

The Linguistic Taboo between Malays and Ibans of Sarawak, Malaysia

LE TABOU LINGUISTIQUE ENTRE MALAIS ET IBANS DU SARAWAK, EN MALAISIE

Affidah Morni¹

Aiza Johari²

Johnny Ahmad³

Kamaruzaman Jusoff (Corresponding Author)⁴

Abstract: This study attempts to determine the Malays' and Ibans' perceptions on the use of linguistic taboo in their culture based on the specified domains and to investigate the occurrence of linguistic taboo in different domains. The outcome of this study would provide a useful understanding over the Malays' and Ibans' sensitivity over the usage of certain words which are considered taboo in their community. Hence, avoid occurrences of embarrassment or offensiveness by the speakers. Questionnaires were given to 40 Sarawak Malays and 40 Ibans of varying educational background and age in Kuching area. They were selected randomly based on convenience random sampling and the data were analyzed using SPSS 10.0. The findings show that many respondents believed that taboo words should not be spoken publicly or openly where certain topics should not be discussed in candid especially in relation to sex, body parts, bodily functions, death and dying. Nonetheless, the cultural norms, rules and the notion of politeness (and among the Malays the tenets of religion) play significant roles in restricting the open use of these taboo words either behaviourally or linguistically. Comparatively, the Iban respondents seemed to be more expressive and candid in using taboo words in expressing their emotions, as compared to the Malays. It is also apparent that the use of taboo words can be acceptable depending on the domains and contexts.

¹ Universiti Teknologi MARA, Academy of Language Studies, Jalan Meranek. Address: 94300 Samarahan, Sarawak, Malaysia. E-mail: affidah75@sarawak.uitm.edu.my

² Universiti Teknologi MARA, Academy of Language Studies, Jalan Meranek. Address: 94300 Samarahan, Sarawak, Malaysia. E-mail: aizajohari@sarawak.uitm.edu.my

³ Universiti Teknologi MARA, Academy of Language Studies, Jalan Meranek. Address: 94300 Samarahan, Sarawak, Malaysia. E-mail: johnny@sarawak.uitm.edu.my

⁴ Faculty of Forestry, Universiti Putra Malaysia. Address: 43400 Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia. E-mail: kjusoff@yahoo.com

*Received 15 June 2009; accepted 20 June 2009

Key words: Linguistic Taboo; Euphemisms; Domains

Résumé: Cette étude tente de déterminer les perceptions des Malais et des Ibans sur l'utilisation de tabou linguistique dans leur culture basée sur les domaines spécifiés et d'enquêter sur l'occurrence de tabou linguistique dans des domaines différents. Le résultat de cette étude nous aiderait à comprendre la sensibilité des Malais et des Ibans sur l'utilisation de certains mots qui sont considérés comme tabous dans leur communauté. Par conséquent, on peut éviter les cas d'embarras ou d'être offensé par les orateurs.

Des questionnaires ont été donnés à 40 Sarawak Malais et 40 Ibans de différents niveaux d'études et de différents âges dans la région de Kuching. Ils ont été sélectionnés de façon aléatoire dans un échantillonnage aléatoire, et les données ont été analysées en utilisant la méthode de SPSS 10.0. Les résultats montrent que de nombreuses personnes questionnées ont estimé que les mots tabous ne devraient pas être prononcés publiquement ou ouvertement, où certains sujets ne doivent pas être discutés de façon franche, notamment en ce qui concerne le sexe, les parties du corps, les fonctions corporelles, la mort et les mourants. Néanmoins, les normes culturelles, des règles et la notion de politesse (et chez les Malais, les préceptes de la religion) jouent un rôle important dans la restriction de la libre utilisation de ces mots tabous. Comparativement, les Iban questionnés semblent être plus expressifs et francs dans l'utilisation de mots tabous à exprimer leurs émotions, par rapport aux Malais. Il est également évident que l'utilisation de mots tabous peut être acceptable en fonction de domaines et de contextes.

Mots-Clés: Tabou linguistique; Euphémisme; Domaines

1. INTRODUCTION

According to Fromkin and Rodman (1993), language, or words of a language, cannot be intrinsically good or bad but may reflect individual or societal values. The filth or beauty of language must then be in the ear of the listener, or in the collective ear of society. Two or more words or expressions can have the same linguistic meaning, with one acceptable and the others the cause of embarrassment or horror. Wardhaugh (1994) defines linguistic taboo as the language used to avoid saying certain things as well as to express them. Certain things are not said, not because they cannot be, but because 'people don't talk about these things; or if those things are talked about, they are talked about in a roundabout way'. Crystal (1995) defines taboo as the items people avoid using in polite society either because they believe them harmful or feel them embarrassing or offensive. The word taboo was borrowed from Tongan, a Polynesian language, in which it refers to acts that are forbidden or to be avoided (Fromkin and Rodman, 1993). Thus, when an act is taboo, reference to this act may also become taboo. Taboo words also include blasphemies, obscenities and profanities (cited from <http://e.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taboo>, 2006). Forbidden acts or words often reflect the particular customs and views of the society. The word *butuh* in Bahasa Melayu is taboo in polite company because it refers to the male genital but in Bahasa Indonesia *butuh* is acceptable as it refers to needs.

Linguistic taboo occurs when people avoid talking about certain things due to some reasons. Some people decide not to mention the forbidden words at all because they believe that mentioning these words can mean to welcome evil spirits or usher bad fortune. On the other hand, some still believe that these words should not be spoken directly or openly and if they do talk about these things, it will be in a very roundabout way and this is known as euphemisms. Fromkin and Rodman (1993) further defined a euphemism as a word or phrase that replaces a taboo word or serves to avoid frightening and unpleasant

subjects. A few dozen lexemes comprise the special category of taboo language – items which people avoid using in polite society, either because they believe them harmful or feel them embarrassing.

Hass (1964) affirms that certain language taboo seems to arise from bilingual situations. The Thais, for example, avoid words like *fag*, *chid*, *phrig*, *khan* in the presence of Anglophone. This is because the English words, ‘yet’ and ‘key’ sound like Thai words *jed* (having intercourse) and *khii* (excrement). In Vietnam, certain Vietnamese names may cause embarrassment in English, for example, the word *phuc*, which sounds like ‘fuck’ in English.

