

**A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF AKU DIALECT IN AKU COMMUNITY OF ENUGU
STATE**

BY

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL, AHMADU BELLO
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DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation entitled “**A SOCIO-LINGUISTIC STUDY OF AKU DIALECT IN AKU COMMUNITY OF ENUGU STATE**” is a product of my own research work. The information derived from the literature has been duly acknowledged in the text and a list of references provided. No part of this dissertation has previously been presented for another degree programme in any institution of learning.

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CERTIFICATION

This dissertation entitled “A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF AKU DIALECT IN AKU COMMUNITY OF ENUGU STATE” by Okpe Chioma Rita meets the regulations governing the award of the degree in master of Arts in English and literary studies, Faculty of Arts, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and is approved for its contribution to knowledge.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved husband, children and my parents, Mr and Mrs Emmanuel Okpe.

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All glory goes to God for the gift of life and the opportunity to undertake this study. Words are not enough to express His guidance and protection.

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ABSTRACT

This study is a sociolinguistic investigation of Akụ dialect in Akụ community of Enugu State. Since language can be used to make or mar people, the attempt here is to examine the use of Akụ dialect by men and women of Akụ community in referenceto one another. In doing so, three specific objectives were stated. They seek information on the form of expressions use by men and women to refer to one another, factors responsible for the use of such expressions by males and females in Akụ community and the effect of the use of such expressions on males and females in Akụ community. In this study, a sample survey design was used. A set of questionnaire and interview technique were employed to collect data. The data collected with the questionnaire was presented and analysed using tables. The interview served as complementary data in the discussion. In the analysis of the data, age, sex and occupation were the demographic variables analysed with frequencies and percentages. Also, the items raised in the study to answer the three research questions were analysed with frequencies and percentages. The findings of the study showed that, there are oppressive and conflict generating words, phrases, statements and proverbs used by men and women to address one another. The factors responsible for the choice of the use of such expressions in Akụ community are: culture, fear for gender equality, fear for male dominance, fear for women dominance, waywardness of men and women, exercise of political power and exercise of academic achievement. The effects of the use of such expressions on males and females in Akụ community are: divorce, domestic violence, poor child upbringing, fight, interfamily and inter village clashes, hatred, mistrust, murder for vengeance, delay and denial of marriage, prostitution, etc

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study.

Language is the fundamental tool of communication. Language, according to Lahey (1978: 8), is a code whereby ideas, information, objects, feelings, etc. in human society are represented through conventional and arbitrary symbols for the purpose of communication either orally or in written form. Language is the expression of human communication through which knowledge, belief and behaviour can be experienced, explained and shared. Cameron (1992) argues that language is the medium through which we interpret our external world. This means that reality is expressed through language. If reality is expressed through language, it also follows that language plays an important role in creating our reality or at least our sense of what reality is. Language can create our world for us. It can manipulate our concepts of self and identity. This is threatening for men and women in general in Akụ community since language can be used to make or mar people.

Akụ is a dialect among over two hundred and fifty dialects in Igbo language and the primary language of communication in Akụ community. In the pre-colonial era, according to Ocho (1974), there was the modest use of the dialect by men and women in addressing one another. This means that the use of insulting and denigrating expressions were less among men and women. He stated that, there were clan or community heads who served as agents of peace. They employed intelligent, strong proverbs and aphoristic statements to convey their messages as well as to regulate the assaultive use of language by men and women on each other. Idiomatic expressions and euphemisms were mostly

used when discussing unpleasant issues and situations he stressed. Though, the community was controlled by men (patriarchy), language use was regulated. The women from birth according to *Ejuona Acada Front* (2000) are taught to speak in a subservient way by their parents. The acquisition of this special style of speech was an excuse the men used to keep the women in a demeaning position Lakoff (1975). The ancestral religion, with its tradition of the masquerade, served as the watchdog of the society. The use of vulgar language capable of raising nerves could attract a penalty. The use of indecent expressions by men and women in referring to one another was minimal because it was a taboo and that was why cases of divorce and domestic violence were less Ocho,(1974).

The colonial period introduced changes that permeated the dialect. The power of the clan heads and traditional priests was weakened. The colonial army took control of everything. There was a loss of the sacredness of the ancestral religion and its regulatory power in the society-Manu, (1982). The market economy that guaranteed competition between the men and the women was introduced. Also, western education that is normally distributed among sexes was introduced. Groups' teaching about equality of humans came up to influence the society. Men and women started clashing at different tents Lakoff, (1975). This development led to the explosion of the use of expressions that describes the situation and was veiled with many stereotypes, she asserted.

The celebration of independence in 1960 came with its vices. The powers of elders and clan heads were lost to rich merchants that cut across sex divide and external influence of feminist group reduced the submissiveness of women to men Manu, (1982). He further stated that complementary relationship of husbands and wives preached by

Christianity narrowed the hierarchy between men and women. This resulted to incompatibility of men and women, thus increasing the degree of clashes in the home as well as the community as a whole. The cases of domestic violence and divorce took a mathematical progression. With the nature of court settlement of crisis which were not reconciliation centred, the crisis between men and women rather increased Onyeokwu et al (2013) argued.

In contemporary times, many factors have fuelled the use of indiscriminate expressions by men and women in Akụ community. The experience of the life style in foreign countries has brought a transformation that is placing women at an equal level with men. Therefore the tolerance in the use of indecent language to refer to one another has dropped. Language that indicates disrespect of men and women against one another seems to be on the increase today. There are expressions that create class based on economic success. In the circle of men, the rich, no matter the source of their wealth, are exalted with expression such as *nnukwu mmọnwu* meaning big masquerade, *ite-ego* meaning pot of money etc. to refer to them. This has created a fearful competition leading to a high increase in crime such as drug trafficking, armed robbery, cultism, prostitution and so on just to get out of a caste that is nurtured and sustained by the forms of expressions used in Akụ community. It is this progression of the use of insensitive expressions by men and women to refer to one another in Akụ community from pre-colonial times to date that constitute the background to this study.

1.2 **The Historical Origin of Akụ Community.**

Akụ Diewa Mgboko Odobo, according to Anị (2002) is one of the largest communities in Enugu State. Akụ is situated in a valley of many hills; the Ase, Aturu,

Ezugwu, Egbugwu, OmAni and Iyi-Afor hills. It is bounded on the North by Obimo in Nsukka Local Government Area; on the South by Affa in Udi Local Government Area; on the East by Ikolo and Ohebe Dim in Igbo-Etiti Local Government Area and Akpugo in Uzọ Uwanị Local Government Area. Akụ community consists of three quarters, six autonomous communities, thirteen villages and sixty-three hamlets. Many authors in Akụ have written several materials on the origin of Akụ. Each writer based his data collection and facts on oral tradition relying on the oral traditional music of our forefathers. We have different versions of the origin of Akụ but for the purpose of this study, and for more clarity, the version by Ocho is adopted.

Ocho (1974: 2) states:

A man by name Ijaja while on a hunting trip came to the present position of Akụ and was enchanted by the place Ijaja, then went back home and brought his entire family to this present position of Mgboko. One of his wives by name Odofo gave birth to a male child called Mgboko. To distinguish him from his other children, he was called Mgboko Odofo as many polygamous families still do today. The first Akụ, had three sons: Akaibute, Akaıtala and Ejuona.

In a clearly reconciled analysis, the first son of *Mgboko* is Akụ who had three sons: *Akaibute, Akaıtala and Ejuona* (the three quarters in Akụ today). *Akaibute* who was named after his grandfather *Mgboko* had six sons which include: Useh, Amaokwu, *Mgboko*, Umu Ezike, Ohemje and Ofienyi.

Akaıtala is the second son of Akụ. He had four sons: Nụa, Obie, Ugwunani and Amogwu. These sons of *Akaıtala* became the fathers of the villages that answer these names today. The last son is *Ejuona* who had three sons: Oshigo, Oda and Ugwu-Egede. These names now stand for villages in Akụ community. In totality, there are thirteen villages in Akụ community. Some clans like *Mgboko* and *Nụa* villages are very large,

numbering between 8,000 and 10,000 people each (Ocho, (1974). The people have common culture and common dialect. They understand their affinity and therefore live in co-operative society.

1.3 The Akụ Dialect, Culture, Tradition and Map

A dialect is a variety of language characterised by a particular set of words, grammatical structures and phonetic or phonological characteristics that are associated with a particular geographical region, McGregor (2009). Akụ dialect is spoken by Akụ people and it is a variety of Igbo language. Igbo language according to Emenanjo, (1978) in Mbaegbu, (2010) is one of three languages recognized in Nigeria. The dialect is a mother tongue for about 221,274 people going by the population census of 2006. It has some vocabulary items, proverbs that are peculiar to Akụ people alone while some other lexical items are shared with Igbo-Izugbe which is central Igbo.

Linguistic evidence shows that Akụ dialect and the Igbo-Izugbe are closely related and it is believed by linguists and researchers on Igbo language according to Eze, Mbah and Eze (1991:1) that the people who speak this dialect and the Igbo-Izugbe must have had a common language in the past. This means that most linguistic items in the Akụ dialect and that of the Igbo-Izugbe are mutually intelligible.

There is no doubt that the knowledge and appreciation of the historical origin, culture and tradition of a people provide the facts for socio-economic and political development of that people. The culture of a society, according to Linton (1945: 203), as in Mestherie, Swann, Deumert and Leap (2009:27), refers to “the way of life of its members, the collection of ideas and habits which they learn, share and transmit from generation to generation.” Culture in this sense is a design for living which defines

appropriate or acceptable ways and form of behaviour within particular societies. Culture varies from society to society.

Akụ community like any other community in Igbo land and beyond is rich in culture and tradition. For instance, according to the Ejuona Acada Front (2000: 81), the social system in Akụ community is patriarchal. In which case, patrilineal system obtains in Akụ community. Thus children in a marriage belong to the father's lineage not the mother's as in a matrilineal system.

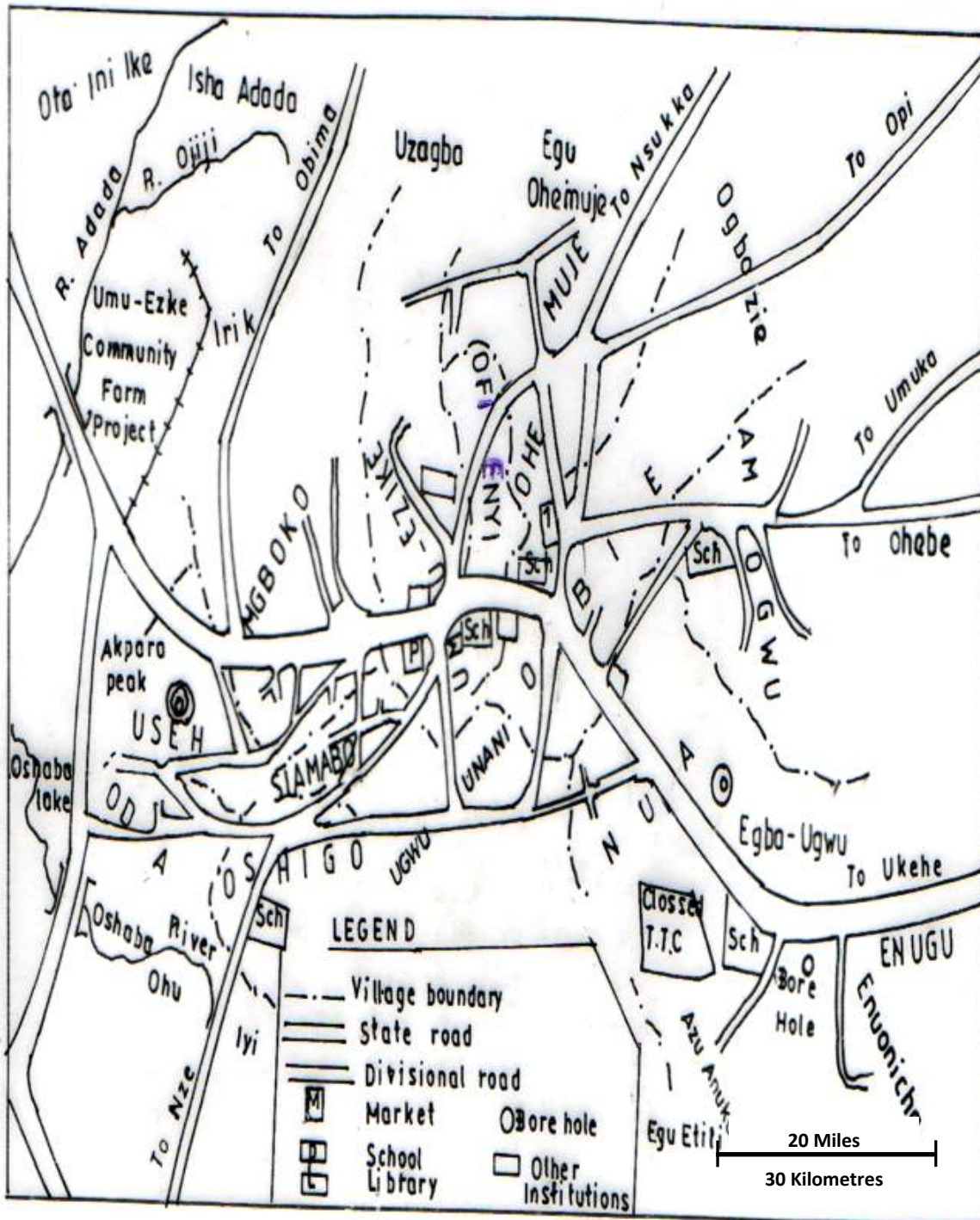
Another cultural practice in Akụ is the taking of title. Some titles according to Ezikeanyi (1997), are meant for the men while some are meant for the women. For instance, the Ọzọ and Ogbuanyinya titles are meant for the men. The Ọzọ title represents authority, honesty and wealth. Ọzọ titled men in Akụ are called Idi while their women counterparts are called Lọlọanyi. Only the wives of Ọzọ titled men can perform Lọlọanyiceremonies. The non-Ọzọ title holders in Akụ are called Oheke. Titles like Lọlọanyi, Ogbun-Obodo, Oduaha, Ogbajiri, etc. are meant for the women. The Odo masquerade is another cultural practice in Akụ community. Akụ people according to Ezikeanyi (1982), see Odo as a link between the dead and the living. He stated that mask is a representation of the spirit deity. The spirit refers to the ancestors and the deity refers to the gods. Odo speaks a complex language, heightened by high or deep guttural tones buttressing its anonymity. The uninitiated males according to Manụ (1982), must be initiated into the secrets of Odo to comprehend the complexity of Odo language. Manụ also says that Interaction with Odo is mainly a male affair.

Religion was centred on the existence of a supreme being 'Chukwu Onye Okike' (god the creator). A pantheon of other gods or deities said to be messengers or agents of

the Supreme God exist in Akụ community. They are Ala (earth goddess), Igwe (Sky god), Anyanwụ (Sun god), Fijioḳụ (the god of agriculture), Arià Afia (god of trade), Ojiyi deity, Ase deity, Chikerueguru deity, Ekumaha and Aturu deity. The Akụ people also vouch for their assertion of or seek for their lost properties by these deities, Manu (1982).

Some of these cultural practices and traditions in the Akụ community have social implications on the women in terms of linguistic expression. The women seem not to have complete freedom of expression. This research therefore, is intended to unravel howthe dialect is used by men and women of Akụ community in interaction.

Map of Aku Village Group, 1974.



1.4 **Statement of the Research Problem.**

Language expresses one's intention. The theory behind attitude is language used. This means that people react to what they hear and not to intentions. Akụ community is experiencing many more vices today than before. The cases of domestic violence, divorce and broken homes are on the increase, (Onyeokụ et al 2013). Many marriages are surviving just for the task of bringing up children together and for external show, while the couples are dying in silence. There is also a high rate of inter-family conflict, armed robbery, cultism etc. according to Amadi, (2000) and Uzochukwu (2013). There is also the case of women not participating actively in politics etc. (Charton 1998).

Many factors could be said to be responsible for these vices. But it seems that their persistence is due to certain expressions used in Akụ community which nurture and sustain them. In other words, the specific ways in which men refer to the women and how women address the men are possible reasons why the above mentioned problems persist. Thus, the concern of this study is to examine the expressions being used in the day to day communication among the people in Akụ community.

1.5 **Research Questions.**

In view of the problems of the study, it is pertinent to ask questions with the hope that the responses will offer possible solutions to the problems.

1. What forms of expressions do people use in referring to one another in Akụ community?
2. What factors are responsible for the choice of such expressions among men and women in Akụ community?

3. What are the effects of such expressions on male and female members of Akụ community?

1.6 Aim and Objectives of the Study.

The main aim of the research is to study the sociolinguistic use of Akụ dialect in Akụ community. In its objective, the research hopes:

1. to identify the forms of expressions used by men and women, in referring to one another in Akụ community;
2. to analyse the factors responsible for the use of such expressions by men and women in Akụ community and
3. to find out the effects of the use of such expressions on male and female members of Akụ community.

1.7 Significance of the Study.

Language, according to the philosophy expressed in the myths and religions of many people, is the source of human life and power (Fromkin and Rodman 2003). This is because language is a medium through which the culture and the very nature of a society can be understood. This study is set to examine the forms of expressions used by men and women in Akụ community in addressing one another and the effects of it on them. In view of this, it is believed that the government, writers, researchers and scholars of sociolinguistics will find this study useful. The study hopes to serve as a reference material that will aid in proffering a solution to problem that arises due to the use of language.

1.8 **Justification of the study.**

This study is to show how Akụ dialect is used in Akụ community. It is believed that the findings from this research will make men and women in Akụ community realize the forms of expressions they use in addressing one another and their effects on them since language can be used to make or mar people. This study will also benefit the community in the resolution of conflicts in broken homes and marriages.

This study will hopefully be of great importance to the educational system in the curriculum development in terms of character formation since one of the objectives of education is the formation of individuals towards healthy attitudes. Therefore, it is hoped that this study brings the spirit of respect, equality and human rights of all genders to the readers. Recommendations from this study will guide the people of Akụ community in terms of language used in referring to one another.

This study is justified because it will help the government in terms of taking decision on the use of language. As far as the use of language is concerned, this study will inform the concerned governments to establish firm laws against hateful speech and punish those who use hate speech to refer to one another. Since the government is in charge of securing lives, and knowing that the use of language leads to different degrees of social vices in the society such as armed robbery, kidnapping, committing murder for vengeance, prostitution, etc. this study will go a long way in remedying these problems.

1.9 **Scope and Delimitation of the Study.**

The Akụ community in Enugu State of Nigeria is the scope and delimitation of the study. Akụ is located in the present Igbo–Etiti Local Government Area of Enugu State. Akụ community, according to Ocho (1974: 1) is located between latitude 6° 40C North and longitude 7°23C East. It is about ten kilometres to Nsukka Division Headquarters and 20.6 kilometres to Enugu, the Headquarters of Eastern Provinces. The research is a sociolinguistic attempt to study Akụ dialect in Akụ community.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 **Preamble.**

This chapter reviews works related to the study. The following sub-headings feature here: Sociolinguistics, language and society, sociological factors that influence the use of language like gender, religion, culture, patriarchy (male dominance) and the theoretical frameworks.

2.2 **Sociolinguistics.**

Over the years, there has been an explosion of research on the question of male and female use of language. Many sociolinguists and anthropologists like Lakoff, Mills, Coates, Zimmermann, West, Wardhaugh, Spender, and Tannen, have carried out researches concerning male dominion and female subordinate status in language use. Sociolinguistics among other fields of study within the scope of linguistics has evidence on the language use in the human society.

Yule (1996: 239) and Hudson (1980: 1) define sociolinguistics as the study of the relationship between language and society. Colmns (1997: 52) describes sociolinguistics as an investigation of how social structures influence the way people talk and how language, varieties and patterns of use correlate with social attributes such as age, class and sex. What this suggests is that Sociolinguistics takes into account the social aspect of language as a means of human communication. This is in contradistinction to the social orientation of theoretical linguistics which seeks to explain and analyse only the structure that is; work and the rules operating in language to the inclusion of the social context in

which it is learned and used. This assertion is supported by Downes (1998: 9) who says that sociolinguistics is that branch of linguistics which studies just those properties of language and languages which require reference to social including contextual factors in the explanation. Ndukwe (1997: 1) conceives sociolinguistics as that part of linguistics which is concerned with language as a social and cultural phenomenon. This means that it studies the relationship between language and social-cultural behaviour of the society. Its goal is to promote a better understanding of the structure of language and how language functions in communication. While Holmes (1994: 45) asserts that sociolinguistics aims towards theory which provides a motivated accounts of the way language is used in the community and of the people when they use language. Anagbogu et-al (2001: 28) also conceives sociolinguistics as the study of the way language attempts to adapt itself to the needs of the society. Sociolinguistics shows the way of doing things with language which is functionally related to the culture and society.

The above scholars give vivid explanations of the relationship between language and society which the researcher agrees on. It is pertinent to know that this research aims at studying the use of certain expressions in Akụ dialect among the people of the community in addressing one another and to bring to the fore the effects of such expressions on them.

2.3 **Language and Society**

Society is any group of people who are drawn together for a certain purpose or purposes, Wardhaugh (2006: 1). It is also an organised group with common aim and interest. The Collins Paperback dictionary and Thesaurus (2006) defines society as human beings considered as a group in an organised community.

Language as earlier mentioned is a system of communication where people in a given community express themselves. Language is used in social context in communicating their needs, ideas and emotions in one way or the other, Labov (1981: 83). It is therefore, expected that human beings, irrespective of gender, should use language for expression. Downes (1981: 1) argues that language is indissolubly linked with the members of the society in which it is spoken and social factors are inevitably reflected in their speech. There is no society without a language(s), so the two depend on each other.

According to Wardaugh (2006: 10) there are several possible relationships between language and society. One is that social structure may either influence or determine linguistic structure and/or behaviour. Certain evidence may be adduced to support this view: the age-grade phenomenon whereby young children speak differently from older children and in turn children speak differently from mature adults. Wardaugh stressed that the varieties of language that speakers use reflect such matters as their regional, social or ethnic origin and possibly even their gender and other studies which shows that particular ways of speaking, choice of words and even rules for conversing are in fact highly determined by social requirements.

