical tradition. However, this taboo is not considered permanent because after bodies are believed to have decomposed, their names are allowed to be mentioned. In this case, Ìbòlò speakers do not compare the names of the living ones with the names of the dead. It is a taboo.

#### **2.1.6.4 Names of Kings and other Sacred Persons**

This aspect of the review deals with the taboo placed on birth names of kings as in the case of Zulu chiefs and kings, Madagascar, Polynesia or Eleusinian priests or in the case of names of members of the Yewe order in Togo. The justification for this is seen in terms of their belief that mentioning names of such persons would result in the disturbance of the course of nature. Amongst the Ìbòlò people, this practice could be seen, for instance, it is a taboo to call kings and chiefs by their first names without their titles coming first and in the case of the high chiefs, their names are totally dropped. Examples of these are Balógun, Sààwò, Eésà and Ojomu of Òffà.



#### **2.1.6.5 Names of Gods**

The observation here is that names of gods are kept secret as in case of Ra and ISIS, and that divine names are used to conjure with, by wizards in Egypt, North Africa, China and Rome.

#### **2.1.6.6 Common Words**

The submission here is that taboos placed on common words as exemplified by Highland Fowlers, Fishermen and others who would not come near mentioning the names of the various things in the practice of their perspective professions, or the case of the common words like the prohibition placed on names of dangerous animals in the various parts of Europe, Siberia, America, Arabia, India and Africa. Malay miners also make use of euphemistic words like Fowlers and Fishers. Avoidance of common words like a snake as in the case of the Ìbòlò people or fishers in other places like Malaysia, India, etc. could be attributed to the fear of being possibly bitten or attacked by a snake or spirit.

In his own attempt, Apte, (1994) classifies linguistic taboos into four types: (i) Swear or curse words, i. e. words which when uttered involve damnation, misfortune, or disrespect of the targeted object or person; (ii) Obscene words, i.e. words referring to sexual organs and acts; (iii) Four-lettered words, which are only acceptable in English, with examples of acceptable obscenities being words such as cunt, fuck, shit, and cock. Such words only having four letters in their spellings; and (iv) Dirty words, i.e. words that refer to sexual organs, acts and scatological substances, (menstruation, urine, faeces, spittle). In the same vein, Jay, (1996) categorises taboo into eight types:

- i. Taboo or obscene language: these are expressions restricted from public use, such as  
“fuck’and bitch;

- ii. Blasphemy: the use of religious terminology to denigrate God and religious institutions and icons and so on;
- iii. Profanity: the use of religious expressions and terminology in an unacceptable manner. The intention of the speaker is not to denigrate God or anything associated with religion but may be rather to express emotional reactions towards certain stimuli;
- iv. Insults and radical slurs-verbal attacks on other people by denoting the physical, mental or psychological qualities of the victims, e. g. coconut head (for unintelligent person), monkey (ugly person);
- v. Expletives: emotional words that are in the form of interjections and that are directed to anyone specifically, but are used by speakers to release frustration and emotion;
- vi. Vulgarisms: crude or raw expressions which are regarded as distasteful and offensive. They are used to evaluate the thing or individual referred to or described;
- vii. Cursing and
- viii. Slang: this is usually developed by social groups to identify solidify in group members.

To Ronald (1986), verbal taboos are classified under the following headings:

- i. **One's Mother-in-Law (Àna)** - This could be substituted with màamá, màámi or mòmó oko mi or even ìyá oko mi.
- ii. **Certain Animals' Game** – An example of this is ejò (snake) which is often substituted with okùn ilẹ̀ which literally means 'rope' among the Ìbòlò people.
- iii. **Death**–The word, kú is not usually used when a king dies. Rather, the announcement of his death will be made as Oba wo àjà meaning, the king has entered the roof or Oba ti lọ bá àwọn bàbánlàrè meaning, the king has gone to join his ancestors.
- iv. **Bodily Functions** – Examples of this are Okó (the penis), Òbò (the vagina). Both are often substituted with nkan which literally means something or abé which literally

means under. Specifically, the vagina is called Ojú ara meaning the eye of the body or Odò abé (the river under).

- v. **Excretion** – An example of this is Ìgbé (faeces) which is often replaced with Ìdòtí which literally means dirt, Ìtò (urine) Omi ara (body liquid).
- vi. **The Left Hand:** This is referred to as the Origin of Sinister. For instance, one should not eat, give or receive with left hand in the Ìbòlò community. This is considered as an act of disrespect and highly frowned at especially when dealing with elderly people. All these classifications as enunciated above are embedded in the Ìbòlò communities.
- vii. **Swear or Curse Words:** These include words which when uttered involve damnation, misfortune or disrespect of the targeted object or person.
- viii. **Obscene Words:** These are words used to refer to sexual organs and acts.
- ix. **Four-Lettered Words:** These are specifically acceptable in English but obscene when used directly in Yorùbá. Some examples of them are ‘cunt’ which is òbò in Yorùbá, ‘fuck’ which is dó in Yorùbá, ‘cock’ which is okó in Yorùbá and ‘shit’ which is ìgbé in Yorùbá, Ààlà. These words have only four letters each in their spellings.
- x. **Dirty Words:** These are words that refer to sexual organs, acts and scatological substances (menstruation, urine, faeces and spittle).

Jay (1996) also categorises linguistic taboos into eight types: These are expressions restricted from public use, such as fuck and bitch’.

- i. **Blasphemy:** The use of religious terminology to denigrate God and religious institutions, icons and so on.
- ii. **Profanity:** The use of religious expressions and terminologies in an unrespectable manner. The intention of the speaker is not to denigrate anything associated with religion but may be rather to express emotional reactions toward certain stimuli.

- iii. **Insults and Radical Slurs:** These are verbal attacks on other people by demoting the physical, mental or psychological qualities of the victims, e.g. coconut head (for an unintelligent person), monkey (for an ugly person).
- iv. **Expletives:** These are emotional words that are in the form of interjecting and not directed to anyone specifically, but are used by speakers to release frustration and emotion.
- v. **Vulgarism:** This has to do with crude or raw expressions which are regarded as distasteful and offensive. They are used to evaluate the thing or individual referred to or described.
- vi. **Slang:** This is usually developed by members of a social group to identify and solidify their membership uniqueness in the group.

In his own view, Omamor (1981) classifies linguistic taboos into four categories which are:

- i. Cleansing Effect Type
- ii. Fear-Related Type
- iii. Royal-Related Type
- iv. Family Relationship Type.

Oyetade's (1994) classification of taboo expressions in the Yòrùbá language mirrors Omamor, Steiner and Apte's classifications as shown below:

- i. **Propriety-Related Taboos:** These are those taboos that enable the society members to conform to the acceptable moral standard with regard to decorum. Examples of such words are; vulgar words, that is words that borders on human parts and its functions.
- ii. **Taboo for Averting Ominous Consequences:** This emanates from people's belief system in the power of words.ie curses and insults.

- iii. **Veneration Type:** This is used to give honour to a specific class of people such as the kings, elders, parents, etc.
- iv. **Fear-Centred Taboos:** These centre on the belief in the existence of supernatural forces that have been claimed to have control over human beings.

However, because of the divergent opinions surrounding the classification of taboo by different authors, Qanbar (2011) proposes a general classification of taboo words and expressions in the Yemeni society, which he divides into two categories: (i) context-specific and (ii) general. These two categories, according to him, also branch out into other sub-categories.

The words under context-specific category are neutral and non-taboo but they get tabooed in particular contexts. Context-specific taboos are divided into two subcategories; non-taboo words and words related to the hearer's physical or social defects while the subcategories under the category general include the unmentionable (the words under this category should be euphemized in polite speech) and mentionable with minimisers, which include words that are to be mentioned along with other fixed conventional expressions which Qanbar calls minimisers. According to him, non-taboo words are neutral in meaning in everyday speech such as pig, dog, ewe etc. but become taboos in certain context when used as swearing or abuse words. He claimed further that religion has played a role in tabooing these words. The animals mentioned above are associated with impurity and unclean (dog and pig). Qanbar claims further that Jews are associated with treachery and meanness due to the nature of the relationship between the Muslims and the Jews throughout history.

Qanbar further categorises taboo under general into two subcategories: (i) absolutely forbidden words, which are referred to as the unmentionable; and (ii) permissible or

mentionable with minimizers. The unmentionables are the absolute forbidden words and they are divided into five subcategories thus:

- i. Words or terms referring to the private organs of the human body and their functions and body efflux via (snot, faeces, menstrual flow etc.).
- ii. Words or terms referring to national or historical of the family mentioned in public or before outsider.
- iii. Words or terms referring to religion (blasphemy) or words against religious figures and symbols.
- iv. The first names of one's female members of the family mentioned in public or before an outsider.
- v. Words referring to things that you give away to the poor and the needy, or friends as social occasions

According to Qanbar, the first three subcategories are known in the literature as the triad of taboos, which is found in Ìbòlò community and almost in most of the cultures across the world, i. e., the triangle of sex, religion, and politics, though the degree of the tabooing varies.

The mentionable with minimisers' category is unique to Yemen's culture and includes words and phrases that are considered taboos and shocking if mentioned unaccompanied with certain fixed conventional phrases. The function of these phrases is to mitigate and minimise the illocutionary force of the tabooed item and make it acceptable. This category is divided into three sub-categories according to Qanbar (2011) as stated below.

- i. Words or phrases referring to unclean places or objects (for example sewages, bathroom, footwear etc.).

- ii. Words or phrases referring to metaphysical things that go beyond the control of the human being (for example, supernatural creatures like jennies, ghosts, certain diseases, accidents resulting in the deformation of human body, such as getting burnt).
- iii. Words or phrases referring to the expressions of admiration for things or objects we admire and like.

From the various classifications of the linguistic taboos as enunciated above, it is clear that linguistic taboos are not only culture-dependent, there are also socio-cultural factors which determine the use of taboo words or their euphemistic equivalents. However, in the Ìbòlò community, the classification of verbal taboos goes beyond the models proposed by different authors as earlier indicated. There are other types of verbal taboos in Ibolo community that are not captured in their classifications which of course is what the work intends to unfold. The uncaptured taboos will be elaborated upon in the analysis of this study. However, this does not mean that the classifications as posited earlier by different authors will not be looked into. As a matter of fact, their various submissions will be subsumed and examined under the classification of the Ìbòlò taboos.

## **2.2 Review of Previous Studies**

Salim (1978) attempts to show the constraints on the Hausa speaker's use of the language by cultural norms and particularly shows how for cultural, religious or other reasons, some words and expressions are deliberately shunned and euphemisms are created to replace them. Such replacements, as he posits, are the only references that are conventionally accepted as appropriate for use in the discussion of the tabooed words.

The Hausa use of euphemistic expressions was recognised to be meant for modifying the subject areas either positively as in the case of the euphemism that is meant to make pleasant such acts that are considered repugnant or to avoid being vulgar and for showing respect and

courtesy, or negatively as exemplified by instances where the replacement is meant to mock, jest or show hatred to the tabooed words. In his own perspective, he attributes the creation of euphemism to one or more of the following reasons: to show respect, to avoid being vulgar, to exhibit shyness, for fear, to show love and affection, hatred, and finally, courtesy.

The submission here, according to the author, is that the practice is incumbent upon anybody who wants to make use of the Hausa language in a manner that conforms to the norms and values acceptable by the Hausa society. The bottom line here is that a speaker of Hausa language can only be seen as a speaker when he exhibits evidence that shows that he is fully conversant with the sounds, syntactic, semantic and the cultural content of his speech. Our point of disagreement is his failure to delve deeper into other areas or expressions considered taboo because the Hausa language just like any other has more than the listed areas affected by taboo as posited by the author.

Accordingly, Awolalu and Dopamu (1979) are of the opinion that taboos are set pattern or code of behaviour for the individual and the community as a whole. They further explain that taboos are prohibited action among the Yorùbá people and the breaking of *èèwò* (things are forbidden) is followed by a supernatural penalty. This is what (Leach 1964:28) describes as “... a specific social phenomenon which affects both the actor and his hearers in a specifically describable way. And to Ayegboyin and Jegede (2009 cited in Ajao, 2013:6), is, femine, plague, pestilence and other hazards. Awolalu and Dopamu further establish that every divinity has things forbidden which must be observed on entering into a covenant with him. They conclude that what may be the taboos of the ancestors of a family may not apply to another family. However, they posit that to disregard God, the divinities and ancestral spirits is to commit sin and to disregard the norms and taboos of the society is also to commit sin. In their final submission, they relate a sin to a taboo. As a taboo is a thing forbidden so also is a sin. Awolalu and Dopamus’s view on the concept of taboo to a large extent explains what is



obtainable in the Ìbòlò community as a violation of words considered taboo in the community is regarded as a sin against god and the community as a whole; hence the imposition of a social sanction by outright reprimand on the deviant.

Okunola's (2005) study focuses on verbal taboo; that is, taboos that have to do with the avoidance of certain words and expressions because their direct use is believed to violate a certain moral code. He successfully categorises a taboo into four types; propriety-related taboo, taboo for averting ominous consequences, veneration type of taboos and fear-centred taboos. He explains that propriety-related taboos have the majority of the taboos expressions in Yorùbá speeches. He establishes that this type of taboo expression deals with the correctness of behaviour which supports the Ìbòlò idea of avoiding reckless or vulgar speeches such as dó (to copulate) instead of bá sùn (to sleep with) and instead of férakù (having a strange feeling) láyún (to be pregnant).

He also posits that the taboos for averting ominous consequences arise from the Yorùbá belief in the power of the spoken word. That is, a person can bring misfortune, catastrophe or good fortune to himself through what he or she says. On the veneration types of taboo expressions, he asserts that they are meant to honour or respect a specific class of people in the Yorùbá setting. However, he discusses a fear-centred taboo as a type of taboo which establishes the Yorùbá's belief in supernatural forces and the type of reference given to them.

Okunola's submissions could be seen to be directly relevant to the current study of the Ìbòlò verbal taboos because, first, the subject matters of the phenomenon are almost similar in both cases because Ìbòlò is a dialect of Yorùbá language. Therefore, the two make use of almost the same terms to refer to the various indelicate matters i.e. Ìbásùn for sex in Standard Yorùbá but àsepò in Ìbòlò dialect. Ìbásùn here means (to sleep with) while àsepò means 'do

together'. The euphemism and circumlocution used here can be said to share the same semantic component of meaning.

In his own view, Farb (1974) proves that around the world, all human societies make the habit of prohibiting certain kind of behaviour and categories of words, and further declares that the fact that English has excluded a large number of words from polite vocabulary by decreeing them as taboos does not amount to any greater degree of refinement in English-speaking communities than in other societies. He particularly makes use of the Nupe' society to prove that such verbal taboos exist in all speech communities. Hence, the idea of people living in all Western cultures looking upon their verbal taboos as hallmarks of their advanced civilisation is hereby debunked.

He goes further to show that the origin of creating euphemism as far as the English are concerned, is traced to the Norman conquest of England in 1066, because it was observed at the time that the community started to make distinct a genteel and an obscene vocabulary, or rather differentiate between the Latin words of the upper class and the lusty Anglo-Saxon of the lower (p. 80).