It is also believed that linguistic taboo varies from one culture to another. There are reasons for words to be considered taboo. In certain societies, words that have religious connotations are considered profane if used outside of formal or religious ceremonies. In England the word *bloody* is a taboo word (Fromkin and Rodman, 1993). Among the Malays, too, curses and swear words, such as *celaka* and *sial*, are considered profane and cultured individuals do not use these words. However, in Melaka, *celaka* is a term of endearment among friends and is often used to greet close friends. Most Malaysians are considerably polite and rarely utter taboo words, as they want to be part of the acceptable norms of behaviour in social interactions in the Malaysian context. Jamaliah (2000:6) has observed that Malaysians in general observe a polite system that embodies specific codes of verbal and non-verbal behaviour in their interactions with others. In other words, Malaysian speakers are generally receptive to those who display good manners in face-to-face interactions.

The Malays and Ibans are part of the Malaysian community in which they share the same rules of interactions and norms of interpretation of utterances. In addition to this, the Malays are strongly influenced by the teachings and tenets of the Islamic religion in terms of beliefs, attitudes, perceptions and social behaviour. Hence, Malays are expected to demonstrate finesse in behaviour whenever they communicate with others to indicate proper upbringing (Jamaliah, 2000). Firstly, the study attempts to investigate the perceptions of the Malays and Ibans regarding linguistic taboo. In some cultures, when an act is taboo, reference to these acts may also become taboo. It all depends on the particular customs and views of their society. Certain words can be taboo in one society where as acceptable in the others. Due to these, people may view the taboo level of certain words differently. These different views can also be associated with different race, gender, age and academic background of the users. The use of euphemisms may be resorted to when words are considered forbidden depending on the context and domain. Therefore, this study attempts to determine the Malays’ and Ibans’ perceptions in the use of linguistic taboo in their culture based on the specified domains and to investigate the occurrence of linguistic taboo in different domains. It is expected that the outcome of this study would provide a useful understanding over the Malays’ and Ibans’ sensitivity over the usage of certain words which are considered taboo in their community. The understanding would also help avoid occurrences of embarrassment or offensiveness by the speakers.

2. METHODS AND MATERIALS

This study is mainly qualitative in nature but it includes substantial quantitative details for empirical evidence.

2.1 Sampling design

The respondents consist of 80 Sarawak Malays and Ibans of varying educational background and age in Kuching area. The respondents were chosen from school teachers, lecturers, students and relatives of the researchers. They were selected randomly based on convenience random sampling representing various individuals, disregarding their age, education background and occupations.

2.2 Instrumentation

The set of the questionnaires was distributed to 80 respondents in order to identify perceptions towards linguistic taboo in their own cultures according to the speakers and domains. The questionnaire is divided into three sections. The first section is based on the respondents' demographic information such as race, gender, age and academic qualifications. In the second section, the respondents are required to provide their general perception of linguistic taboo using the 5-point Likert scale from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). The third section is based on the four categories of linguistic taboo: sex, body parts, bodily functions and death and dying where the 5-point Likert scale is also employed. However, the frequency scale is used: from Never (1) to Always (5). This scale is used because the researchers wish to find out the frequency of 'with' and 'when' taboo words are used in the Malay and Iban cultures. The study was carried out over a period of two weeks and entailed 80 respondents in which they were chosen randomly. They were given a short briefing regarding the questionnaires. The analysis of the findings will be based mainly on the relationship between the Malays' and Ibans' perceptions towards linguistic taboo.

The data obtained from the questionnaire was then analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 10.0. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and was reported in terms of frequency distribution, mean and mode.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Reliability analysis and the general perception of linguistic taboo

A reliability test (**Table 1**) is conducted to ensure the validity of the method. The result shows that the Alpha value is satisfactory (0.9742). This means that the method is valid because the Alpha value is bigger than 0.6000. **Table 2** shows the average mean for the general perception of the Malays and Ibans on linguistic taboo which is 3.25. This shows that most respondents agree to all the items listed in the questionnaire. **Table 3** presents the frequency distribution of each item on general perception of the Malays and Ibans on linguistic taboo. The findings show that half of the respondents (51.3%) agree with the first statement "I believe that taboo words are generally acceptable" (25.0% of Malays and 26.3 % of Ibans). The second statement "I believe that taboo words help to convey meanings more clearly" also shows both races agreeing although the percentage for the Ibans is higher (25%) than the Malays (15%). Thus, it can be seen that most Malays and Ibans believe that taboo word are generally acceptable. For the third statement, "I do not believe taboo words are offensive or repulsive", most Malays (20.0%) do not agree but 26.3% of the Iban respondents demonstrate their agreement to the statement. This is interesting and may suggest that for the Malays although they generally feel that taboo words are acceptable these words are nevertheless offensive or repulsive but the Ibans are generally accepting of these taboo words. 15% of the Malays and 20% of the Ibans agree with the fourth statement "I do not believe taboo words are vulgar." Among the Malays 18.8% are undecided compared to 15 % who agree. This seems to suggest that the Malays, known for their refined and gentle ways, still hold strong to their culture. 25% of the Malays and 11.3 % of the Ibans agree to the fifth statement "I do not think taboo words are dirty." However, among the Ibans, 15% are undecided compared to the 13.3 % who agree.

The majority of the respondents, 17.5 Malays and 20.0 % Ibans, agree to the statement "I believe taboo words should not be used in public." However, for the statement "I am embarrassed to use taboo words with others" 16.3% of the Malays disagree compared to 8.8 % of them who agree, while more Ibans agree (13.8%) with the statement compared to those who disagree (6.3%). For the statement "I avoid using taboo words in my speech", an equal number of the Malay respondents agree and disagree (16.3%), while the majority of the Iban respondents agree with the statement compared to those who disagree. Both the Malay and Iban respondents agree with the statements "Taboo words should only be used with close friends" and "I do not believe taboo words should be used even though one is in anger"

(22.5% Malays and 23.8 % Ibans). This is probably because in the eyes of the Malay and Iban communities, a person who uses taboo words is perceived to be insensitive to the dignity of others or described as being rude and insulting.

A total of 21.3 % Of the Malay respondents and 20.0 % of the Iban respondents agree with the statement “I detest those who frequently use taboo words openly.” The majority of the Malay and Iban respondents disagree (16.3% of the Malays and 15.0 % of the Ibans) with the statement “I believe that those who frequently use taboo words are from lower status background.” Similarly both races disagree (20.0 % of the Malays and 17.5 % of the Ibans) with the statement “I believe those who use taboo words frequently are uneducated.” This is probably because Malaysians, regardless of ethnicity, status or educational background are generally grouped oriented. Therefore, the use of these taboo words has nothing to do with the aspects above.