A second possible relationship is directly opposed to the first: linguistic structure and/or behaviour may either influence or determine social structure. This is the view behind the Whorfian linguistic relativity-hypothesis. This tends to suggest that one's native language determines, to a great extent, how one conceptualizes reality or view the word, Yule (1996: 247). In the same vein, the claims of Bernard Bernstein codes and social control and many of those who argue that language rather than speakers of these

languages can be sexist illustrate the possible influence of linguistic structure on social structure.

A third possible relationship is that the influence is bi-directional: language and society may influence each other. A Marxist viewpoint put forward by Dittmar (1975: 238) argues that speech behaviour and social behaviour are in a state of content interaction and that material living conditions are an important factor in the relationship.

Finally, a fourth possibility is to assume that there is no relationship at all between linguistic structure and social structure and that each is independent of the other. A variant of this possibility would be to say that although there might be some such relationship, present attempt to characterize it are essentially premature, given what we know about both language and society. Actually, this variant view appears to be the one that Chomsky himself upholds. He prefers to develop an asocial linguistics as a preliminary to any other kind of linguistics such as asocial approach being in his view logically prior. For the purpose of this work, the researcher upholds the first three possibilities. In other words, the linguistic and social structure can be correlated. This is in line with the observation of Gumperz (1971: 223) who says that sociolinguistics is an attempt to find correlation between social structure and linguistic structure and to observe any changes that occur. Chambers (2002: 3) concurs with Gumperz' assertion by saying that Sociolinguistics is the study of the social use of language and the most productive studies in the four decades of sociolinguistic research have emanated from determining the social evaluation of linguistic variants.

2.4 **The Importance of Language in the Society**

Language is essential to every aspect and interaction in our everyday lives. We use language to inform the people around us of what we feel, desire and question/understand the world around us. Mills (1995: 1) says language is clearly not simply a mirror that reflects reality rather it functions to impose structure on our perception of the world. This means that language mirrors and shapes people's beliefs, attitudes and actions according to the context and the needs or expectations of any society. In fact, it may help people to know and become aware of different gendered attitudes which are derived from the social life; at the same time as it may reinforce these differences linguistically in a negative way. Language is laden with socio-cultural senses and interpretations. It is far from having a passive function in society; such as just reflecting the social life as it is. Conversely, language is a powerful means that may determine the repressive, regressive or progressive behaviour of any given society. It works according to the values and customs of a specific culture, and it also depends on its religious, political and economic variables. As such, it is a very active and dynamic tool that functions differently across cultures.

Language is not “a transparent carrier of meanings” rather it is “a medium which imposes its own constraints on the meaning which is constructed” – Mills (1995: 11). It is viewed as a social phenomenon, because according to Fowler and Kress (1979: 26), the forms of language in use are a part of as well as a consequence of social process. Critically, it is considered to be used as a “form of social control” serving to confirm and consolidate the organisations which shape it, being used to manipulate people, to establish and maintain them in economically convenient roles and statuses, to maintain

the power of state agencies, corporations and other constitutions,” Fowler and Kress (1979: 190).

The theory of linguistic determinism suggests that the language of a culture shapes the way its speakers see the world (Mills, 1995: 84) which means that if language is sexist, speakers will see and conceive the world in a sexist way. Besides, since language has an impact on how we view the world, it therefore affects the material conditions of women’s lives (Mills, 1995: 85). Consequently, language rather than simply reflecting society, actually brings about shapes and changes in the way we see and think (Mills 1995: 87).

Finally, it is common knowledge that language in general reflects and reinforces man’s power and authority, and at the same time maintains negative images about women. As Cameron (1992: 1) says; language is a weapon used by the powerful to oppress and silence the subordinate. Weatherall (2002); also says language not only reflects and perpetuates gender but language constitutes gender and produces sexism as a social reality (2002: 5). Sexism linguistically or socially, may be completely present or less prevalent across societies depending on their local circumstances which is why observing linguistic and gender practices in the context of a particular community’s social practices is required since the context and social conditions may vary between cultures.

2.5 Men and Women’s Speech

There is a lack of agreement about whether males and females use language differently. In many studies, one may achieve many conclusions about the differences

that characterize women and men's identity, behaviour, role, speech and so on. Of course, men and women are different in so many aspects; however, this difference should not be used to discriminate and marginalize women. Men are different from other men whereas women can be different from other women, and obviously men are different from women, which is completely natural. Both sexes are different in their physical appearance, in their feelings and emotions, in their behaviour, and also in their language use.

According to Lakoff and Spender, women's speech is characterized "as more hesitant, less fluent, less logical, and less assertive than men's speech. Women, in their view, are more silent, interrupt less frequently than men, use tag questions and modal verbs more than men, use cooperative strategies in conversations rather than competitive ones, and so on" (Mills, 1995: 45).

Therefore, in men and women's choices of conversation content, language use or speech style are not different only because of their different sexes, but also because of their socio-cultural background. Setting, social status, power and authority are other factors that determine the degree of differences. It is believed that women and men use language differently; men are the norm and women are defined in relation to them, which is obviously reflected in their speech. It is not easy to prove that both sexes have different speech styles, although many studies characterize women as talkative. According to Weatherall (2002: 56) "in the western world, for example, there are widely held stereotypes about how talkative women are, and how trivial their talk is". Besides, women are believed to be more polite and cooperative in conversation; nevertheless, this is not a general or universal rule. We can perfectly find more polite and talkative men

also, depending on the person's personality, education, social status and expectations as well as other factors. Or maybe men and women speak differently because they are living in different dimensions. Indeed, we can say that they live in separate spheres; each sex has his or her own role and position in society.

However, men still have difficulties in accepting women in their so-called professional space, which has an impact on men's language use because there is a strong connection between one's life and choice of speech. As Weatherall, (2002: 55-56), says "women's speech style is oriented to values of connection and affiliation while men's style reflects their concern with status".

Women and men are deemed to have some differences at the level of discourse and conversation. Men interrupt women in a group where men and women are interlocutors. When women offer an idea, they are more likely to hesitate or apologize". Women frequently accept men's topics while men reject subjects raised by women. Women are more polite than men and try most of the time to initiate conversation but succeed less because of men's lack of cooperation. The proof, according to Cross & Markus (1993: 81), is that "women's linguistic styles also reflect a sensitive and connection to the other. For women, the goal in social interaction is often cooperation and support".

Beauvoir (1952/1988) argues that in male dominated cultures, the term *man* "represents both the positive and the neutral, as is indicated by the common use of man to designate human beings in general; whereas women represent only the negative, defined by limiting criteria, without reciprocity" Weatherall (2002: 12). Therefore, according to

the results obtained by researchers in relation to women and men's different speech, "women talk as they do because of their position of relative powerlessness both in the society as a whole and in the context of particular relationships" Poynton (1989: 69).

The fact is that women and men do not speak separate languages, that they all use the same linguistic resources, though undoubtedly with different frequencies in many cases"(Poynton, 1989: 68). The subjects that are talked about in men's conversations are completely different from those of women's talk. Women together may speak about their husbands, children, mothers-in-law, religion, television programmes and series, and also trying to find solutions to life's problems if ever they have troubles with their husbands or relatives in general. The setting of these discussions is usually at home, in the market or public bath and even at work. On the contrary, men's conversations are freely held in public places such as work, café, in the street, places of worship...and the topic of their talk could be women, though never, of course, their own wives, mothers, sisters or daughters. Rather, men criticize women's way of clothing or the position of those who work outside, or they speak about prostitutes. They also speak about religion and football. Both females and males feel free and more at ease when speaking within the same sex, notwithstanding that these conversations may vary according to the age and education of the interlocutors as well as the context and social status.

2.6 Sociolinguistic Factors

There are different sociolinguistic variables that can serve as factors determining the use of language in the human society. Some of the factors according to Nwala (2004:145) are sex (gender/sexism), culture, religion, etc.

2.7 Gender/ Sexism as a Determining Factor

Gender, according to Mills (2003:198), is a term used most generally in discussions of differences in male and female linguistic production. Butler (1997: 130) sees gender as a possession or set of behaviour, which is imposed upon the individuals by the society. John (1998: 39) sees gender as how an individual feels and expresses himself or herself typically through masculinity or femininity. He further states that gender is informed through people's social interactions. It is important to point out that gender differences in regards to social construction are also said to be driven by relations of power, typically through patriarchal ideologies which privilege men over women. Gender by the above explanation is simply a societal issue and not biological.

In sociolinguistics, gender is seen as one of the variables that affect the use of language. Sociolinguistic study of gender shows that there is variation in the use of language and this is intimately connected to socio-cultural patterns which reflect women oppression and subordinated status and male dominance in many societies. Practical example in support of women oppression and male dominance status can be inferred from the Lakoff's polemical analysis of what she considered to be female language patterns. This made clear causal connection between the social and political oppression of women as a group and their linguistic behaviour. This subordinated status was displayed in the language which she described as 'talking like a lady,' Lakoff (1975: 10).

The language as used by the men according to Lakoff shows the dominance status of men in language use and the subordinated status of women in language use in the society. So gender is not just reflected in language but it is the concept of gender in itself constituted by the language used to refer to it Weatherall (2002: 80).

Sexism as a determining factor on the other hand, can be defined as using discriminatory language in relation to gender. According to Mills (1995: 83), a statement is sexist when “its use constitutes, promotes or exploits an unfair or irrelevant or impertinent distinction determining between the sexes”. But, she also argues that language can be sexist when it presents male-oriented experience as the norm in society (Mills, 1995: 89). Another definition by Henley (1987) suggests that sexist language is “language that ignores women; language that defines women narrowly; and language that depreciates women” (Weatherall, 2002: 13). Consequently, this differentiation between the sexes at the level of speech may have negative attitudes towards women and an effect on their expectations, because of the stereotypes which are widely and socially common between individuals, and which entail women’s exclusion and inferiority.

People are exposed to sexist language in everyday life, at home, at school, in the street, and through the media, such as cinema, television and magazines. Language use can be sexist because of the social and cultural circumstances of any society which are instilled in the mind and the beliefs of its individuals. There are some opinions such as Lakoff’s (1975:7) as in Mills, (1995: 86)) according to whom “sexism in language simply reflects sexism within society, and is a symptom rather than a cause”. This suggests that sexism in language is not the cause of women’s discrimination or trivialization since words alone are not strong enough to make women invisible. However, this study has tried to argue that language is the first powerful tool which is most responsible for making much segregation between the sexes. It is a factor in women’s oppression because it is through language that ideas and thoughts are communicated and maintained among citizens. And in agreement with Weatherall who says that “sexist language is not

just about words used to describe women but also how they are used to and to what ends” (2002: 11), Lakoff gave some examples of sexism in English.

Women are devalued in language, for example in slang terms like chick, kitten or derogatory term like slut. Lakoff again stated that words associated with women are not valued. For example, use of specific colour terms like mauve and lavenders. She says expectations about femininity and lady like speech force women into euphemism or silence. Lakoff (1975: 7)

To concur with Weatherall and Lakoff, Memissi (2003: 43) cited the rhymes of the poet Sidi Abdarahman al-Majdoub in which a negative attitude towards femininity is strongly conveyed and these are significant examples of men’s use of language against the women.

*Women are fleeting wooden vessels
Whose passengers are doomed to destruction
Don’t trust them (women) so you would not be deceived.
Women are belted with serpents and jewel with scorpions.*

Here is a list of proverbs describing women negatively according to Chafai (2005: 64):

*When you see two neighbours quarrelling, be sure that women are the cause.
Women are like a boat, those who are inside it are loss.
What Satan does in a year, the old woman does it in one hour.
Submitting to women leads to hell.*

And here is a list of proverbs portraying men positively:

*A man has a purse, he is perfect.
The beauty is reflected in his mind, while a woman’s mind is seen through her beauty.
It is the man who chooses a wife not the contrary.
One can trust only a man’s promise.*

The last proverb shows that men’s promise is taken seriously while women’s promise has the connotation of a promise never kept or a deed never accomplish Hachimi (2001: 40). In agreement with Memissi, Schipper (1985; 20) says that some traditional

Africa proverbs maintain that women should not be listened to. For instance, one African proverb states that “If in times of drought a woman comes and tells you that she has found a well, do not listen to her.” Women are suffering from being under the authority of men which is obviously mirrored in the language used to describe them and how they are looked upon. This is obviously in line with Lakoff’s assertion that; “The women experience linguistic discrimination in two ways; the way they are taught to use language and the way general language use treats them. Both tend to relegate women to certain subservient functions: that of sex-object or servant and that therefore certain lexical items mean one thing applied to them and another to women, a difference cannot be predicted except with reference to the different roles the sexes play in the society,” Lakoff (1973: 46).

In agreement with Lakoff, Nwala (2004: 180) mentioned other pejoratives that have no male equivalents. They are effeminate, emasculate, divorcee, henpecked, etc. Again, Nwala states that objects of unpleasant kinds are usually referred to as being feminine. Example; black widow, black Maria, iron maiden, Venus fly trap, hurricane Betsy, hurricane Katrina, Mary go-round, etc.

Kuiper (1991: 76) studied the use of language by the men within a team of rugby players, he concludes that men insults to express solidarity rather than use positive politeness strategies. The different views as elicited above have come to a common ground that gender/sexism determines the use of language in society.

2.8 Culture as a Determining Factor

Many of the factors which gave rise to linguistic variation are sometimes discussed in terms of cultural differences. Yule (1996: 246) giving the process of cultural transmission by which languages are acquired, it makes a lot of sense to emphasize the fact that the use of language is determined by culture in society.

The societal culture makes the use of language as a medium of expression and communication unrealistic. Yule (1996: 346) sees culture as socially acquired knowledge. Culture according to Zimmerman (2012) is the characteristic of a particular group defined by everything from language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music and arts. This simply implies that culture govern the existence of human beings since it entails the people's way of life. Unfortunately, the societal culture is practically designed in such a way that it favours only the male folk while the female folk are made to play a second fiddle. This is why Russ as quoted by Donovan (ed.) (1975: 5) writes that:

Culture is a male. This does not mean that every man in western (or eastern) society can do exactly as he pleases, or that every man is luckier or more privileged than every woman. What it does mean (among other things) is that the society we live, like all other historical societies, is a patriarchy. And patriarchies imagine or picture themselves from the male point of view. There is female culture, but it is an underground, unofficial minor culture, occupying a small corner of what we think of officially as possible human experience. Both men and women in our culture conceive the culture from a single point of view – the male.

Russ's unequivocal point that culture being a male does not imply that every man is luckier and more privileged than all women. It is stated to prove that both men and women are created equal, but men twisted the societal norms to favour themselves only. This has been seen in a way women are made or expected to be using language and the

ways in which women are spoken of. Language is very vital for the identification of a cultural group, but it appears that human beings linguistically speaking are unequal in the area of language use. Women are not favoured (in the area of language use) by the societal cultures.

This practice cuts across every human society. Nwala (2004: 170) in favour of the above opinion of Russ writes that ‘cultural norms, linguistically speaking, favour the male folk than the women.’ In order to buttress the above assertion of Nwala and Russ, Munonye (1966: 67) in his book, ‘The Only Son’ states that women are not allowed speaking in proverbs before the men. According to Munonye, when Chiaku was called upon to speak before men, she begins with; “we women do not know how to speak our minds in proverbs, I shall tell you in very plain words what I have come for.” The author later clarifies that women are allowed to use proverbs when they speak with their fellow women, or when they address children. This illustration simply implies that women, no matter how highly placed, can never be given equal attribute to her male counterpart in the use of language. And this justifies Lakoff’s claim that:

the ultimate effect of the restriction of women in language use is that women are systematically denied access to power on the grounds that they are not capable of holding it as demonstrated by their linguistic behaviour along with other aspects of their behaviour and the irony here is that women are made to feel that they deserve such treatment because of inadequacies in their own intelligence and/or education.(Lakoff 1973: 48)

This practice is highly obtainable in several human societies where women are severely punished for speaking in public with proverbs and idioms. Mills (2003: 164) lends her voice in support of the above assertion by claiming that women oppression is deeply ingrained in the culture of the societies, which ensures the connection of patriarchal control.

Achebe (1958: 138) shares the same opinion that women and men are not expected to use language in the same way. According to Achebe, using the character Okonkwo, Okonkwo is said to vent his anger on his son Nwoye for preferring to listen to his mother's tales to his father's masculine stories of violence and bloodshed.

Secondly, Okonkwo asks his first wife when she has become one of the 'Ndichie' (elders of the society) after expressing an opinion of her own. This means that women are not permitted to take part in community matters in many traditional African societies and in most instances, they tacitly accepted or are brainwashed into accepting their inferior status. This direct accusation from Okonkwo against his wife emanates from his wife speaking in a way that sounds masculine in a matter that is presented to male elders of the society rather than concerning herself in matters that concern the women.

Taking a cue from Ghana cultural premises, Aidoo (1970: 30) presents a situation where a woman is reminded to restrict her argument to the level of her womanhood rather than speaking like a man. In an argument between Kofi Ako and his wife Anowa, Kofi reminds her of limits in their verbal disagreement over the oppression of slaves, stating: "we all know you are a woman and I am a man." This shows that women's voice were often silenced and were supposed not to be heard, and even if at all it must be heard, should be only in the private domain of their homes, while the men operated in the foreground. Also in the culture of the Hindus, according to Wikipedia, it is improper for women to speak with strangers on the street, and especially strike a casual conversation. If a wife is at home alone and a male visitor comes to see her husband, it is not proper for her to invite him in nor for him to expect to enter. In a mixed company, especially in the presence of strangers, Wikipedia writes that a Hindu woman will keep modestly in the

background and not to participate freely in conversation. Weatherall (2002: 56) supporting this view point, says that women are to keep their voices low, soft and agreeable which Cameron refers to as verbal hygiene. The society's attitude to women in the use of language remains backward and oppressive. This shows that societal cultures relegate women to the background.

From the foregoing, one can easily deduce that cultural beliefs and traditions of most societies in the use of language give more attention to male folk thereby ensuring the continuation of domination and suppression of women in communication, imaginative expression and emotional release. Widdowson (1998:136) as stated in Wardhaugh (2006:15), concurs with this line of thought. He says; "language is used and abused in the exercise of power and the suppression of human rights. This exercise of power in language use is mostly unleashed on women in Africa." In respect of this, one can say that the complete freedom in language use by women – a reality that has been historically denied in most of our societies should be placed above any culture. This means that culture should not hinder the advancement of women in the use of language.

2.9 **The Patriarchy**

Patriarchy, according to Mills (2003: 168) is a form of social organisation in which men are dominant. According to Wikipedia, patriarchy is a social system in which males hold primary power. Males predominate in roles of political leadership, moral authority, social privilege and control of property and in the domain of the family, fathers or father figures hold authority over women and children. This implies the institutions of male domination and entails female subordination. Supporting this view, Tuttle (1986: 242) argues that patriarchy is the rule of the father.

Historically, patriarchy has manifested itself in social, legal, political and economic organisation of a range of different cultures. The feminist theory defines patriarchy as an unjust social system that is oppressive to women. The feminists state that it has its tentacles in all aspect of our lives and is characterized by relations of domination and ideology embedded in languages. The above directly means that patriarchy places limits on the achievements of women and reduces the value of the feminine by picturing women as limited human beings. Patriarchy as a doctrine is expressed differently in various languages. For example, in Kate Millet's study of patriarchy, the question of gender, the nature of a family and the process of socialization are highlighted in understanding the nature of male supremacy. For her, the political relationship between the sexes was central to patriarchy and male power is expressed and contained in the sexual acts itself, Bullock et-al (1988: 632). Similarly, Spender (1980: 1) says,

“Patriarchy has been used within the women’s movement to analyze the principles underlying women’s oppression... It has been used... in the search for an explanation of feelings of oppression and subordination and in the desire to transform feelings of rebellion into political practice and theory... Thus the theory of patriarchy attempts to penetrate beneath the particular experiences and manifestation of women’s oppression and to formulate some coherent theory of the basis of subordination which underlies them.”

Spender argues that our social world is described using language which is biased against women in a patriarchal society. She believed that by being more active in public life than women, men have been able to get their opinions heard. As we use language to speak our views, she argues that the words are more likely to express the male experience than female experience. Spender's argument relies upon the belief that men traditionally have more power than women. This situation (social system) makes it impossible for

women to seek ways to express their inner thoughts, Spender (1980: 3). To concur with Spender, Cameron (1985a: 197), asserts that “ultimately, it is men who have the power (in public and in private life) whereas women only have responsibility.”

Based on the assertions above, Eisten (2000: 277) states that women are only thought to be submissive wives and dutiful mothers without the opportunity of questioning the oppressive and subjugating acts of the men in society. Freud as cited by Nye (1988: 118) provides an indirect perspective on the universal nature of patriarchy. He believes that the most likely explanation for its universality lies in the fact that a woman’s anatomy is traditionally vulnerable to and responsible for biological qualities such as menstruation and child birth. He describes women as hysterical because they have a womb and their willingness and receptivity are related to their open genitals. Freud’s belief of the universal nature of patriarchy is highly questionable because it focuses only on the woman’s anatomy as the cause of her inferior/subordinate’s position in the society while ignoring the moral and psychological state of being which makes every person different from others. This view, is therefore, rejected in this study.

2.10 Religion as a Determining Factor

Religion is generally believed to be one of the foremost forces that preserve culture/traditions. It is consequently a form of social order influencing social attitudes and behaviours.

In the Christendom, Microsoft Encarta (2009) writes that as far back as the 11th century, Hildegard of Bingen (1098 – 1179), a German abbess defied the authority of the male Church leaders who did not grant women their desired access in the Church

administration. In the same vein, an Italian poet, Prose Writer and Courtier Christine De Pisan (1364 – 1430), defended the course of women and wrote biblical commentaries that challenged the patriarchal ideas inherent in Christianity around the 14th century. This proves that the struggle for equal treatment between men and women is almost as old as humankind. This inequality is taken from the linguistic angle where women are not expected to head a Church, speak in the Church or use a given language meant for the men in the Church.

The restriction in language use could be seen in 1 Corinthians 14:34 “as in all the Churches of God’s people, the women should keep quiet in the meetings.” This means that in a social gathering women have no right to express their own opinions and desires and whatever the decision the men take binds on them. The Bible went further to say that “it is a disgraceful thing for a woman to speak in the Church.” (1 Corinthians 14:35).