In addition to this is the submission made by Farb that the feature of assigning euphemisms is characterised by a character of change and replacement, because it could be seen that there is a constant invention of new euphemisms because after some time such substituted words would also become too infected to be used in polite linguistic context. He declares that when two words sound alike with one as taboo, then, the unaffected word often becomes taboo as well. According to him, what happened to the American words 'cocks' and 'ass' which are now usually called rooster and donkey. It was also indicated how, to this day, some rural South American speakers do not tell cock and bull tales but rather rooster and ox stories" mainly because the cock, the bull and tale (tail) of the first utterance are a taboo.

The taboo phenomenon according to him is considered so great that speakers of a minority language go to the extent of eliminating innocent words that resemble the majority language's taboo words from their speech as in the case of the Greek, Indonesia living in Oklahoma.

Farb as many others shares the idea that prohibiting the uses of tabooed words cannot be the hallmark of refinement and civilisation but rather represents a wound in the body of language, because by isolating words and designing them as taboo, natural thing like sexual intercourse and the bodily functions are debased. Moreover, the idea tends to speed guilt by making people to repress words and even any reference of all to the natural acts of the body these words describe. It also encourages exhibitionist and further provides an excuse for low forms of scatological and sexual humour. This, he observes that people in American speech community are recognised to talk dirty because they want to attract attention to themselves, to display the speaker's contempt and rebellion, as an affective rhetorical device for verbal aggression or for sexually modelling figures and as a strategy for verbal seduction. It is also observed in his work that the phenomenon of taboo and euphemism are a matter of contention that is possible in the life of all speech community which is encompassed in his words that any word is an innocent collection of sounds until a community surrounds it with connotation and then decrees that it cannot be used in certain speech situation" (p.91).

A provision was also made in the study for a passing remark on theories that were advanced by several scholars on the justification for using obscene words. He enumerates them as follows;

- i. "...Freud's theorized obscene speech in general serves as a substitute for aggression as, for example, the hostility of the expletive fuck you".

- ii. "... Freud's disciple, Sandou Ferenczi associates obscene words with the childhood period of learning about sex. Obscenity, in his view, therefore is the last stronghold of infantile sexual pleasure persisting into an adult world of conventional utterances".
- iii. ... Edmund Bergler revised these theories somewhat and emphasised the importance of the oral pleasure as individual receive when he uses obscene words (p.93).

With regard to the four letter word, he selected a sample in the word "fuck" and laments that:

Whatever the correct explanation for the antipathy towards fuck, the problem is much greater than just this word. If discussion of a subject is sometimes necessary, then why not allow the use of ordinary word. Prohibiting certain words actually elevates them in a neurotic way by encouraging the strategy of talking dirty, things it endows them with titillation, shame and vulgarity that the things they stand for do not themselves poses (p.94).

Farb finally recalls how in 1934, a certain Allen Walker of the Chicago University labelled taboo words a disease condition of our language and made a suggestion that we should get rid of our taboos, in what he describes as a very simple way i. e. by using the words. This suggestion is practically impossible because, in the Ìbòlò community, all the words considered taboos have been enshrined in the lexicons of Ibolo dialects.

According to Robins, R. H. (1980), a taboo is recognised as a special case of stylistics under which either whole topics or certain words are avoided by speakers in particular situation like in the presence of a stranger, opposite sex, children and elderly people. The author is in agreement with others such as Wundt (1906), Farb (1974), Hayakawa (1974), Awolalu and Dopamu (1979) that the phenomenon of taboo and euphemism is found in all communities with variations namely in the sorts of topics and types of vocabulary that are affected and the situations in which the taboos operate. He gives the examples of tabooed topics in English as:

- (i) Obscenity and dirt i. e. topics of excretion and sexual reproduction;
- (ii) Talking shop considered as the discussion of one's own professional activities;

(iii) Swank or what is known as discussion of personal success; and

(iv) Discussion on making and investing of money in certain types of situation and company.

The relevance of this work to the current study is the author's recognition that not that words labelled as taboos are not discussed at all but that the tabooed words are reserved for the intimate and special situation. Some of the topics labelled as obscene and the names of the dirt as well as words with the religious association are seen to sometimes relieve tensions merely by being uttered as in the case of moments of anger, enthusiasm, jokes and the like.

Wardagh (1986) tries to relate the topic of taboo and euphemism with meaning. As a matter of fact, this is one of the books we consider more relevant to this study because of the way the author links up the language with culture. This, in essence, shows the effect of society on language in use which of course is the basis of this study. His position on this matter is specifically about how what he terms cultural meaning is expressed in language. He recognises the fact that language is both used to avoid saying certain things as well as to express them. He also considers that the subject matter is of two things, first, the instance of taboo which is the case where certain things are not said, not because they cannot be but because people do not talk about these things, and again, he identifies the employment of euphemism which signifies that if those things are talked about, they are talked about in very roundabout ways.

In his book, Wardagh upholds the views of Robins (1974) and Farb (1974) that there are variations in taboo topics which could be very wide and that despite the constraints and penalties, there is always the possibility of getting defaulters who would have their reason for not conforming to the inhibition placed by the society. Wardagh also agrees that when someone brakes the rules, that rapture may arise considerable comment although not perhaps quite as much today as formally, mainly because standards and norms do change. This view,

however, is contrary to the view asserted by Leach, (1964) and Adedoyin and Jegede (2009) on the likely consequences of breaking the verbal taboo. Notwithstanding, there could also be the possibility of the penalty of breaking linguistic taboos being very severe because, for example, blasphemy and obscenity are still considered crimes in any jurisdiction, but this could hardly cost one's life as the violation of non-linguistic taboos like incest taboo might, in certain places of the world. He also cites the case of the attribution of certain linguistic taboos to bilingualism by Farb (1974) and Trudgill (1983) as exemplified by the cases of the Greeks of Oklahoma and Thai students learning English in English speaking countries.

The author further propels that the fact that euphemism or the result of "dressing up" certain areas in life to make them more presentable may be more obvious in English society than the taboo words and expressions. The use of euphemism words and expressions is seen as a means of allowing us to talk about unpleasant things and "neutralise" the unpleasantness, as in the case of the subject of death, dying, unemployment and criminality. Another use is that they also allow us to give labels to unpleasant tasks and jobs in an attempt to make them sound almost attractive. He believes that euphemism is endemic in English society and that it equals the glorification of the common place and the evaluation of the trivial.

One of the most worthwhile things about his work is his universalistic stand. In his words: (p.91) Wardaugh emphasises that taboo and euphemism affect us all, we may be deeply conscious of the effect as are the Nupe, but affect us they do perhaps are linguistic universal is that no social group uses language quite uninhibitedly."

Louise (1936:195-202) notes that the expressions she collected from time to time in what she refers to as a purely incidental fashion which was largely from oral sources, sermons and conversation, newspaper and books are divided into six sections which are:

**Sentimental and Poetic Expressions:** These comprise of the list of poetic personification of death, metaphors of light and darkness, sleep and rest and the familiar figures of department, setting out, or return, in which death becomes a journey as exemplified by: laid down his burden, fallen by the wayside, sleeps the long sleep, called to heavenly rest, passed to a better home, etc.

**Flipp and Slang Expressions:** This division consists of the various expressions carrying a little humour, much vulgarity and a general spirit of deviance and insolence that have been created by the various classes of American society like students, farmers, gangsters and playwright. Examples are: kicks the bucket, kisses the dust, salted down, counting the worms, etc.

**Terms from Works and Recreations:** The group here contains a list of metaphors from a variety of human endeavours like occupations, professions and trade, and from sports and recreation. These are: fired his last shot, fed the fishes (died by drowning), cashed his cheque, went to the races, played his last card, took the curtain call, jumped his last hurdle and threw in the sponge.

**Terms for Hanging, Lynching and Electrocutation:** This comprises the list of expressions which are created by the criminal world to cover the horrors of hanging, lynching and electrocution as in the case of: kicked the clouds/air/wind, give the rope, yield to judge lynch, fry in the chair and take the electric cure.

**Miscellaneous Euphemisms:** These are expressions used to suggest the material adjuncts of funeral and burial. They are mainly used by Eulogist and scoffers in order to shun a forthright mention of the concrete evidences of death like the coffin, corpse and the cemetery. We have instances of the dead being referred to as: the defunct, the marble city, the memorial park. The case of the coffin being referred to as: the planting crate, a cold meat box, a six-foot

bungalow or of the grave being called, the dust bin, the narrow home and a neat oblong hole in the ground. The case of the funeral is called Burying, Dead Match, and Cold Meat Party.

**Predictions of Death:** Mainly because of the difficulty involved in prophesying death or announcing it, she discovers that various paraphrases/euphemisms have been invented to smoothen the difficulty as exemplified by expressions like your number is up, your expectancy of life is zero, you will be put to bed with a shovel, they will be playing slow music and you will not hear it or you will be put to rest.

The work is relevant to the present study particularly when the various ways in which Ìbòlò speakers try to make pleasant or try to soften the pangs of death so that the matter which is regarded so highly as falling into areas that are sanctioned and not to be spoken can be discussed for examples, Ó wàjà, (gone into the roof), Ó jáde láyé, (gone out of the world) or (he has answered the call of nature).

In agreement with the opinion of Louis (1936), Thomas (1954:109) refers to the aforementioned as some stylistic characteristics namely tell-talk, turgidity and taboo. In his contribution, he notes that euphemism and expressions which are considered milder or more decent for what is felt to be harsh as in the case of the preference for saying pass away rather than die, or the replacement of stomach with abdomen, tummy, midriff or bread basket as almost as an ancient language itself. He attributes the practice of euphemism to people's supposition ". . . that life's harsher realities may be ameliorated, if not dissipated altogether by the simple experiment of using different words to name them" (ibid. 109). For example, it could be seen that some elements of beauty and dignity were lent to the spittoon by calling it a lovely name cuspidor, coffin (a casket), toilet (a powder room) etc. An attempt is being made to remove some of the reticent attendants upon the performance of a humble natural function. This can be said to be in agreement with the Ìbòlò's cases of euphemism in respect



to death. His reference to the use of substitution for various words in English just like Pound (1936) is directly relevant to the treatment of taboos in the Ìbòlò dialect. Taboos, as noted, can be said to be one of the age-long ways of maintaining moral standard and protection of lives and property in the Ìbòlò community.

Inside the ambit and end of this study, the overall concept of a taboo can be considered as far as the working phenomena of linguistic taboo or tabooing in Ìbòlò community is to be reckoned with, there exist certain topics and theme, words and expressions that have come to be imbued with stigmatisation and hence will not be spoken of in already specified situations majorly because of the endeavour incumbent on all to maintain the status quo, not to be viewed as cultural deviants. Notwithstanding, people, especially with inflected minds throw caution to the wind and bare their minds with all frankness to a fault when, for instance, with peers. In such situations, no sense of remorse is felt. However, a quick withdrawal to status quo is made upon the intrusion by the society. Perhaps it can be submitted here that linguistic taboos are not only culture-dependent, there are also socio-cultural factors which determine the use of taboo words or other euphemistic equivalents.

Ibrahim (2016) is a recent work on taboos titled 'A Sociolinguistic Interpretation of Taboos in Yòrùbá Language: A Study of Ondo and Ido-Ekiti Towns.' In the work, she distinguishes between seven different types of taboos with reference to Ondo and Ido-Ekiti towns. These are: taboos related to royalty, taboos related to women, taboos related to children, taboos related to the behaviour of individuals, taboos which can not be ordinarily explained, taboos relating to animals and taboos relating to food. She describes a taboo as a prohibition of an action based on the belief that such behaviour is either too sacred or too horrific for ordinary individuals to undertake under the threats of supernatural punishments. According to her, such prohibitions are recent in every society. On the contrary, the researcher disagrees with the view of Ibrahim on the foregoing as he believes that a taboo as an integral part of the

language and culture of a given society is as old as the origin of man and his language. Ibrahim (ibid.) asserts that breaking a taboo is considered recursive in every given society as she maintains that a taboo is not restricted to a particular culture. She states further that a taboo is an act forbidden in any society or religion as she is of the opinion that the violators of such an act gets punished. She goes further to say that the Yòrùbá society just like any other society has its distinct taboos which are applied on the individuals in the communities. She then posits that, despite sharing the same culture and a general taboo, each Yòrùbá community has its unique taboo and punishments for its offenders. She also states that Yòrùbá believe strongly that taboos are bad deeds and they bring bad omen to the society. She then adds that due to the effects of these taboos on their offenders, the people try to shy away from such bad acts. She submits that taboos are important in Yòrùbá land especially in the areas of moral guidance in the community and in ensuring a good harmony between the gods and the people. She concludes that Yòrùbá taboos can be traced to their culture as these taboos play vital roles in the Yòrùbá society. According to her, a taboo teaches moral values, and clarifies developments and harmonious living. She also maintains that Yòrùbá strongly believe in these taboos and the effect of violating them as staying off the taboos bring happiness, peace and purity to the community at large.

However, going through the various submissions and diverse views as presented by different scholars in their attempt to classify a taboo, it is discovered that their classification of linguistic taboo as evident in their works did not cover all the areas affected by the phenomena of taboo in the Ìbòlò community as seen later on in this analysis. Hence, the task of this study is to explore these areas and provide the adequate explanation for their inhibition in the Ìbòlò community as well as giving reasons for the avoidance of words considered taboos in our connection with each other. The discovery that the Ìbòlò community just like any other community in the world, where the phenomena of taboos are held at high esteem

makes use of circumlocution or euphemism (different from our earlier submission) to replace such words considered a taboo whenever the need arises, hence, this study stands to present empirical data and findings on the taboos as seen within the Ìbòlò community and compare these taboo words with the general worldview in accordance to where scholars have failed to research on and see evidence of relation.

### **2.3 Theoretical Framework**

Having assessed the nature of taboos, its various classifications and purpose in many societies, it is realised that this study's view dwelt heavily on Halliday's Theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). This theory asserts that the meaning of any utterance cannot be ascertained outside its context of the situation. According to Halliday, Functionalism arises from the concerns of Villem Mathesius (1882-1945) at the University of Prague where he calls for the non-historical approach to the study of language in 1911. Halliday again reiterates that Russian Roman Osipovich Jacobson (1896-1982) are some of the Prague School linguists alongside Mathesius. He maintains that functionalism was later associated with the British linguists Michael Alexander Kirkwood, MAK Halliday and his followers. The Prague School linguists believe that the phonological, grammatical, and semantic structures of a language are determined by the functions they have to perform in the societies in which they operate' (See also Lyons (1981:224).

Hallidayan theory pertains to meaningful choices rather than formal rules of language. He views language as being part of social semiotic that is constructed out of series of systems of signs. The contextual theory of meaning as developed by Halliday deals with the context of use of words and sentences not as an isolated entities but as related to the situation of occurrence and use. This means that meaning is related to the external world or situation of occurrence on one hand and to the levels of language such as syntax and words on the other.