3.2 Categories of Linguistic Taboo used according to Domains

The descriptive statistics in **Table 4** shows the mean value for the statement “I use taboo words related to sex when I am”. The mean value given is less than 2.0 except for the fifth statement with the mean value of 2.21. Meanwhile, the mode value for the five statements is 1. Meanwhile, **Table 5** presents the frequency distribution of the usage of taboo words related to sex according to specific domains. The frequency distribution in Table 5 demonstrates the majority of respondents from both ethnic groups have opted for ‘never’ or ‘seldom’ to show the use of sex related taboo words. For example: “In using sex related taboo words when being alone”, 22.5% Malay respondents, state ‘never’ and 13.8% stated ‘seldom’. The Ibans, however show 27.5% for ‘never’ and 12.5% for ‘seldom’. For the next statement, using sex related taboo words among family at home, the Malays show 30.0 % of ‘never’ compared to the Ibans with 25.0%. This is hardly surprising as the Malays and the Ibans come from a culture that puts much importance on family values. In addition to this is the fact that both come from puritanical cultures that consider sex as something that is not mentioned or discussed among family members, especially between parents and children. However, the use of sex related taboo words shows higher frequency during informal gatherings with the option ‘occasionally’ selected by the Malays (10.0%) and the Ibans (15.0%). Informal gatherings usually involve close friends and friends and both the Malays and Ibans seem to be comfortable talking about sex in the company of friends rather than in the company of family members.

Table 6 is the analysis result for the statement “I use sex taboo words with” which includes mean, mode, minimum value, maximum value and sum. The fifth item has a mode value of 3.0 as compared to the other Items with the mode value of 1.0. This demonstrates that respondents opt for ‘occasionally’ in using sex related taboo words among close friends. Meanwhile, **Table 7** presents the frequency distribution of the usage of taboo words related to sex with specific people. The use of sex-related taboo words among “Older close family members”, “Young close family members”, “Older relatives” and “Younger relatives” is relatively rare. The frequency distribution in Table 7 shows 28.8 % (Malays) and 35.0 % (Ibans) do not use sex-related taboo words when they communicate with the “Older close family members”. On the other hand, for the use of sex-related taboo words among “close friends”, “friends”, “colleagues” and “peers” for both ethnic groups, the option is “occasionally”. This could be due to the intimacy aspect where the more intimate they are with the other party, the less shy or inhibited will they appear to be. Nevertheless, when dealing with “men in the street”, “People I do not like” and “strangers”, most respondents state “never” or “seldom” in using sex related taboo words.

Table 8 which present the descriptive statistics for ‘I use taboo words related to sex when’ shows that the mean value ranges from 1.0 to 2.50 with the mode of 1.0. This shows that most respondents have a higher tendency of opting “never” and “seldom”. The use of sex-related taboo words to the option when “I am angry” among both ethnic groups has a similar frequency with 17.5% for ‘never’ and 13.8% (Malay) and 8.8% (Iban) for ‘seldom’. The majority state ‘never’ to the use of sex-related taboo words for items (b) to (h) as seen in **Table 9**. The statement “I use taboo words related to body parts when I am” has a mean value of less than 2.0 and a mode value of 1.0 as shown in **Table 10**. This illustrates the tendency of the majority to select “never” and “seldom” as their options to the above statement.

The frequency analysis in **Table 11** shows that the majority of responses from both ethnic groups for the five items are mostly geared towards the option “never”. For example: 31.3 % of the Malay respondents opt for “never” in using taboo words related to body parts when alone, while 35.0% of the Ibans do so. The situation is similar when they are at school. The majority of them opt for “never” in using taboo words related to body parts: (33.8 % (Malays) and 27.5% (Ibans). The finding is expected, as among the Malays and the Ibans, politeness is an important aspect of their daily interaction both within the group and outside the group. Politeness for both groups means showing respect for others and conforming to social rules and etiquette. In addition, it is the cultural traits of both the Malays and Ibans not to cause offence to others. Thus, the use of taboo words related to body parts is strictly prohibited (unless with close friends). Most mean values are stipulated between 1.27 to 2.30 for the statement “I use taboo words related to body parts” with items such as older and younger close family members, older and younger relatives, friends, colleagues and peers as shown in **Table 12**.

The use of taboo words related to body parts illustrates a high frequency between the two ethnic groups except when they are with close friends as depicted in **Table 13**. About 30.0% of the Malay respondents and 33.8% of the Iban respondents opt for ‘never’ in using taboo words related to body parts when communicating with the older close family members. Meanwhile, when they (Malays and Ibans) are communicating with the younger family members, the tendency is more towards ‘never’ (80.0%). When they communicate with older and younger relatives, most of them opt for ‘never’ and ‘seldom’. This is probably in deference to the elders. Among the Malays, the elders are revered and are to be treated with respect at all times. Nevertheless, it seems that most of the respondents admit to using taboo words related to body parts when they communicate with their close friends. Comparatively, the respondents also admit that they opt for ‘never’ and ‘seldom’ in using taboo words related to body parts when they communicate with ‘the man in the street’ and ‘strangers’. 41.3% of the Malay respondents and 36.3% of the Iban respondents opt for ‘never’, while 7.5% opt for ‘seldom’ in using such taboo words with ‘the man in the street’. This shows that ‘the sense of familiarity or intimacy’ is one of the factors which could influence the use of taboo words during verbal interaction.

Table 14 shows a high mean value of 2.19 for the item “I use taboo words related to body parts when I am angry”, compared to the other Items that have less than 2.0. This shows that most respondents frequently use the taboo words related to body parts when they are angry, probably to release their anger or to express how angry they are at that particular moment. This seems to be in agreement with Tannen’s (1979) observation as cited in Jamaliah (2000) that when people speak they do it in some ways that contributing to the impression others derive about the speaker’s intentions, personalities and styles. In relation to the study, the respondents choose to use taboo words intentionally in order to mock, release anger or probably to show their unique personalities and styles. The majority of the respondents opt for ‘never’ and ‘seldom’ in using taboo words related to body parts in various situations. When they are in anger, most Malay and Iban respondents have chosen the option ‘occasionally’. For the item ‘I want to show affection’ the Iban respondents (12.5%) opt for ‘occasionally’ compared to the Malays with 6.3%. The other two Items, ‘I want to shock’ and ‘I am happy’ also demonstrate the higher tendency of the Iban respondents to use the related taboo words compared to the Malay respondents as shown in **Table 15**. These findings indicate that most Ibans are probably more outspoken and expressive in showing various emotions.