I Timothy 2:11-13 says “let the women learn in silence with all subjection. I do not allow them to teach or to have authority over men; they must keep quiet.” From the discussion so far, it can easily be deduced that women both culturally and religiously do not have equal status with the men in the use of language in the Society. Women are reduced to second class citizen. The patriarchal society favours the men to the detriment of the women. The culture and perhaps the religion have subconsciously shaped the attitude of the men towards the women in Africa. According to the Christian missionary in West Papau, too, women are not allowed to speak in public:

... even today women are slaves of the men in Churches in Papua. If I would like to use modern terms, their tasks in Churches mainly are to pray in their prayer groups for the men, clean the yards of the Church and tidy up the Church floors before and after Church services.

They can teach in Sunday Schools but not in public meetings. Women are allowed to go to colleges but when they return to their Churches they cannot become the leaders or priests. They cannot hold official positions in the Churches. In our research, all Churches originating from Australia do not encourage women to play the same roles as men at all.

The above discussion proved that the suppression of women in the society exist in the context of the use of language by the men as defined and encouraged by gender, culture, tradition and religion.

2.11 **Theoretical Framework**

Although the difference in language use between men and women has been widely discussed, there are many theories on language use by male and female. But for the purpose of this study, the social and dominance theory and cultural and difference theory are adopted. The social and dominance theory provides a traditional negative evaluation of women's speech which the authors contend is a direct consequence of women's political and cultural subordination to men. Thus, women's linguistic inadequacies are attributed to societal inequalities between men and women, where men's conversational dominance appears to reflect the wider political and cultural domination of men over women (Freeman and Mc Elhinny, 1996).

Lakoff (1975: 40) argues that women's manner of speaking, which is different from that of men, reflects their subordinate state in society. Thus women's language is marked by powerlessness and tentativeness, expressed through the use of litigator and inessential qualifiers which effectively disqualify women from positions of power and authority.

In particular, Lakoff (1975: 41) argues that women's language style is deficient, lacking in authority and assertiveness. Lakoff (1975: 43) also makes the interesting observation that women face a 'double bind' where they are criticized or scolded for not speaking like a lady but at the same time, speaking like a lady systematically denies the female speaker access to power on the ground that she is not capable of holding the ground based on her linguistic behaviour (Ibid).

Freeman and Mc Elhinny (1996) divide the women's use of language into three categories; the first is that which refers to the lack of resources that would enable women to express themselves strongly. Secondly, language that encouraged women to talk about trivial subjects and finally, language that requires women to speak tentatively. The authors also provide a comprehensive list of Lakoff's (1975) claims as provided below.

- Use of expletives while women use weaker ones.
- Women's speech is more polite than men's.
- Trivial, unimportant topics are considered to be women's domain.
- Women use empty adjectives.
- Women use tag questions more often than men.
- Women express uncertainty through the use of the question intonation pattern.
- Women tend to speak in italics (women use more intensifiers).
- Hedges are used more often by women.
- Hyper correct grammar is a feature of women speech.
- Women don't tell jokes.

(Freeman and Mc Elhinny, 1996: 232).

Zimmerman and West who also focused on male dominance in interaction added the feature of interruptions and silence to the list above. They argued that interruptions are used to silence others and that men tend to interrupt women more than women

interrupt men (ibid). The study of interruptions also proved to be more complex than originally thought of by West and Zimmerman who argued that interruptions are ‘a device for exercising power and control in conversation’ (1983: 103).

Women’s way of speech is often connected with tentativeness and the reason for this might be their way of using hedges. These hedges are linguistic forms such as, for instance, I think, you know, I’m sure, sort of, perhaps. Lakoff appears to be rather convinced that women’s speech contains more hedges than men’s speech. She explains that it is because women are socialized to believe that asserting themselves strongly is not nice or ladylike or even feminine (Lakoff, 1975: 54).

Another researcher named Preisler (1986: 29) also claims that women use more hedges in their language. Coates (1993: 116-118) gives a possible reason for men’s lower usage of hedges and that is their choice of topic, she explains that men prefer to talk about impersonal subjects.

Holmes (1984:60) made a study concerning hedges. Her analysis proves that hedges are multi-functional. Hedges reflect the speaker’s certainty as well as uncertainty in a conversation. Tag question such as I did – didn’t I? He was – wasn’t he? etc. are also one of the linguistic forms that are connected with tentativeness according to Lakoff who posits that females use more tag questions than males.

2.12 **The Cultural Dominance and Difference Theory**

This theory was developed as a reaction primarily to Lakoff’s (1975) deficit and dominance theory. In essence, feminists who subscribe to this theory claim that the reason for the different biological forms of language used by men and women is due to

their early socialization. The key features of the difference or cultural difference approach relate to psychological differences and socialization differences in social power.

An innate biological difference is cited by some as explanation of the differences in male and female language. Under this theory, biological differences lead to different rates of language acquisition in addition to causing psychological differences (Buffery and Gray 1972; Mc Glone 1980). For example, women tend to place more value on making connections, seeking involvement and concentrates on interdependences between people (Giligan 1982: Boe, 1987). Men value autonomy and detachment and seek independence, focusing on hierarchical relationships. Many however, would attribute such differences to socialization than biology.

Another reason to explain difference in male and female linguistic behaviour is that of social power. According to this view, men's greater degree of social power leads to their domination in interaction (Zimmerman and West, 1987). Deuchar (1988) suggests that the powerless members of the society must also be more polite, thus in communities where women are the powerless members, their speech would contain more element of linguistic politeness.

Those who adhere to the difference and dual cultural claim that men's conversational style is based on competitiveness while women have a more co-operative conversational style are Coates and Cameron (1988). Coates (1986) argues in her study that women aim to maintain social relationships, thus their goal of consolidating friendships is reflected in how they talk.

Tannen's (1990: 12) examination of a range of speech actions from advice-giving, story-telling, reactions to another's account of problems, asking for and giving information, compliments and gossip led her to conclude that while men approach the world as individuals in a hierarchical social order in which they are either one up or one down, women approach the world as individuals in a network of connections.

Tannen further expanded on the dual-culture model and argues that conversations are negotiations in which people try to achieve and maintain the upper and if they can, and protect themselves from other's attempt to put down and push them around (1990: 24-25).

Essentially, theories of the difference and dual-culture approach believe that differences appeared in childhood where boys and girls tend to play in sex-segregated groups with different sets of rules. Girls play almost exclusively in small co-operative groups while boys play almost exclusively in larger more hierarchical organised groups, Freeman and Mc Elhinny, (1996: 240). Therefore, dual theories argue that gender differences are created in similar ways to regional and social differences in language use through physical and social separation, Richford (1996). This study adopts the above theories as the theoretical frameworks. Although the theories did not take into consideration the economic factor which is the major amplifier of male and female chauvinism in the society today, it brings out the natural build-up of men and women in the society – the dominance nature of men which reflects the wider political, social and cultural domination of men over the women.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Preamble

This chapter examines the methodology adopted for this study. Its main focus is the research design, the population of the study, sample and sampling system, the research instrument and its validity, method of data collection and method of total analysis.

3.2 The Research Design

Research design is the plan for a research project. It provides guidelines which direct the researcher towards solving the research problem. Research design varies depending on the nature of the problem (Akuezuluilo and Agu, 2002). The research design adopted in this study is the survey research method. Survey research according to Kerlinger (1973: 411) studies large and small populations by selecting and studying samples chosen from the population to discover the relative incidence, distribution and interaction of sociological and psychological variables.

Survey research method studies samples drawn from population. From these samples, it infers the characteristics of the defined population. The study of the samples from which inferences about the population can be drawn is needed because of the difficulties in attempting to study a whole population.

This is because of the enormity of studying the whole population. The choice of the survey research is also justified with the fact that if it focuses on the people, the vital facts of the people and their beliefs, opinions, attitudes, experiences, behaviours,

motivations will be expressed. Also, other attributes of individuals that spring from their membership in social group are sex, income, political/religious affiliation, socio-economic status, education, age, living expenses, occupation and so on (Kerlinger, 1973: 412). Some of these variables as highlighted by Kerlinger are at the core of this study hence the relevance of this survey research to it.

3.3 The Target Population

In research, the term population is given a special definition. It is the aggregate or totality of objects or events or individuals, having one or more characteristics in common that are of interest to the researcher and where inferences are to be made (Olaofe, 2010: 90). The population for this study consists of all the people in the Akụ Community in Igbo-Etiti Local Government Area of Enugu State. From the gazette of the human population census of 2006, the population of the community under study is two hundred and twenty one thousand, two hundred and seventy four people (221,274). The target population is the one from which the researcher ultimately wants to generalize the result (Aminu, 2005: 235). Four hundred and thirteen subjects both male and female of different ages were randomly selected from the thirteen villages that make up Akụ community. They include civil servants, farmers, house wives and business men and women. Four hundred of the samples taken were from the application of the questionnaire and thirteen were from the oral interview written down. These number sampled are the representation of the entire population.

3.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

Studying the whole population within a specific period of time would be difficult, thus the need for a sample as a representation of the whole population. A sample is a

small subset of the population that has been chosen to be studied (Lunsford and Lunsford, 1995: 2). “Sampling is the process of selecting elements from the population in such a way that the sample elements selected represent the population (Aminu, 2005: 236). To get the sample for the study, random sampling technique was adopted by the researcher. Random sampling, according to Kerlinger (1973: 118) is “that method of drawing a portion (or sample) of a population or universe so that each member of the population/universe has an equal chance of being selected.” He however, warns that a random sample must be representative of the population from which it is drawn. When this happens then, a sample drawn at random is unbiased in the sense that no member of the population has any more chance of being selected than the other member. The sampling for this study was carried out in all the 13 villages that make up Akụ Community. This involves random selection of subjects on whom the questionnaires were administered to and the oral interview carried out on. In conducting the oral interview, a research assistant was employed. The researcher and the research assistant visited the respondents together. The researcher asked the subjects questions and the assistant took notes.

3.5 Research Instrument

Every study needs some tools of operation for it to be successful. An instrument in research is the tool for the collection of data. In this study, the research instruments chosen to collect data on the study of language use in Akụ Community are questionnaire and oral interview.

The researcher constructed the instrument using the insight gained from the review of related literature to the study. The questionnaire was used to gather

information from the literate subjects of the study. It is considered the appropriate instrument because it is a device for gathering information on people's opinions as demanded in the study (Hannan, 2007). Interview was used to gather data to complement that of the questionnaire.

3.6 **The Questionnaire**

Questionnaires are straightforward written questions requiring answers by ticking the appropriate boxes. They are very efficient ways of collecting facts (Hannan, 2007). The questionnaire used in collecting data on the use of Akụ dialect by the men and women of Akụ Community consists of two parts. Part one (1) required the bio-data of the respondents which include sex, age and occupation. Part two (2) of the questionnaire contains the items that elicited the opinion of the subjects. It was divided into three (3) sections (Section A-C). Section A elicits opinions on the words and expressions/proverbs used to refer to only the men in Akụ community. This was followed by words, phrases, statements and proverbs used in referring to the women in Akụ Community. Finally, was words, phrases statements and proverbs used to refer to both men and women in Akụ community. Section B seeks responses on the factors that are responsible for the use of such expressions on the people of AkụCommunity. Finally, Section C focuses on the effects of such expressions on the people of Akụ Community. (see Appendix A for the questions).

The items in the questionnaire were scaled as follows: The strongly agreed and agreed rating (SA and A) which are considered the positive scores and the strongly disagreed and disagreed rating (SD and D) which constitute the negative score. A

questionnaire scale in this way is very good in asking people to indicate how strongly they agree or disagree with a statement given (Hannan, 2007).

3.7 **The Oral Interview**

Interview is a purposeful conversation in which one person asks prepared questions (interviewer) and another answers them (respondents) (Qatey, 1999). Structured interviews consist of oral questions rather than a written questionnaire in order to obtain a higher response rate. It was useful in getting information from the literate as well as the illiterate subjects in the study. Interview gathers data from those who may not be capable of correctly completing a complex questionnaire (Hannan, 2007).

Interview was used in this study. It was given due consideration because in it, according to Opdenakker (2006), social cues such as voice, intonation and body language of the interviewee can give the interviewer extra information that can be added to the verbal answers of the interviewee on a question. In it, the interviewer observes as well as listens and asks more complex questions (Qatay, 1999). The research did not make use of tape recorder because the procedure is often cumbersome, as the materials have to be coded and perhaps transcribed before analysis.

There were two (2) parts in the schedule of interview. The part one (1) seeks the bio-data of the respondents such as age, marital status and occupation. The part two (2) of the interview schedule consists of items designed to elicit verbal information (data) from the respondents. The items were a rephrase of those in the questionnaire to make them suitable for face-to-face question and answer interaction. Question one (1) had one main question with five (A-E) attached to it. And, question two (2) had one main question with one (A) attached to it. Finally, question three (3) was one main question

with two (A & B) attached to it (See Appendix B for the questions). The responses of the informants, were written down and analysed.

3.8 **Pilot Study**

Pilot study/testing is the mini-trial of the research instruments to determine the adequacy or otherwise of such instrument (Olaofe, 2000: 97). It provides advance information on the possible difficulties, success and failure of a research project (Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001). Before going into the field, a pilot study on the sociolinguistic study of Akụ dialect in Akụ community was conducted in Kaduna metropolis. It was conducted on the selected group of Akụ people who reside in Kaduna. The choice of the Akụ people in Kaduna was informed by the experience they have in the use of certain expressions by men and women in addressing one another in Akụ Community. The result was used in checking the comprehensiveness and validity of the research instrument.

The data collected from the respondents for the pilot study were analyzed. A total number of thirty respondents were selected and administered the copies of the questionnaire for the study. But a total of twenty-seven (27) copies of the questionnaire were returned and found useful. The analysis of the result was based on responses to individual items on the questionnaire using the percentage method of analysis. The result of the pilot testing was in line with the objectives of the research. Therefore, the instrument is reliable and valid for the study.

3.9 **Validity of Research Instruments**

Validity is the ability of the research instrument to measure as adequately as possible the variables purported to be measured (Olaofe, 2010: 92). Validity involves all the measures carried out to ensure the fitness of an instrument. The validation of the questionnaire was done by first seeking the input of the thesis supervisor. Finally, a pilot study was conducted and the result utilised to further ascertain the validity of the questionnaire.

3.10 **Administration of Research Instrument/Data Collection**

In the data collection process, the researcher administered 400 questionnaires herself to the people of Akụ community in their various homes. The on-the-spot mode of questionnaire administration was to ensure that the actual individual for whom it was issued was indeed the one who completed it. It also eliminated the possibility of misinterpretation of the questions on the part of the respondents. Completed questionnaires were then retrieved for analysis.

Oral interview was conducted by the researcher and the research assistant. So, notes were written down as the interviewees spoke with the interviewer by the research assistant.

3.11 **Procedure for Analysis**

The results were tabulated and analysed based on responses to individual items on the questionnaire using the percentage method of analysis. This method was adopted in order to get the accurate responses of the informants to the different questions asked.

Decimals were used to avoid the dangers in rounding percentages which may distort the result. The aim of using decimals was thus to present the results as they were.

The responses of the interviewees were not subject to statistical analysis. They were used when discussing the items from the questionnaire as supplementary data.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Preamble

Chapter Four focuses on the presentation and analysis of the data. The data was collected from respondents in the thirteen (13) villages, which make up Akụ Community. The data collected with the questionnaire was presented and analysed in tables using frequencies and percentages. The information from the interview was used as complementary data in the analysis.

4.2 The Social Characteristics of the Respondents

The social characteristics considered include age, sex and occupation of 400 respondents, which were sampled from the thirteen villages of Akụ community and reflected in tables i – iii below.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Age

| Age | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| 30 – 39 | 90 | 22.5 |
| 40 – 49 | 100 | 25 |
| 50 – 59 | 124 | 31 |
| 60 and above | 86 | 21.5 |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

Table 1 shows distribution of the respondents by age. Out of the total number of the respondent, 90 representing 22.5% were within the age range of 30 - 39, 100 respondents representing 25% within the age range of 40 - 49, 124 respondents representing 31% within 50 - 59 and 86 respondents which is 21.5% were within the age range of 60 and above. The highest concentration of respondents falls within the ages of

60 years and above. The idea of falling between the ages of 40 – 49 years and 50 - 59 years was not deliberate. However, they were readily available and they constitute a strong working force. Among those groups too, the researcher noticed a high sense of enlightenment and exposure. These respondents were therefore willing to contribute to the research work and it is believed that their information will be most revealing.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents According to Sex

| Sex | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Male | 169 | 40 |
| Female | 240 | 60 |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

Table 2 shows that 160 respondents representing 40% were males, while 240 respondents representing 60% of them were females. The female respondents were more than the males. The women (female) can be reached easily because they stay more at home than the men.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents According to Occupation

| Occupation | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Civil Servant | 184 | 46 |
| Farmer | 14 | 3.5 |
| House Wives | 42 | 10.5 |
| Business | 160 | 40 |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

Table 3 shows that 184 respondents representing 46% of the respondents were civil servants, 14 respondents representing 3.5% were farmers, 42 respondents representing 10.5% were housewives and 160 respondents representing 40% of them

were business men and women. Civil servants and businessmen and women dominated the study because the two occupations are the most popular in Akụ Community. Also, the educated that easily fill the questionnaire are from these occupations.

4.3 Questions Related to the Topic of Study and Responses

4.3.1 The Following are derogatory Words, Phrases, Statements and Proverbs Used to Address the Men in the Akụ Community.

Table 4: *Oke ngta nwa onyonyo kparh*(A dog trained by a woman): Son of a bitch

| Data | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Agreed | 336 | 84 |
| Agreed | 60 | 15 |
| Disagreed | 4 | 1 |
| Strongly disagreed | --- | --- |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

Table 4 reveals that 336 respondents representing 84% out of 400 sampled strongly agreed that the expression “*Oke ngta nwa onyonyo kparh*” meaning a dog trained by a woman or son of a bitch is an expression used on the men in the Akụ community. Moreover, 60 respondents representing 15% of the respondents also agreed that it is used to refer to the men while only 4 respondents which is 1% of the subjects disagreed. By implication, it means that when a man trains a dog, it will be a useful one, but when the same dog is trained by a woman, it will become a useless one. This expression is literarily used to describe men whose behaviours are questionable. The respondents who believe in this see it from a point of view that men are believed to be perfectionists in training of children, while women are generally imperfect.

Table 5: *Echiche ndtiomu* (Women’s thinking or reasoning)

| Data | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Agreed | 348 | 87 |
| Agreed | 40 | 10 |
| Disagreed | 8 | 2 |
| Strongly disagreed | 4 | 1 |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

Table 5 indicates that the greater percentage of the respondents strongly agreed that the statement “*echiche ndtiomu*” meaning ‘women thinking or reasoning’ is an oppressive language against the women (87%). Then 10% ticked agreed while 2% ticked disagreed and 1% strongly disagreed. To the respondents that believe that this expression is an oppressive one, they believe that those who use this statement erroneously generalize that women’s thought is always very feeble and unreasonable. This is a case of over-generalization, as ways of thinking should not be seen as purely a gender thing. Men, as much as women, can be reasonable and unreasonable

Table 6: *Mkpi* (He-goat)

| Data | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Agreed | 377 | 94.25 |
| Agreed | 23 | 5.75 |
| Disagreed | --- | --- |
| Strongly disagreed | --- | --- |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

Table 6 shows that 94.25% of the respondents strongly agreed that ‘*mkpi*’ meaning he-goat is an expression used to refer to men. Also, 5.75% of the respondents ticked agreed. To the respondents, this expression is used to refer to a man who is randy in nature. None of the respondents disagreed with this perception.

Table 7: *Qwalì anụ Qzọ ne-egwuru ọnu* (Alligator that cannot dig its own hole).

| Data | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Agreed | 256 | 64 |
| Agreed | 114 | 28.5 |
| Disagreed | 20 | 5 |
| Strongly disagreed | 10 | 2.5 |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

Table 7 reveals that 256 out of 400 respondents sampled representing 64% strongly agreed that *Qwalì anụ Qzọ ne-egwuru ọnu* meaning alligator that cannot dig its own hole is an expression used to refer to men. This is followed by 28.5% who ticked agreed. Then, 5% disagreed and 2.5% strongly disagreed. These responses revealed that majority of the respondents strongly believe that this expression is used to refer to men in Akụ community.

4.3.2 **The Followings are Words, Statements, and Proverbs Used to Refer to Women in Akụ Community.**

Table 8: *Nwa onyonyo atụ ọhụ* (A mere woman who should not talk when men are talking or a common woman who should not bring herself out unless invited or permitted).

| Data | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Agreed | 316 | 79 |
| Agreed | 70 | 17.5 |
| Disagreed | 9 | 2.25 |
| Strongly disagreed | 5 | 1.25 |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

In Table 8 above, it shows that 316 respondents representing 79% strongly agreed that the expression “*Nwa onyonyo atụ ọhụ*” meaning a mere/common woman who should not talk when men are talking or who should not bring herself out unless invited or

permitted to; is an oppressive language used against women in the Akụ community. This is followed by 70 respondents representing 17.5% who also agreed that the expression is a language of oppression against the women. However, 5 respondents strongly disagreed with this 1.25% and 9 respondents which represent 2.25% disagreed.

These responses above show that majority of the respondents strongly believe that the expression is used to refer to the women in Akụ community.

Table 9: *Omer ke dimkpa*(She acted like a real man).

| Data | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Agreed | 266 | 66.5 |
| Agreed | 120 | 30 |
| Disagreed | 14 | 3.5 |
| Strongly disagreed | --- | --- |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

Table 9 indicates that 266 respondents representing 66.5% out of 400 subjects sampled strongly agreed that the expression “Omer ke dimkpa” meaning ‘she acted like a real man’ is an expression used to refer to the women of Akụ community. Then, 120 respondents representing 30% who ticked agreed follow this. Next was 14 respondents representing 3.5% disagreed and no respondent strongly disagreed. These responses revealed that majority of the respondents strongly agreed that the expression is used to address the women in the Akụ community. The respondents believe that when a woman acts bravely, she should be praised as a great person, rather than likening her braveness to that of a man. This is because, like some women, some men are also naturally cowards.