Halliday has been able to come up with component contexts of the situation based on this theory which Halliday (1978) calls **field of discourse**, **tenor of discourse** and **mode of discourse**. This study will then be analysed based on this theory which emphasises that there are three Model or Components of analysing the context of the situation. To him, the meaning of an utterance has three (3) dimensions which he calls Mode which he also refers to as a Mode of Discourse, Tenor of Discourse which he terms Style and Field which he also names Field of Discourse. According to him, “These are highly general concepts for describing how the context of the situation determines the kind of meaning that is expressed. These models are:

**Field:** This refers to the social activity in which language is being used. The field is seen as the context which motivates the production of ideational or experiential meanings in a text. Definitions of Field vary. Halliday (1985:12) defines it as “what is happening to the nature of social action that is taking place: what is it that the participants are engaged in”. Another definition of Field is “what the language is being used to talk about” (Eggins, 1994:52). Mathiesen and Bateman (1991:72) define Field as “socially significant action”. Yet, another definition of Field is “what is to be talked or written about” (Butt, Fahey, Feez, & Spinks, 2012:23).

**Mode:** It is the medium through which the verbal discourse is transmitted. We have written and spoken channels. The mode could be didactic, persuasive or narrative. The mode is related to the textual metafunction in that it refers to the organisation of meaning into a coherent text (Butt, Fahey, Spinks & Yallop, 1995:14). Similarly, Halliday (1985:12) defines Mode as “the symbolic organisation of the text, the status that it has, and its function in the context, including the channel and also the rhetorical mode”. Mathiesen and Bateman (1991:71) define it as “the role played by the text itself”. Therefore, Mode in this research is

defined as the way ideas are organised in a text. The mode is realised in texts through themes which are explained next.

**Tenor:** This accounts for the addresser-addressee relationship. It may also be described as the role relationship between the speaker and listener and the way in which their relationship affects or influences language. These models have actually proven to be relevant to our analysis and thus have been incorporated into our theoretical framework. Tenor expresses relationships between participants in a text (e.g., writer and reader) (Halliday, 1985; Eggins, 1994; Mathiesen & Bateman, 1991; Butt et al., 2012). Further, Tenor can be related to what is called Stance (Reilly, Zamora, McGivern, 2005) which involves opinion and feeling. Tenor can also be related to what Thompson and Hunston (2006) call Evaluation. In this way, it includes writers' opinions on issues being discussed. Martin and White (2005:7) define Tenor as how people are interacting including the feeling they try to share. Finally, Tenor is used by writers to draw readers to certain points of view about the content (Butt et al., 2012:165). From these definitions, Tenor encompasses those opinions, feelings and relationships that are reflected in the use of language, for example, being angry, happy, engaged, polite, enthusiastic, pessimistic, supportive, or unsupportive of an idea. In this study, Tenor is defined as the writers' attitude expressed through language.

Since conversation in this work is primarily oral (mode) which can only take place between two or more people that are related or not related either by blood or socially (Tenor), at home or in public (Field), the researcher's choice of the theory is considered appropriate and justifiable for the analysis of the collected data for this current study. Furthermore, considering how a given people use a particular language in a given situation and to take a close look at situations and appropriateness of using all of which sociolinguistics dwells on. Consequently, it is believed that the model adopted for this work does justice to the analysis of the collected data.

In summary, the perception of Halliday on the relevance of contextual features in understanding and interpreting references is very crucial to the study of language. These aspects of his study have a direct bearing on the present study which strongly considers the contextual features necessary for understanding and interpreting taboos in the Ìbòlò dialect.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Preamble**

This chapter consists of the methodological processes employed in the course of this investigation and how they are used to give plausible answers to the research questions. The chapter presents the research design, the sources of data, method of data collection, the sampling procedure and the analytical procedure of the work. A sociolinguistic-based research of this nature which requires some form of interactions between the researcher and the subjects of the research may also have to adopt a combination of methods.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

This research employed a descriptive qualitative method since it involves the collection of data for the purpose of describing the existing condition. According to Vanderstoep and Johnson (2009:167), this method focuses on cultural, social, personal identity and its goal is more descriptive than predictive. Moreover, Strauss and Corbin (1998:11) state that qualitative research is achieved not by means of quantification or statistical technique. It can give complex detail about particular phenomena which are difficult to be expressed with a quantitative method. Therefore, the findings of the qualitative research will not be in the form of data which usually belong to the quantitative research. In this research, a qualitative method is chosen as the appropriate method because it represents what the researcher is studying.

Being more detail, this research will also use a content analysis in order to also achieve the textual investigation. The analysis of the study will be based on classification on data sheets, i. e., data that include words or utterances which contain taboo words.

### 3.2 Sources of Data

According to Bousfield (2008:15), a qualitative research can be conducted by employing verbal and non-verbal data. verbal data can be found in utterances spoken by speakers, while non-verbal data can be seen through gestures, facial expression, tone and physical contact between speakers. In this research, the data are in the form of words and utterances while the context of the data is in the language use containing taboo words. Therefore, the sources of the data are divided into two. The two sub-divided sources are:

#### 3.2.1 Primary Source

The researcher divided this source of the data into two; *Participant Observation* and *Interview* of the native speakers of the Ìbòlò dialect across the ten villages/towns that make up the Ìbòlò community which are: Òffà, Òyán, Òkukù, Òsogbo, Ìdó, Ìlobù, Èjìgbò, Ede, Ìrèsà and Ìkìrun

**a) Participant Observation:** As one of the sons of Late Chief Balógun of Òffà, the War Lord of Òffà, the researcher had availed himself the opportunity to watch with keen interest how the people in the ward used to relate with the father. The discovery was that, during discourse, certain words were often dropped and replaced with other words (euphemism) especially when greeting parents (in this case, the researcher's father) and in some other linguistic contexts. The word Bàbá is often used to address father. Aside this, being a polygamous home, the terms that the wives and the children used to address him with are either Bàbá or Bàbá wa, meaning 'father' or 'our father'. None of his family members ever called him by his name even those that were his friends and those that were older than him. This is as a result of his status in his community.

More so, some of the elderly sons and daughters in the family were never called by their first names by the younger wives, instead, cover terms like bòòdá for (male adult), àntí or ídí ìlèkè



for female adult are often employed. It is interesting to note here that even the people related to the father are equally treated the same way. These types of taboo words are part of what constitute taboos that are related to marriage. The adoption of the *participatory Observation* method corresponds with the opinion of Chensul and Le Compte (1999:91) who see a participant observation method as “the process of learning through exposure to or involvement in the day-to-day or routine activities of participants in the researcher’s setting”.

In addition to this, in 2010 when the Late Olofa of Offa joined his ancestors, the researcher went with other members of the family on behalf of Late Balogun’s family to register their condolences. There, apart from being told by the parents, the researcher confirmed that when a king dies, people do not say Oba ti kú, (*the king has died*), rather the euphemism Obati wo àjà, (*the king has entered the roof*) or Bàbà ti pa ipò dà (*Our father has changed his position*) is be used. Through the researcher’s father, the knowledge of a lot about veneration types of taboos which is meant to honour people and the taboos for averting ominous consequences which arise from the Ibòlò belief in the power of words was learnt. All these taboo words in the Ibòlò community are elaborately discussed in the analysis.

**b) Interview:** The data for the research were also collected from the speakers of the Ibòlò dialect of Yorùbá language in some parts of Offa, Oukù, Oyán, Ilòbú, Ìkìrun, Òsogbo, Ido, Èjìgbò and Ìrèsà) of Kwara and Òsun States respectively through structured interview as a means of eliciting information from the subjects. The researcher being one of the sons of the Late Chief Balógun of Offa was allowed to pay a courtesy visit to the palaces of the father’s contemporaries and freely interacted with the four high chiefs on the concepts of taboo. Some of the questions asked were; what terminologies are recognised as taboos? Why a taboo? Who is allowed to use or utter these terms? What are the punishments for breaking a taboo and the circumstances surrounding its usage? The four chiefs visited: Chief Eesa of Offa,

Chief Ojomu of Òffà, Chief Sààwò of Òffà, the current Chief Balógun of Òffà as well as the Olọfà of Òffà, Òbà Mùfùtáù Gbàdàmósí Èsùwòyè II. For the purpose of clarity and objectivity, the researcher also visited Ìlá-Òràngùn, Òkukù, Òyán, Ìlòbú, Ìkìrùn, Òsògbò, Ido, Èjìgbò and Ìrèsà, all in Osun State where the native speakers of the Ìbòlọ dialect of Yòrùbá language could have possibly being found, to repeat the same activity earlier performed in Òffà so as to reaffirm the data earlier collected in Òffà. However, it is noteworthy to say here that most of the people contacted in some of these villages (Òyán, Ìlòbú, Òkukù and Èjìgbò) were farmers and artisans. The researcher's interaction with these sources will give an opportunity to know more about the other types of taboos in the Ìbòlọ community which may not be found in the archives. This is most especially in the area of the fear-related taboos and the taboos associated with ritual and hunting as presented in the chapter of the analysis of the current study.

### **3.2.2 Secondary Source**

The researcher, in the bid to complement the primary source of the data that are considered relevant, helpful and accurate for this work, visited University of Ilorin Library, the State Library in Ilorin, the Sir Kashim Ibrahim Library at the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and Kenneth Dike Library at the University of Ibadan where relevant textbooks were consulted, M. A. Dissertations, PhD Theses, as well as scholarly published journals considered relevant to the current study were also consulted. The internet was also used to provide some current information on the current study. All the information on the concepts of taboos, sociolinguistics and history of Ìbòlọ people through these sources are used as the basis for the study. The relevant and applicable information considered for the work were picked while the irrelevant information were left out. The adoption of this method seems to go in line with the submission of Scotton, (1972:9-10) that, "in order to formulate a hypothesis

which will reflect in his questions, the survey researcher must necessarily first serve as an observer within the society being studied or through the available literature”.

### **3.3 Method of Data Collection**

The interactive, interview and participatory observation of language use is the starting point of this sociolinguistic study. It is also used to complement customary sociolinguistic interviews (See also Labov, 1972:43). In the case of a sociolinguistic study that focuses on the choice of words and terminologies, the emphasis on tabooed expressions in language use in everyday life becomes paramount. Therefore, the researcher personally interviewed the elders of the community on the nature of a taboo and its use between the Ìbòlò people and Yòrùbá speakers and why these words are seen as taboos. The interview was conducted by a careful selection of assumed tabooed words in the Ìbòlò dialect given that interview remains the most common data collection method in a qualitative research and a familiar and flexible way of asking people about a tradition and their opinions and experiences of the use of taboo words within a given community. A considerable amount of data is generated from an interview lasting one or two hours, although considerable time may have been expended, setting up the interview and subsequently on analysing it, in the end, the adoption of these methods of data collection dwells mainly on sociolinguistics. As such, the interview made use of is done in order to elicit information from the interviewees. By including a quantitative method, it means that all the respondents were asked the same set of questions.

### **3.4 Sampling Procedure**

Simple random sampling technique is employed to get the required sample. This means that each individual is chosen entirely by chance and each member of the population has an equal chance, or probability of being selected. In other words, only part of the whole population is selected to represent the whole population. The age range of the targeted informants is from

the age of Forty (40) to Seventy (70) years. The reason for considering this age range as part of the strata used for the current study is because the researcher considers it appropriate since the people within aforementioned age range are adults who are expected to have known much about what the interview demands and are likely to provide the required responses as specified in the questionnaire accordingly. In addition to this, older people within the remote community it is believed are more aware of the native usage of the dialect under study.

Three hundred (300) respondents were randomly selected which cut across other strata like sex, occupation and educational level. One hundred and sixty (160) of the total population were males while one hundred and forty (140) were females. This means that, in each village/town, four (4) chiefs, five (5) educated people comprising three (3) men and two (2) women, three (3) artisans, three (3) hunters, twelve (12) traders mainly women and three (3) farmers totalling thirty from each village/town are selected. Since our areas of research were ten (10), a total number of respondents from all the ten (10) villages/towns are summed up to the three hundred (300) respondents.

However, the researcher settled for a simple random selection of three hundred (300) respondents in anticipation for an empirical collection of data, as well as to ensure that the number corresponds to other villages and the data collected. This sample size is in the regards that the respondents are in the same community, their language, dialects and culture are largely characterised as the same. The reasons for making use of the differences in the respondents' level of education as a yardstick in the selection of the subjects are that:

- i. The educated natives were familiar with reading books, articles, magazines etc where cultural issues like taboos are often found and discussed extensively. As such, they were able to identify what aspect of the Ìbòlò culture is acceptable and what not;
- ii. The educated native speakers of the Ìbòlò dialect were more accommodating and willing to give the required information than the illiterates; and

- iii. The illiterate speakers of the Ìbòlò dialect between the ages of fifty-one (51) and above helped in narrating the history of the Ìbòlò people. Their practical and direct involvement in one form of the Ìbòlò cultural activity or the other helped in identifying other taboo words associated with rituals, hunting and fear-related ones in the linguistic community.

The reason for the adoption of this approach in the current study is because it does not only end with the complex nature of the work but with the appreciation of the fact that the approach is quite appropriate, adequate and suitable for the data collected.

### **3.5 Analytical Procedure**

The diagram below depicts the basis of the present analysis as contained in the theoretical framework of the study. The adoption of this method in analysing the data was considered more appropriate and justifiable for the validation of the data because context, mode and field are parts of the determining factors in the usage of euphemism for taboo words in the Ìbòlò community. These factors as we will see in this analysis are reflected, subsumed and extensively discussed under the analysis and general discussion of the data collected. Therefore, the researcher presents tables containing the responses relevant to this study using eight columns in some tables and nine in others as the analysis demand. In doing this, the researcher employed the following headings; the sample text and number, the Ìbòlò names for the sample text, the English name, the euphemism used by the Ìbòlò speakers for the taboo words, English gloss, the reason for using euphemism for taboo words and in some cases, the background for such taboo words:

## Propriety Related Taboos of Parts of the Body

SN	Ibolo Taboo Words	English Equivalent	Ibolo Euphemism Words	English Gloss	Reason	Halliday`s Theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics		
						Mode	Tenor	Fields
1	Ökó	Penis	Nhkan, kòkòrò	Something Insect	Constraints Avoidance	Face to face	Formal / Informal (Opposite Sex)	Home/Public
2	Öbò	Vagina	Kinní  Àbé Öjú àrà  Òdó àbé	Something  Under Body opening  The stream under	Constraints  Avoidance of using vulgar words	Face to face	Formal/ Informal (Opposite sex)	Home/Public

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION OF DATA AND ANALYSIS

#### 4.0 Preamble

This chapter is devoted to the presentation, analysis, interpretation and general discussion of data. In this chapter, interpretative technique is employed to analyse the collected data presented in tabular form.

#### 4.1 Data Presentation

75 taboo words form the raw data for this study. These words were collected by the means of audio recordings by the researcher with the assistance of his informants among Ibolo speakers of Yoruba language in Osogbo and its environs as well as the Ìbòlò Dialect speakers in Offa. Efforts were also made to provide their English translations.