Table 16 illustrates the response to the statement ‘I use taboo words related to bodily functions when I am’ in different contexts: alone, home, office, school and informal gatherings. The mean value is at the average rate of 1.50 to 1.80 for the options ‘never’ and ‘seldom’. Meanwhile, **Table 17** demonstrates the result for the use of taboo words related to body functions in various locations. It is discovered that most respondents do not opt for ‘frequently’ and ‘always’ options in using taboo words related to bodily functions in most suggested locations. For example: only 3.0% of Malay and Iban respondents opt for ‘always’ for most locations except for ‘at informal gatherings’ with 3.8%. Acts of bodily functions are considered private and are not to be discussed openly. Therefore, words relating to bodily functions are considered impolite and people of good upbringing do not mention them in polite company, especially during formal occasions. These words are also not mentioned in the company of elders and superiors as well as among acquaintances and strangers. This appears to be congruent with the belief that Malaysians

are expected to respect elders in their speech and behaviors. The mode value for the statement 'I use taboo words related to bodily functions with' seems to be parallel when the respondents communicate with others. **Table 18** shows high mean value for the Items: close friends, friends and colleagues, with 2.0 and more. This demonstrates that they frequently use such taboo words with their friends and colleagues compared to their family members and relatives.

Similarly, in **Table 19**, the low frequency distribution is illustrated for the options 'frequently' and 'always' for the statement 'I use taboo words related to bodily functions'. The items of 'friends', 'colleagues' and 'peers' entail high percentage for the option 'occasionally' compared to other items especially among Iban respondents. This shows that most Iban respondents opt for 'occasionally' in using taboo words related to bodily functions when they communicate with 'friends', 'colleagues' and 'peers', thus demonstrating that they tend to be more open and frank when they are around their peers compared to their own family members, probably trying to set good examples in front of the younger family members and to show respect towards the elders. The mode and mean values for the statement "I use taboo words related to bodily functions" are higher than any other items when respondents are angry. **Table 20** indicates that the mean value is at 2.24 and the mode value is at 2.00. This shows that the respondents from both ethnic groups 'occasionally' use taboo words related to bodily functions when they are angry.

Table 21 shows that 21.3% of the Malay respondents and 12.5% of the Iban respondents opt for 'seldom' when responding to the statement "I use taboo words related to bodily functions when I am angry". However, most Iban respondents respond 'occasionally' with 15.0% as compared to Malay respondents 10.0% to the statement. This means that Iban respondents use taboo words related to bodily functions when they are angry more frequently than the Malay respondents. This is probably tied up to cultural values. The Ibans are known as a warrior race and probably the use of taboo words indicate warrior-like traits. The Malay respondents on the other hand, have a greater frequency of responding 'Never' for most items as compared to Ibans. This is probably because in the Malay community a person must demonstrate proper refined behaviour at all times. It can be gathered that the percentage of Iban respondents choosing 'Occasionally' is more than 10.0% for most items except for feedback given to these statements: 'I want to give emphasis' and 'For no reasons'.

The five Items analysed have a low mean value which is lesser than 2.00 with the mode at 1.00 as shown in **Table 22**. The result shows that most of the respondents opt for 'Never' and 'Seldom' for the statement "I use taboo words related to death and dying when". The majority of the respondents choose 'Never' and 'Seldom' when using taboo words related to death and dying at all occasions in this study. For instance, 27.5% of the Malay respondents and 30.0% of the Iban respondents state that they 'Never' use taboo words related to death and dying at informal gatherings. However, 13.8% of the Malay and 6.3% of Iban respondents choose 'Seldom' in response to the statement as shown in **Table 23**. No Malay respondents actually respond 'Always' in using taboo words related to death and dying when they are at home, office, school and at informal gatherings.

The "friends" and "close friends" items have a very high mean value when associated with the statement "I use taboo words related to death and dying with" with 2.10 and 20.4. All Items have a mode value at 1.00 as shown in **Table 24**. Therefore, it can be summed up that respondents normally choose "Seldom" or "Occasionally" when using taboo words related to death and dying with their close friends. On the other hand, the items for "older and younger close family members" and "younger and older relatives" present a high percentage for 'Never' and 'Seldom' between the two ethnics in relation to the statement of using taboo words related to death and dying. The 'friends' Item is the only Item having high percentage for the feedback 'Occasionally' among the Iban respondents. It is represented by 10.0% as shown in **Table 25**. This indicates that having a close relationship with someone does not prevent the respondents from using taboo words related to death and dying when communicating with them. However, when communicating with strangers, the majority of the respondents (4.0% of Malays and 37.5% of the Ibans) opt 'Never' in response to the statement.

The Item for "I am angry" has a mean value of 2.20 for the statement "I use taboo words related to death and dying when" whereas other items have a mean value lesser than 2.00 as shown in **Table 26**.

This explains that respondents choose 'seldom' and 'occasionally' in relation to using taboo words related to death and dying when they are angry. A higher percentage of the Iban respondents (11.3%) choose 'Occasionally' in response to the item "I am angry" as compared to the Malay respondents (8.8%) as shown in **Table 27**. No Malay respondents respond 'Always' for these Items: "I want to shock", "I am happy", "I am excited" and "I want to emphasise". This implies that the Malay respondents are more cautious in using taboo words related to death and dying as compared to the Iban respondents, again signifying that the Ibans are more responsive and frank in expressing their feelings.

4. CONCLUSIONS

This study attempts to contribute towards a better understanding of how taboo words operate in the Malay and Iban cultures. Generally, the population of Sarawak is ethnically and linguistically varied with the perceptions towards linguistic taboo seem to cross ethnic barriers. Since members of the different ethnic groups (particularly Malays and Ibans) demonstrate striking similarities in the treatment of linguistic taboo with regard to domains, contexts and participants, their common Malaysian cultural background may well be a powerful influencing parameters.