Table 10:*Ndtiomu bụ ukpo n'ekpo obodo*(Women are destroyers of the community or women are detractors of the society).

| Data | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Agreed | 322 | 80.5 |
| Agreed | 69 | 17.25 |
| Disagreed | 5 | 1.25 |
| Strongly disagreed | 4 | 1 |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

Table 10 shows that 80.5% of the respondents strongly agreed that the expression “Ndtiomu bụ ukpo n’ekpo obodo” meaning that ‘women are destroyers of the community or women are trouble makers’ is used to refer to the women of Akụ community. This is followed by 17.25% of the respondents who also tick agreed. Then 1.25% disagreed and 1% also tick strongly disagreed. These responses imply that majority of the respondents believe that this expression is use to refer to women in Akụ community. To the respondents who believe that this expression is used on women, they ask, don’t human societies have men who destroy and women who build the society?

Table 11:*Eweg nwa onyonyo eme ntili ishi*(Women are not reliable or women are unreliable).

| Data | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Agreed | 280 | 70 |
| Agreed | 116 | 29 |
| Disagreed | 4 | 1 |
| Strongly disagreed | --- | --- |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

Table 11 reveals that most of the respondents believed that the expression “*Eweg nwa onyonyo eme ntili-ishi*” meaning that women are not reliable is an expression used to refer to women. Seventy percent (70%) of the respondents ticked strongly agreed while 29% ticked agreed. Then, only 1% of the respondents ticked disagreed and no respondent ticked strongly disagreed.

Table 12:*Ndtiomu buobata osu*(Women are trouble makers or home dividers).

| Data | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Agreed | 297 | 74.25 |
| Agreed | 92 | 23 |
| Disagreed | 11 | 2.75 |
| Strongly disagreed | --- | --- |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

Table 12 shows that the statement “*Ndtiomu buobata osu*” meaning women are trouble makers or home dividers is an expression used to refer to the women of the Akụ community as troublemakers. Here, two hundred and ninety seven (297) out of 400 respondents ticked strongly agreed representing 74.25% while ninety two respondents representing 23% ticked agreed. Then 2.75% of the respondents ticked disagreed and no respondent ticked strongly disagreed. This shows that majority of the respondents believe the above expression is used on the women in the Akụ community.

Table 13:*Uka nwa onyonyo anog, okwu ang adh nke obu*(There is peace or tranquility where a woman is absent).

| Data | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Agreed | 250 | 62.5 |
| Agreed | 150 | 37.5 |
| Disagreed | --- | --- |

| | | |
|--------------------|------------|------------|
| Strongly disagreed | --- | --- |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

Table 13 indicates that majority of the respondents strongly believed that the expression “*Ụka nwa onyonyo anọg, okwu ang adh nke ọbụ*” meaning there is peace and tranquillity where a woman is absent is used to refer to women in the Akụ community. While two hundred and fifty (250) representing 62.5% out of 400 respondents ticked strongly agreed in their responses, one hundred and fifty (150) respondents representing 37.5% ticked agreed, then no respondent ticked disagreed and strongly disagree.

Table 14: *Akwunakwuna*(Prostitute); *Onye ukwu war* (Adulterous woman); *Araka dti* (Fantastic adulterer); *Onye amịaa*(Shameless and uncontrollable adulterous woman); and *Onye nzoshue ụkwụ*(Useless adulterous woman).

| Data | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Agreed | 372 | 93 |
| Agreed | 28 | 7 |
| Disagreed | --- | --- |
| Strongly disagreed | --- | --- |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

Table 14 reveals that a greater percentage of the respondents strongly agreed that the following words/expressions are used on the women of the Akụ community. “*Akwunakwuna*” – slut; “*Onye ukwu warh*” meaning ‘adulterous woman;’ “*Araka dti*” meaning fantastic adulterer; “*Onye amịaa*” meaning shameless and uncontrollable adulterous woman and “*Onye nzoshue ụkwụ*” meaning useless adulterous woman. In their responses, 93% ticked strongly agreed and 7% ticked agreed. None of the respondents ticked strongly disagreed and disagreed.

Table 15: *Uchichi agba eka, Ora ke ikpo, Owe uchichi eme eshushue* (Sexually insatiable and dangerous fornicator)

| Data | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Agreed | 364 | 91 |
| Agreed | 36 | 9 |
| Disagreed | --- | --- |
| Strongly disagreed | --- | --- |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

Table 15 indicates that out of 400 respondents 364 representing 91% strongly agreed that the expressions *uchichi agba-eka, ora ke-ikpo* and *oji uchichi eme eshushue*” meaning sexually insatiable and dangerous fornicators are used to refer to the women of Akụ community. Then, nine percent (9%) also agreed while none of the respondents ticked disagreed and strongly disagreed. This shows that the greater percentage of the subject believe that the expression is used on the women in the community under study.

Table 16: *Ebere boys* – Free for the boys; and *Ngta* – bitch

| Data | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Agreed | 377 | 94.25 |
| Agreed | 23 | 5.75 |
| Disagreed | --- | --- |
| Strongly disagreed | --- | --- |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

Table 16 reveals that 377 out of 400 respondents representing 94% strongly agreed that “*ebere boys*” meaning free for boys and “*ngta*” meaning a bitch are phrase/word used on the women of the Akụ community. Then, 23 respondents representing 5.75% also agreed while no respondent ticked disagreed and strongly

disagreed. These responses indicate that the majority of the respondents believed that the expressions mentioned above are used to refer to the women in Akụ community.

4.3.3 The Following are some of the Words, Statements and Proverbs Used to Refer to Both Men and Women in Akụ Community

Table 17: *Nwa ndhdh agbugba* (A child born out of wedlock).

| Data | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Agreed | 276 | 69 |
| Agreed | 124 | 31 |
| Disagreed | — | — |
| Strongly disagreed | — | — |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

Table 17 reveals that 276 out of 400 respondents representing 69% strongly agreed that ‘nwa ndhdh ogbugba’ is an expression used in Akụ dialect to refer to men/women. This was followed by, 124 respondents, representing 31% who equally agreed. The responses above imply that the entire respondents strongly believe that illegal children or child born out of wedlock is referred to as ‘nwa ndhdh agbugba’ in the dialect of Akụ.

Table 18: *Ngwere amag ahuhuuilo* (Lizard does not know what it takes to build a house, yet it lives in a house comfortably).

| Data | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Agreed | 390 | 97.5 |
| Agreed | 10 | 2.5 |
| Disagreed | — | — |
| Strongly disagreed | — | — |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

Table 18 indicates that 390 out of 400 respondents representing 97.5% strongly agreed that ‘*ngwere amag ahuhuulo*’ meaning lizard does not know what it takes to build a house and yet, it lives in a house comfortably is an expression used to address a man or a woman living in a house not built by him or her and yet, exhibit sorts of arrogance. Also, 10 respondent, representing 2.5% agreed on this too. This means that the entire respondents strongly believed that this expression is used to refer to arrogant men and women in Akụ community who are not capable of building their own houses and yet live in a house built by another person.

Table 19: *Onye kpée, nhu, Uhere hurh nyima shi*(worthless fellow/individual)

| Data | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Agreed | 366 | 91.5 |
| Agreed | 34 | 8.5 |
| Disagreed | — | — |
| Strongly disagreed | — | — |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

Table 19 reveals that the entire respondents strongly believe that *Onye kpée, nhu, Uhere, hurh nyima shi* - Meaning a complete useless or worthless fellow is expression in Akụ community that is used to refer to man/woman whose behaviour is considered questionable. While 366 out of 400 respondents representing 91.5% ticked strongly agreed, 34 respondents representing 8.5% ticked agreed. None of the respondents ticked strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively.

Table 20: *Onye nshì* (a murderer).

| Data | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Agreed | 400 | 100 |
| Agreed | — | — |
| Disagreed | — | — |
| Strongly disagreed | — | — |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

Table 20 reveal that the 100% of the respondents strongly agreed that ‘*onye nshì*’ meaning a murderer is a phrase in the dialect of Akụ community use to refer to both men and women. To these respondents, this phrase is used to refer to a man or a woman who is suspected to be diabolical or who kills people using poisons.

Table 21: *Adh mma ne igbugbu, adh mma ne utara* (good for nothing human being).

| Data | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Agreed | 310 | 77.5 |
| Agreed | 90 | 22.5 |
| Disagreed | — | — |
| Strongly disagreed | — | — |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

Table 21 shows that ‘*adh mma ne igbugbu, adh mma ne utara*’ meaning good for nothing, is a statement in the dialect of Akụ community that is used to address either a man or a woman, while 310 respondents representing 77.56% ticked strongly agreed, 90 respondents representing 22.5% ticked agreed. None of the respondents disagreed.

Table 22: *Ọnọrh ọbịa* (One who lives on other people’s benevolence)

| Data | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Agreed | 21 | 52.5 |
| Agreed | 190 | 47.5 |
| Disagreed | — | — |
| Strongly disagreed | — | — |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

Table 22 shows that the expression ‘*Ọnọrh ọbịa*’ – meaning One who lives on other people’s benevolence in the dialect of Akụ community that is used to refer to both men and women in Akụ community. In the responses of the subjects, 210 represents 52.5% ticked strongly agreed, 190 respondents representing 47.5% ticked agreed. None of the respondent ticked disagreed.

Table 23: *Ndh eka nwe* (the out castes or slaves)

| Data | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Agreed | 227 | 56.75 |
| Agreed | 173 | 43.25 |
| Disagreed | — | — |
| Strongly disagreed | — | — |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

Table 23 proves that 227 respondents representing 56.75% ticked strongly agreed while 173 respondents representing 43.25% ticked agreed. This means that the entire respondents believed that ‘*ndh eka nwe*’ meaning the out castes is an expression used to refer to people who are perceived to be slaves (osu) in Akụ community.

Table 24: *Ejọ nwa or Ejọ mmadvu*(evil child or evil human being)

| Data | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Agreed | 368 | 92 |
| Agreed | 32 | 8 |
| Disagreed | — | — |
| Strongly disagreed | — | — |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

Table 24 indicates that ‘*ejọ nwa*’ is a phrase in the dialect of Akụ that is used to refer to either a man or a woman. While 368 respondents representing 92% of the entire respondents ticked strongly agreed, 32 which represents 8% went for agreed. This implies that the entire respondents believed that *Ejọ nwa or Ejọ mmadvu* is used to refer to both men and women in the community under study that are perceived to be wicked.

Table 25: *Kpanthth/Mkphrhwiwi/kpakpa ahuriahụ* (a Kleptomaniac)

| Data | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Agreed | | 83.25 |
| Agreed | 67 | 16.75 |
| Disagreed | — | — |
| Strongly disagreed | — | — |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

Table 25 shows that 333 respondents representing 83.25% ticked strongly agreed. Then, 67 respondents, representing 16.75% ticked the agreed box. This means that the entire respondents agreed that ‘*mkphrhwiwi or kpanthth*’ meaning kleptomaniac is a word in the dialect of Akụ community that is used to refer to either a man or a woman who has a strong desire to steal.

Table 26: *Onye ejigrị obu*(a stubborn person)

| Data | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Agreed | 348 | 87 |
| Agreed | 52 | 13 |
| Disagreed | — | — |
| Strongly disagreed | — | — |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

Table 26 reveals that 348 representing 87% ticked strongly agreed and 52 respondents representing 13% of the entire respondents ticked agreed. This means that ‘*onye ejigrị obu*’ meaning a stubborn person is an expression used to refer to both men and women in Akụ community. To the respondents, this expression can cause quarrel or even lead to fight when used to refer to people

Table 27: *Ọdh kodh kpọshị, ọdh ọdọh gorh*(Meaning People of like minds or Birds of a feather)

| Data | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Agreed | 280 | 70 |
| Agreed | 80 | 20 |
| Disagreed | 25 | 6.25 |
| Strongly disagreed | 15 | 3.75 |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

The statistical Table 27 reveals that 280 (70%) of the respondents strongly agreed that the above mentioned is used to refer to both sexes in the Akụ community. Also, 80 (20%) of the respondents agreed to this perception. On the other side 25 (6.25%) of the respondents disagreed and 15 (3.75%) strongly disagreed with the perception. The responses above imply that majority of the respondents agreed that ‘*Odh kodh kpoishi, odh kodh gorh*- Meaning People of like minds or Birds of a feather’ is used to refer to people in Akụ community irrespective of their sexes.

4.4 **The Following Factors are Responsible for the Use of the Above Mentioned Expressions by People to Refer to One Another in Akụ Community**

Table 28: Culture/Tradition

| Data | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Agreed | 235 | 58.75 |
| Agreed | 62 | 15.5 |
| Disagreed | 80 | 20 |
| Strongly disagreed | 23 | 5.75 |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

Table 28 above indicates that 285 (58.75%) of the respondents strongly agreed that culture/tradition is one of the factors that are responsible for the use of the above mentioned expressions by the people of Akụ community to refer to one another. Then, 62 (15.5%) of the respondents agreed with the opinion. On the contrary, 80 (20%) of the respondents disagreed and 23(5.75%) of the respondents strongly disagreed. This shows that majority of the respondents agreed that culture/tradition is one of the factors responsible for the use of such expressions

Table 29: Religion

| Data | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Agreed | 190 | 47.5 |
| Agreed | 80 | 20 |
| Disagreed | 60 | 15 |
| Strongly disagreed | 70 | 17.5 |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

Table 29 reveals that 190 (47.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 80 (20%) agreed, 60 (15%) disagreed and 70 (17.5%) of the respondents strongly disagreed. The statistical distribution table shows that the greater percentage of the respondents agreed that religion is one of the factors responsible for the use of such expression by the people of Akụ community to refer to one another.

Table 30: Fear of Gender Equality

| Data | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Agreed | 280 | 70 |
| Agreed | 68 | 17 |
| Disagreed | 30 | 7.5 |
| Strongly disagreed | 22 | 5.5 |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

Table 30 shows that 280 (70%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 68 (17%) of the respondents agreed, 30 (7.5%) of the respondents disagreed, and 22 (5.5%) strongly disagreed with the above opinion. Their responses prove that majority of the respondents are of the opinion that fear of gender equality is one of the factors that is responsible for the use of such expressions by the people of Akụ community to refer to one another.

Table 31: Fear of Male Domination

| Data | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Agreed | 30 | 7.5 |
| Agreed | 50 | 12.5 |
| Disagreed | 80 | 20 |
| Strongly disagreed | 240 | 60 |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

Table 31 reveals that 30 (7.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 50 (12.5%) of the respondents agreed. But 80 (20%) of the respondents disagreed and 240 (60%) of the respondents strongly disagreed. This reveals that greater percentage of the respondents disagreed that fear of male domination is a factor.

Table 32: Fear of Female Domination

| Data | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Agreed | 240 | 60 |
| Agreed | 80 | 20 |
| Disagreed | 50 | 12.5 |
| Strongly disagreed | 30 | 7.5 |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

Table 32 shows that 240 (60%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 80 (20%) of the respondents agreed, 50 (12.5%) of the respondents disagreed and 30 (7.5%) of the respondents strongly disagreed. This suggests that majority of the respondents agreed with the opinion.

Table 33: Waywardness of Men and Women

| Data | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Agreed | 180 | 45 |
| Agreed | 95 | 23.75 |
| Disagreed | 90 | 22.5 |
| Strongly disagreed | 35 | 8.75 |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

Table 33 reveals that 180 (45%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 95 (23.75%) of the respondents agreed, 90 (22.5%) of the respondents disagreed and 35 (8.75%) of the respondents strongly disagreed. This suggests that majority of the respondents strongly agreed with the perception.

Table 34: The Exercise of Economic and Political Power

| Data | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Agreed | 180 | 45 |
| Agreed | 60 | 15 |
| Disagreed | 60 | 15 |
| Strongly disagreed | 100 | 25 |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

This statistical Table 34 reveals that 180 (45%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 60 (15%) of the respondents agreed, 60 (15%) of the respondents disagreed and 100 (25%) of the respondents strongly disagreed. This suggests that majority of our respondents believed that the exercise of economic and political power is one of the factors responsible for the use of such expressions by the people of Aku community to refer to one another.

Table 35: Exercise of Academic Achievement

| Data | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Agreed | 210 | 52.5 |
| Agreed | 80 | 20 |
| Disagreed | 50 | 12.5 |
| Strongly disagreed | 60 | 15 |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

The statistical Table 35 reveals that 210 (52.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 80 (20%) of the respondent agreed, 50 (12.5%) of the respondents disagreed and 60 (15%) of the respondents strongly disagreed. The responses show that majority of our respondents believed that men and women in Akū community use such expressions as mentioned above to refer to one another in order to exercise their academic achievements.

4.5 **The Following are the Effects of the Use of the Above Mentioned Words, Phrases, Statements and Proverbs on Men and Women in Akū Community.**

Table 36: It is Oppressive

| Data | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Agreed | 330 | 82.5 |
| Agreed | 62 | 15.5 |
| Disagreed | 8 | 2 |
| Strongly disagreed | — | — |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

Table 36 shows that 330 respondents, representing 82.5% ticked strongly agreed and 62 respondents, representing (15.5%) ticked agreed. Then, 8 (2%) respondents ticked disagreed. This means that, the greater percentage of the respondents believed that the use of such words, statement and proverbs as mentioned above on men and women in Akū community is oppressive.

Table 37: It Leads to Domestic Violence

| Data | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Agreed | 291 | 72.75 |
| Agreed | 88 | 22 |
| Disagreed | 13 | 3.25 |
| Strongly disagreed | 8 | 2 |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

Table 37 indicates that 291 respondents, representing 72.75% ticked strongly agreed. This, was followed by 88 respondents, representing 22% who ticked agreed. Then, 13 (3.25%) of the respondents disagreed and 8 (2%) of the respondents strongly disagreed. This means that majority of the respondents believed that using such expressions to refer to one another leads to domestic violence in families.

Table 38: It Leads to Divorce and Broken Homes

| Data | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Agreed | 294 | 73.5 |
| Agreed | 79 | 19.75 |
| Disagreed | 20 | 5 |
| Strongly disagreed | 7 | 1.75 |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

Table 38 indicates that 294 (73.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed that using such expressions as mentioned in section 4.2.2 on people can lead to broken home/divorce and also 79 (19.75%) of the respondents agreed. But,20 (5%) ticked disagreed and 7 (1.75%) of the respondents ticked strongly disagreed. This means that bulk of the percentage of the respondents agreed that the use of such expressions on men and women could lead to broken home/divorce.

Table 39:It Leads to Quarrel/Fight

| Data | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Agreed | 377 | 94.25 |
| Agreed | 20 | 5 |
| Disagreed | 3 | 0.75 |
| Strongly disagreed | — | — |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

Table 39 indicates that 377 (94.25%) respondents ticked strongly agreed and 20 (5%) of the respondents ticked agreed. Then, 3 (0.75%) of the respondents ticked disagreed, while none of the respondents ticked strongly agreed. This means that majority of the respondents agreed that using such expressions on men and women in Aku community can lead to quarrel/fight.

Table 40: It Brings About Hatred and Mistrust

| Data | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Agreed | 259 | 67.75 |
| Agreed | 127 | 31.75 |
| Disagreed | 10 | 2.5 |
| Strongly disagreed | 4 | 1 |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

Table 40 shows that 259 (64.75%) of the respondents ticked strongly agreed and 127 (31.75%) of the respondents ticked agreed. On the contrary, 10 (2.5%) of the respondents disagreed and 4 (1%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with the perception. This concludes that majority of the respondents are of the opinion that those forms of expressions could lead to hatred and mistrust among men and women in Aku community.

Table 41: It Leads to Poor Upbringing of Children.

| Data | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Agreed | 246 | 61.5 |
| Agreed | 135 | 33.75 |
| Disagreed | 19 | 4.75 |
| Strongly disagreed | — | — |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

Table 41 indicates that 246 (61.5%) of the respondents ticked strongly agreed and 135 (33.75%) of the respondents ticked agreed. Then 19 (4.75%) of the respondents ticked disagreed and none of the respondents ticked strongly disagreed. This implies that the use of such expressions to refer to people can lead to poor child upbringing.

Table 42: It Leads to Prostitution.

| Data | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Agreed | 370 | 92.5 |
| Agreed | 26 | 6.5 |
| Disagreed | 3 | 0.75 |
| Strongly disagreed | 1 | 0.25 |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

Table 42 reveals that 370 (92.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed to this and 26 (6.5%) agreed. However, 3 (0.75%) of the respondents disagreed and 1 (0.25%) of the entire respondents strongly disagreed. From the result, it was seen that (396) 99% of the entire respondents believed that those kinds of expressions can lead one into prostitution due to the fact that some of these expressions dehumanize and depress. Low self-esteem could be responsible for some persons going into prostitution.

Table 43: It Leads to Inter-Village or Inter-Family Clashes.

| Data | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Agreed | 298 | 74.5 |
| Agreed | 97 | 24.25 |
| Disagreed | 2 | 0.5 |
| Strongly disagreed | 3 | 0.75 |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

Table 43 shows that 298 (74.5%) of the respondents ticked strongly agreed and 97 (24.25%) of the respondents ticked agreed. On the other hand 2 (0.5%) of the respondents ticked disagreed and 3 (0.75%) of the respondents strongly disagreed which is to say that a good number of the respondents agreed to the fact that expressions of such degree can fuel inter-village or inter-family crisis.

Table44: Murder for Vengeance.

| Data | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Agreed | 262 | 65.5 |
| Agreed | 118 | 29.5 |
| Disagreed | 11 | 2.75 |
| Strongly disagreed | 9 | 2.25 |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

Table 44 reveals that 262 (65.5%) strongly agreed and 118 (29.5%) agreed that such words aforementioned can lead to people killing oneanother. On the other hand, 11 (2.75%) disagreed and 9 (2.25%) strongly disagreed. From the result, it can be seen that majority of the respondents agreed that expressions as such can lead to people killing their fellow human beings.

Table 45: It Can Cause Delay in Getting Married and Even a Total Denial of Getting Married

| Data | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Agreed | 391 | 97.75 |
| Agreed | 5 | 1.25 |
| Disagreed | 4 | 1 |
| Strongly disagreed | — | — |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

Table 45 indicates that 391 (97.75%) of the respondents strongly agreed and 5 (1.25%) of the respondents agreed. Only 4 (1%) of the respondents disagreed. The statistics shows that 99% of the respondents believed that using such utterances to refer to people could lead to delay or denial of getting married.