S/N	TABOO WORDS	TRANSLATION
1	Okó	Penis Phallus
2	Òbò	Vagina
3	Ilé ìgbé	Anus
4	Ẹpón	Testicle
5	Omú	Breast
6	Irun okó/ Irun òbò	Pubic hair
7	Oyún	Pregnancy
8	Dó	To copulate
9	Oyún	Pregnancy
10	Nkàn oşù	Menstruation
11	Ọmọ bíbí	Child delivery

12	Ìtò	Urine
13	Ìgbẹ	Faeces
14	Ọwọ òsì	Left hand
15	Apá òsì	Left side
16	Kò sí owó lówó mi	I am broke
17	N kò ní n kàn kankan nílẹ	I have nothing at home
18	Kò sí iyò nílẹ	There is no salt in the house
19	Mo lá àlá pé mo kú	I dreamt that I died
20	Ìbì ọmọ òsì	Baby' s placenta
21	Ọmọ àlẹ	Bastard
22	Ọmọ ọlọmọ	Illegitimate child
23	Oòtó bẹẹ	You cannot dare it
24	Ọmọ burúkú	Bad child
25	Àgùntàn ni ọ	You are a sheep
26	Ẹran ni ọ	You are a goat.
27	Mẹẹ	Bleating of a goat
28	Ẹlédẹ	Pig
29	Afọfun gbému Aláiní irònú	Imbecile; Unserious person
30	Ọdẹ ni ọ Agò ni ọ O tutù Òpònú ni ọ	Imbecile you are or unintelligent person you are
31	Olẹ Agbẹwiri Ọlọsà	Thief
32	Oníró Òpùró	Liar
33	Ẹranko	Monster Beast
34	Aṣẹwó	Flirt



35	Òtòṣì /Olòṣì	Poor person
36	A kò gbòdò sọ wípé ènìyàn wúwo	One must not say that somebody is heavy
37	Abéré A kò gbòdò bèrè abéré láàárò tàbí lálé lówò aláté	Needle It is forbidden to ask for (needle) when one wants to buy it either in the morning or at night.
38	Orin A kò gbòdò jí kọ orin láàárò	Song Singing must not be done in the morning.
39	Èpè A kò gbòdò gbé ewúré sèpè	Curse A goat must not be cursed
40	Àlá A kò gbòdò ró àlá ní ọsán	Dream A dream must not be related in the afternoon.
41	Ọba	King
42	Olórí awo	Chief Priest
43	Olórí agbo	Ward head
44	Ìyàwó Ọba	Queen
45	Àkọbí Ọba	Prince/Princess
46	Ó kú	He is dead
47	Fún Ọba tí ó kú	For a king that dies
48	Ọba ti kú	The king is dead
49	Orúkọ màamá ẹni	Personal name of one' s mother.
50	Orúkọ bàbá ẹni	Personal name of one' s father
51	Orúkọ ẹgbón ẹni	Personal name of one' s elder brother
52	Orúkọ ẹgbón obinrin	Personal name of one' s elder sister
53	Orúkọ àbúrò bàbá ẹni	Personal name of one' s uncle
54	Orúkọ àwọn tí ó bí àwọn òbí ẹni	Personal name of one' s grand parents
55	Orúkọ àwọn obinrin tí wọn kò tii ní adé orí tàbí ọkọ	Personal name of unmarried/single/spinster
56	Orúkọ ọkọ ẹni	Personal name of one' s husband

57	Orúkọ àwọn ànà ẹni	Personal names of one' s in-laws
58	Orúkọ àwọn ẹgbón tàbí àbúrò ọkọ ẹni	Personal names of one' s husband elder or younger brothers/sisters
59	Orúkọ iyàwó bàbá ẹni tàbí orogún màmá ẹni	Step mother
60	Ejò	Snake
61	Àkéekèè	Scorpion
62	Kowèè	A bird so-called from its cry.
63	Ẹmọ	A type of migrant rat
64	Ìgalà	Antelope
65	Pépèyẹ	Duck
66	Àjé/Oṣó	Witch/Wizard/Sorcerer
67	Sànpònná Ilẹ̀ẹ̀ gbóná	Small – pox
68	Orúkọ ẹni tí ó ti kú	Name of the dead.
69	Eégún	Masquerade
70	Wèrè	Mad person
71	Isó	Fart
72	Òkóbó	Impotent person
72	Oyún bàjẹ	Miscarriage
74	Owó ẹhìn	Bribe/kick back
75	Ọmọ bíbí	Child delivery

## 4.2 Data Analysis

This segment deals with the analysis of the data for this study. The analysis is done in accordance with the theoretical framework adopted for the study. The Halliday's Theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is considered for this study because of its relatedness to explaining the concept of taboos in Ìbòlò literal discourse. The data collected are analysed using the interpretative approach of analysis. The diagram below depicts the basis of our analysis as contained in our theoretical framework. The adoption of this method in analysing our data as indicated earlier was considered more appropriate and justifiable for the validation of our data because context, mode and field are parts of the determinant factors in the usage of euphemism for taboo words in Ìbòlò community.

### 4.2.1 Analysis Showing the List of Taboos and Euphemisms of Ibolò Dialects

Propriety-Related Taboo of Parts of body				
SN	Ìbòlò Taboo words	English Equivalent	Ibolò Euphemism Words	English Gloss
1	Okó	Penis Phallus	Nùkan/kòkòrò, Kinní	Something Insect something
2	Òbò	Vagina	Abé	Under Body opening The stream under Cover, safeguard, protection
3	Ilé ìgbé	Anus	Ojú ara Odò abé Ààbó Ilé ìmí	The house of dirt Bottom Buttock
4	Èpòn	Testicle	Ìdí Fùrò	Leather Seed
5	Ọmú	Breast	Òbò Àwò Kóró	You select Chest
6	Irun okó/irun òbò	Pubic hair	Irun ara Irun abé Irun isàlè Irun kinní	Body's hair The hair under. Hair at the bottom Something' s hair

Propriety-Related Taboo of Bodily Acts and Functions				
SN	Ìbòlò Taboo words	English Equivalent	Ìbòlò Euphemism Words	English Gloss
7	Dó	To copulate	Ìlòpò Ìbàsùn Àṣepò Ipàdé	To use together To sleep with To do
8	Oyún	Pregnancy	Férakù Ọlẹ inú	- -
9	Nkàn òsù	Menstruation	Abara méjì Àlejò	Double bodied person. Visitor
10	Ọmọ bíbí	Delivery of a child	Ìsòkalẹ	To come down
11	Oyun baje	Miscarriage	Ole wale/Osu baje	The foetus has come down/the pregnancy has aborted

Propriety-Related Taboo of Excretion				
SN	Ìbòlò Taboo Words	English Equivalent	Ìbòlò Euphemism Words	English Gloss
12	Ìtó	Urine	Òmì àrà	Body's water
13	Ìgbé	Faeces	Ìdòtí Ìmí Ìgbònsè Èrú	Dirt - - -
14	Iso	Fart	Ara agba fele	The body of an elder is light

Taboos for Averting Ominous Consequences of Insults				
SN	Ìbòlò Taboo Words	English Equivalent	Ìbòlò Euphemism Words	English Gloss
15	Ọwọ òsì	Left hand	Ọwọ àlàáfia	Hand of peace
16	Àpá òsì	Left side	Àbé	Side of peace
17	Kòsì owó lówó mi	I am broke	Òwó pò lówó mì	I have plenty of money
18	Nko ni nkan nile	I have nothing at home	Ilé mí kún	My house is full
19	Kòsì iyò nílẹ	There is no salt at home	Iyo po ni ile	I have plenty of salt at home
20	Mo lá àlá pé mo kú	I dreamt that I died	Mo sè àlá pé olódi mi kú	I dreamt that my enemy died
21	Ibi ọmọ	Baby's placenta	Èkejì ọmọ	Baby's companion

Taboos for Averting Ominous Consequences for Insults				
SN	Ìbòlò Taboo words	English Equivalent	Ìbòlò Euphemism Words	English Gloss
22	Ọmọ àlè	Bastard	Ọmọ ọkọ	The husband's son
23	Ọmọ Ọlómọ	Illegitimate child	Ọmọ ọkọ	The husband's son
24	Oòtó bèè	Bastard	Ọmọ ọkọ	The husband's son
25	Ọmọ burúkú	Bad person	Olórí ire ọmọ	Fortunate person/hea of good luck
26	Àgùntàn ni ọ	Sheep you are	-	-
27	Ẹran ni ọ	A goat you are	-	-
28	Mẹẹ	Bleating of a goat	-	-
29	Ẹlédè	Pig	-	-
30	Afọfun gbému	Imbecile	-	-
31	Aláini frónú	Clueless person	-	-
31	Ọdè ni ọ	Imbecile you are	-	-
	Agò ni ọ	or		
	O tutù	unintelligent		
	Òpònú ni ọ	person you are		
32	Olè	Thief	-	-
	Gbéwiri			
	Ọlọsà			
33	Onírọ	Liar	Aláhán méjì	Two-tongued person
	Òpùrọ	iar		
34	Ẹranko	Monster Beast		
35	Aṣéwó	Flirt	Gbajúmọ	Social person
36	Olòṣì	Poor person		
37	Were	Mad person	Ofe si i	An ill wind has blown on him/her
			On se aare	He/she is sick
38	Okobo	An impotent person	Aguntan buje	He is bitten by sheep

Taboos for Averting Ominous Consequences for Expression				
SN	Ìbòlò Taboo	English Equivalent	Ìbòlò Euphemism	English Gloss
39	A kò gbódò sọ wípé	One must not say that somebody is heavy	Ó fúyẹ	It's light
40	Abéré	Needle	Okinni	-
	A kò gbódò bèèrè	It is forbidden to ask for (needle)		

	abẹrẹ láàárò tàbí lálẹ̀ lówó alátẹ	when one wants to buy it either in the morning or at night.		
41	Orin A kò gbòdò jí kọ orin láàárò	Song Singing must not be done in the morning.		
42	Èpẹ̀ A kò gbòdò gbé ewúré sẹ̀ pẹ̀	Curse A goat must not be cursed		
43	Àlá A kò gbòdò rọ àlá ní ọsán	Dream A dream must not be related in the afternoon.	-	-

#### Taboos of Proper Names that cannot be Mentioned (Uttered)

SN	Ìbọ̀lọ̀ Taboo words	English Equivalent	Ìbọ̀lọ̀ Euphemism Words	English Gloss
44	Ọba	King	Olú ayé Aléyélúwà Kábíyèsí	The lord of the world The owner of the world and the characters therein. The unquestionable
45	Olórí awo	Chief Priest	Olú àwo Olórí awo	The cult's' lord
46	Olórí agbo	Ward head	Olóyè	Chief
47	Ìyàwó Ọba	Queen	Olorì Ayaba	The king's favourite wife The king's wife
48	Àkọbí Ọba	Prince Princess	Àrẹmọ Àládé	Royalty Heir to the throne

#### Taboo Expressions of Bad Occurrence (Death) for Ordinary Person and A King

SN	Ìbọ̀lọ̀ Taboo words	English Equivalent	Ìbọ̀lọ̀ Euphemism Words	English Gloss
49	Ó kú	He is dead	Ó sẹ̀ aláìsí Ó jáde láyé	He is no more He has gone out of the world
50	Fún Ọba tó kú	For a king that dies	Ó di olóògbé	He has become a sleeper

			Oba wọ àjà	The king has entered the roof
51	Oba ti kú	The king is dead	Òbà tì pà ìpò dà	The king has changed position.
			Òbà rèwàlè àsà	The king has gone to the spirit world

Type-Taboo Names of Relations that cannot be Uttered by the Younger Ones				
SN	Taboo words	Ìbòlọ Euphemism Words	English Gloss	
52	Personal names of one's mother.	Mòmó, Mòómì, Wúra mì, Òlókò mì.	Mummy, My mother My Gold, My driver	
53	Personal names of one's father.	Bàbá, Bàbá mì, Díngí mì	Daddy, my father, My mirror, My driver	
54	Personal names of elder brothers	Bòòda or bòòda + the first name	Brother	
55	Personal names of elder sisters	Àntì or àntì + her first name	Sister	
56	Personal names of one's uncle or aunt	Bàbá kékèé/Mòmó kékèé	The small father or small mother.	
57	Personal names of one's grandparents.	Bàbá àgbà/Mòmó àgbà	The older father or older mother	
58	Personal name of unmarried woman	Òmìdàn	Miss	

Type-Taboo Names of People Related by Marriage				
SN	Ìbòlọ Taboo Words	Ìbòlọ Euphemism Words	English Gloss	
59	Personal names of one's husband.	Òkò mì Òlówó òrí mì	My husband	
60	Personal names of one's In-laws.	Bàbá + 1 <sup>st</sup> child's name i.e. Bàbá Táyo Ànàn mì	The owner of my bride price. Tayo's father. My In-law	
61	Personal names of one's husband's elder or younger brothers or sisters	Bòòdá for the male while Àntì, Ìdí Ìlèkè, ìbàdí àràn for the female-in-law.	Brother for males, sister or the buttocks of beads or cudroy for females.	
62	Step mother. ìyàwó /Orogun	Mòmó or mòmó +òrukò òmò ìyàwó nàà E.g. Mòmó Tòpé or Ìyàwó kékèré	Mother or the younger wife, ormòmó plus her child's name. if the speaker is older than the younger wife's child	

Supernatural Beings' Taboo and Euphemism Terms				
SN	Ìbòlò Taboo words	English Equivalent	Ìbòlò Euphemism Words	English Gloss
63	Àjé/Òsò	Witch/Wizard/ Sorcerer	Àwòn Ìyà Àwòn Élèyè (Appellation) Àgbàlágba	The mothers The owners of birds The oldest ones
64	Sànpònná Ìlèé gbóná	Small – pox	Òlódè Bàbá	The owner of the outside
65	Òrúkò ènìtí ó tíkú	Name of the dead.	Ènì ìré Òlòògbè Àlâísí	Father The good person. The one who is dozing  The one who is no more.
66	Èégun Òrúkò ènìtí ó wà nínú èèku.	Masquerade	Àrá òrùn Bàbá	Inhabitant of heaven.
67	Owo eyin	Bribe or kick back	Obi	Father Kolanut
68	Okele	Morsel	Owe	Bit
69	Orun	Sleep	Reju	Mere relaxation

#### 4.2.1.1 Analysis Showing Propriety-Related Taboo of Body Parts

SN	Ìbòlò Taboo Words	English Equivalent	Ìbòlò Euphemism Words	English Gloss	Reason	Halliday's Theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics		
						Mode	Tenor	Field
1	Òkó	Penis Phallus	Nkàn ,kòkòrò Kinní	Something Insect something	Constraints. Avoidance of vulgar words	Face to face or one to many	Formal/Informal (opposite sex)	Home/Public
2	Òbò	Vagina	Àbé Òjú àrà  Òdóàbé Ààbó	Under Body opening The stream under Cover, safeguard, protection	Constraints. To avoid using words considered vulgar/obscene	Face to face/one to many	Formal/Informal (opposite sex)	Home/Public
3	Ìlè ìgbé	Anus	Ìlè ìmí Ìdí Fùrò	The house of dirt Bottom Buttock	Irritation. To avoid saying things that could easily irritate people. Constraints.	One to many	Formal	Public
4	Èpòn	Testicle	Òbò Àwò Kóró	Leather Seed	Avoidance of vulgar words	Face to face or one to many	Formal	Public
5	Òmún	Breast	Oyan Aya	You select Chest	Constraints.	Face to face	Formal	Public



6	Ìrùn òkó/Ìrùn òbò	Pubic hair	Ìrùn àrà Ìrùn àbẹ̀ Ìrùn Ìsàlẹ̀  Ìrùn kinní	Body's hair The hair under.  Hair at the bottom Something's hair	Constraints	-Face to face	Formal/Informal	Public
7	Òyún	Pregnancy	Férakù Òlẹ̀ inú Àbàrà méjì	Doubled-bodied person	Fear To prevent evil people from harming the foetus at the mention of its real term.	Face to face	Formal	Public
8	Omo bibi	Child delivery	Osu sile	She has defecated at home	To differentiate human from animals	Face to face	Formal	Public

From the above, we can observe that Ibolo people, just like many other people across the globe as noted by Pyles (1954), Nadel (1964), Robin (1980), and Okunola (2005), do not speak or call by their direct names any subject matter that has to do with bodily parts, especially, those that are related to most of the natural and sexual functions of the human body freely. Among the Ibolo people, the word *virgina* (i. e. female private part), *òbò* and penis *Òkó* (i.e male private part) are not called by their raw names. It is not a sin in English language to call *virgina* its proper name but it is a taboo to call *Òkó* or *òbò* in its raw form in Ibolo dialect of Yoruba language for its seeming obscenity and moral decadence. Thus, euphemisms such as *Iya mopo* for *òbò* and *kinni* or *kokoro* for penis are often employed to avoid the direct mentioning of their (body parts) names. This is a reflection of people's moral standard. This is resented on the ground that it is too dirty or harsh to people's ears. It is also an aberration of moral conduct; while at the same time threatens the integrity of such speaker. It is also to say *o loyun* when a woman is pregnant, but *O feraku*. She has missed her time or menstruation. *O loyun*, is euphemised as *O feraku* in order to reduce the sharpness of the word. Also, when a woman has been put to bed, we do not say *O bimo*, it is a linguistic taboo. Instead, we say *O su sile*, the woman has defecated at home. These are exclusively used for human beings in order to respect and draw a line of demarcation between animals and human beings. Ibòlò people are word conscious that any seemingly dirty word is euphemized.