It can be concluded that Malaysians believe that taboo words should not be spoken publicly or openly. Most of them also perceive that certain topics should not be discussed in candid. This is established in the study. The findings in this study have proven that linguistic taboo is still in existence in the cultures and languages of the Malays and Ibans, especially in relation to sex, body parts, bodily functions, death and dying. Nonetheless, the cultural norms, rules and the notion of politeness (and among the Malays the tenets of religion) play significant roles in restricting the open use of these taboo words either behaviourally or linguistically. Therefore, in comparison, the use of taboo words seems to be more significant among the Ibans in expressing their various feelings as most Ibans are more expressive and candid, compared to the Malay respondents who tend to be more cautious in using taboo words. Nevertheless, it is also apparent that the use of taboo words can be acceptable depending on the domains and contexts (where, when and who). For that reason, a subtle way of discussing them is required without being blunt, direct, coarse and insulting. Due to this, social interactions should adopt various strategies to minimize or even eliminate such threats. In relation to linguistic taboo, many Malaysians (including Malays and Ibans) employ euphemisms to 'save face' to avoid causing hurt, interpersonal conflict, aggression and impoliteness, hence disrupting the harmonious relationship between speakers.

Therefore, language that is appropriate according to situations, customs and beliefs is expected of Malaysian speakers when speaking to other people while offensive language (linguistic taboo) is to be avoided at all times in order to main social harmony, stability and politeness. In the words of Holmes (2001:67): Choosing the appropriate linguistic forms for directives to families, friends and foreigners involves the dimension of solidarity (or social distance) and social status (or power). These dimensions are at the heart of the politeness behaviour. Thus, it is hoped this study will reveal whether linguistic taboo still plays a major role in affecting the way people speak and interact with one another, and to increase sensitivity and reduce embarrassment or offensiveness when communicating. It is recommended that this study be expanded to a wider scope of society in Sarawak that covers rural and urban communities in future.

REFERENCES

- Asmah Hj. Omar. (1982). *Language and Society in Malaysia*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Crystal, D.. (1995). *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Ferenczi, S. (1916). *Contributions to Psychoanalysis*. Boston: Badger.
- Fromkin, V. & Rodman, R.. (1993). *An Introduction to Language Fifth Edition*. Harcourt: Brace Colledge Publishers.
- Greenson, R.. (1950). The Mother Tongue and the Mother. *International Journal of Psychiatry*, Volume 31, Page 18 – 23.
- Hass, Mary R.. “Interlingual Word Taboos” in Dell Hymes (Ed.) (1964). *Language in Culture and Society: a Reader in Linguistics and Anthropology*. New York: Harper & Row pp 489 – 494.
- Holmes, J.. (2001). *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics Second Edition*. Singapore: Longman <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taboo>.
- Jamaliah Mohd. Ali. (2000). *Verbal Communication: A Study of Malaysian Speakers*. Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press.
- Javier, R.A.. (1989). Linguistics Considerations in the Treatment of Bilingual. *Journal of Psychology*. Volume 51, page 371 – 377.
- Macarthur, T.. (1992). *The Oxford Companion to the English Language*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wardhaugh, R.. (1994). *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics Second Edition*. Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers

Table 1. Reliability Analysis

***** Method 1 (space saver) will be used for this analysis *****	
RELIABILITY ANALYSIS - SCALE (ALPHA)	
Reliability Coefficients	
N of Cases = 80.0	N of Items =126
Alpha = .9742	

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Section B

		B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	B7	B8	B9	B10	B11	B12	B13
N	Valid	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		3.28	3.30	3.10	3.19	3.28	3.54	3.25	3.63	3.30	3.53	3.40	2.83	2.64
Mode		4	4	4	3	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	2	2
Minimum		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1
Maximum		5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Sum		262	264	248	255	262	283	260	290	264	282	272	226	211

A multiple mode exists. The smallest value is shown

Table 3. General Perception of Linguistic Taboo

Statement	Strongly Disagree (%)		Disagree (%)		Undecided (%)		Agree (%)		Strongly Agree (%)	
	M	I	M	I	M	I	M	I	M	I
1. I believe that taboo words are generally acceptable.	5.0	3.8	7.5	6.3	11.3	11.3	25.0	26.3	1.3	2.5
2. I believe that taboo words help to convey meanings more clearly	1.3	3.8	12.5	8.8	11.3	10.0	15.0	25.0	6.3	2.5
3. I do not believe taboo words are offensive or repulsive	1.3	1.3	20.0	11.3	11.3	10.0	17.5	26.3	0.0	1.3
4. I do not believe taboo words are vulgar	1.3	0.0	15.0	8.8	18.8	16.3	15.0	20.0	1.3	3.8
5. I do not think taboo words are dirty	2.5	0.0	15.0	8.8	6.3	15.0	25.0	11.3	1.3	2.5
6. I believe taboo words should not be used in public.	3.8	1.3	15.0	3.8	5.0	11.3	17.5	20.0	8.8	13.8
7. I am embarrassed to use taboo words with others.	3.8	1.3	16.3	6.3	15.0	18.8	8.8	13.8	6.3	11.3
8. I avoid using taboo words in my speech	2.5	1.3	16.3	3.8	5.0	7.5	16.3	21.3	10.0	16.3
9. Taboo words should only be used with close friends.	2.5	3.8	13.8	7.5	5.0	8.8	27.5	26.3	1.3	3.8
10. I do not believe taboo words should be used even though one is in anger	1.3	0.0	10.0	6.3	11.3	12.5	22.5	23.8	5.0	7.5
11. I detest those who use taboo words openly.	0.0	0.0	13.8	10.0	8.8	15.0	21.3	20.0	6.3	5.0
12. I believe that those who frequently use taboo words are from lower status background	8.8	6.3	16.3	15.0	8.8	12.5	10.0	11.3	6.3	5.0
13. I believe those who use taboo words frequently are uneducated.	10.0	7.5	20.0	17.5	6.3	11.3	10.0	8.8	3.8	5.0

Note: M=Malay, I=Iban

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics for “I use taboo words related to sex when I am”

		csex1_a	csex1_b	csex1_c	csex1_d	csex1_e
N	Valid	80	80	80	80	80
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		1.85	1.69	1.85	1.99	2.21
Mode		1	1	1	1	1
Minimum		1	1	1	1	1
Maximum		5	5	5	5	5
Sum		148	135	148	159	177

Table 5. I use taboo words related to sex when I am:

Item	Never (%)		Seldom (%)		Occasionally (%)		Frequently (%)		Always (%)	
	M	I	M	I	M	I	M	I	M	I
a)Alone	22.5	27.5	13.8	12.5	8.8	5.0	3.8	5.0	1.3	0.0
b)At home	30.0	25.0	12.5	15.0	6.3	6.3	1.3	2.5	0.0	1.3
c)At the office	25.0	23.8	13.8	13.8	6.3	10.0	2.5	2.5	2.5	0.0
d)At school	25.0	21.3	12.5	10.0	6.3	13.8	5.0	3.8	1.3	1.3
e)At informal gatherings	16.3	18.8	15.0	11.3	10.0	15.0	6.3	3.8	2.5	1.3

Note: M=Malay, I=Iban

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics for I use sex taboo words with:

	csx2a	csx2b	csx2c	csx2d	csx2e	csx2f	csx2g	csx2h	csx2i	csx2j	csx2k	csx2l
Mean	1.60	1.44	1.51	1.45	2.70	2.68	2.45	2.36	1.88	1.41	1.95	1.40
Mode	1	1	1	1	3	1(a)	1	1	1	1	1	1
Min	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Max	5	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Sum	128	115	121	116	216	214	196	189	150	113	156	112

A multiple mode exists. The smallest value is shown.

Table 7: I use sex taboo words with

Item	Never (%)		Seldom (%)		Occasionally (%)		Frequently (%)		Always (%)	
	M	I	M	I	M	I	M	I	M	I
a)Older close family members	28.8	35.0	8.8	10.0	10.0	2.5	2.5	1.3	0.0	1.3
b)Younger close family members	37.5	33.8	6.3	10.0	5.0	5.0	1.3	1.3	0.0	0.0
c)Older relatives	32.5	35.0	6.3	10.0	10.0	3.8	1.3	1.3	0.0	0.0
d)Younger relatives	38.8	31.3	6.3	12.5	3.8	3.8	1.3	2.5	0.0	0.0
e)Close friends	10.0	10.0	11.3	15.0	16.3	12.5	7.5	6.3	5.0	6.3
f)Friends	15.0	8.8	7.5	15.0	15.0	8.8	10.0	12.5	2.5	5.0
g)Colleagues	16.3	1.3	8.8	15.0	15.0	10.0	7.5	6.3	2.5	5.0
h)Peers	15.0	15.0	12.5	13.8	12.5	13.8	7.5	5.0	2.5	2.5
i)Acquaintances	22.5	25.0	8.8	15.0	13.8	10.0	3.8	0.0	1.3	0.0
j)The man in the street	32.5	36.3	15.0	8.8	1.3	5.0	0.0	0.0	1.3	0.0
k)People I do not like	27.5	25.0	10.0	8.8	6.3	8.8	3.8	5.0	2.5	2.5
l)Strangers	37.5	38.8	10.0	3.8	0.0	5.0	1.3	2.5	1.3	0.0

Note: M=Malay, I=Iban

Table 8. Descriptive Statistics for I use taboo words related to sex when:

	csex3_a	csex3_b	csex3_c	csex3_d	csex3_e	csex3_f	csex3_g	csex3_h
Mean	2.33	1.89	2.11	1.90	1.61	1.84	2.11	1.45
Mode	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Minimum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	4
Sum	186	151	169	152	129	147	169	116

Table 9. I use taboo words related to sex when:

Item	Never (%)		Seldom (%)		Occasionally (%)		Frequently (%)		Always (%)	
	M	I	M	I	M	I	M	I	M	I
a)I am angry	17.5	17.5	13.8	8.8	13.8	12.5	3.8	3.8	1.3	7.5
b)I want to show affection	23.8	22.5	11.3	12.5	13.8	12.5	1.3	1.3	0.0	1.3
c)I want to be offensive	23.8	20.0	10.0	12.5	10.0	7.5	5.0	6.3	1.3	3.8
d) I want to shock	26.3	25.0	10.0	6.3	10.0	15.0	3.8	2.5	0.0	1.3
e)I am happy	38.8	27.5	3.8	6.3	6.3	13.8	1.3	2.5	0.0	0.0
f)I am excited	30.0	22.5	11.3	7.5	7.5	16.3	0.0	2.5	1.3	1.3
g)I want to emphasise	20.0	22.5	12.5	6.3	8.8	16.3	7.5	5.0	1.3	0.0
h)For no reason	37.5	32.5	8.8	7.5	3.8	8.8	0.0	1.3	0.0	0.0

Note: M=Malay, I=Iban

Table 10. Descriptive Statistics for I use taboo words related to body parts when I am:

		cparts1_a	cparts1_b	cparts1_c	cparts1_d	cparts1_e
N	Valid	80	80	80	80	80
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		1.59	1.53	1.59	1.76	1.83
Mode		1	1	1	1	1
Minimum		1	1	1	1	1
Maximum		5	4	5	5	5
Sum		127	122	127	141	146

Table 11. I use taboo words related to body parts when I am:

Item	Never (%)		Seldom (%)		Occasionally (%)		Frequently (%)		Always (%)	
	M	I	M	I	M	I	M	I	M	I
a)Alone	31.3	35.0	12.5	8.8	2.5	1.3	2.5	2.5	1.3	2.5
b)At home	27.5	31.3	18.8	13.8	3.8	2.5	0.0	2.5	0.0	0.0
c)At the office	32.5	31.3	10.0	10.0	5.0	6.3	1.3	2.5	1.3	0.0
d)At school	33.8	27.5	6.3	7.5	6.3	8.8	2.5	5.0	1.3	1.3
e)At informal gatherings	26.3	30.0	11.3	6.3	8.8	8.8	1.3	3.8	2.5	1.3

Note: M=Malay, I=Iban

Table 12. Descriptive Statistics for I use taboo words related to body parts with:

	cp2a	cp2b	cp2c	cp2d	cp2e	cp2f	cp2g	cp2h	cp2i	cp2j	cp2k	cp2l
Mean	1.55	1.27	1.38	1.38	2.30	2.16	2.03	2.13	1.65	1.31	1.73	1.40
Mode	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Minimum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum	5	3	4	5	5	5	5	12	5	4	5	5
Sum	124	102	110	110	184	173	162	170	132	105	138	112

Table 13. I use taboo words related to body parts with:

Item	Never (%)		Seldom (%)		Occasionally (%)		Frequently (%)		Always (%)	
	M	I	M	I	M	I	M	I	M	I
a)Older close family members	30.0	33.8	13.8	10.0	3.8	3.8	1.3	2.5	1.3	0.0
b)Younger close family members	40.0	40.0	8.8	3.8	1.3	6.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
c)Older relatives	36.3	40.0	8.8	5.0	3.8	2.5	1.3	2.5	0.0	0.0
d)Younger relatives	38.8	35.0	10.0	8.8	1.3	3.8	0.0	1.3	0.0	1.3
e)Close friends	17.5	12.5	17.5	18.8	7.5	6.3	3.8	10.0	3.8	2.5
f)Friends	23.8	15.0	13.8	12.5	5.0	13.8	5.0	7.5	2.5	1.3
g)Colleagues	25.0	18.8	12.5	12.5	7.5	13.8	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
h)Peers	25.0	23.8	8.8	8.8	8.8	13.8	6.3	2.5	1.3	1.3
i)Acquaintances	30.0	28.8	12.5	10.0	5.0	10.0	2.5	0.0	0.0	1.3
j)The man in the street	41.3	36.3	7.5	7.5	1.3	5.0	0.0	1.3	0.0	0.0
k)People I do not like	32.5	28.8	10.0	8.8	2.5	6.3	3.8	5.0	1.3	1.3
l)Strangers	41.3	36.3	7.5	5.0	0.0	3.8	1.3	3.8	0.0	1.3

Note: M=Malay, I=Iban

Table 14. Descriptive Statistics for I use taboo words related to body parts when:

		cpt3a	cpt3b	cpt3c	cpt3d	cpt3e	cpt3f	cpt3g	cpt3h
N	Valid	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		2.19	1.74	1.91	1.78	1.64	1.61	1.80	1.48
Mode		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Minimum		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum		5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5
Sum		175	139	153	142	131	129	144	118

Table 15. I use taboo words related to body parts when:

Item	Never (%)		Seldom (%)		Occasionally (%)		Frequently (%)		Always (%)	
	M	I	M	I	M	I	M	I	M	I
a)I am angry	22.5	16.3	10.0	12.5	11.3	11.3	6.3	7.5	0.0	2.5
b)I want to show affection	25.0	27.5	17.5	7.5	6.3	12.5	1.3	2.5	0.0	0.0
c)I want to be offensive	28.8	22.5	10.0	11.3	7.5	7.5	3.8	6.3	0.0	2.5
d) I want to shock	32.5	26.3	8.8	8.8	6.3	8.8	1.3	3.8	1.3	2.5
e)I am happy	33.8	27.5	11.3	8.8	2.5	11.3	2.5	1.3	0.0	1.3
f)I am excited	37.5	27.5	7.5	7.5	2.5	12.5	2.5	1.3	0.0	1.3
g)I want to emphasise	27.5	28.8	12.5	7.5	6.3	7.5	2.5	5.0	1.3	1.3
h)For no reason	42.5	31.3	3.8	7.5	1.3	8.8	2.5	1.3	0.0	1.3

Note: M=Malay, I=Iban

Table 16. Descriptive Statistics for I use taboo words related to bodily functions when I am:

		cftns1_a	cftns1_b	cftns1_c	cftns1_d	cftns1_e
N	Valid	80	80	80	80	80
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		1.64	1.66	1.53	1.71	1.80
Mode		1	1	1	1	1
Minimum		1	1	1	1	1
Maximum		5	5	4	5	5
Sum		131	133	122	137	144

Table 17. I use taboo words related to bodily functions when I am:

Item	Never (%)		Seldom (%)		Occasionally (%)		Frequently (%)		Always (%)	
	M	I	M	I	M	I	M	I	M	I
a)Alone	33.8	33.8	6.3	7.5	2.5	6.3	6.3	1.3	1.3	1.3
b)At home	30.0	30.0	12.5	10.0	2.5	8.8	3.8	0.0	1.3	1.3
c)At the office	33.8	35.0	12.5	3.8	1.3	7.5	2.5	3.8	0.0	0.0
d)At school	30.0	30.0	12.5	6.3	3.8	8.8	3.8	3.8	0.0	1.3
e)At informal gatherings	26.3	32.5	12.5	3.8	6.3	8.8	2.5	3.8	2.5	1.3

Note: M=Malay, I=Iban

Table 18. Descriptive Statistics for I use taboo words related to bodily functions with:

	cfn2a	cfn2b	cfn2c	cfn2d	cfn2e	cfn2f	cfn2g	cfn2h	cfn2i	cfn2j	cfn2k	cfn2l
Mean	1.53	1.46	1.55	1.51	2.29	2.13	2.00	1.93	1.64	1.38	1.85	1.43
Mode	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Min	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Max	4	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5
Sum	122	117	124	121	183	170	160	154	131	110	148	114

Table 19. I use taboo words related to bodily functions with:

Item	Never (%)		Seldom (%)		Occasionally (%)		Frequently (%)		Always (%)	
	M	I	M	I	M	I	M	I	M	I
a)Older close family members	28.8	38.8	13.8	3.8	3.8	6.3	3.8	1.3	0.0	0.0
b)Younger close family members	37.5	36.3	7.5	5.0	2.5	6.3	2.5	1.3	0.0	1.3
c)Older relatives	35.0	35.0	6.3	5.0	5.0	7.5	3.8	2.5	0.0	0.0
d)Younger relatives	36.3	31.3	8.8	11.3	2.5	5.0	2.5	1.3	0.0	1.3
e)Close friends	22.5	13.8	12.5	15.0	7.5	6.3	5.0	11.3	2.5	3.8
f)Friends	20.0	20.0	16.3	8.8	10.0	11.3	1.3	8.8	2.5	1.3
g)Colleagues	21.3	21.3	20.0	8.8	3.8	13.8	2.5	6.3	2.5	0.0
h)Peers	20.0	23.8	20.0	11.3	5.0	11.3	2.5	3.8	2.5	0.0
i)Acquaintances	27.5	30.0	13.8	11.3	6.3	7.5	2.5	1.3	0.0	0.0
j)The man in the street	37.5	36.3	10.0	8.8	2.5	2.5	0.0	1.3	0.0	1.3
k)People I do not like	30.0	26.3	12.5	7.5	2.5	6.3	5.0	7.5	0.0	2.5
l)Strangers	37.5	37.5	10.0	5.0	1.3	2.5	1.3	3.8	0.0	1.3

Note: M=Malay, I=Iban

Table 20. Descriptive Statistics for I use taboo words related to bodily functions when:

		cftns3a	cftns3b	cftns3c	cftns3d	cftns3e	cftns3f	cftns3g	cftns3h
N	Valid	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		2.24	1.81	1.94	1.76	1.71	1.74	1.85	1.58
Mode		2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Minimum		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum		5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4
Sum		179	145	155	141	137	139	148	126