Table 46: It Leads to Armed Robbery.

| Data | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Agreed | 212 | 53 |
| Agreed | 93 | 23.25 |
| Disagreed | 62 | 15.5 |
| Strongly disagreed | 33 | 8.25 |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

The Table 46 reveals that 212 (53%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 93 (23.25%) of the respondents agreed, 62 (15.5%) of the respondent disagreed and 33 (8.25%) of the respondents strongly disagreed. This implies that a larger percentage of the respondents believe that the use of such expressions leads to some of the social vices experienced in Akū community which include, but not limited to armed robbery.

4.6 Summary of the Major Findings

The findings of the research reveal that there are certain forms of expressions used by the people of Akụ community in addressing one another which have negative influence on the people, especially the women. Some specific revelations of the research worthy of note are summarised as follows:

- i. There are oppressive and conflict generating words, statements, and proverbs used in referring to the men in Akụ community. A clear evidence of this is seen in the responses of our subjects in the questionnaire and interview questions where it was uncovered that majority of our subjects were of the opinion that words and statements and proverbs such as *mkpi* (he-goat), *Oke ngta nwa onyonyo kpar* (A dog trained by a woman or Son of a bitch), *echiche ndiom* (women reasoning), *Owalị anụ ozo ne egwuru ọnu* (Alligator lizard that cannot dig its own hole itself) etc. are quite oppressive.

The oppressive and suppressive words, statements and proverbs being used in referring to women in Akụ community are: *akwụnakwuna* (prostitute), *ngta* (bitch), *ebereboys* (free for all boys to have sexual intercourse with), cheap articles, public toilet, *uchichi agba eka* (sexually insatiable lady), etc. These words are used to refer to women who engage in fornication. The expressions are dehumanizing and make the women feel inferior. Expressions like *onye nzoshue ukwu*, *onye amiaa*, *araka dti*, *onye ukwuwarr* meaning shameless, useless and uncontrollable adulterous woman are used to refer to women who commit adultery and these expressions have no male equivalent. Some of the oppressive proverbs revealed are *eweg nwa onyonyo eme ntili ishi* – women are not reliable, *uka nwa onyonyo anog ne okwu ang adh nkobu* – there is peace where women are absent, *nwa onyonyo bu ukpo na – ekpo obodo* meaning women are community

destroyers, etc. All these statements about women portray them negatively .It sounds as if there is nothing good about the women in the community under study. One who values his mother, sister and wife should not find it advisable to use any of these abusive remarks on women.

Also, there are words, statements, and proverbs used in referring to both men and women that are oppressive and suppressive in content. They are; *Nwa ndhdh agbugba*(a child born out of wedlock),*Onye kpee,uhere,nhu,huru nyima shi* (worthless fellow or individual), *Onye nshi* (murderer),*Adh mma ne igbugbu;adh mman'utara*(good for nothing individual), *Ndh eka nwe*(slaves), *Ejona/ejommadvu* (evil child or evil human being),*nkpurhwiwi, kpanthth, kpakpahuriahu* (kleptomaniac),*Onye ejigri obu*(a hard-hearted human being)*Odh kodh kpohiodh kodh gorh*(people of like minds or birds of a feather flock together)etc. The enlisted expressions above are used to address people negatively.

- ii. There are factors that are responsible for the choice of such expressions in Akụ community. This can be seen in the responses of our respondents in both the interview questions and the questionnaires. Here, majority of the respondents strongly agreed that culture/tradition, fear of gender equality, fear of male domination, fear of female domination, waywardness of men and women, exercise of economic and political power, exercise of academic achievement, are some of the factors responsible for the use of such language.
- iii Furthermore, the effects of the use of the above mentioned expressions on the people of Akụ community are: it leads to divorce, domestic violence, poor upbringing of children, quarrel, fight, inter village and inter family clashes , hatred , mistrust, murder for

vengeance, delay and total denial of marriage, prostitution, armed robbery and cultism. It is also oppressive, suppressive, dehumanizing, belittling and ridiculous.

iv Finally, from the respondents, it was also uncovered that language use in Akụ community affects the women more than the men. This was seen in the responses of the respondents in the questionnaires. In the oral interview, it was also gathered that, apart from the use of oppressive and dehumanizing words, phrases, statements and proverbs to address them (women) they are not also allowed to make linguistic contributions or lend their voices in areas like taking decisions on issues concerning family land no matter the age of the woman; discussion on haggling of marriage rites (*ih ishi nwanyi*), chanting of incantations before breaking of kolanuts in a social gathering (*ihu ohọ tupu awaa oji na ogbakọ*), chanting of incantations in the shrine while appeasing the gods (*I go maa*).

4.7 Discussion of Findings

In the analysis of the data presented, the researcher interpreted and explained all the data concurrently and collectively under the following sub-topics: The words and expressions used in referring to the men in Akụ community, The words, phrases, statements and proverbs used in referring to the women in Akụ community, Then, words, phrases, statements and proverbs used in referring to both men and women in Akụ community. This is followed by the factors that are responsible for the use of such expressions on the people of Akụ community. Next, are the effects of the use of such expressions on the people whom they used it to address in Akụ community and finally, gender which the use of such language affects more in the community under study.

4.7.1 **The Words or Expressions Used to Refer to the Men in Akụ Community.**

The researcher has earlier pointed out that language is a veritable tool for expression in the human society. It has the power to dehumanize and perpetuate the oppression of people. According to Bosmajian (1960: 35) the magic of words and names has always been an integral part of both “primitive and “civilized society. And names, words, statements and proverbs can be and are used to inspire, motivate, and liberate the people. They are also used to dehumanize human beings and to justify their suppression and even their extermination. In other words, we have observed from our respondents that some of the words, names and expressions used to refer to men in Akụ Community are oppressive and dehumanizing. The response from our subjects to this oppressive expressions used on the men in the community under study proves that a greater percentage of the people sampled, strongly believed that expressions used to address the men tend to not only degrade the men, but also to lower their self-esteem.

Some of the words, names and expressions used to refer to men in the community under this study are: *mkpi* meaning he-goat. In a formal gathering for instance, you hear a statement like: *Ugwuja bu mkpi* meaning Ugwuja is a he-goat. This means that he (Ugwuja) is promiscuous in nature. In most cases, according to interviewee 7, many societal responsibilities in the village are not entrusted to the men who are perceived to be *mkpi*. This is because they do not have confidence in such men. They can compromise situations if women are involved in anything that is entrusted to them. Secondly, the society feels that they lack concentration. Any man who is perceived to be like that is not respected in the society. ‘Woman- wrapper’ is also an expression used to refer to men who are promiscuous (interviewee 4). For example, *Okoro bu* ‘woman-wrapper’ meaning

Okoro is a woman-wrapper. This means that Okoro is promiscuous. This expression is also degrading.

Another expression is the common and popular idiom; “*oke ngta nwa onyonyo kpar*” meaning a dog trained by a woman or son of a bitch which is also used in referring to men in Akụ community. If in a social gathering someone utters: *Ogbonna bu oke ngta nwaonyonyo kpar*, it means that Ogbonna is a dog trained by a woman. What this means is that Ogbonna is a male child who does not know his worth in the family or society. From the explanations of our interviewees on the course of this research, we understood that it is used to refer to a man who misbehaves or a male child who behaves foolishly. Even though the use of this expression belittles the man whom it is used to refer to, women also share in the insult. This is because the women are being portrayed as incompetent beings with regard to raising of male children. This idiom implies that men raise the male children better than the women do. This notion is wrong because in today’s society, there are multiple examples of widows who raised their male children to become responsible citizens. There are also several instances of families where both parents jointly raise irresponsible children. There is the common idea that when a male child is good, the father will be praised in the society but when he is bad or foolish the mother is blamed. This should not be so. Treating women in this manner does not only harm them but also contributes to the practice of subjugation and oppression that have persisted from generation to generation. The harm of oppressive language is more psychological than physical.

Another example is ‘*echiche ndtiomu*’ – women’s thinking or reasoning. It was clearly observed from the interviewees that any argument that is not logical or useful is

referred to as '*echiche ndtiomu.*' more especially when the argument is presented by a man. And when such argument is regarded as women's thinking/thought, it is being down-played on. The man who presented such argument is perceived to be foolish and hence, he is ridiculed. If in a formal gathering, one makes a statement like: *Atumatu Ochefu bu echichendtiomu* meaning Ochefu's suggestion is just women's reasoning. This means that Ochefu's suggestion is not suitable to the issue at hand and therefore people should reject and disregard it. Conversely, where a woman presents a strong argument or useful argument, they say she did not think like a woman. By implication, it means that she thought like a man even when they know that men can as well be narrow in their thinking thus, the phrase '*echiche ndtiomu.*' The question is, Does it mean that women never think rightly? The answer is 'NO'. It is just that our social system designed language in such a way that it will favour the male folk against the women folk thereby subjecting them to second class citizens.

In addition, '*Owalì anuozọ ne egwuru onu*' means alligator that cannot dig its own hole. This proverb, according to interviewees 4 and 9 is mostly used in Akụ community to refer to a married man who is unable to impregnate his wife due to some biological/health complications. In such situation, the wife is, permitted to go out and get pregnant for her husband from a different man of her choice, according to the tradition of the Akụ community; the children born in this manner rightly belong to her husband. If such a man disagrees with other people on some kinds of issues in a social gathering, he may be verbally assaulted thus: *Ibekwe, owalì anuozọ ne egwuru onu kwuchie onu nọrọdu na oche* meaning *Ibekwe* who cannot perform his duties as a man, kindly close

your mouth and sit down. They use such expression to silent and suppress whoever is referred to.

4.7.2 The Words, Statements and Proverbs Used in Referring to Women in Aku Community.

We confirmed that the following words and expressions are used to refer to women in Aku community; slut or prostitute (*akwunakwuna*). Here a woman who engages in prostitution is referred to as *akwunakwuna*. For example, *Adaora bu akwunakwuna* meaning *Adaora* is a prostitute. It is also used to refer to a woman who has multiple sexual partners. For example: *Chinyere bu akwunakwuna ama ama, osoo nwoke nkea tata echi osoroqzo*. This means that Chinyere is a known prostitute who sleeps with different men on different days. In this situation, the men who patronize them have no name given to them. No equal pejorative is used to refer to the men. This shows how women are being relegated in the Aku community. Another word used to refer to women who engage in multiple sexually related acts is “*ngta*” meaning a bitch. For example: *Nwanneka bu ngta* meaning Nwanneka is a bitch. It means that *Nwanneka* is promiscuous. This derogatory remark equates the “*mkipi*” meaning he-goat, which is used to refer to the men. Comparing human beings with animals is the highest level of degradation.

Other words or names used to refer to women who commit fornication in Aku community are ‘cheap article,’ ‘public toilet,’ ‘free for boys’ (*ebere boys*), etc. according to interviewee 6. For instance, when you hear: *Nkechi bu ebere boys*. This means that Nkechi is free for all boys or gives herself freely to the boys. They apply such words indiscriminately to women while their sexual partners (men) are being considered

asheroes. They are praised with names like “*onye ike*” meaning ‘strong man’ or ‘powerful man,’ ‘professors of women affairs,’ and *eze nnunu*’ meaningking of the birds says interviewee 4. For example: *Chukwuemeka bu onye ike, okporo nwaanyi nkea bata tata, echi odupukpota ozo* meaning Chukwuemeka is a strong man who changes women every day. *Udoka bu ezennunu, o na- ekpo umu nwaanyi ekpo* meaning Udoka is the king of the birds, he carriesmany women as he wants. Here, women are referred to as ‘birds’. While the women are traumatized, the men are glorified with the names used to describe them. This indicates the biased nature of language on women. Our subjects further informed us in our oral interview that certain pejoratives are used in Akụ community to refer to women who commit adultery. Such pejoratives are; ‘*onye amiaa*’ – shameless and uncontrollably adulterous woman, ‘*ogba ne-ezi*’ – adulterous woman, ‘*onye ukwu warr*’ – useless adulterous woman, ‘*araka dti*’ – fantastic adulterer, ‘*onye nzoshue ukwu,*’ etc. e.g. *Ukamaka bu onye amiaa* meaning Ukamaka is a shameless and uncontrollably adulterous woman. *Kanayo buogba ne-ezi* meaning Kanayo is an adulterous woman. *Oriaku bu onye ukwu warr* meaning Oriaku is a useless adulterous woman. *Uche bu araka dti* meaning Uche is a fantastic adulterer. *Ogbuanyinya bu onye nzoshue ukwu* meaning Ogbuanyinya is a useless adulterous woman. Our respondents argued that these names mentioned here are used to refer to women who commit adultery, have no male equivalent in the dialect of Akụ community. Using such derogatory remarks to address women shows that, language is, biased against them. In this vein, promiscuity is a heroic act as far as men are concerned.

We were made to understand that the women, when caught in the act of adultery, are severely punished. They are sent back to their father’s houses, and stigmatized, while

the men are free, says interviewee 1. The question one should ask is: “Are women who are treated this way listened to?” Consulted when important decisions are being taken? Argued with? Obviously no! Such people are devalued and are never taken seriously. Just as our thoughts affect our language, so does our language affects our thoughts and eventually our actions and behaviours. As Cameron (1992: 3) rightly observes, we (women) are at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression in our society.

To confirm the fact that language is used to devalue women as rightly observed in this sociolinguistic study of Akụ dialect in Akụ community, (Lakoff, 1975: 7) gave examples of slang terms like *chick*, *kitten* or derogatory term like sluts, etc. which are used to refer to women. . This further stresses the Bosmajian assertion (1960) that “as long as adult women are chicks, girls, dolls, babes and ladies, their status in the society will remain” inferior.” They will be treated as subjects in the subject-master-relationship as long as the language of the law places them into the same class as children, minors and inferiors. Nwala (2004: 180) supports Lakoff and Bosmajian when he mentioned other pejoratives that have no male equivalence which are divorcee, black widows, hurricane Katrina, black maria, etc. and they are objects of unpleasant kinds, but are usually referred to as being feminine. These assertions give credence to the ” NO” responses of our interviewees when they were asked if they have male equivalent of the words and statements that are used strictly on a woman that engages in extra-marital affairs in Akụ community. This means that people who design language designed it in such a way that the men who misbehave are, exonerated. No wonder Spender (1980: 3) says that language is biased against the women in our patriarchal society.

This study revealed that there are common statements that are used to belittle women in this community. Examples of such statements are *eweg nwa onyonyo eme ntili ishi* (women are not reliable). Here, women are described as unreliable beings. Statements like this make women feel depressed and worthless in the community under study. It is evidence that, all their (women's) efforts to build their homes are not appreciated. This assertion is in agreement with Chafai (2005:64) who listed some of these proverbs that describe women negatively.

Another popular derogatory statement used against the women in Akụ community is “*Nwa onyonyo atụ ohụ*” meaning a mere woman who should not talk when men are talking or a common or ordinary woman who should not bring herself out unless called or permitted to. It is used to refer to a woman who tries to claim her right when felt cheated in her husband's family according to interviewees 4 and 10. For example in a family gathering and you hear: *Ọbụ nwa onyonyo atụọhụ ga agwa anyi ihe anyi gaeme?* Meaning Is it a mere woman who should not talk unless permitted to that is dictating for us? Once this question is asked by any male member of the family, the woman referred to is neglected and her opinion rejected. This expression, to a large extent, confines womanhood to a certain stereotype whose argument or line of thought should not be taken seriously or given much attention. This shows the extent to which language is used to suppress women in the Akụ community.

Omer ke dimkpa – she acted like a man is also another statement. Example, *Nne Ngozi mer ke dimkpa; ọ kwara nna ya ọfuma* meaning Mama Ngozi acted like a man; she gave her father a befitting burial. Our interviewees told us that this expression is used when a woman does some heroic things. But when a man misbehaves, it is said that he

acts like a woman. The questions one should ask here are : Why would it be that when a man misbehaves he is likened to a woman and when a woman does something great she is likened to a man? When would the society design a language that would blame men for their woes and mistakes in their capacity as men and then praise women in their heroic deeds and achievements in their own capacity as women? In this study, we adopt the definition of language by Robins (1985: 9-14) which says that language is a symbol system based on pure or arbitrary convention... Infinitely extendable and modifiable according to the changing needs and conditions of the speaker “as the best and more suitable since it gives room for extensibility and modifiability (dynamism). New words\statements that are equivalent to those used to refer to the women who misbehave can be formed and be used to refer to the men who do the same thing. And new suitable proverbs and expressions can also be formed to be used in describing the men just as it is in the part of the women.

Another expressions used in Akụ community to refer to women are as follow; “*Ndtiomu bụ ukpo na-ekpo obodo*” (women are destroyers of the community. “*Ndtiomu bụ obataosu*” meaning women are trouble makers. “*Uka nwa onyonyo anọg, okwu ang adh nke oḅu*” meaning there is peace where women are absent. These negative statements above are used to depict women as trouble makers and this contradicts the popular name “*nwaanyi bụ ife*” meaning ‘woman is precious’ given to women in the same community under study. From our interviewees, we were made to understand that a lot of men are destructive but you can never hear that men are equally destructive, instead, they say men build the society, while the women destroy it. Does it mean that all the troubles and problems in the Akụ community are caused by the women? Certainly

No! It is just that language is designed in our society in such a way that women and their achievements are side lined in order to promote male dominance and female subjugation in our society. These observations led us to agree with Memissi (2003;43) who cited the rhymes of the poet Sidi Abdarahman Al-Majdoub in which a negative attitude towards women are strongly conveyed and also, Lakoff's assertion that women experience linguistic oppression and suppression in the way they are taught to use language and the way general language use treats them. Lakoff (1973: 46). Both tend to relegate the women to the background.

4.7.3 **Words, Phrases and Statements Used in Referring to Both Men and Women in Akụ Community.**

It was uncovered also that there are certain oppressive and conflict generating words, phrases and statements that are used to refer to both men and women in Akụ community. They are; *mkphrhwiwi*, *kpakpahụriahụ* or *kpanthth* meaning one who has strong desire to steal. Example: *Okafor bụ mkphrhwiwi, kpakpahụriahụ ma obụ kpanthth* meaning Okafor is a kleptomaniac. These words are used to refer to one who indulges in such act. Such expression is a derogatory one. People tend to avoid people who are perceived to be behaving in this way. They are being considered as enemies of the society. The problem with the use of this expression according to interviewees is that people tend to use this expression wrongly. They explained that, if one or two person(s) in a particular family is/are caught in the act of stealing, the entire family is referred to as family of *mkphrhwiwi*, *kpakpahụriahụ* or *kpanthth* that is thieves (overgeneralisations). *Ndibe Ezechi nile bụ ndi mkphrhwiwi, kpakpahụriahụ ma obụ kpanthth* meaning the entire family of Ezechi are kleptomaniacs. This results to people ostracizing all the members the

family in question. When the innocent members of such family discover this, they either bury their heads in shame or fight their oppressor.

Another expressions used to refer to people is *ejo nwa*, *onye ikparu* or *ejommadvu* meaning evil child or evil fellow. Example: *nneka bu ojo nwa* meaning Nneka is an evil child, *Chijioke bu onye ikparu*, Chijioke is an evil fellow, and *ogbonne bu ojo mmadvu* meaning Ogbonne is an evil fellow. These are used to refer to a child or an adult who is perceived to be wicked. This type of expression when used to refer to people generates conflict especially when it is used to refer to a wrong person. This is because some people use it to refer to people who did not agree with or support their opinions. It is also an oppressive use of language. Again, expressions such as *onye kpee*, *nhu*, *uhere* or *huru nyima shi* meaning a worthless individual are used to devalue people. Example: *Ejike bu onye kpee* meaning Ejike is a worthless man, *Odohubu uhere*. Or *Odohubu nhu* meaning *Odoh* is a worthless man, *Okereke bu huru nyima shi* meaning *Okereke* is a worthless fellow. They are used to refer to an individual who is perceived to not be serious in life. It has a way of placing someone below other people in the society. It is also oppressive in its context and content. *Akri nhu* meaning someone whose genealogy is worthless. Example: *Akri Ugwueke bu akri nhu, ha akwabeghi nne na nna ha nwuru ke mgbe*. Meaning *Ugwueke's* genealogy is worthless, they have not performed the funeral rites of their father and even that of their mother that died long ago.

According to interviewee 2, this statement is used in certain situation where they have intergenerational poverty in a family. She says that people from such families are not permitted to make linguistic contributions and if the person insists on lending his voice,

they use such denigrating remark to refer to him, his present, past and his generations yet to come. Such statement is suppressive in content.

It was also revealed that the proverb – *ngwere amagh ahuhuul* meaning the lizard does not share in the economic and physical stress that are involved in building a house and yet it lives in the house comfortably is used on people living in the house not built by them and such people exhibit sort of arrogance. It is also used to address a man who is of age and is still depending on another person for his survival. Out of curiosity to avoid being described in such negative terms, people tend to go into armed robbery, cultism, kidnapping and other social vices to survive in order not to be addressed as such.

4.8 **The Factors Responsible for the Choice of Such Expression.**

From the analysed data, it is discovered that some of the following serve as the factors responsible for the use of suppressive and oppressive expressions by the people of Akụ community to refer to one another. They are: culture and tradition, fear of gender equality, fear of male domination, fear of female domination, exercise of economic and political power, exercise of academic achievements etc. We noticed that majority of our respondents strongly agreed that culture/tradition is one of the factors accounting for the use of oppressive language among the people of Akụ community. This could be seen on the use of such expressions as *nwa ndhdh agbugba* meaning a child born out of wedlock or *ndh eka nwe* meaning people who are the outcasts. These words are dehumanising. *Enyibụakụbụ nwa ndhdh agbugba* meaning Enyibụakụ is born out of wedlock. *Ndị beAmadibụ ndi eka nwe* meaning the Amadi's family is outcast. According to our interviewees, the people who belong to this class are not culturally allowed to make linguistic contributions when they are taking societal decisions. And whatever is agreed

on is binding on them. If they want to object or make their own input, they are reminded of whom they are. Sometimes another terrible and more derogatory statement such as *gbue ekwu chargh n'ishi* meaning cut down the ripe palm nut on your head is used to remind them of their position in the society. This in actual sense, according to interviewees 3 and 12 means 'go and find who your real father is or go and trace your lineage or your real status in this community'. This position concurs with Bosmajian (1960) who states that; "Our identities, who and what we are, how others see us are greatly affected by the names we are called and words with which we are labelled. The names, labels and phrases employed to identify a people may in the end determine their survival".