Below are some of the other words observed to have fallen into this category of unmentionable parts and the various permissible words in their stead. This seems to confirm Thorpe's (1967: xiii) assertion that:

Àwòn èèwò ní ÍléYòrùbá jé ònà kàn tí à ngbà kó àwòn òmò  
wéwé àtì òdó ònì ní onírùrù ònà tí àngbà hùwá nínú ilé, ní òdè,  
lààrìn àwùjò, nínú ilù tàbí ibi èsìn.

Translation:

Taboo in Yoruba society is a way by which the Yoruba people teach the younger children and youth the different manner of behaviour at home, outside, in the society, within the town and in religious places.

#### 4.2.1.2 Analysis Showing Propriety-Related Taboo of Body Acts and Functions

SN	Ìbòlò Taboo words	English Equivalent	Ìbòlò Euphemism Words	English Gloss	Reason	Halliday's Theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics		
						Mode	Tenor	Field
1	Dó	To copulate	Ìlòpò Ìbàsùn Àsèpò Ipàdé	To use together To sleep with To do	Constraints. To avoid mentioning words that are obscene	Face to face or one to many	Formal/ Informal	Home/Public
2	Òyún	Pregnancy	Féràkù Òlè inú Àbàrà méjì	- - Double bodied person.	Prevention. To protect the foetus from being harmed by witches	Face to face	Formal	Public
3	Nkàn òsù	Menstruation	Àlèjò	Visitor	Constraints.	Face to face or One to many	Formal	Public

Table 4.2.1.2 presents three propriety-related taboos that border on the areas of natural acts or bodily functions. The three words, 'do' (copulate), Oyun (Pregnancy), and Nkan osu (menstrual flow), are often replaced with euphemized words or cover terms as can be seen above. The use of cover terms for them is borne out of constraints Ibolo people have for such. Moreover, all the cases stated above appear to support Leach's (1964:28) assertion that; "...

Psychologists have adequate and persuasive explanations of why the central focus or the crudest obscenity should ordinarily lie in sex and excretion”. Furthermore, usage of cover terms for all these words by Ìbòlò people is mainly because they want to stay within the boundaries of what could be regarded as some refined speech that is not considered vulgar, unseeingly or inappropriate by the standard of Ìbòlò culture.

#### 4.2.1.3 Analysis Showing Propriety-Related Taboos of Excretion

SN	Ìbòlò Taboo words	English Equivalent	Ìbòlò Euphemism Words	English Gloss	Reason	Halliday's Theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics		
						Mode	Tenor	Field
1	Ìtò	Urine	Òmì àrà Eyo	Body's water	Irritation. To avoid using words capable of getting people easily irritated because of its odour which could sometimes be offensive.	One to many	Formal	Public
2	Ìgbé	Faeces	Ìdòtí Ìmí Ìgbònsè Èrú	Dirt - Leg shaker Load	Irritation. To avoid using words capable of getting people easily irritated because of its odour which could sometimes be offensive. Irritation. Irritation/Respect	One to many	Formal or informal	Home or Public
3	ISO	Fart	Ibon; O ta ibon idi  Ara agba fere	Gun He discharges buttock's bullet. The body of an elder is light		One to one	Formal or Informal	Home/Public

Table 4.2.1.3 presents taboo words that hinge on the area of excretion. Because of their irritating nature, euphemised words are often used for them. Examples: Ìdòtí, Ìmí, Ìgbònsè, Èrú, Eyo etc. are all euphemised words for Ìgbé and Ito (faeces and urine) to make it more tolerable. More so, it is an offence to insult or insinuate that an elderly person farts. The society frowns at such demeanour. If for instance, an elderly person farts with offensive odour, it is a taboo for the younger ones to present to exhibit their indignation by condemning him

for doing so with acrimonious remarks or by either boo him with hun hun or tell him off with E ti so but instead, you sympathise with him or her with such complementary and soften remarks as Ara agba fere, the body of an elder is light.

#### 4.2.1.4 Analysis Showing Taboos for Averting Ominous Consequences of Decorum

SN	Ìbòlò Taboo Words	English Equivalent	Ìbòlò Euphemism Words	English Gloss	Reason	Halliday's Theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics		
						Mode	Tenor	Field
1	Ọwọ̀ ọ̀sì	Left hand	Ọwọ̀ àlàáfíà	Hand of peace	To protect one against bad luck	Face to face	Formal	Public
2	Àpá ọ̀sì	Left side	Owo alaafia	Side of peace	To avert poverty	One to many	Formal	Public
3	Kòsì ọ̀wó lówó mì	I am broke	Owó pọ̀ lówó mì	I have plenty of money	To cover one from poverty	One to many	Formal or informal	Home or Public
4	Nkò ní nńkan nílẹ̀	I have nothing at home	Ilẹ̀ mì kún	My house is full	-	One to many	Formal	Public
5	Kòsì iyọ̀	There is no salt in my house	Iyọ̀ pọ̀ nílẹ̀	There is plenty of salt in the house	To protect one from sadness or calamity	Face to face or One to many	Formal or Informal	Home or Public
6	Mo lá àlá pé mo kú	I dreamt that I died	Mo lá àlá pé olódì mì kú	I dreamt that my enemy died	To save one from untimely death	Face to face	Formal or Informal	Home or Public
7	Ibi ọmọ	Baby' s placenta	Èkejì ọmọ	Baby' s companion	To protect the baby from bad luck	Face to face/one to many	Formal	Public

From the Table 4.2.1.4, one notices that the key words having negative connotations are being replaced with the alternation having positive connotations. For example, Ọ̀sì in Àpá ọ̀sì and Ọ̀wó ọ̀sì have negative connotation of bad luck or poverty. So, referring to somebody as having ọ̀sì or Àpá ọ̀sì implies cursing the person. This is what Ronald (1986) calls “origin of sinister”. Iyọ̀ in Ìbòlò means salt, in Kòsì iyọ̀ nílẹ̀, means, there is no joy in the house, hence, Iyọ̀ pọ̀ nílẹ̀ meaning, there is sweetness or joy in the house and sensation in Yorùbá utterances. Therefore, to say that there is no salt in the house amount to cursing one' s house. The same applies to Kòsì ọ̀wó lówó mì, I am broke and Nkò ní nńkan, I have nothing. More so, Mòkú I died' as in relating a dream one had is often substituted with positive connotation like olódì mì kú, meaning my enemy has died. In Ibi ọmọ, baby's placenta, which in Yoruba Ìbì means bad luck”and bùrúkú, bad”are usually replaced with the alternatives having positive connotation as can be noticed from the table above.

#### 4.2.1.5 Analysis of Taboos for Averting Ominous Consequences for Insults

SN	Ìbòlọ Taboo words	English Equivalent	Ibolo Euphemism Words	English Gloss	Implied Meaning	Situation of Use	Halliday's Theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics		
							Mode	Tenor	Field
1	Òmò àlè	Bastard	Òmò Òkò	The husband's son	A badly behaved person	When a person behaves in a way that does not conform to the family's norms.	Face to face	Formal or informal	Home or Public
2	Òmò Òlómò	Illegitimate child	Òmò Òkò	The husband's son	Illegitimate	Can be used to dare a boastful person.	Face to face	Formal or informal	Home or Public
3	Òòtó béè	Bastard	Òmò Òkò	The husband's son	-	When one's behaviour seems inhuman or abnormal	Face to face	Formal or informal	Home or Public
4	Òmò bùrúké	Bad person	Òlórìrè ómò	Fortunate person/ head of good luck	A badly behaved person	This insult is often used for a person who seems not to have any sense of direction	Face to face	Formal	Public
5	Àséwò	Flirt	Gbàjúmò	Social person	Prostitute	A girl/ lady or a woman that does not have a steady relationship. When a woman has made it a habit to sleep with different men at a time.	Face to face	Formal or informal	Home or Public
			Ko fe oorun	One who does not like sun					
6	Were	Mad person	O fe si i	An ill wind has blown on him.					
			O nse aare	He/She is sick.					

Table 4.2.1.5 presents decorum linguistic taboo, which contains words that are meant to hurt people's feelings because they devalue the object being referred to. They are sometimes used to condemn or disapprove of people's unbecoming acts or behaviours which are frowned at by the Ibolo people so as to make them turn over a new leaf. Words like Òmò àlè "bastard", Òmò Òlómò, Òòtó béè are often used for people whose behaviours do not conform to family norms, Àgùntàn "sheep" for a sluggish or unintelligent person, Èrán Mèè, for a stubborn person, while Èlédè, "pig" is used for a dirty person. Aside these, when a person gets mad or develops psychiatric problem or O ya were in Ìbòlọ term, it is a taboo to say in order not to sound sarcastic but we say O fe si i or On se aare, he is sick. It is also harsh and embarrassing to call an impotent man Okobo for this can generate a blacklist from the person concerned and strain relationship. It does become a taboo to use such word but instead, a cushion phrase is used Aguntan buje he is bitten by sheep. However, the use of words considered insults by anyone in Ìbòlọ community is seen as taboo because of their semantic implications or effects

on the interlocutor. However, it is important to note here that some of the taboo words in this category as observed from the table are not replaced with euphemism. This is because; they are used directly to refer to the person with the hope that such a person might have a rethink, thereby, turning over a new leave.

#### 4.2.1.6 Analysis of Taboo for Averting Ominous Consequences in the Area of Expression

S N	Ìbòlò Taboo	English Equivalent	Ìbòlò Euphemism	English Gloss	Implied Meaning	Reasons	Background	Halliday's Theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics		
								Mode	Tenor	Field
1	À kò gbòdò sò wipe èniyàn wúwò	One must not say that somebody is heavy	Ó fúyé	It's light	Untimely death	Anyone described as heavy will die.	The belief here by Ibolo Speakers is that, living souls are naturally light, only the dead is usually heavy	Face to face	Formal or informa l	Home or Publi c
2	Àbéré Àkò gbòdò bèèrè ábéré lówùrò tàbì lálé lówó àlátè	Needle It is forbidden to ask for (needle) when one wants to buy it either in the morning or at night.	Òkinnì	-	Poor sales	To prevent poor sales during the day	Using euphemism in referring to a needle, at this time of the day was borne out of the belief that business of the day should start with selling of expensive items that will be a good omen for the day. Thorpe, (1967:3)	Face to face	Formal or informa l	Publi c
3	Òrìn Àkò gbòdò jìkò òrìn lówùrò	Song Singing must not be done in the morning.			Triviality or laziness	This would cause business failure	The Yoruba considered singing in the morning as being idle or wasting the time that could be spent on meaningful activities. The Ibolo culture detest this. Thorpe, (1967: 159) nevertheless, no harm is attached.	One on one or One to many	Formal or informa l	Home or Publi c
4	Èpè Àkò gbòdò gbé èràń sèpè	Curse A goat must not be cursed				The goat will retaliate the moment it looks back and the curse will	A goat being a friendly domestic animal to <u>Ibolo</u> speakers deserves to be	Face to face	-	Home

						be shifted on the person that cursed it since it cannot talk.	treated fairly.			
5	Àlá	Dream	-	-	Indolence	The dream will come to reality	The taboo was meant to teach a moral lesson. Only an idle person was expected at that time of the day when he should be fullyged in business, relating a dream. This was a way of discouraging lazine ss. Thorpe, (1967:33)	Face to face or one to many	Informa l	Publi c
	Àkò gbòdò ró àlá ní òsán	A dream must not be related in the afternoon.								

Table 4.2.1.6 presents taboo expressions in Ìbòlò dialect which emanated from the belief that there is power in the spoken words, so that what is uttered could simply be responsible for good fortune or misfortune. Thus, expressions in this category are often avoided by any means possible by the speakers of Ìbòlò language to avert bad-luck or misfortune in their daily endeavours.

## 4.2.2 Veneration Types of Taboo Expressions

This category contains the taboo words and expressions meant to honour or respect a specific class of people in the Ìbòlò community. The accordance of respect to them is as a result of what they represent and the position they occupy in the community culturally. These are kings, title holders, married and unmarried grown-ups, relations, the elderly ones, and relations by marriage.

### 4.2.2.1 Analysis Showing Veneration Taboos of Proper Names not Uttered

SN	Ìbòlò Taboo Words	English Equivalent	Ìbòlò Euphemism Words	English Gloss	Implied Meaning	Reason	Halliday's Theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics		
							Mode	Tenor	Field
1	Qba	King	Olú ayé Aláyélúwà	The lord of the world The owner of the world and the characters therein.	Royalty or Scared	Respect and Honour. He is the representative of the gods on earth.	Face to face	Formal or informal (Subject to the king)	Home or Public

			Kábíyèsí	The unquestionable		Idol that needs to be honoured			
2	Olórí Awo	Chief Priest	Olú awo	The cults' lord	Sacred	Courtesy and Respect	Face to face	Formal or informal (unequal power)	Public
3	Olórí agbo	Ward head	Olóyè	Chief	Royalty	Courtesy and Respect	Face to face	Formal or Informal	Home or Public (unequal position)
4	Ìyàwó Ọba	Queen	Olori/ ayaba	The king's favourite wife The king's wife	Royalty	Courtesy and Respect	Face to face	Formal or Informal	Home or Public (unequal position)
5	Àkóbí Ọba	Prince Princess	Àrẹmọ Aládé	Royalty Heir to the throne	Royalty	Courtesy and Respect. Direct descendant of the ruler in Ibolo community is as good as the ruler himself because he will someday occupy his father's royal position	Face to face	Formal or Informal	Public

Kings in Yorùbá land were regarded according to Adebayo (2009) as divine representatives of the gods on earth. They are raised to the highest pedestal which human being could attain in this world. They were often credited with various kinds of supernatural powers including that of clairvoyance. As such, absolute obedience was due to them from their people. Òbà in Ibolo community as put by Johnson (1977) are sacred.