Table 21. I use taboo words related to bodily functions when:

Item	Never (%)		Seldom (%)		Occasionally (%)		Frequently (%)		Always (%)	
	M	I	M	I	M	I	M	I	M	I
a)I am angry	15.0	15.0	21.3	12.5	10.0	15.0	3.8	1.3	0.0	6.3
b)I want to show affection	27.5	22.5	15.0	11.3	7.5	10.0	0.0	5.0	0.0	1.3
c)I want to be offensive	23.8	20.0	17.5	13.8	5.0	10.0	3.8	3.8	0.0	2.5
d) I want to shock	31.3	27.5	8.8	7.5	5.0	11.3	5.0	2.5	0.0	1.3
e)I am happy	35.0	26.3	6.3	8.8	6.3	10.0	2.5	3.8	0.0	1.3
f)I am excited	33.8	26.3	7.5	6.3	7.5	12.5	1.3	3.8	0.0	1.3
g)I want to emphasise	26.3	25.0	16.3	8.8	5.0	7.5	2.5	7.5	0.0	1.3
h)For no reason	30.0	36.3	10.0	5.0	6.3	7.5	3.8	1.3	0.0	0.0

Note: M=Malay, I=Iban

Table 22. Descriptive Statistics for I use taboo words related to death and dying when I am:

		ccyi1_a	ccyi1_b	ccyi1_c	ccyi1_d	ccyi1_e
N	Valid	80	80	80	80	80
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		1.64	1.75	1.54	1.71	1.78
Mode		1	1	1	1	1
Minimum		1	1	1	1	1
Maximum		5	5	5	5	5
Sum		131	140	123	137	142

Table 23. I use taboo words related to death and dying when I am:

Item	Never (%)		Seldom (%)		Occasionally (%)		Frequently (%)		Always (%)	
	M	I	M	I	M	I	M	I	M	I
a)Alone	32.5	31.3	11.3	11.3	2.5	1.3	2.5	3.8	1.3	2.5
b)At home	27.5	23.8	16.3	15.0	5.0	5.0	1.3	5.0	0.0	1.3
c)At the office	36.3	31.3	6.3	11.3	5.0	5.0	2.5	1.3	0.0	1.3
d)At school	31.3	26.3	10.0	11.3	7.5	8.8	1.3	1.3	0.0	2.5
e)At informal gatherings	27.5	30.0	13.8	6.3	3.8	8.8	5.0	2.5	0.0	2.5

Note: M=Malay, I=Iban

Table 24. Descriptive Statistics for I use taboo words related to death and dying with:

	ccy2a	ccy2b	ccy2c	ccy2d	ccy2e	ccy2f	ccy2g	ccy2h	ccy2i	ccy2j	ccy2k	ccy2l
Mean	1.63	1.50	1.55	1.41	2.10	2.04	1.89	1.79	1.56	1.41	1.70	1.43
Mode	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Min	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Max	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	4
Sum	130	120	124	113	168	163	151	143	125	113	136	114

Table 25. I use taboo words related to death and dying with:

Item	Never (%)		Seldom (%)		Occasionally (%)		Frequently (%)		Always (%)	
	M	I	M	I	M	I	M	I	M	I
a)Older close family members	28.8	35.0	17.5	7.5			2.5	5.0	1.3	2.5
b)Younger close family members	36.3	35.0	8.8	8.8	2.5	0.0	2.5	5.0	0.0	1.3
c)Older relatives	33.8	35.0	12.5	7.5	1.3	1.3	2.5	2.5	0.0	3.8
d)Younger relatives	38.8	35.0	7.5	10.0	1.3	2.5	2.5	1.3	0.0	1.3
e)Close friends	22.5	16.3	17.5	16.3	5.0	8.8	3.8	2.5	1.3	6.3
f)Friends	23.8	16.3	20.0	15.0	1.3	10.0	3.8	5.0	1.3	3.8
g)Colleagues	28.8	21.3	13.8	13.8	2.5	7.5	3.8	5.0	1.3	2.5
h)Peers	31.3	22.5	13.8	13.8	0.0	8.8	3.8	2.5	1.3	2.5
i)Acquaintances	35.0	28.8	10.0	12.5	2.5	6.3	2.5	1.3	0.0	1.3
j)The man in the street	38.8	37.5	5.0	6.3	3.8	3.8	2.5	2.5	0.0	0.0
k)People I do not like	35.0	27.5	10.0	7.5	1.3	8.8	2.5	5.0	1.3	1.3
l)Strangers	40.0	37.5	5.0	5.0	1.3	3.8	3.8	3.8	0.0	0.0

Note: M=Malay, I=Iban

Table 26. Descriptive Statistics for I use taboo words related to death and dying when:

		ccy3a	ccy3b	ccy3c	ccy3d	ccy3e	ccy3f	ccy3g	ccy3h
N	Valid	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		2.20	1.75	1.95	1.71	1.55	1.66	1.81	1.50
Mode		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Minimum		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum		5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Sum		176	140	156	137	124	133	145	120

Table 27. I use taboo words related to death and dying when:

Item	Never (%)		Seldom (%)		Occasionally (%)		Frequently (%)		Always (%)	
	M	I	M	I	M	I	M	I	M	I
a)I am angry	20.0	13.8	17.5	15.0	8.8	11.3	2.5	5.0	1.3	5.0
b)I want to show affection	28.8	27.5	13.8	10.0	5.0	5.0	2.5	6.3	0.0	1.3
c)I want to be offensive	27.5	20.0	15.0	13.8	2.5	7.5	3.8	5.0	1.3	3.8
d) I want to shock	35.0	23.8	12.5	11.3	0.0	8.8	1.3	3.8	1.3	2.5
e)I am happy	37.5	33.8	6.3	6.3	5.0	3.8	1.3	3.8	0.0	2.5
f)I am excited	35.0	27.5	7.5	11.3	7.5	3.8	0.0	5.0	0.0	2.5
g)I want to emphasise	31.3	25.0	7.5	12.5	5.0	6.3	6.3	5.0	0.0	1.3
h)For no reason	35.0	35.0	8.8	7.5	5.0	5.0	0.0	1.3	1.3	1.3

Note: M=Malay, I=Iban

Editor: Hamimah Adnan