Although, the use of oppressive language cuts across every human being in Akụ community, our finding indicates that certain expressions use in Akụ community has more effect on the women than on the men. According to interviewee 2, women of the community are not only oppressed on the names, words, phrases and proverbs used to label them. They are also suppressed in the way culture and tradition subjects them to speak. The women of the Akụ community are marginalised in their speeches. They do not have equal linguistic expression as the men do. And because they are restricted in making personal linguistic contribution in certain cultural and religious practices, untold hardships and some wicked deeds are being unleashed on them. This can be proven from the responses we got from our oral interview question:

Do women have equal rights with the men in the expression of their ideas, opinions and emotions in Akụ community?

It was discovered in this research work that majority of our interviewees believe that women culturally do not have equal linguistic expression with men. They told us that women can only express themselves when they are permitted to, especially in a social gathering and in certain discussions regarding the entire family. For example, interview 3 stated that he grew up to see that women are denied expression in certain socio-cultural practices. And it has been like that for centuries. He went ahead to say that men possess the women. Therefore, women should be voiceless and rightless in their husband's family, but their voices can be heard through their husbands or male children.

Other socio-cultural and religious practices in which women of Akụ community are denied equal expression as the men are: discussion regarding land issues (selling and reclaiming of land, settling of land dispute even if the land belongs to them), discussion regarding marriage rites, chanting incantations before breaking of kolanuts and in presenting kolanuts to visitors, etc. When we asked why it is so, interviewee 8 stated clearly that why the women not allowed to partake in sales of land and in settling land dispute is because they are regarded as visitors in the family in which they are married into and therefore they are members of that family by their virtue of marriage. We noticed that no matter how many years women have spent in their husbands' houses they are regarded as visitors in that family by the male folk. And therefore, are not allowed to pronounce that they want to sell their land, partake in settling land dispute and reclaim family land. This means they do not have right to initiate the selling of family land. Our informant went ahead to tell us that if a family of a widow is faced with a problem, the culture demands that it is the male children that have the right to initiate the selling of land to solve their family problem and not their mothers/female. It is considered a taboo

in the community under study for a woman to initiate selling of land. In the case of settling land dispute, it is believed that women are visitors, therefore do not know much about land issues irrespective of their ages.

We also observed that women of Akụ community are not allowed to chant incantations before the breaking of kolanuts because kolanuts they said is “tradition itself,” therefore it is a taboo for a woman to pray over kolanuts before the men. The men pray (chant incantations), break it and then give to women in their hands. Women, irrespective of their age are not allowed to deep their hands and take kolanut from the saucer/plate themselves. The men do give it to them. Interviewees stated that not allowing women to pray over kolanuts is cultural and were established by their fore fathers.

In the case of presentation of kolanuts to visitors, women are expected to hand over the kolanuts to the men to present it. If a grown up man is not there, any male child around irrespective of the age presents it to the visitors. He says, please my people, this is kolanuts. This utterance is forbidden by the women. If the visitors are all women, the male child or the man who presented it, blesses and breaks it and then give to them to eat. This makes one question the definition of language as a medium of expression of ideas, emotions, desires, etc. by humans in the society.

In the issue of discussion regarding marriage rites, we also observed that culture and tradition forbid women discussing marriage rites (*ihh ishi nwaanyi*). In the course of marriage between proposed in-laws, there is always haggling on marriage rites, bride price and other customary rites between the intending in-laws. The opinions of the women of Akụ community are not sought in the course of the discussion. And whatever

the male folk arrived at is binding on the women (mothers). In other words, women of Akụ community are not integrated in the discussions about marriage rites even when they are the ones that gave birth to the girl child. This confirms the assertion of Ocho (2007: 45) who says that women of Akụ community have no say in serious decision making both in the family and in the community. And the responses from our interviewees correspond with the above assertion. We can possibly assert that language which is defined as a medium of expression of ideas, opinions, desires, etc. among humans has a loophole. This means that women linguistically speaking are marginalised in the area of language use. In other words, women are not favoured in the area of language use by the societal cultures. This goes a long way to support the opinion of Nwala (2004: 170) who says that cultural norms, linguistically speaking, favour the male folk than the women. This simply implies that women irrespective of their age and position in the society can never be given equal linguistic expression with their male counterpart.

From the foregoing, one can easily say that cultural beliefs and tradition of our society give more attention to male folks than the women folk linguistically. Weatherall (2002:56) supported the above view point when he said that women are to keep their voices low, soft and agreeable which Cameron referred to as verbal hygiene. And to confirm that the above viewpoint is what is obtainable in our society today, interviewee 9 stated that “they grow up to meet this tradition and that his father told him that the gods of the land bestowed this tradition to the men. To support the opinions of our respondents that culture/tradition is the most factor accounting for women oppression, a reference can be made to Yule (1996: 246) who says: “given the process of cultural transmission by which language are acquired, it makes a lot of sense to emphasize the fact that the use of

language is determined by culture in society. In other words, Yule means that the societal culture makes the use of language as a medium of expression unrealistic. This is because the societal culture is practically designed in such a way that it favours the male folk while the female folk are made to play a second fiddle. This can be seen in the way women are restricted in the use of language in areas like discussions regarding marriage rites, settling land disputes, blessing and presentation of kolanuts to visitors, etc.

In the issue of religion, a woman who wishes to appease her god(*igò mmaa*) in order to get favour from the gods does not have the cultural right to go to the shrine and speak to the gods. She buys the items needed for appeasing the god and then goes to the shrine with her husband or any male member of the family or from the neighbourhood. The man does the prayers (incantations) on her behalf. She sits back and watches because culture does not permit her to do so. They can only do that if the chief priest permits them. From the above, it could be seen that women both culturally and religiously have no equal status with the men in the use of language. Religion limits the use of language by the women.

From the analysed data, another factor accounting for the hateful expressions used by the people of Akụ community to address one another is fear of gender dominance. The society, for a long period of time, has been controlled by men (patriarchy). Due to changes in the world, groups are coming up with teachings that promote gender equality. This kind of influence is mostly coming from the outside world. The fear of such a practice creates in Akụ community the use of aggressive and conflict generating remarks mostly to suppress the women. Also, restriction of women in self-expression as well as denying them some linguistic contributions in certain situations as

earlier mentioned were employed too . For instance, the use of strong proverbs such as ‘*Nwa onyonyo atụghụ*’ meaning a mere woman who is not permitted to talk unless when she is permitted to do so, ‘*Eweg nwa onyonyo eme nthli ishi*’ meaning women are not reliable, ‘*Ụka nwa onyonyo anog ne okwu angh adh nke ọbụ*’ meaning there is peace and tranquillity where women are absent, ‘*Ndtiomu bụọbata osu*’ meaning women are trouble makers or home dividers etc. are used to suppress and devalue the women . Also, the use of other oppressive words and statements such as *akwụnakwuna* meaning prostitute or slut, *ngta* meaning a bitch, *ebere boys* meaning free for the boys, *arakadtime* meaning promiscuous adulterer, *onye ukwu warr*, *onye amiaa*, *onye nzọshue ụkwụ* meaning shameless and uncontrollably adulterous woman etc. All these words and statements do not have male equivalence in the dialect of Akụ community except the use of *ngta*- a bitch which is equivalent to *mkpị* – he - goat that is used to refer to men that are randy in nature.

Considering the opinions of our subjects, fear of male domination is another factor that is responsible for the use of conflict generating language to address the men by the women in the community under study. Patriarchy, according to Mills (2003: 108), is a form of social organization in which men are dominant. This implies that male dominance entails female subordination. The feminist theory defines male dominance as an unjust social system that is oppressive to women. The feminists state that it has its tentacles in all aspects of our lives and is characterised by relations of domination and ideology embedded in the use of languages. The fear of male domination makes the women develop aggressive expressions to serve as a wall against male domination. For

instance, words such as *nhu*, *onye kpee* or *onye iberibe* meaning worthless fellow are used to refer to men just to devalue them.

Another factor is fear of female domination. From the analysed data, it was revealed that fear of female domination created certain use of denigrating expressions on the women of Akụ community. This, according to interviewee 2, brings about the women being subjected to keep mute in certain socio-cultural activities just to show superiority and make them play a second fiddle. Sociolinguistic study of gender shows that there is difference in the use of language and the language used by the men shows the dominance and oppressive status of men and the subordinate status of women in language use in the society. For example, expressions like '*nwa onyonyo atu ohu*' meaning a mere woman who should not talk unless permitted to, is a good example of male dominance and subordinated status of women in Akụ community. Sexist language according to Henley (1987) is a language that ignores women, defines women narrowly and depreciates women. This could also be seen in the silly and oppressive words like *ngta*, *akwunakwuna*, *ebere* boys, *araka dti*, etc that are used to refer to women who commit fornication and these do not have male equivalent

Next is waywardness of men and women. It is uncovered from the analysed data that waywardness of men and women is also a factor responsible for the use of dehumanising language in Akụ community to refer to one another. Women who flirt around particularly, those who are not stable with one man are ridiculed through the use of language. They are sometimes described with names such as slut, chick, public toilet etc. while men who do the same are labelled woman wrapper, he-goat etc. interviewee 6. Men who are wayward are deprived of certain positions in the society interviewee 2.

The exercise of economic and political power is also another factor that is responsible for the use of suppressive language among humans in the Akụ community. This according to interviewee 4 is more common among the men. He stated that when a man has made some kind of economic achievements, he tends to look down on the other men or he takes a title. Names that create stereotypes for the less privileged are used to refer to them. For instance *ite ego* meaning pot of money, *nnukwu mmọu* meaning the big masquerade, *onwa na etirhọha* meaning the moon that shines for all, *omerh oha* meaning one who does for all, *nwa ka ibenye* meaning a child that is greater than his mates etc are used to refer to them. On the other hand, the poor are called names such as *onye ukpara*, *ogbenye onu ntu*, *onye ujuru onye egh*, etc meaning the poorest of the poor. Sometimes they are not recognised at all in the community most especially in a social gathering. The use of such names to refer to them (the poor) creates stereotypes. It is oppressive and belittling. It makes the victims feel cursed by nature- interviewee (5).

The last factor is the exercise of academic achievement. According to interviewee 4, this leads to evolution of remarks that humiliates the uneducated. He states that *itiboribọ* meaning illiterate or *onye ime ezhi* meaning a primitive fellow are expressions used to refer to the uneducated or those who are not educated up to a certain level. Example: *Obiọra bu itiboribọ ma obu onye ime ezhi* meaning Obiora is an illiterate or a primitive fellow. The more educated and exposed ones who are in civil service or who have made it in business use such expressions to intimidate and suppress those who have not.

4.9 **The Effect of the Words, Phrases, Statements, and Proverbs Used to Refer to Men and Women in Akụ Community.**

From the responses of our respondents in both the questionnaire and oral interview, we observed that the following are the effects of the use of such expressions on the individuals in which they are used to address in Akụ community. They are; it is oppressive, it leads to divorce, broken home, domestic violence, poor children upbringing, prostitution, inter family and inter village clashes, murder for vengeance, armed robbery, cultism, delay in getting married, denial of getting married etc. When there is delay in getting married Mbaegbụ (2012) stated that derogatory statements such as *Okokporo* (for the man), *Ọtọn'ekanne*(for the lady), meaning literally the one that will remain in the hands of her mother or *Nnaga-alụ* (for the lady) meaning her father will marry her, are used to address them. He further stated that such derogatory statements are used to describe them as loafers, wayfarer and irresponsible beings. Majority of our interviewees stated that the utmost effect of the use of such expressions to refer to individuals in the society is that they are highly oppressive. To support their position, interviewees 4 and 7 stated that assumption drawn from oppressive language prevents society from ever reaching out to seek the truth. They further stressed that oppressive language regardless of the scale, leads to negative influences, negative influences leads to stereotypes and assumptions, which ultimately leads to a community that is unwilling to shake off whatever preconceived notion they have acquired. When people are unwilling to let go of what they have heard, then the society will be unable to move forward.

The assertions of our respondents concurred with Morrison (1998) that oppressive language does more than represent violence; it is violence; does much more than

represent the limits of knowledge; it limits knowledge. What Morrison implies is that the spewing of oppressive language is in itself violence aside from the violence that it encourages. Just as physical violence can cause pain to whoever it is used against, so can hateful speech. Negative words or remarks have the power to break a heart or shatter a spirit just as physical violence has the power to break bones. Spouting hateful speech towards a person or group of persons due to their gender, class/position etc. affects a person's foundation and can leave them feeling inadequate. Oppressive remarks not only represent the limit of knowledge, it prevents the spread of knowledge. By creating a stereotype of certain group of people, a negative "standard" is set and used to judge some persons. For instance, stereotyping women with such statements as *ndtiomubu ukpo ne kpo obodo* meaning all women are community destroyers, *eweg nwa onyonyo eme ntlishi* meaning women are not reliable, *ukanwa onyonyo anog n'okwu anhg adh nke obu* meaning there is peace or tranquillity where a woman is absent, *ndtiomu buobata osu* meaning women are trouble makers or home dividers etc demeans their worth. In the same vein, the use of phrases such as *onye ujuru* meaning poorest of the poor, *ndh eka nwe* meaning the outcast etc. and other expressions such as *oke ngta nwa onyonyo kpar* meaning a male dog trained by a woman or son of a bitch, *onyenhu* meaning worthless fellow, *ngta* meaning a bitch, *mkipi* meaning he-goat etc. to refer to certain individuals also stereotype them too. To avoid being described in such negative remarks, people tend to go into armed robbery, prostitution, cultism etc. Some individuals who cannot control their emotions when addressed with such hateful speech tend to engage their perceived oppressor in a physical fight. By extension, this can lead to inter family or inter village clashes or conflict. Verbal violence in the family leads to domestic violence; domestic

violence leads to divorce or broken home which ultimately leads to poor children upbringing. When children are poorly brought up, they tend to go into practicing social vices which brings destruction in the society. From the above explanations one should agree with our respondents that the use of negative remarks or hateful speech against a person or group of persons in any community is quite oppressive and counterproductive.

In the findings from the oral interview conducted, we discovered that both men and women use oppressive expressions to refer to one another. The study further indicates that men use it to refer to their fellow men and the women too use it to refer to their fellow women, thus aggravating the spiral of conflict and hatred in Akụ community. However, it was evidently clear that the gender that it has more effect on is the ‘women’. This position is strengthened by interviewee 4 who stated that the remarks used in Akụ community have more effect on the women than the men. He argued that apart from certain oppressive expressions used to refer to the women, sociolinguistic variables such as culture/tradition, religion, patriarchy etc. influence their speech. They are not allowed to make linguistic contributions in certain socio-linguistic environments as much the men. Therefore, from the above, it could be seen that women culturally do not have equal status with the men in the language use in Akụ community. Their freedom of speech is limited by the above mentioned variables.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary.

The main focus of this study was to investigate the sociolinguistic use of Aku dialect in Aku community. It centres on the inhumane use of language in interaction between men and women which has been an age long practice in that society; the factors accounting for the use of such expressions to refer to men and women of Aku community; and finally, the effects of such expressions on the victims in Aku community. And this study attempts to address the phenomenon. The relevant literature reviewed in this study such as sociolinguistics, language and society, the importance of language in the society, men and women's speech, sociolinguistic factors that determine the use of language (i.e gender/sexism, culture, patriarchy and religion) aided the focus of the study.

The methodology used in the study was sample survey design, because it involved collecting and analysing data from representatives from an entire group. The target population for the study was two hundred and twenty one thousand, two hundred and seventy-four (221, 274) subjects. Since studying the whole population within a specific period would be difficult, sample and sampling procedure are used for the study.

To get the sample for the study, random sampling technique was adopted by the researcher. The sampling was carried out in all the thirteen (13) villages that make up Aku community. In all, four hundred and thirteen (413) subjects constituted the sample for the study. Questionnaire and oral interview were considered the appropriate instruments because of their usefulness in getting the opinions of literate and illiterate subjects. The

result of the pilot study conducted using the questionnaire indicated the validity and reliability of the research instruments. Finally, the data is analysed using frequencies and percentage statistics. The face-to-face interview is used as complementary data in the discussion.

The study reveals that there are oppressive and conflict generating words, statements, idioms and proverbs used by men and women in referring to one another in Akū community. It was also discovered that factors such as culture and tradition, fear of gender equality, fear of male dominance, the exercise of economic and political power, the exercise of academic achievement and religious practices are responsible for the use of such derogatory remarks in Akū community.

Divorce and broken homes, domestic violence, poor children upbringing, inter family and inter village conflict, murder for vengeance, armed robbery, prostitution, inferiority complex etc. are the effects of the use of such expressions on the people of Akūcommunity. All this have been unveiled in this study.

5.2 Conclusion.

From the analysis of the data in this study, it is established that the forms of expressions used in Akū community to refer to one another are highly oppressive. The use of dehumanising words, statements, idioms and proverbs in communication among men and women in referring to one another in Akū community encourages divorce, domestic violence, poor children upbringing, and other social vices, which the people of that community experience. Certain expressions used in Akū community nurtures and sustains inter family and inter village conflict, hatred and mistrust which leads to cat and dog relationship that exists among the people today. It inflicts psychological trauma,

promotes loss of interest in participation in politics (especially the women) and inferiority complex on the addressed. The women feel devalued and see themselves as less important in the society. The women also see themselves as second-class citizens, eternal sex objects and personified evils.

The socio-cultural and religious practices in which the women of Akụ community are denied their voices make them feel helpless and often without human rights in their husbands' families, and in the society. Their marginalized positions in the use of language from childhood without giving them a fairly level ground with their counterparts put them in a disadvantaged position.

The factors that are responsible for the use of such expressions are culture/tradition, fear of male dominance, fear of gender equality, fear of women domination, exercise of economic and political power and religious practices etc. These factors introduced remarks that are aggressive and as well, create stereotypes. The culture does not permit the women to speak as freely as the men since the culture favours the male folk linguistically.

5.3 Recommendations.

The findings from the study are clear indications that the forms of expressions used in Akụ community by men and women in referring to one another are conflict generating and highly oppressive. Oppressive, language according to Morrison (1998): prevents the society from ever reaching out to seek the truth. She stressed that it leads to negative influences, negative influences lead to stereotypes and assumptions which

ultimately lead to a community that is unwilling to shake off whatever preconceived notions they have acquired.

Considering the effects of the use of derogatory, conflict generating and oppressive expressions by the people of Akụ community in addressing one another, we recommend that public lectures and seminars on the use of descent expressions in referring to one another should be organised regularly in Akụ community.

- Parents should strive to use descent expressions at all times especially in the presence of their children.
- Religious based programmes on the use of descent language should be organised periodically in Akụ community.
- Acting dramas that portray the use of negative language and its effects on the people should be encouraged in Akụ community.
- The use of polite language should be included in the school curriculum. This will go a long way in curbing the use of conflict and oppressive expressions in referring to one another from the early stage of an individual.
- Government should train agents of peace driven linguists and employ them in different communities to mediate on conflict issues that have to do with language use.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research.

This study, like any other of same magnitude, provides a foundation for further research on language use in the society. For instance, investigating the use of oppressive slangs among the youth in communication, and investigating the use of satire and sarcasm for gender discrimination.

5.5 Contribution to Knowledge

The study has raised an awareness of the fact that certain expressions used by the people of Aku community in referring to one another are oppressive, dehumanising and conflict generating. Apart from uncovering the fact that the use of such expressions result to conflict and other vices in Aku community, exposition of this study will also give an opportunity to see how conscious efforts can be made by the people of Aku community to resolve these problems by the act of using positive expressions in addressing one another.

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APPENDIX 1

QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire on the Study of Aku Dialect in Akụ Community

Dear Respondent,

The researcher is an M.A. student of Department of English and Literary Studies of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. She is carrying out a study on 'A sociolinguistic study of Akụ dialect use in Akụ community'. She is conducting this research in Akụ community of Enugu State, Nigeria. Therefore, asking for your assistance to kindly fill this questionnaire as honestly as possible.

Please, do not write your name on the questionnaire. Be assured that your response will be treated with confidentiality and will be used strictly for the purpose.

PERSONAL DATA

INSTRUCTION:

Please tick in the box that applies to you.

PART I

Sex: Male Female

Age: 30-39 40-49 50-59 60 above

Occupation: Business Farmer Housewife Civil servant

PART II

Please tick the appropriate column that suits your assessment.