Therefore, Table 4.2.2.1 above shows veneration related taboo words in Ìbòlọ community. As can be seen from the table, different euphemism is used for each as a mark of courtesy and respect for them because of their exalted positions and what they represent in the community. In Ibolo community, Oba king” can only be referred to by many euphemized words like Kábíyèsí, The unquestionable one, Olú ayé, The Lord of the world, or Aláyéélúwà “The owner of the world and the characters therein. Similarly, Òlú áwò, “The Cult’s lord” also falls into this category because of his role as the mediator between the gods and the people. So



also are the relations of Òbà “king” in the community. It is pertinent to say here that, all the euphemized words for the aforementioned classes of people are meant to accord them honour and respect.

#### 4.2.2.2 Analysis Showing Veneration Taboo Expressions of Bad Occurrence (Death) for an Ordinary Person and a King

SN	Ìbòlò Taboo Words	English Equivalent	Ìbòlò Euphemism Words	English Gloss	Reason	Halliday's Theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics		
						Mode	Tenor	Field
1	Ó kú	He is dead	Ó se aláísí	He is no more	To soothe the pain of being bereaved	Face to face	Informal	Home or Public
			Ó jádè láyé	He has gone out of the world				
			Ó di olóògbé	He has become a sleeper				
2	Fún Òbà tí ó kú	For a king that dies	Ọba wọ àjà	The king has entered the roof	Kings are regarded as idols, representatives of the gods. Therefore, they are seen as sacred.	Face to face or one to many	Informal	Home or Public
3	Òbà tìkú	The king is dead	Ọba tí papò dà	The king has changed position.	Using common term, O ku, “He is dead” for a king is sacrilege.	Face to face or one to many	Informal	Home or Public
			Ọba Òbà rèwàlè àsà	The king has gone to the spirit world				

As can be seen from Table 4.2.2.2 above, there are two words representing the pains of being bereaved that is, death. Ó kú “He is dead” is considered taboo in Ìbòlò community because of the pains that the word connotes. The belief here is that, it is only person who has lived his life full before passing away to the great beyond such word can be used for. To them, only a person like this can die or ku in their parlance. It then becomes a taboo to use the word ku for the demise of any person below this age bracket or grade. This is done out of respect for age and elders in the community. For instance, when a baby dies, it is a taboo to say ‘O ku’ instead they used the word O kanbo. Kanbo is a compressed form of a full sentence, Iku ti kanibo. Ibo in this context is an unripe fruit, hence, it becomes death has plucked an unripe considering the tender age and immaturity of the baby that has just been snatched away by death. In other sense of it, when a youth or a middle age person dies from natural selection or

calamity, the word used for his/her transition is not Ku but Ó sè àlâísí “he is no more”, Ó jádè láyé “He has gone out of the world” or Ó dì òlòògbé “He has become a sleeper” are often used to break the news of death. In the same vein, Oba “king” because of his status as a political head in the community and as a representative of gods, there are terms like, Òbà wò àjà “The king has gone into the ceiling”, Òbà tì pà ìpòdà “The king has changed position”. The belief here is that, an Oba never dies. The position of an Oba as an institution and pillar in which he reigns transcends mortality, his physical death therefore, signifies the fallen of the town’s governing pillars, hence, we say Opo ye (A pillar has fallen) This reflects the political psychology of Ìbòlò people.

#### 4.2.2.3 Analysis Showing Veneration Type-Taboo Names of Relations that cannot be uttered by the Younger Ones

SN	Taboo words	Ìbòlò Euphemism Words	English Gloss	Reason	Halliday’ s Theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics		
					Mode	Tenor	Field
1	Personal names of one’s mother.	Mòmò, Mòòmí, Wúrà mí Olókò mì.	Mummy, my mother My Gold, My driver	Courtesy or Respect	Face to face	Informal (son or daughter to his or her mother)	Home or Public
2	Personal names of one’s father.	Bàbá, Bàbá mì, Dínjí mì	Daddy, my father, My mirror, My driver	Courtesy and Respect	Face to face	Informal (son or daughter to his or her father)	Home or Public
3	Personal names of elder brothers	Bòdà or bòdà + the first name	Brother	Courtesy and Respect	Face to face	Informal (the younger ones to their elder brother)	Home or Public
4	Personal names of elder sisters	Àntì oràntì + her first name	Sister	Courtesy and Respect	Face to face	Informal (Younger ones to sisters)	Home or Public
5	Personal names of one’s uncle or aunt	Bàbá kékèé/Mòmó kékèé	The small father or small mother.	Courtesy and Respect	Face to face	Informal (Nephews and Nieces to the parents’ brothers or sisters)	Home or Public
6	Personal names of one’s grandparents.	Bàbá àgbà/Mòmó àgbà	The older father or older mother	Courtesy and Respect	Face to face	Informal (Grand children to their grandparents)	Home or Public
7	Personal name of unmarried woman	Omidan	Miss	Courtesy and Respect	Face to face	Informal	Home or Public (Wedding or Beauty competition)

In Table 4.2.2.3 above, there are six names of kinship relations that are taboo in Ìbòlò community. The set of people in this category cannot be called by their first names by their younger ones except by those who are within the same age bracket with them. Different euphemisms are employed by the community to refer to them. The uses of such euphemisms

are meant to accord them respect. Ìbòlò community like many other communities, frown at any attempt by the younger ones to address any of the people in the kinship relation by their first names. This is the reason why honorific pronouns are employed for elderly ones or senior persons in rank and in age. Examples of such are; Awon (they), he/she for elderly or senior person. Eyin (you in the subject form), Yin (in the object form), Won (them) him/her in the object form. These honorific pronouns are wrongly transferred into the English Language. Hence, we have sentences like; they are coming, I gave it to them, where ‘they’ and ‘them’ refer to only one person. A violator of this rule is often beaten, rebuked or seen as culturally deviant.

#### 4.2.2.4: Showing Veneration Type-Taboo Names of People Related by Marriage

SN	Taboo Words	Ìbòlò Euphemism Words	English Gloss	Reason	Halliday's Theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics		
					Mode	Tenor	Field
1	Personal names of one's husband.	Òkò mì Òlówó òrí mì	My husband	Courtesy or Respect	Face to face	Informal (wife to her husband)	Home or Public
2	Personal names of one's In-laws.	Bàbá + 1 <sup>st</sup> child's name i.e. Bàbá Táyo Àná mì	The owner of my bride price. Tayo's father. My In-law	Courtesy and Respect	Face to face	Informal (In-laws to In-laws)	Home or Public
3	Personal names of one husband's elder or younger brothers or sisters	Bòdádá for the male while Ànti, Ìdí Ìlẹ̀kẹ̀, ìbàdí àrán for the female-in-law.	Brother for males, sister or the buttocks of beads or cudroy for females.	Courtesy and Respect	Face to face	Informal (A wife to her husband's younger brothers or sisters)	Home or Public
4	Step mother. ìyàwó /Orogún	Mòmó or māmá , orúkọ ọmọ ìyàwó nàà E.g. Māmá Tópẹ̀or Ìyàwó kékeré	Mother or the younger wife, ormómó plus her child's name. if the speaker is older than the younger wife's child	Courtesy and Respect	Face to face	Informal (Step child to step mother)	Home or Public

In most of the instances listed above, it is observed that euphemistic devices are being employed by the Ìbòlò speakers to address different categories of people to mark signs of respect mainly because “...every senior (in terms of age) is a parent to every younger .... that every elder (Bàbá) irrespective of his socio-economic standing deserves a standardized form of respect especially from his junior” (Yusuf, 1979:109).

### 4.2.3 Fear-Centred Taboo

As the name implies, this type of taboo establishes the Ibolo belief in supernatural forces and the type of reference given to them. These supernatural forces are believed to have control over us and the world. These taboo words are similar to those for averting ominous consequences in the sense that the use of harsh words or names as believed by Ìbòlò that can annoy these forces are tabooed and replaced with subtle alternatives. Oyetade (1994: 99) emphasises this as an expression of the Ìbòlò speakers' belief in the existence of supernatural forces that are perceived as having control over human affairs. In the tables below are some of the fear-related taboos:

#### 4.2.3.1 Analysis Showing Animals' Terms referred as Taboos and Euphemisms

SN	Ìbòlò Taboo words	English Equivalent	Ìbòlò Euphemism Words	English Gloss	Reason	Halliday's Theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics		
						Mode	Tenor	Field
1	Ejò	Snake	Okùn ilẹ̀ Afàyà wọ Afàyàfà	Land rope The one that crawls on chest	Fear Lest a snake appears to the violator in his dream and bite him	-	-	Home or Public
2	Àkékéèè	Scorpion	Òjògón Òmò Afídíjà	The one who fights with its back.	Fear of not being stung	-	-	Home or Public
3	Kòwéè	A bird so-called from its cry.	Èyè àbàmi	Extraordinary bird	Fear Its cry signifies death. Anywhere it cries, there must be news of death.	-	-	Home or Public
4.	Èmì	A type of migrant rat	Èkúté	Rat	Fear of the unknown (Instability)	-	-	
5.	Ìgalà	Antelope	Àgbònrín	Sacred animal	Fear	-	-	During hunting
6.	Pépeyé	Duck	Òpèbẹ	The name coined from the shape of its legs, i.e. scattered legs	Fear (Calling its name after being accidentally killed may spell doom on the violator)	-	-	Public

Table 4.2.3.1 provides the first category of fear-related taboo in the area of animals believed by the Ìbòlò speakers to be harmful or dangerous to people. The names of such animals are hardly freely uttered in Ibolo community. These include: Èjò “snake”, Àkékéèè “scorpion”, Kowéè “mysterious bird”, Ìgalà “antelope”. So, the name Èjò “snake” is often substituted with okùn ilẹ̀ “land rope”, while Àkékéèè, “scorpion” is called Ònídì gànngàn. This is to

avoid being bitten or stung in one's dream by these animals. Ìgàlà “antelope” because of Àmì ifá, “oracular sign” on its skin, it is believed by Ibolo that hunters must not call it by its name Ìgàlà when they are about to kill it. Similarly, Kòwèè, a mysterious black bird is believed by Ib as a sign of bad omen; that its cry signifies untimely death.

#### 4.2.3.2 Analysis Showing of Supernatural Beings' Taboo and Euphemism Terms

SN	Ìbòlò Taboo Words	English Equivalent	Ìbòlò Euphemism Words	English Gloss	Reason	Halliday's Theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics		
						Mode	Tenor	Field
1	Àjé/Òsó	Witch/Wizard/Sorcerer	Àwòn Ìyà Àwòn Élèyè (Appellation) Àgbàlágba	The mothers The owners of birds The oldest ones	Fear Calling them by their direct names can make one incurs their wrath.	Face to face	Formal or Informal	Home or Public
2	Sànpònná Ìlèé gbóná	Small – pox	Òlódè	The owner of the outside	Fear Outbreak of the disease.	Face to face (to the victim)	Formal or Informal	Home or Public
			Baba Eni ire Òlódògbe	Father The good person. The one who is dozing	Fear To curb against remembering the deceased	Face to face	Informal	Home or Public
3	Òrúkò ènítí ó tíkú	Name of the dead.	Àláísí	The one who is no more.				
4	Eégún	Masquerade	Àrá òrùn	Inhabitant of heaven.	Fear One can be cursed with a charm or beaten up by them	Face to face	Informal	Public
	Orúkọ ẹni tí ó wà nínú ẹkù		Bàbá	Father				

As it can be seen from the Table 4.2.3.2, there is a list of a category of elements regarded as supernatural human beings. These groups of people are believed by the Ibolo speakers to possess supernatural powers, as such, they are capable of inflicting unquantifiable pains on their victims, or sometimes, death. Because of this, Ibolo speakers dare not call them by their crude names in Ibolo language; rather, subtle or appealing words are often used to refer to them at any particular time of the day. For instance, Àjé a witch is usually replaced with Àwòn Ìyà The mothers, Àwòn Élèyè The owners of bird, Ìyàmi My mother, while Òsó “wizard, is also replaced with Baba or Bàámi My father. Èégún Masquerade” or people in mask are another set that cannot be called by name but baba or Àrá òrùn the inhabitants of heaven. And lastly here, is Sànpònná, who is believed to be responsible for the affliction of measles on children. To avoid the outbreak, its name must not be directly mentioned rather it

is euphemized as olóde the owner of outside, Bàbá father, or Ènì ìré the good person” . In referring to someone who died of small pox, the Ìbòlò prefer to say, Bàbá gbàá “Bàbá has taken him”.

### **4.3 General Discussion**

We have seen from the tables presented earlier how the propriety-related taboo which hinges on the body parts and bodily acts and functions, taboos for averting ominous consequences which border on the Ìbòlò belief in the power of the spoken word, veneration types of taboo expressions which explain why various kinds of euphemisms are used for different categories of people as a mark of courtesy and respect, and how fear-centred taboo which is observed to be the taboo that establishes the Ìbòlò belief in supernatural beings or forces constituted the principal subject areas of the linguistic taboo in Ìbòlò language. In this section of the study, one is aiming at finding the various functions that such inhibitions perform in the Ìbòlò community, mainly because of the assumption that after all, these avoidances cannot be in vain. If this assertion is true, one can then share the belief of Avrorin, (1975:29 cited in Bello, 1990:80) that, “language has essentially social functions and all levels of linguistic structures are subject to the influence of the social factors, albeit, to varying extent.”

It therefore became pertinent that the avoidances can be seen to throw light on inter-personal relationships and socio-cultural values. Farb, (1974: 81) sees this as “... the passion for relegating certain words to taboo status and then substituting euphemisms for them – with the inevitable result that some speakers are thereby encouraged to break the rules and use these words – giving considerable insight into the speech communities that emphasise such taboos.”

Hence, one can conclude that when the Ìbòlò speakers refrain from mentioning the names of certain body parts and their acts and functions and employ some cover terms to do so, they can be seen to be fully conscious of what they do. In his own contribution, Douglas, (1966:163) emphasises that:

The body as we have tried to show provides a basic scheme for all symbolism. There is hardly any pollution which does not have some primary psychological reference. As life is in the body, it cannot be rejected outrightly. And as life must be affirmed, the most complete philosophies, as Williams James put it must find some ultimate way of affirming that which has been rejected.

From this submission by Douglas, one can say that anything that can irritate the feelings of another in the eyes of others or put any aspect of his dignity to shame is decreed as taboo. Ìbòlò speakers therefore takes to making more use of the cover terms such as Ìbàsùn “to sleep with”, Àsèpò “to do together”, Ìgbònsè “leg shaker”, èrù, “load” to represent sexual intercourse and excretion because they want to stay within the boundaries of what could be regarded as some refined speech that is not considered vulgar, unseemly irritating, or inappropriate by the standards of the Ìbòlò culture. Thus, anyone who violates the rule will be faced with stigmatisation and seen as a shameless, vulgar and irresponsible person, because by all cultural standards in the Ìbòlò community, such a violator is not fit for responsible talks and discussions. This is what Akindele and Adegbite, (1999:10) call, “...behaviours that are forbidden or regarded as immoral....”