SECTION A:

- i. The Following are Words, Statements and Proverbs Used in Referring to Men in Akụ Community:

| S/N | Item | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|-----|--|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| 1. | Oke ngta nwa onyonyo kpar – A dog trained by woman: Son of a bitch. | | | | |
| 2. | Echiche ndtiomu – Women’s thinking/ reasoning. | | | | |
| 3. | Mkpị-He Goat | | | | |
| 4. | Ọwalị anh Ọzọ ne-egwuru ọnụ – Alligator that cannot dig its own hole | | | | |

- ii. The Following are Words, Phrases, Statements and Proverbs Used to Refer to Women in Akụ Community

| S/N | Item | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|-----|---|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| 1. | Nwa onyonyo atụọhụ – A mere woman who should not talk when men are talking or a common woman who should not bring herself out unless called or permitted. | | | | |
| 2. | Omer ke dimkpa – She acted like a real man. | | | | |
| 3. | Ndtiomu bụ ukpo na –ekpo obodo – Women are destroyers of the community or women are detractors of the society. | | | | |
| 4. | Eweg nwa onyonyo eme ntili ishi – Women are not reliable or women are unreliable. | | | | |
| 5. | Ndtiomu buọbata osu – Women are trouble makers or home dividers. | | | | |
| 6. | Ụka nwa onyonyo anọg, okwu ang adh nke ọbụ – There is peace or tranquility where a woman is absent. | | | | |
| 7a) | Akwunakwuna – Prostitute | | | | |
| b) | Onye ukwu warr – Adulterous woman | | | | |
| c) | Araka dti – Fantastic adulterer. | | | | |
| d) | Onye amịaa – Shameless and uncontrollable adulterous woman. | | | | |
| e) | Onye nzoshue ukwu – Useless adulterous woman. | | | | |
| 8. | Uchichi agba eka, Ora ke ikpo, Owe uchichi eme eshushue – Sexually insatiable and | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|----|--|--|--|--|--|
| | dangerous fornicator | | | | |
| 9. | Ebere boys – Free for the boys; and Ngta – bitch | | | | |

iii. The Following are Some of the Words Phrases, Statement and Proverbs Used in Referring to Men and Women in Akụ Community

| S/N | Item | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|-----|--|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| 1. | <i>Nwa ndhdh agbugba</i> – a child born out of wedlock | | | | |
| 2. | <i>Ngwere amg ahuhūūlo</i> – Lizard does not share in the economic and physical stress that are involved in building a house and yet it lives in the house comfortably | | | | |
| 3. | <i>Onye kpee, Nhu, Uhere, Huru nyima shi</i> – A worthless individual | | | | |
| 4. | <i>Onye nshi</i> – A murderer | | | | |
| 5. | <i>Adh mma ne, ibgugbu adh mma ne utara</i> – Worthless fellow or Good for nothing human being | | | | |
| 6. | <i>Onorh obia</i> – One who lives on other people's benevolence | | | | |
| 7. | <i>Ndh eka nwe</i> – People who are the out caste or the out caste | | | | |
| 8. | <i>Ejo nwa, Ejommadvu</i> – Evil child or evil human being | | | | |
| 9. | <i>Kpanthth, mkphrhwiwi, kpakpahuriahu</i> – Kleptomania or one who has strong desire to steal | | | | |
| 10. | <i>Onye ejigrj obu</i> – hard hearted human being | | | | |
| 11. | <i>Odh kodh kposhi, odh kodh gor</i> – Birds of a feather | | | | |

SECTION B:

The Following Factors are Responsible for the Use of the Mentioned Expression by People of Akụ Community to Refer to One Another.

| S/N | Item | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|-----|-------------------------|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| 1. | Culture/Tradition | | | | |
| 2. | Religion | | | | |
| 3. | Fear of Gender Equality | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|----|--|--|--|--|--|
| 4. | Fear of Male Domination | | | | |
| 5. | Fear of Female Domination | | | | |
| 6. | The Exercise of Economic and Political Power | | | | |
| 7. | Exercise of Academic | | | | |

SECTION C:

The Following are the Effects of the Use of the Above Listed Words, Phrases, Statements and Proverbs on Men and Women in Akụ Community:

| S/N | Item | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|-----|--|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| 1. | It is Oppressive | | | | |
| 2. | It is Ridiculous and Belittling | | | | |
| 3. | It Leads to Divorce ,Broken Home and Domestic Violence | | | | |
| 4. | It Leads to Quarrel, Fight ,Conflict and Aggression | | | | |
| 5. | It Brings About Hatred and Mistrust | | | | |
| 6. | It Leads to Poor Child Upbringing | | | | |
| 7. | It Leads to Prostitution | | | | |
| 8. | It Leads to Inter-Village and Inter-Family Clashes | | | | |
| 9. | It Can Bring About Murder for Vengeance | | | | |
| 10. | It Brings About Delay in Getting Married and Denial of Getting Married | | | | |
| 11. | It Leads to Armed Robbery | | | | |

APPENDIX 2

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

A Sociolinguistic Study of Akụ Dialect in AkụCommunity ofEnugu State

Introduction: This interview is designed to collect data that will complement data from the questionnaire

Preliminaries

1. What is your age?
2. What is your sex?
3. Are you married or single?
4. What is your occupation?

Main Interview Questions

- 1a. Language is used to express ideas, opinions, desires and emotions in the human society, do you know any word(s), phrase(s), statement(s) or proverb(s) in the dialect of Akụ community that is/are used to refer to the men and the women that can bring fight?
- b. Can you give us some of the examples of such words, phrases, statements and proverbs that are used specifically to refer to the men and explain the situation in which such expressions are used?
- c. How do you think they feel when such expressions are used to refer to them?
- d. Can you give us the examples of the words, phrases, statement and proverbs that are used specifically to refer to the women and explain the situation that leads to the use of such expressions?
- e. How do you think they feel when such expressions are used to refer to them?
- f. Are there words, statements and proverbs that are generally used to refer to both men and women in Akụ community? Give us the examples and explain the condition that leads to the use of such expressions.

- 2a. What do you think could be the reason males and females use such expressions to refer to one another in Akụ community?
- b. Can you expatiate please?
- 3a. Have you noticed any problem(s) that arose because of the use of such expressions by men and women to refer to one another in Akụ community?
- b. What are the problems?
- c. Can you expatiate please?

APPENDIX 3

INTERVIEWEE RESPONSES

Interviewee 1

| | |
|-----------------|----------|
| Age: | 62 years |
| Marital Status: | Married |
| Occupation: | Business |

Language is used to express ideas, opinions, desires and emotions in the human society, do you know any word(s), phrase(s), statement(s) or proverb(s) in the dialect of Akụ community that is/are used to refer to the men and women that can bring fight?

- Yes, so many of them.

Can you give us some of the examples of such words, phrases, statements, proverbs that are used specifically to refer to the men and explain the situation in which such expressions are used?

1. *Mkpị* – he goat. This is used to refer to a man who is randy in nature.
2. *Oke ngta nwa onyonyo kpar* meaning son of a bitch. This is used to describe a man whose behaviour is questionable.
3. *Ọwalị anuozo ne egwuru onu* meaning alligator that cannot dig its own hole. You know, according to the tradition of our people, if a man is unable to pregnant his wife due to some biological problems, his wife is culturally, permitted to go out and get pregnant for him. The children of such a woman rightly belong to her husband. So, if such a man disagrees with other people in some kinds of issues, they can use such expression to refer to him.

How do you think they feel when such an expressions are used to refer to them?

- I think they feel ashamed, suppressed and belittled.

Can you give us the examples of words, phrases, statements and proverbs used specifically to refer to the woman and explain the situation that leads to the use of such expressions?

- Yes, I can give some examples. Expressions such as *Akwunakwuna* meaning slut/prostitute, *ngha* meaning a bitch, *ebere boys* meaning free for boys are used to refer to women who commit fornication.
- Then, *Araka dti* meaning fantastic adulterer, *onye amiaa* meaning shameless and uncontrollable adulterous woman are use to refer to women who commit adultery. If the woman is caught, they send her back to her father's house.
- *Ukanwa onyonyo anog na okwu angh adh nke obu* meaning there is peace where women are absent. This is used to describe women's troublesome attitude.
- *Eweg nwa onyonyo eme ntili ishime* meaning that women are not reliable. They use this when a woman disappoints a man.

How do you think they feel when such expressions are used to refer to them?

- They feel devalued, traumatized and oppressed.

Are there words, phrases, statements and proverbs that are generally used to refer to both men and women in Akụ community?

- Yes there are.

Give us the examples and explain the condition that leads to the use of such expressions.

1. *Onye kpee* meaning worthless fellow is used when an individual is perceived to be not serious minded.
2. *Onye nshị* meaning a murderer is used when an individual is perceived as one who kills people using poisonous substances.
3. *Kpakpahurjahụ* meaning a kleptomaniac is used to describe an individual who has a strong desire to steal.
4. *Ndheka nwe* – not free born. This is used to refer to the Osus in Akụ community. Most of the time people use these expressions to silence others who may or may not be victims just to have their way.

What do you think could be the reason men and women use such expressions to refer to one another in Akụ community?

- I can say it is part of our culture/tradition. Another reason is fear for gender equality and fear for women domination.

Can you expatiate, please?

- Our culture/tradition forbids us doing certain things. For instance, it is forbidden for a married woman to commit adultery in our land.
- Women are not allowed to partake in certain socio-cultural/religious activities in Aku community e.g. selling and reclaiming of land, settling of land dispute; even if the land belong to them, discussion regarding marriage rite, chanting, incantation before breaking of kolanut in social gathering especially where the men are, appeasing the gods, etc.

So women who default are sanctioned. Some of the expressions as mentioned above are used to refer to them. Again since our society is male centred, there is fear for gender equality and fear for women domination. So certain expressions and restrictions are used to keep the women in a deeming position.

Have you noticed any problem(s) that arose because of the use of such expressions by men and women to refer to one another in Aku community? - Yes!

What are the problems?

- It brings fight, it leads to broken home, it causes inter-family clashes.

Can you expatiate, please? – As we know, when an insulting and denigrating expression are used to refer to people, they tend to react.

Interviewee 2

| | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| Age: | 55 years |
| Marital Status: | Married |
| Occupation: | Civil Servant |

Language is used to express ideas, opinions, desires and emotions in the human society, do you know any word(s), phrase(s), statement(s) and proverb(s) in the dialect of Aku community that is/are used to refer to the men and the women that can bring fight?- I do!

Can you give us some of the examples of such words, phrases, statements and proverbs used specifically to refer to the men and explain the situation in which such expressions are used? Oh yes! Proverb like *Oke ngta nwa onyonyo kpar* meaning son of a bitch is used to refer to a male child or a man who behaves foolishly. Statement like *Echiche ndtiomu* meaning women thinking is used when a full grown man presents a weak argument. *Mkpì* – he goat is used to address men who are randy in nature.

How do you think they feel when such expressions are used to refer to them? - I think they feel ashamed and disappointed. In short, they feel generally bad.

Can you give us the examples of the words, phrases, statements and proverbs that are used specifically to refer to the women and explain the situation that leads to the use of such expressions?

- They use expressions such as *uchichi agba eka*, meaning sexually insatiable woman public toilet, *ngta* meaning a bitch to address women who engage in fornication. These expressions are indiscriminately used to refer to them.
- *Onye nzoshue ukwu, onye ukwu warr* are used to refer to women who commit adultery.
- *Eweg nwa onyonyo eme ntili ishi* meaning that women are not reliable. This expression is used when a woman disappoints a man or it is used when advising a man that is perceived to be randy in nature.
- *Nwa onyonyo atụọhụ* – meaning, a mere woman who should not speak unless permitted. This is used to ridicule a woman who tries to claim her right when felt cheated in her husband's family.

How do you think they feel when such expressions are used to refer to them? - They feel ridiculed, demoralized and it affects them psychologically.

Are there words, phrases, statements and proverbs that are generally used to refer to both men and women in Akụ community? - There are so many of them.

Give us examples and explain the condition that leads to the use of such expressions.

- Ok. *Akri nhu* means someone whose genealogy is worthless. This is used in a situation where there is inter-generational poverty in a family. If someone from such family insists

in claiming right or making linguistic contribution in a community they use the above expression to silence him/her. This is quite oppressive.

- *Ngwere amag ahuhuulo* meaning that lizard does not know what it takes to build a house and yet lives comfortably in a house. This is used to address men/women who are living in houses not built by them and yet exhibit sort of arrogance.
- *Adh mma ne igbugbu, adh mma ne utara* meaning worthless fellow. The direct translation of this is yam that can neither be chewed nor pounded. It is used to refer to someone who is perceived not to be useful in any way or for anything.

What do you think could be the reason males and females use such expressions to refer to one another in Akụ community?

- I feel the reason is to exercise political and economic power, the fear for gender equality, waywardness of men and women and culture/tradition.

Can you expatiate please? - You know, when a man has made some kinds of political and economic achievements, he tends to look down on other fellow men.

- He uses certain expressions that creates stereotypes for the less privileged. Secondly, the fear for gender equality, the society as we know for a long period of time, has been men centred. Due to the changes in the world, a feminine group came with teaching that promotes gender equality. This kind of influence is mostly coming from the outside world. The fear of such a practice has been created in Akụ community, they use aggressive, suppressive and oppressive language to pin down the women.
- Another reason is waywardness of men and women. Men, who are wayward are deprived of certain positions in the society. Lastly, our culture/tradition affects the women more than the men. Our culture, marginalise the women's use of language. It does not permit them to participate in certain social, cultural and religious practices. When they default, oppressive names, words and proverbs are used to label them.

Have you noticed any problem(s) that arose because of the use of such expressions by men and women when used to refer to one another in Akụ community? -Yes!

What are the problems?

- It leads to inter-family clashes. It causes murder for vengeance. It leads one to armed robbery, cultism, kidnapping and prostitution.

Can you expatiate please? People tend to go into armed robbery, prostitution, kidnapping, etc. Out of curiosity to avoid being described in certain negative terms and also for their voices to be heard.

- When you make money in our society, your identity will change. The society will label you with names such as “Nwa ka ibe ya” meaning a child that is greater or better than his contemporaries or “Nwoke/Ada eji eje mba” meaning an outstanding and reliable man or woman. And this sort of expressions create stereotypes

Interviewee 3

| | |
|-----------------|----------|
| Age: | 68 years |
| Marital Status: | Married |
| Occupation: | Business |

Language is used to express ideas, opinions, desires and emotions in the human society, do you know any word(s), phrase(s), statement(s) or proverb(s) in the dialect of Akụ community that is/are used to refer to the men and the women that can bring fight? - Yes, so many of them.

Can you give us some of the examples of such words, phrases, statements and proverbs that are used specifically to refer to the men and explain the situation in which such expressions are used?

- *Ọwalị anụọzọ ne-egwuru ọny* meaning alligator that cannot dig its own whole. This proverb is used for someone especially a man who lives in a house built by another without paying rent. It is also used to refer to men who are of age but still depends on another person, may be friends or relations, for survival. *Mkpị* meaning, he-goat is used to refer to men who are lustful in nature. Another one is woman wrapper. It is also used to refer to men who are promiscuous.
- *Oke ngta nwa onyonyo kpar* meaning son of a bitch. This proverb is used to address a man with questionable value.

How do you think they feel when such expressions are used to refer to them?

- To me, they feel devalued.

Can you give us the examples of words, phrases, statements and proverbs that are specifically used to refer to the women and explain the situation that leads to the use of such expressions?

- Yes, expressions such as *ndiomu buobata osu* meaning women are home dividers and *nwa onyonyo bu ukpo ne ekpo obodo* meaning women are community destroyers are made when there is serious quarrels/conflicts in the family and the cause of it is traced to a woman or women. Women who commit adultery or fornication are called different shameful names. They are so unpleasant for me to mention.

How do you think they feel when such expressions are used to refer to them?

- I know they feel bad

Are there words, phrases, statements and proverbs that are generally, used to refer to both men and women in Akụ community? Give us examples and explain the condition that leads to the use of such expressions.

- *Ejo nwa/ejo mmadvu* meaning, evil child/evil human being. *Onye ejigrị obu* meaning, a wicked soul. This expression is used to refer to someone who is perceived to be wicked. But, sometimes people wrongly refer to others being wicked simply because they disagreed with their opinions.
- Other names are *ndh eka nwe* meaningslaves or people who are the outcast. People who happen to come from this family are, not permitted to take part in community decision making.
- If they want to lend their voices, another ridiculous and oppressive expression which is *gbue ekwu charg n'ishi* meaning cut the ripe palm nut on your head is used to remind them of whom they are.

How do you think they feel when such expressions are used to refer to them?

- I think they feel oppressed and suppressed.

What do you think could be the reason men and women use such expressions to refer to one another in Akụ community?

- There is fear for female domination, to exercise economic power.

- Most importantly, culture/tradition plays a vital role.

Can you expatiate, please?

- Traditionally, women do not have equal use of language with the men. I grew up to see it that way. Culturally too, men possess the women. That is why they are expected to keep mute unless when they are permitted to speak or their voices should be heard through their husbands and male children. If not, they will try to dominate the men.

Have you noticed any problem that arose because of the use of such expression by men and women to refer to one another? Yes!

What are the problems?

- The use of such expression on people suppresses them.
- Calling young girls names delays their getting married or makes them not to get married at all.
- It causes murder for vengeance.
- It leads to divorce/broken home.

Can you expatiate please?

- A lot of girls I know did not get married because of the names other people call them. For instance, *akwunakwuna* meaning a slut or *ngta* meaning a bitch or when they are from the family of ‘Osu.’

Interviewee 4

| | |
|-----------------|-------------------------|
| Age: | 58 years |
| Marital Status: | Married |
| Occupation: | Civil servant (retired) |

Language is used to express ideas/opinions, emotions and desires in the human society, do you know any word, phrase, statement or proverb in the dialect of Akụ community that is used to refer to the men and the women that can bring fight?

- Yes! They are numerous.

Can you give us some of the examples of such words, phrases, statements and proverbs used specifically to refer to the men and explain the situation in which such expressions are used?

- *Ọwalì anu ọzọ ne egwuru ọny* meaning an alligator that cannot dig its own hole. This is used to refer to man who is impotent and has children through another man. It could also be used to refer to a man who lives in a house built by another person and not paying rent.
- *Oke ngta nwa onyonyo kpar* meaning son of a bitch is used to refer to a man with a foolish or dubious character.
- *Echiche ndtiom* meaning women thinking/women thought. It is used to refer to a man who presents a weak argument or a man who is shallow in his thinking.
- *Mkpi*/woman wrapper is used to refer to a man who is promiscuous.

How do you think they feel when they use such expressions to refer to them?

- I think they feel belittled and ashamed. But at times, men who are promiscuous are called such names as *onye ike* meaning the strong man, professor of women affairs and *eze nnunu* meaning king of the birds. Here the women are referred to as the birds. It sounds like praises.

Can you give us some of the examples of words, phrases, statements and proverbs used specifically to refer to the women and explain the situation that leads to the use of such expressions?

- Yes. Those who engage in fornication are called *ngha* meaning a bitch, *uchichi agba eka* meaning sexually insatiable and dangerous fornicator which is *owe uchichi eme eshushue*.
- A woman who is suspected to be an adulterer is referred to as *onye nzoshue ukwu* or *onye amiaa* meaning useless adulterous woman.
- They also use oppressive statement such as *nwa onyonyo atụ ohụ* meaning a mere woman who should not talk when men are talking. They use this to refer to a woman who feels cheated in her husband's family and try to protest.
- They use such expression to silence her. *Nwa onyonyobu ukpo na-ekpo obodo* meaning women are community destroyers.

- *Uka nwa onyonyo anog na okwu anog adh nke obu* meaning there is peace where a woman is absent. All these proverbs are used to oppress the women.

How do you think the women feel when such expressions are used to refer to them?

- I think they feel oppressed.

Are there words, phrases, statements and proverbs used to generally refer to both the men and the women in Akụ community?

- Yes

Give us examples and explain the condition that leads to the use of such expression.

- *Nwa ndh dh agbugba* meaning a child born outside wedlock.
- *Ndi eka nwe* meaning people who are the outcast. They use these expressions to suppress the victims and silence them in a meeting where important decisions are taken.
- *Uhere, nhu, huru nyima shi, etc.* meaning worthless individual. This is used to refer to one who people perceive to not be useful for them in anything.
- *Ngwere amag ahuhūlō* meaning a lizard does not know what it takes to build a house and yet it lives in the house comfortably. This is also used to suppress a victim who is proud or arrogant.

How do you think they feel when such expressions are used to refer to them?

- I think the victims feel disrespected and ridiculed.

What do you think could be the reason men and woman use such expressions to refer to one another in Akụ community?

- Fear for female domination, fear for gender equality, cultural/traditional and religious practices, exercise of economic and political power and exercise of academic achievement.

Can you expatiate please?

- The women are afraid of male domination so aggressive language is developed among them to serve as a protective wall against the male domination since the society has been a male centred one. Therefore, the overbearing influence of women in today's world has

created tension among the men. This led to an evolution of language that protects the male dominance position in Akụ community.

Have you noticed any problem(s) that arose because of the use of such expression by men and women when used to refer to one another in Akụ community?

- Yes.

What are the problems?

- It is highly oppressive and the use of oppressive language brings backwardness in the society and murder for vengeance. It leads to armed robbery, cultism, kidnapping and prostitution.

Can you expatiate please?

- When a man has made some economic achievements, they tend to take some oppressive titles such as *Ite ego* meaning pot of money, *Nnukwu mmṅnwu* meaning the big masquerade or *Ọnwa na etiri ọra* meaning the moon that shines for all. Some people out of curiosity to take their own title go into kidnapping, robbery, cultism, etc. to make their own money. Again, those who have attained certain academic level call those who have not names like *Itiboribo* meaning an illiterate, *onye ime ezhi* meaning a primitive fellow. The victims could commit murder for vengeance.

Interviewee 5

| | |
|-----------------|-------------------------|
| Age: | 67 years |
| Marital Status: | Married |
| Occupation: | Civil servant (retired) |

Language is used for expression of ideas, opinions, emotions and desires in the human society, do you know any word, phrase, statement or proverb in the dialect of Akụ community that are used to refer to men and women in Akụ community that can bring fight?

- Yes, I do.

Can you please give us some of the examples of words, phrases, statements and proverbs that are used specifically to refer to the men and explain the situation in which such expressions are used?

- Yes. *Mkpị* meaning he-goat used to refer to a man who is randy in nature.
- *Oke ngta nwa onyonyo kpar* – son of a bitch. This is used to refer to a man who behaves foolishly. They are many I can't remember some of them.

How do you think the men feel when such expression is used to refer to them?

- I think they feel ashamed and insulted.

Can you give us some of the examples of the words, phrases, statements and proverbs used specifically to refer to the women and explain the situation that leads to the use of such expressions?

- *Akwụnakwụna* meaning a slut, *ngta* meaning a bitch, etc. are used to refer to women who fornicate.
- *Omer ke dimpa* – she acted like a man is used to refer to a woman who acted like a real man.
- *Ndtiomu bụọbata osu* meaning that women are trouble makers or home dividers. They use this expression when there is a problem between a woman and her husband's family.

How do you think the women feel when such expressions are used to refer to them?

- I think they feel suppressed.

Are there words, phrases, statements and proverbs that are generally used to refer to both men and women in Akụ community?

- Yes there are so many of them.

Give us the examples and explain the condition that leads to the use of such expressions.

- *Onye kpee, uhere, huru nyima shi* meaning worthless individual.
- *Onye ikparụ, ọnye ejọ mmadvụ* meaning evil human being.

The above expressions are used to refer to someone who is generally useless and wicked.

- *Kpanthth* meaning kleptomaniac is used to refer to a person who has strong desire for stealing.

What do you think could be the reason men and women use such expressions to refer to one another in Akụ community?

- They use such expressions because of culture/tradition, to describe the waywardness of men and women and fear for female domination.