It is important to say here that tabooing of these words is usually instilled from early childhood and as such forms a part of childhood language socialisation. No wonder, Leach, (1964:28) submits that, “...psychologists have adequate and persuasive explanations of why the central focus or the crudest obscenity should ordinarily lie in sex and excretion.”

This notion is further shared by Mbaya, (2002:20-22) that, “taboos are those words or expressions in language which are avoided as a result of their indecency ... or immorality...”

Aside from this, some taboos in Ìbòlò are purposely placed on words or expressions of Ìbòlò speakers because of their strong belief in the power of words. This is contained in the work of Awolalu and Dopamu, (1979:211) that; “when certain norms are observed faithfully, it will go well, not only with the individual who does so, but also with the entire community, and when it is otherwise, disaster results.” This explains why some of the Ìbòlò words expressing negativity are usually substituted with other words connoting positivity as can be observed from table 4 in which Kòsì ìyò nílẹ̀ “there is no salt in the house” is replaced with Ìyò pò nílẹ̀ “there is plenty of salt in the house”. The implied meaning here is that ‘there is happiness in my house’ because Ìyò symbolises ‘happiness’. In the same vein, Nkòni nkàn “I have nothing” is replaced with Ìlẹ̀ mi kún “My house is full”. Kòsì òwó lówó mi “I am broke” is usually replaced with Òwó pò lówó mi “I have much money”. Owo osi, “left hand” to Òwó àlàáfia, “Hand of Peace”, Apa osi “left hand” to Àpá àlàáfia “side of peace”. The belief here is that osi “left” signifies bad omen, as such, it is tabooed in Ìbòlò dialect, hence, replaced with words that connote positivity. Also, Ibi omo “a baby’s placenta” to Èkéjì òmò “a baby’s companion”, Òlórí bùrúkú “ill-luck person” to Òlórí dáràdàrà “good luck person”. Ìbì in Ìbì òmò signifies “bad” while bùrúkú signifies “bad luck”. The two are often replaced with positive words to avoid calamity. Ìbòlò speakers’ belief in the power of words is what Wardhaugh (1986:230) refers to as “the way in which a society expresses its disapproval of certain kinds of behaviour believed to be harmful to its members....” It can therefore be said that taboos imposed on words or expressions in Ìbòlò community stand to direct the society’s speech by approving and promoting the kind of utterances that are believed not to be harmful to oneself, other people and to the societal life. This is what Ajao, (2005:3) calls “expression of the people’s activity in averting ominous consequences a way of life.”



Another principal area here is the decorum table which contains insulting words in the Ìbòlò dialect. This area is described by Abdulkadir (1988:7) as “... any speech or action that can or is even intended to hurt another person’s feelings or dignity.”

In Ìbòlò language, the themes governing the “life” of insults are considered something abominable; hence anybody who indulges in uttering insults is bound to be considered the irresponsible and shameless person. This partly explains why Adeyanju (2004:21) states that “the words we speak have a lasting effect on the hearers”. This ideal corroborates the Ìbòlò adage that Bétí ò gbó yìnkìn inú kǐ bàjé (If the ear does not hear bad or incorruptible words, the mind cannot be corrupted or spoiled). The main reason for the imposition of taboos on such words as posited by Adegbija, (1989:58) could be found in the area of decorum which stemmed from the belief Ìbòlò speakers have in the power of words. The submission made on this by Adegbija is:

un-obstructive to the hearer(s), such a speaker does not in any way infringe on the inter-locutors prerogative or leave unsaid or undone what he ought to have said or done in a particular communication context. A polite speaker is normally expected to comport himself in a manner.

Here a taboo is seen as one of the rules governing what should or should not be said in public to talk about and to be silent when due. This invariably shows the sociolinguistic functions of taboo as a way of correcting excesses in the use of language that if not checked can lead to obscenity, insults, curses, blasphemy etc., with the disastrous consequences on individual and the society at large.

Oyetade, (1994:99) considers all these as expressions of the Ìbòlò’s belief in the existence of supernatural forces that are perceived as having control over human affairs. The doctrine of courtesy and respect in the Ìbòlò community seems to confirm Williams Conton’s (1966:21) opinion that Africans generally have deep and ingrained respect for old age and even when

we can find nothing to admire in an old man, we will not easily forget that his grey hair has earned him right to courtesy and politeness.

It is quite natural for the Ìbòlò speakers to respect elders. It is true that respect for elders starts within one's immediate family. This is why the Ìbòlò speakers say Òbí léye. "Parents are dignified and respected". Therefore, words like bàbá or bàámi "father", Màmá or Mòmó "mother" is used to refer to them by their children or younger ones.

In the area of kingship, Oba "king", because of his exalted position as second in command to the gods, his first male child, and his wives enjoy the same courtesy and respect accorded to the king. In the Ìbòlò community, it is a sacrilege to call the Oba, his first male child or his wives by their names. As such, euphemisms such as Aláyélúwà "the owner of the world and all the characters therein", Kábìèsí "the unquestionable one", Olofà "the Owner of Òffà town" are used for the Oba (the king) in the Ìbòlò community. His first male child is often referred to as Àrèmo "heir to the throne or one who has the right to wear the crown", while the king's first wife is referred to as Olorì, Mòmo, Ìyá-ààfin, if the king has more than one wives. The accordance of these respects stemmed from their deep-rooted belief in their cultural norms and values, and a violator of such as believed by the Ìbòlò speakers will be struck by thunder, while every member of his family will be declared as outcasts and sent into exile. The same goes for the four major Chiefs: Balógun, Eésà, Sààwò and Ojomu. All these title holders are seen and called by their titles and not by their names. The Olúáwo is another person here that such a respect is accorded to because of his divinity as the mouthpiece of the gods.

Along the same line is the concept of death. As far as death is concerned, as observed in Ibolò community and in some other societies, Pound's (1972) opinion confirms that the creation of euphemisms for its terms is an attempt at ameliorating altogether the harsher realities of life.

The cover terms encountered are seen as milder forms which are used in order to smoothen the harsh reality of death. This seems to be a supposition that by changing or euphemising the direct “he is dead” to Ó jáde láyé “he has gone out of the world”, Ó ɣe aláísí “He is no more”, Ó di olóògbé, “He has become a dozer”, and for kings, Oba ti pa ipò dà “he has changed position”, Oba wọ àjà. “The king has entered the ceiling”, Oba rèwàlẹ̀ àsà “The king has gone to the spiritual world”. The harshness, pain and agony involved in this all-powerful phenomenon are softened by just a simple application of these cover terms, which are recognised to have the tendency to make the notion more tolerable to the human consciousness.

For a relationship by marriage, especially, between Okọ l’áyà “husband and wife”, it is a basic fact that there is a relationship of love and affection which calls for a need to show respect; a feeling of Àponlé “courtesy”, hence, we have this case of trying to avoid an outward show of love and affection that characterise the relationship and emphasise that of respect, Okọ mi “my husband”, Olówó orí mì “the owner of my bride price”, or Bàbá plus the first child’s name, ‘e.g. Bàbá Kúnlé.

The in-laws Àwon Àna, especially, fathers, mothers, uncles, aunts, brothers (elder/younger), sisters (elder/younger) in-laws, are so highly respected that their names are forbidden to be mentioned by a housewife. The case could be said to be the most serious of linguistic taboos as regards to marital relations. It is believed by the Ìbòlọ speakers that if a woman calls the names of her in-laws, thunder will strike the erring wife to death. As for father-in-law, euphemism such as bàbá “father”, bàámí “my father” is used. And for mother-in-law, Mòmó Okọ mi “my husband’s mother”, Mòmọ, Mòmọ mì “mother or my mother” are used.

As for the younger sisters and brothers-in-law, Àna Okùnrin àti Àna Obìnrin, there is a certain joking relationship between the wife of their elder brother and them that warrants her

to give them such pet terms like Bàbá Oko mì “My husband’s father”, Bòòdá plus the person’s first name sometimes (Brother Bayo) and for the girls, anti “sister”, Ìdí Ìlèkè “the buttocks of beads” are often used. In the same vein, a newly wedded wife cannot call his co-senior wife/wives by their names, it is a taboo, as such terms like Mòmó “mother” or Ìyá wa “our mother” are used.

All these go in agreement with the belief of Sapir quoted in Pride, (1970:288) that language: “...very often serves for ‘communion’ the reflection or clarification or consolidation or alteration of interpersonal relationships and socio-cultural values, and may in many cases be their only detectable sign.” In buttressing this view, Opadotun, (1991:125) asserts that the function of taboo in Yorùbá community is:

Oríṣi ìkìlò kantí àwọn bàbá òlá wa gbé kalẹ̀ lẹ́yìn ìrírí àníníyẹ ọ́dún, kí àṣà, ẹ̀sìn, àti ipò wá má bàà dàrú, kì á sì lèè máa gbé pò ní àlàáfíà, èyí tí ẹ̀rí ọ̀kàn ònìkálùkú jẹ ọ̀lọpà tì múnì.

Translation:

Some kind of warning introduced by our fore-fathers as a result of past years of experiences to sustain our culture, religions, and traditions for peaceful co-existence as directed by the individual conscience.

In the Ìbòlò community, violation of a taboo is seen as a serious offence against gods and humanity. Adeoye (1979:79) describes this as:

Ìtùmò èèwò nì òhùn tí à gbàpé à kò gbòdò sè tàbí dánwò, tí à siní ìgbàgbo pé bì éniyàn bádàn nkàn náàwò, òlúwà ré yìò dàn tán.

Translation:

Taboo is what we see as forbidden whose violation an erring member lives to regret.

Therefore, the taboo is seen by Ìbòlò as a collective agreement between the members of the society that owns it and whose violation has a serious effect on the erring member. As it is with the case of veneration types of taboo, so it is with the case of taboos centred on fear. The institution of fear seems to be another reason why the Ìbòlò community employs inhibitions with regard to mentioning the names of certain species of animals and people regarded as supernatural beings.

This explains what is obtainable in other cultures as put by Douglas, (1966:1) cited in Bello, (1995:85) that:

Almost any missionary's or traveller's account of a primitive religion talks about the fear, terror or dread in which its adherence lives. The source is traced to beliefs in horrible disasters, which overtake those who inadvertently cross some forbidden line or develop some improved condition. And as fear inhibits reason, it can be held accountable for other peculiarisation in primitive thought, notably, the idea of defilement.

Furthermore, as observed by Frazer, (1911), it is the fear of consequences that may befall upon anybody who brings to notice his presence within the domain of the said dangerous animals that prevent people from mentioning the names of such animals. Moreso, some of them are also believed to come near any place in which their names are being mentioned, or appear to one in one's dream and bite or sting one, or as put by Thorpe, (1967:51) that:

The mention of dangerous animals/reptiles such as a snake at night was believed to be evoking a fearful feeling that may lead to having a terrifying dream and disturbing other's sleep with the resultant frightful cry.

It is because of the inherent fear in mentioning their names that brings about the usage of cover terms in order to be able to discuss any species that fall under such a category. Thus, Èjò "snake" is usually called Òkùn ilè "land rope", Àkèkèé "scorpion" is called Òjògón or Òmò à fídí jà "one who fights with its buttock", and Kòwée "a bird so-called from its cry Èyè àbàmì". Other examples are Èmì "a type of migrant rat" or Èkúté. Calling this rat by its name will make one become unstable. Ìgàlà "antelope" is usually substituted with Àgbònrín by hunters. It is noteworthy to say here that any hunter in the Ìbòlò community who calls antelope, Àgbònrín, Ìgàlà before killing and refuse to peel off its skin before cutting it into pieces will die. The same goes for Pépyè "duck" usually substituted with Òpébé.

Aside from the animals, we also have names of some supernatural beings who are believed by the Ìbòlò speakers to be in control of man's destiny. As such, they are said to have powers

to befall calamity, poverty, or possibly, death on anyone who calls them by their direct names. This is contained in the observation of Ikenga, M. (1987:125 -144) that:

In the onthological order in the spirit world, first in the hierarchy is the creator, then, the deities, object-embodied spirits, ancestral spirits and other miscellaneous spirits that are known by human, comprising both good or harmless spirits and evil spirits. Man stands between the array of spiritual hosts in the world and the world of nature.

This is contained in Kafo's (1975:36) view when he refers to some of the wicked spiritual beings as Satan. Therefore, names such as Àjé "witch", Òsó "wizard", Sànpònná "god of smallpox", Èégún "masquerade" are often substituted with appellations and subtle words such as, Àjé-Àgbàlágba "the oldest one", Àwòn Élèyè "owner of birds", Awon iya "the mothers"; while wizards Òsó is replaced with Bàbá "father". Sànpònnán the other hand is usually substituted with Òlódè "the owner of the outside", Bàbá "father", Ènì ìré "the good person". In addition to this is Eegun "masquerade" often substituted with ara orun "the inhabitants of heaven", Bàbá "father" and Òrúkò ènìtí ó tókú "the name of the dead" is often replaced with Àlâisí "one who is not present" possibly, our relations, acquaintances or our ancestors.

The Ìbòlò community like any other communities has its own perception of good and bad manners that pertain to both behaviours and speech acts. Thus, various ways are employed in order to train and guide the members of the community towards a complete adherence to these desired goals. It seems the employment of taboo as affirmed by Thorpe, (1967: xiii) and Oladele, (1986: 308) is one of those ways. Thorpe sees this as a way by which the society – Ìbòlò people as the case may be – teach their younger generation the different manners of behaviour at home, outside, in the society, within the town, and in religious worships. Here, a taboo is seen as a way of bringing up an individual member of the Ìbòlò society in the ways and manners acceptable to the general life of a society. In other words, a taboo stands to correct the younger generation of any Ìbòlò to prepare them for the larger societal demands.

Oladele (1986:308) has this to say: “Èwò jé idérùbà tàbí ìkìlò fún òmòdé tàbí ògbèrì”, meaning, “a taboo is an act of instilling fear or warning on children or the non-initiate.” Douglas, (1986:40) upholds that, “...attributing danger is one way of putting a subject above dispute. It also helps to enforce conformity.”

*The Oxford Junior Encyclopaedia* (1974:446) contains where it was asserted that:

It would be a mistake to dismiss all this as mere primitive superstition of no value. Taboo may play an important part in defining what is lawful and what is unlawful, or in protecting people from borne diseases, or in forbidding actions that would be harmful to good social relations between members of a community...

...the total effect, in short, is to bind individual men, women, and children into an orderly society in which each has his or her proper place and part to play for the well-being of the group as a whole.”

This was also re-echoed by Douglas (1966:3-4), when she admitted that:

...the whole universe harnessed to men’s attempts to force one another into good citizenship. Thus, we find that certain social rules defined by beliefs, in dangerous contagion, as when the glance or touch of an adulterer is held to bring illness to his neighbours or his children.

And that:

...ideas about separating, purifying, demarcating, and punishing transgressions have their main functions to impose system on an inherently untidy experience. It is only by exaggerating the difference within and without, above and below, male and female, with and against, that a semblance of order is created.”

These and other beliefs on the purpose and objectives of the institution of taboo are reinforced by a statement in *Oxford Junior Encyclopaedia* (1974:466) thus: “If human beings are to live together in unity, peace, and concord, there have to be adequate controls such as the institutions of taboo afford.”

From the foregoing, one can conclude that a taboo in Ìbòlò language is a way, as put by Thorpe (1967: xiii) by which the Ìbòlò people teach the younger children and youth the

different manner of behaviour at home, outside, in the society, within the town, and in religious worship.

This justifies the theoretical framework adopted for this research as advanced by Halliday's Theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). According to him, meaning of an utterance cannot be ascertained or well understood outside the context of the situation. Therefore, he proposes components of the context of the situation based on his work. Taboos, as earlier discussed, form an integral part of the Ìbòlò culture and no child of Ìbòlò speakers was born with the ability to differentiate properly from obscene words. This was made possible through the guidance of adults who will go a long way in educating the child and instilling in him some reasonable amount of moral lessons to enable him to function well at home, outside the home and in the community. This is why Taiwo (1977: 43) asserts that:

Àwọn èèwò wònyí jẹ àbájáde ìyànjú gbígba láàrin àwọn Yorùbá láti kó àrómọdọmọ wọn ní àwọn nńkan tí àṣà tàbí ìgbàgbọ wọn kò gbà láàyè.

Translation:

These taboos are the outcomes of an attempt of the Yòrùbá society to teach their offsprings the things that are forbidden by their culture, tradition, and belief.

This opinion which emphasises on teaching as in the work of Thorpe earlier quoted is meant to show the desire to uphold the societal-cultural beliefs and traditions i. e. knowing the right thing to say irrespective of the relationship between the inter-locutors at any given linguistic context in a way that conforms with the society's laid down rules that govern the linguistic behaviour in the Ìbòlò society as contained in our theoretical framework for the study.

#### **4.4 Summary of Findings**

From the analysis of the data collected, the following findings emanated:

- i. Moral, political and culture are the major determinant factors for the Ìbòlò speakers' choice of taboos or euphemism in their daily social interactions. The result of this



study shows that these factors are imbibed as part of the traditions of the people, and as the determinants for the Ìbòlò speakers' choice of taboos for social interactions;

- ii. The interplay that exists between the linguistic items used in the formation of taboos and the meaning speakers of the Ìbòlò dialect give to the linguistic tokens only exists in terms of the semantic meaning which is conventional. Otherwise, the linguistic items do not relate either syntactically or in terms of their pragmatic functions; and
- iii. The strict adherence to taboo as it affects their daily interactions with the non-native speakers of the Ìbòlò dialect is evident in their daily social discourse especially when euphemisms, circumlocutions, para-linguistics (gestures) or an alternative way of expressing certain ideas are employed.

From the several discussions held in this analysis, it has been discovered that most of the words considered taboos are primarily meant to inculcate morals. Some of the words that centre on body parts and functions like Dó (sexual intercourse), Okó (penis) which are often replaced with Ìlòpò, kinni are meant to teach morals. Other taboo words in this category are the taboos that bother on courtesy and respect for one's parent, elder brothers, and sisters, uncles, aunts, in-laws, husbands and husband's relations, kings, kingmakers and so on. The euphemisms formed for this category of people are meant to show respect and courtesy to those who deserve them.

Moreover, the most of the linguistic taboos in Ìbòlò land are borne out of the desire to control their excesses which are of humans and are capable of bringing about anarchy and disrespect to the constituted authority, misconceptions and series of crises amongst people. Some of these are noticeable in the veneration type of taboos that shows proper names people forbid to be mentioned either at home or in public. Names such as Oba, (king), Olórí agbo, Ìyàwó Oba, and Afobaje, are usually replaced with euphemisms meant to honour, to accord respect and give courtesy to such as due. This class of people are considered royally sacred and to some

extent, representatives of the gods on earth. As for this reason, they deserve to be respected and honoured.

Some of these linguistic taboos in the Ìbòlò community are deep-rooted in their beliefs in their culture which teaches them to believe in the power of words and the existence of the supernatural beings. In this regard, the Ìbòlò speakers do substitute some of these words believed by such speakers can bring about bad luck, poverty, sadness, misfortune and untimely death upon those who the words are used to describe. Examples of such are curse/insults which are mostly replaced with subtle phrases or words that connote positivity. Such words among others are òsì, which signifies (bad luck), Ìbì omo, (placenta), Àlá bùrúkú (bad dream), (associated with a supernatural curse), and Olòsì (associated with misfortune) to mention but a few. Other areas in this category are taboos associated with supernatural human beings and some animals believed to possess such supernatural powers as Àjé (witch), Òsó (wizard), Sànpònnán (god of measles), Èjò (snake), Ìgalà (antelope), Pépèye (duck), Emi (migrant rat) etc. It is pertinent to state here that the rationale behind the prohibition on these words is meant strictly to uphold our cultural tenets and beliefs. There is no doubt that taboos are meant to serve as an important aspect of culture introduced by our ancestors to control and guide the crude and aggressive nature of human beings and to inculcate morality into the minds of people.

The interplay between the linguistic items used in the formation of taboos for elders, opposite sex, political leaders, chief priests, kings, kingmakers, body parts, the functions and meanings speakers of the Ìbòlò dialect give to these linguistic tokens for different social contexts, possibly to mean one thing and also mean another thing with a particular utterance or expression in a given discourse and at a time. For instance, old adults are often addressed as Bàbá or Màmá (one's father or mother, uncle or aunt), Oloye for chiefs and king makers and so on. The expressions above can only be interpreted semantically based on the context but

syntactically, there is no conventionality since the same words are used for a different category of people in the same linguistic context. Another instance is found in the taboo expressions in the Ìbòlò dialect as considered in this study, do with its English meaning as (to copulate) and its euphemism in the dialect as Ìbàsùn (to sleep with) or Ìlòpò (the act of mating) with its English gloss as ‘sexual intercourse’.

Strict adherence to the use of taboos by the Ìbòlò native speakers affects their social interactions with non-native speakers of the dialect. The observance is done in a bid to hold and preserve their culture in the area of respect to those whom it is due, to be modest in their utterances and not to be seen as culturally deviant in order to inculcate and enforce morals. So, when euphemisms like Ìdí Ìlèkè (the waist of beads) and Àntí (an elderly sister) are used for sisters-in-law, Ègbón, Bòòdá or Àgbà (elder brother), Omidan (adult female), Ògbéni (adult males are used for opposite sex while other euphemisms such as Bàbá or Bàámi, Màámi (my father, my mother) are used for fathers and mothers in-law respectively, Asiwaju for (political leaders), Bàbá Ojomu, Bàbá Balógun, Bàbá Eesa, Bàbá Sààwò for high chiefs or the kingmakers, Okùn ilè for (snake) and so on, non-native speakers of the Ìbòlò dialect may not understand all these terms except when further explanations are provided. For instance, Bàbá Ojomu, Eesa etc., sound as if one is referring to one’s own father or to an elderly person whereas, they may even be younger than one in age but in the real sense, the word Bàbá before their respective titles is purely a sign of respect for the exalted positions as the custodians of the Ìbòlò culture. The same goes for old adults, chief priests and so on. Likewise, if the word Okùn ilè is used as a substitute for a snake, a non-native without any doubt will give a different interpretation to the word. Although extra effort may be put in, the speakers make their listener understand his intents.

The study also revealed that the use of euphemisms or circumlocutions as substitutes for taboo words does affect their daily interactions with other speakers of Yòrùbá language who

do not understand the Ìbòlò dialect with regard to the strict adherence to the use of taboos by the Ìbòlò native speakers and the effects on their social interactions with non-native speakers of the dialect under study.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

#### 5.0 Introduction

The primary aim of this dissertation is to contribute to a greater understanding of the sociolinguistic effects of taboos in the use of Yòrùbà language with a particular reference to the Ìbòlò people. This chapter then presents the summary and conclusion of the study as well as its contribution to the field of Linguistics, and suggesting other areas for further studies.

#### 5.1 Summary

This study paid attention to the sociolinguistic taboo expressions in the Ìbòlò dialect of the Yorùbá language. The work attempted to identify the factors that determine the Ìbòlò speakers' choice of taboos in their daily linguistic interactions, to find out the interplay between the linguistic items used in the formation of taboo words for the olds, opposite sex, political/social classes, leaders, kings, kingmakers, as well as for games, body parts and their functions and the meanings speakers of the Ìbòlò dialect give to such linguistic tokens and also to explain the extent to which the strict adherence to the avoidance of taboos affect their interactions with other speakers of Yòrùbá who do not understand the dialect in question. .

To achieve all these, data were collected through the primary and secondary sources from speakers of the dialect in Òffà (the Headquarters of the Ìbòlò linguistic group) and from the nine other towns/villages where the dialect is used mainly as lingua franca. An unstructured interview and participant observation techniques were used in eliciting relevant information from the natives. The work adopted Halliday's Theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) for an in-depth analysis of the identified and selected taboos in various Ìbòlò expressions.

## 5.2 Conclusion

This research establishes that the use of verbal taboo expressions is not allowed in the Ìbòlò dialect particularly and in the Yòrùbá language in general either in ordinary discourse or in formal discourse. Taboos are not just a matter of solving problems but are also functional and directly relevant to the practical everyday life of the community. This paves way for the use of permissible alternatives to replace such tabooed words or expressions in the Ìbòlò dialect. However, there are reasons or purposes that may not be rightly understood or comprehended by people who are from different linguistic backgrounds for the inhibition on taboo words in the Ìbòlò community. The study has also further revealed that the reasons or rationale behind the imposition of a taboo on words or expressions has various effects on the inter-locutors, hence, this speaks volume about the cultural tenets and the beliefs of the Ìbòlò people in particular and the Yorùbá society in general. These purposes or reasons can be classified as moral, political and socio-cultural beliefs of these people. Although, some of the taboo words used during discourse sometimes do have a negative effect on the interlocutors by way of warning, giving advice, respect, courtesy; hence the inability of the speakers to express themselves using the right words for the right referents without any form of circumlocution or employment of euphemism. Consequently, listeners who are not of the same linguistic background may not be able to instantly understand without further explanations or gestures from the speaker.

The study also reveals that commissives and directives mostly constitute the taboo words and its euphemism. From the taboo words analysed, we were able to get many words that are commissives and directives in form as we will see below.

Field: The data reveal that most of the taboo words used in our analysis take the form of warning, advice, respect, courtesy, morality and honour. The euphemism used for any

particular situation must be appropriate for that taboo word to have the desired effect on the speaker and the listener. Any euphemism used that does not fit into the situation of use causes a lot of misunderstanding and misinterpretation. What was done in this part is that the researcher tried to depict the possible context of where the euphemism could be employed.

Mode: The concern of this work is speech rather than written discourse. This accounts for the ‘face-to-face’ entries in our data. Taboo words in the Ìbòlò dialect are inhibited words which are not to be mentioned in their raw form except by their replacement with euphemism whether at home or in the public. This makes it imperative for the interlocutors or interactants to come together and discuss. This permits immediate feed back, careful turn-taking which invariably allows the interlocutors to understand and not the sequence of communication or interaction when taboo words are being replaced with euphemism.

Tenor: It has been ascertained here that most of the taboo words in the Ìbòlò dialect carry the force of morality, respect, honour and courtesy. From our tenor analysis, many of the relationships mentioned as existing in this linguistic community from friends to friends, brothers to brothers, brothers to sisters, sisters to brothers, sons/daughters to parents, and wives to husbands, as the case may be, are subject to royalties etc

However, as said earlier, the Ìbòlò community and many societies of the world have been living with and still have to live with the phenomenon of taboo if sanity is to be maintained and cultural values and norms are to be firmly upheld in our societies.

### **5.3 Contributions to Knowledge**

From the foregoing discussion, the present study has contributed to knowledge in the following ways:

The strict adherence to taboos can be used to impart and enforce moral rules in any given linguistic community in Africa especially now that the contemporary society has been characterised by all kinds of moral decadence.

In addition to this, our long lost cultural norms, value systems and tradition which Africans are known for can be resuscitated by embracing the institution of taboo. The level of indiscipline which has been on growing level in most of our tertiary institutions in Nigeria today and the society at large can be corrected by introducing into, and enforcing the teaching of the concept of taboos in our curriculum since students at various levels of learning are potential leaders of tomorrow.

#### **5.4 Recommendations for Further Study**

In view of the foregoing discussion, the researcher is of the opinion that the foregoing findings will stimulate further research in other areas of the history of Yorùbá especially in the area of cultural heritage, religion and taboo. This will in no doubt, contribute in no small way to the resurrection of the use of a taboo in the Yorùbá language. This, in essence, will aid the proper teaching of the Yorùbá cultural heritage where the emphasis is mostly on religion, language and where a taboo which is now used as one in which the ways through which cultural values and morality can be maintained and sustained in the Ìbòlò community in particular and Yorùbá society at large is not given its pride of place. Therefore, it is hoped that this study will make readers aware of the need to correctly interpret, comprehend or decode euphemisms for various taboo words rather than consider them as superstitions or uncivilised ways of life.



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## APPENDIX

### Interview Questions

A written Interview was used as a guide throughout the period of the oral interviews and discussion held with the informants at various linguistic contexts.

A sample of the Interview questions is given below.

(1) Name: \_\_\_\_\_

(2) Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

(3) Age: \_\_\_\_\_

(4) Qualifications: \_\_\_\_\_

(a) Tertiary level

(b) Post-Primary level

(c) Primary level

(d) Retiree

(d) None of the above

(5) Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

(6) Do you speak Yoruba language?

(7) What dialect?

(a) Standard Yoruba

(b) Okun

(c) Ibolo

(8) Religion: \_\_\_\_\_

(9) Status: \_\_\_\_\_

(a) King

(b) High Chief/King maker

(c) Chief Priest

(d) None of the above

(10) Do you think there are some expressions or words that are unethical to be heard from you?

(a) Give examples if there are

(b) Why do you consider such unethical?

(c) What is the rationale behind their inhibition?

(d) Of what use are they to the community?

(11) Is there any reason for not mentioning the male and female genital organs either at home or in public?

(12) Why is it that in-laws are not directly called by their names in the Ibolo community?

(a) Do you know of any names that people use for this category of people?

(b) Can you mention these other names?

(13) Are there any animals that are not supposed to be called by their conventional names?

(a) If such exist, then why?

(14) Are there any group of people if any that should not be called by their first names in the community?

(a) If yes, who are they?

(b) What is/are the reasons for this?

(15) Do you break the news of death directly?

(a) If yes or no, why?

(16) Can the living be compared to the dead viz-a-viz?

(17) Do Ibolo speakers use abusive words when offended or hurt on their fellow men or

women?

(18) If they do, why? If they don't what are the reasons?

(19) Do you think the people of the Ibolo community like this tradition?

(a) If yes, why do you think people are still adhering to it?

(b) If no, why are people no longer adhering strictly to its dictates?

(c) What do you think are the consequences of infringing on taboo words in the Ibolo community?

(20) Do you tell your wife/husband to have sex with you whenever you feel like making love?

(a) If yes, why?

(b) If no, are there any other words you use to convey your feelings?

(c) Can you please mention them?

(21) Can you talk about menstruation freely and directly with your kids or friends at home or in public?

(a) If yes, then why?