Can you expatiate please? Such expressions are oppressive, so they use it to make the victims feel cursed and then keep mute.

Have you noticed any problem(s) that arose because of the use of such expressions by men and women when used to refer to one another? Yes.

What are the problems?

- It leads to divorce. It leads to poor children upbringing. It encourages cultism, armed robbery, prostitution, denial or delay in getting married.

Can you expatiate please?

- When you use abusive language on someone, the person tends to react. A lot of marriages were broken because of the use of oppressive and aggressive language by couples to address each other. People tackle their economic problems by indulging in stealing kidnapping etc.

Interviewee 6

Age: 78 years

Marital Status: Married

Occupation: Retiree

Language is used to express our ideas/opinions, emotions and desires, do you know any word(s), phrase(s), statement(s) or proverb(s) that is/are used in the dialect of Akụ community to refer to the men and the women that can bring fight? Yes.

Can you please give us examples of such words, phrases, statements and proverbs that are used specifically to refer to men in Akụ community?

- Yes. *Ọwalị anụọzọ na egwuru ọny* meaning alligator that cannot dig its own hole. This is used to describe a man who had his children through another man because he is impotent or has some biological problems. So when such a man tries to exhibit some arrogance, he is being reminded of his predicament.
- *Oke ngta onyonyo kpar* – son of a bitch is used to refer to a man with a questionable character.
- *Woman wrapper/mkpi*– he-goat. This is used to refer to a man who is lustful.

How do you think the men feel when such expressions are used to refer to them?

- I think they feel disrespected.

Can you give us examples of words, phrases, statements and proverbs that are specifically used to refer to the women in Akụ community and explain the situation that leads to the use of such words?

- *Ebere boys* meaning free for boys. *Ngta* – a bitch, public toilet, cheap article are used to describe a woman who fornicates.
- *Ogba na-ezi/onye ukwu warr* meaning an insatiable adulterous woman. They use it to describe a woman who commits adultery.

How do you think the women feel when such expression is used to refer to them?

- They feel disdained, traumatized and psychologically down.

Are there words, statements and proverbs that are generally used to refer to both men and women in Akụ community? Yes.

Give us some of the examples and explain the condition that leads to the use of such expressions.

- *Kpakpahuriah/nkpuruwiwi* meaning kleptomaniac. This is used to refer to one who has strong desire for stealing.
- *Uhere, nhu, huru nyịma shi* meaning worthless fellow are used to refer to good for nothing human beings.
- *Ngwere amag ahụhụlọ* meaning lizard does not know what it takes to build a house and yet lives in a house comfortably. They use it to humble a person who depends on others for survival but yet so proud.

What could be the reason men and women use such expressions to refer to one another?. The reason is that it is culturally rooted. Again, fear for gender equality, fear for women dominance and fear for male dominance.

Can you expatiate please? The men use such expressions in order to suppress the women, while the women use it as a protective measure against the men's world.

Have you noticed any problem(s) that arose because of the use of such expressions by men and women when used to refer to one another? Yes.

What are the problem(s)?

- It leads to domestic violence. It leads to broken homes/marriage. It encourages prostitution, hatred, conflicts in the society and prostitution.

Can you expatiate please?

- Using such expression to refer to a person can make the victim to develop hatred, mistrust, etc. to the speaker and this can lead to societal conflict.

Interviewee 7

Age: 74 years

Marital Status: Married

Occupation: Business

Language is used to express ideas/opinions, emotions and desires in the human society, do you know any word(s) phrase(s), statement(s), proverb(s) that is/are used in the dialect of Akụ community to refer to the man and the woman that can bring fight. Yes.

Give us examples of such words, phrases, statements and proverbs that are specifically, used to refer to the men in Akụ community and explain the situation in which such expressions are used.

- *Mkpị* – he-goat is used to refer to a man who is randy in nature. *Echiche ndiomu* meaning women reasoning is used when describing a man who presents weak argument. *Oke ngta nwa onyonyo kpar* – son of a bitch. This expression is used to describe a man whose behaviour is irritating.

How do you think the men feel when such expressions are used to refer to them? I think they feel not trusted.

- They feel demoralized.

Can you give us example of words, phrases, statements and proverbs that are, used specifically to refer to women in Akụ community and explain the situation that leads to the use of such expression?

- Statements like *e weg nwa onyonyo eme ntili ishi* meaning women are not reliable. This is used when a woman disappoints her husband. Words like *ngta* meaning a bitch are, used to refer to a woman who fornicates.

How do you think they feel when such expressions are, used to refer to them?

- I think they feel traumatized and low spirited.

Are there words, phrases, statements and proverbs that are generally, used to refer to both men and women in Akụ community? Yes

Give us examples and explain the condition that leads to the use of such expressions.

- *Onye ibereibe* meaning a useless human being is, used on someone who displays wicked acts.
- *Ndh eka nwe* – the outcast is, used to refer to people who belong to this class but want their voices to be heard. Such people are not respected by free born in the society.

What do you think could be the reason men and women use such expressions, to refer to one another in Akụ community?

- Culture/tradition, exercise of economic and political power, fear for gender equality, waywardness of men and women in the society.

Can you expatiate please?

- They use certain expression to refer to people because such expressions have been there for a period of time. So they use it to refer to people whose behaviour suit such expression.

Have you noticed any problem(s) that arose because of the use of such expression by men and women when used to refer to one another? Yes.

What are the problems?

- It creates stereotype on the victims, it stagnates the growth of the society. It encourages hatred, mistrust and different vices in the society.

Can you expatiate please?

- When an oppressive language is used on an individual in a society, the growth of such society is affected.

- It can lead to serious inter family/village conflict.

Interviewee 8

Age: 81 years
 Marital Status: Married
 Occupation: Nil

Language is used for expression of ideas/opinions, emotions and desires in the human society, do you know any word(s) phrase(s), statement(s), proverb(s) that are used in th dialect of Akụ community to refer to the men and women that can bring fight? Yes

Can you please give us some of the words, phrases, statements and proverbs that are specifically, used to refer to men and explain the situation in which such expressions are used?

- *Mkpị – he-goat*, used to refer to a man who exhibits the act of promiscuity.
- *Oke ngta nwa onyonyo kpar* - son of a bitch this is used to refer to a man who exhibits questionable behaviour.

How do you think the men feel when such expressions are used to refer to them?

- They feel demoralized.

Can you give us examples of words, phrases, statements and proverbs that are specifically, used to refer to women and the situation that leads to the use of such expressions?

- *Onye nzoshue ukwụ or araka dti* – an adulterous woman. These expressions are used to refer to women who engage in extra marital affairs. There are other expressions but so unpleasant to talk about.

How do you think the women feel when such expressions are used to refer to them?

- They feel not carried along. They feel demoralized.

Are there words, phrases, statements and proverbs that are generally, used to refer to both men and women in Akụ community? Yes.

Give us examples and explain the condition that leads to the use of such expressions.

- *Ngwere amag ahuhūlō* – lizard does not know the economic and physical stress that are involved in building a house, yet it lives in a house comfortably. This, is used to address

someone who lives in a house built by another person and not paying rent, yet exhibits some pride and arrogance.

- *Onye iberibe, onye kpee, onye nhu* – meaning worthless fellow. This is used to address someone who is good for nothing but tries to feel important.

What do you think could be the reason men and women use such expressions to refer to one another in Akụ community?

- Fear for gender equality, culture/tradition and exercise of academic achievement.

Can you expatiate please?

- The society developed certain oppressive expressions and restrictions in socio-cultural and religious activities deliberately to tame the women. The exercise of academic achievement has led to evolution of language that humiliates the uneducated. For example *itiboribor* meaning an illiterate and *onye ime obodo* meaning the primitive one.

Have you noticed any problem(s) that arouse because of the use of such expression by men and women when used to refer to one another in Akụ community?

- Yes, i have noticed.

What are the problems?

- They cause domestic violence, poor children upbringing, hatred, etc.

Can you expatiate please?

- The use of oppressive and aggressive language by men and women to refer to one another triggers conflict, which stagnates the growth of the society.

Interviewee 9

Age: 72 years

Marital Status: Married

Occupation: Retiree

Language is used for expression of ideas/opinions, emotions and desires in the human society, do you know any word(s) phrase(s), statement(s), proverb(s) in the dialect of Akụ community that is/are used to refer to the men and the women that can bring fight? Yes I do.

Can you give us some of the examples of such words, phrases, statements and proverbs that are used specifically to refer to the men and explain the situation in which such expressions are used?

- *Oke ngta nwa onyonyo kpar* – son of a bitch. This is used to refer to a male child who behaves stupidly.
- *Ọwalị anuọzọ na egwuru ọny* meaning alligator that cannot dig its own hole. This is used to address a man who got his children through another man because he is impotent yet exhibits pride.

How do you think the men feel when such expressions are used to refer to them?

- They feel incomplete.

Can you give us some of the examples of words, phrases, statements and proverbs that are specifically used to refer to the women and explain the situation that can lead to the use of such expressions?

- There are a lot of them. I find it unpleasant to say them, but some of the proverbs are *ndtiomu bu ukpo na-ekpo obodo* meaning that women are community destroyers. They use this when the cause of the problem in the community is traced to women.
- *Nwa onyonyo atụọhụ* meaning an ordinary woman who should not speak unless permitted to by the men. They use this to mute a woman who tries to protest for her right in the extended family.

How do you think the women feel when such expressions are used to refer to them?

- They feel belittled.

Are there words, statements and proverbs that are generally used to refer to both men and women in Akụ community? Yes.

Give us examples and explain the condition that leads to the use of such expressions.

- *Ọdh ọdh kpoşhị, ọ dh ọdh ọr* meaning birds of a feather. It is used to refer to people of like minds. It is mostly negatively used.
- *Oyiri ndiikwu nne ya* meaning a child resembles his maternal family. This is used when a child's character is bad.

- *Ome ka nna ya* meaning he acts like his father. This is used when a child behaves well in the society.
- *Onye ojoo/aru* – worthless fellow. This is used when a person exhibits the act of wickedness.

What do you think could be the reason male and female use such expressions to refer to one another?

- I think it is because of our culture/tradition, fear for female domination as well as fear for gender equality.

Can you expatiate please?

- Like the culture, I grew up to see it like that. Culturally, women are not permitted to freely lend their voices in some situations. They use certain proverbs and statements to refer to them to make sure they are suppressed.

Have you noticed any problem(s) that arose as a result of the use of such expressions by men and women to refer to one another? Yes.

What are the problems?

- It makes the victims feel oppressed. It brings quarrel/fight between families and villages. At home, it brings about domestic violence. It leads to broken homes and finally, poor children upbringing.

Have you noticed any problem(s) that arose because of the use of such expressions by men and women to refer to one another? Yes.

What are the problems?

- It makes the victims feel oppressed. It brings quarrel/fight between families and villages. At homes, it brings about domestic violence which leads to broken homes and finally poor children upbringing.

Can you expatiate please?

- Yes, when certain expressions are used to refer to a married woman who tries to exercise her right in her husband's family, she leaves the home. We all know the consequence of

a broken home. The children if not properly managed go wayward thereby constituting nuisance in the society.

Interviewee 10

| | |
|-----------------|----------|
| Age: | 74 years |
| Marital Status: | Married |
| Occupation: | Farmer |

Language is used for expression of ideas, opinions, emotions and desires in the human society, do you know any word(s) phrase(s), statement(s), proverb(s) in the dialect of Akụ community that is/are used to refer to men and women that can bring fight?- Yes, so many of them.

Can you give us some of the examples of such words, phrases, statements and proverbs that are used specifically to refer to men and explain the situation in which such expressions are used?

- They use words like *mkpi* meaning he-goat to refer to a man who is perceived to be lustful. Another one is *oke ngta nwa onyonyo kpar* meaning son of a bitch to refer to a man who misbehaves or who acts stupidly.
- Again, they use *echiche ndtiomu* meaning women's reasoning to refer to a man who presents weak argument in a meeting.

How do you think they feel when such expressions are used to refer to them?

- I think they feel generally bad.

Can you give us some of the examples of words, phrases, statements and proverbs used specifically to refer to women in Akụ community and explain the situation that leads to the use of such expression?

- Yes. *Akwunakwuna* meaning prostitute, *ngta* means a bitch, *ebere boys* meaning free for boys refer to young women who are perceived to be wayward.
- Then, *araka dti* meaning adulterous woman, *onye nzoshue ukwu* meaning shameless, adulterous women are used to refer to women who engage in extra marital affairs, but in the case of the men, our community is silent about men who indulge in extra marital affairs.

- They have expressions such as *nwaonyonyo buobata osu* meaning women are trouble makers or home dividers, *eweg nwa onwonyo eme ntili ishi* meaning that women are not reliable. They use this when a women disappoints people as if men do not disappoint people. Another expression is *nwa onyonyo atuohu* meaning a mere woman who should not talk unless permitted to by the men. They use this expression to silence any woman who is perceived to be too wise.

How do you think they feel when such expressions are used to refer to them? I think the women feel devalued.

Are there words, phrases, statements and proverbs that are generally used to refer to both men and women in Akụ community? Give us the examples and the condition that leads to the use of such expressions.

- Yes. They use *onye kpee*, *onye nhu* to refer to a person who is perceived to be worthless. *Akiri nhu* meaning a person whose genealogy is worthless. *Ngwere amag ahuhūulo* meaning that lizard does not know what it takes for one to build a house and yet it lives in a house. They use these proverbs to silence someone who is living freely in a house built by another person and yet displays pride. It is used to mock and silence the victim.

What do you think could be the reason for the use of such expression by men and women to refer to one another in Akụ community? What I think could be the reason firstly, is culture. Secondly, exercise of economic power, and lastly fear for gender equality.

Can you expatiate please?

- **Culture:** The culture does not permit women to speak in certain situations. So when some women who think they should exercise their freedom of speech try to speak out, they use certain expressions to silence them.
- Again, some people who have made it economically use certain expressions to cajole their counterparts who have not. Lastly, since men are not comfortable with the saying “what a man can do, a woman can do even better.” They use certain expressions as mentioned above to keep the women in deem position.

Have you noticed any problem(s) that arose because of the use of such expression by men and women when used to refer to one another? Yes.

What are the problems?

- The use of such derogatory expressions on men and women against each other causes murder for vengeance, hatred and mistrust, women not actively participating in politics, inter family conflict, armed robbery, kidnapping prostitution, etc.

Can you expatiate please?

- People who are so emotional go as far as poisoning anyone who use oppressive terms on them. People go into kidnapping, stealing and prostituting so that they will not be intimidated by the rich. I can go on and on to give reasons.

Interviewee 11

| | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| Age: | 67 years |
| Marital Status: | Married |
| Occupation: | Farmer/businessman |

Language is used for expression of ideas, opinions, emotions and desires in the human society, do you know any word(s) phrase(s), statement(s) or proverb(s) in the dialect of Akụ community that are used by men and women to refer to one another that can bring fight? Yes, a lot!

Can you please give us some of the examples of the words, phrases, statements and proverbs used specifically to refer to the men in Akụ community and explain the situation in which they are used.

- Yes, they use expressions such as *oke ngta nwa onyonyo kpar* meaning a male dog trained by a woman. They use this to address a man who acts foolishly.
- *Qwalì anh ọzọ ne-egwuru ọnu* meaning alligator that cannot dig its own hole; they use this to address mostly men who have their children through another man because they cannot pregnant their wives or are impotent. There are so many of them, just that I cannot remember them now.

How do you think they feel when such expressions are used to refer to them? They feel disrespected.

Can you give us examples of words, phrases, statements and proverbs used specifically to refer to the women and explain the situation that leads to the use of such expressions?

- Yes, they use expressions such as *ogba na-ezi* meaning an uncontrollable adulterous woman, *onye nzoshue ukwu* – fantastic adulterer, to address women who are perceived to be indulging in extra marital affair, unfortunately, no equal expression for the men who indulge in such affairs; *ndiomu bu ukpo ne-ekpo obodo* meaning that women are community destroyers. They use this proverb when there is a family squabble that involves the women. *Oyiri ndi ikwu nne ya* meaning the child takes after the maternal family. They use this expression when a child behaves foolishly. How do you think they feel when such expressions are used to refer to them? They feel oppressed.

Can you give us examples of words, phrases, statements and proverbs used generally to refer to both men and women in Akụ community and explain the condition that leads to the use of such expressions?

- Yes, *ndh eka nwe* meaning slaves. This is used to refer to certain people who are considered ‘Osu’ in Akụ community. This group of people are not allowed free linguistic contributions in community meetings. Another one is *nwa ndh dh agbugba* meaning a child born out of wedlock. The victims do not have full linguistic contributions when decisions are taking in both at family and community level. *Qdh kqdh kpqshj, qdh kqdh gorr* meaning people of like minds or birds of a feather. They use this to address people who are perceived to be senseless or not serious minded that are either friends or couples.

What do you think could be the reason men and women use such expressions to refer to one another in Akụ community?

- I think the reasons are exercise of economic and political power, exercise of academic achievements, and waywardness of men and women.

Can you expatiate please?

- Yes. When a man or woman is perceived to be wayward, expression such as he-goat, slut, a bitch, etc. are used to address them. Again, those who have acquired wealth talk down the poor, etc.

Have you noticed any problem(s) that arose because of the use of such expression by men and women when used to refer to one another in Akụ community? Yes.

What are the problems?

- It breeds societal vices, it causes murder for vengeance, it suppresses the victims.

Can you expatiate please?

- Yes. To avoid being labelled or intimidated some people go as far as indulging in armed robbery, prostitution, kidnapping, etc. to make money and take titles. Some practice cultism for them to feel secured.

Interviewee 12

| | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| Age: | 73 years |
| Marital Status: | Married |
| Occupation: | Businessman |

Language is used for expression of ideas, opinions, emotions and desires in the human society, do you know any word(s) phrase(s), statement(s) or proverb(s) in the dialect of Akụ community that is/are used to refer to men and women that can bring fight? Yes, I do know.

Can you give us example of words, phrases, statements and proverbs that are used specifically to refer to the men in Akụ community and explain the situation in such expressions are used.

- Yes – *mkpi* meaning he-goat/woman wrapper are used to address men who are randy in nature. *Oke ngta nwa onyonyo kpar* – a male dog trained by a woman. This is used to address a man whose behaviour is questionable. *Echiche ndtiomu* – women thinking is used to refer to a man whose argument does not hold water, etc.

How do you think they feel when such expressions are used to refer to them? They feel ashamed.

Can you give us examples of words, phrases, statements and proverbs used specifically to refer to women in Akụ community and explain the situation that leads to the use of such expressions?

- Yes I can. *Akwunakwuna*– slut, *ngta* – a bitch are used to refer to a woman who engages in fornication. *Umụ nwanyi buobata osu* – women are family dividers.

How do you think they feel when such expressions are used to refer to them? They feel ridiculously oppressed and devalued.

Can you give us examples of words, phrases, statements and proverbs used generally to refer to both men and women in Akụ community and the condition that leads to the use of such expressions?

- Yes. *Onyo nhu, onye kpee* meaning worthless fellow. *Mkphrhwiwi, kpanthth* meaning kleptomaniac, *nwa ndhdh agbugba* meaning a child born outside wedlock, *ndi eka nwe* – people who are not free born or the outcast.

What do you think could be the reason men and women use such expressions to refer to one another?

- I think they use it out of fear for gender equality, to exercise economic and political power and finally because of culture/tradition.

Can you expatiate please?

- The rich use oppressive languages to suppress others who they feel are threat to them. Because of our culture, men use such expression to subjugate the women while the women use it on the men to shield themselves from male domination.

Have you noticed any problem(s) that arouse because of the use of such expression by men and women to refer to one another in Akụ community? Yes.

What are the problems?

- Domestic violence/divorce, social vices such as kidnapping, armed robbery, prostitution, poor children upbringing, hatred, squabbles in families, inter-family/village conflict, etc.

Can you expatiate please?

- Where an aggressive and derogatory language is used to refer to someone, the person will likely react especially a person who is emotional. Some of the reactions could be divorce, domestic violence, etc. And when a home is broken, the result is likely poor children upbringing which leads to armed robbery, prostitution, etc.

Interviewee 13

Age: 73 years
Marital Status: Married
Occupation: Retiree

Language is used for expression of ideas, opinions, emotions and desires in the human society, do you know any word(s) phrase(s), statement(s) or proverb(s) in the dialect of Akụ community that is/are used to refer to men and women that can bring fight? Yes, a lot!

Can you please give us some of the words, statements and proverbs that are specifically used to refer to the men and explain the situation in which such expressions are used?

- *Oke ngta nwa onyonyo kpar* – son of a bitch. This is used to address a man who behaves unwisely. *Mkpi* – he-goat and woman wrapper which refer to men who are promiscuous.

How do you think they feel when such expressions are used to refer to them? They feel belittled. Can you give us some of the examples of words, phrases, statements and proverbs that are specifically used to refer to women and explain the situation that leads to the use of such expressions?

- *Onye ukwu warr* – adulterous woman, and *onye amiaa* – shameless adulterous woman. All these are used to refer to a woman who engages in adultery.

How do you think they feel when such expressions are used to refer to them?

- They feel oppressed and rejected in the society.

Are there words, phrases, statements and proverbs that are used generally to refer to both men and women in Akụ community? Give us the examples and explain the condition that leads to the use of such expression.

- Yes there are. *Ngwereamag ahuhu ulo* – lizard does not understand what it takes to build a house and yet lives in a house. This is used to address someone who lives in a house built by another person without rent and yet want to display arrogance. *Onye nshị* – murderer is used to address someone who is perceived to be a killer using poison, etc.

What do you think could be the reason men and women use such expressions to refer to one another in Akụ community?

- Culture/tradition, fear for gender equality and exercise of economic power

Can you expatiate please?

- Our culture marginalizes the women in the use of language in some areas and aggressive expressions are used to humble and silence them because men do not want the women to compete with them in the society, etc.

Have you noticed any problem(s) that arose because the use of such expressions by males and females to refer to one another? Yes.

What are the problems?

- Delay in getting married; denial of getting married; it brings self-condemnation, inter-family/inter-village conflict, etc.

Can you expatiate please?

- When expressions such as slut, armed robber, kidnapper, etc. are used to address one, the person finds it difficult to have a lifetime partner. The use of Hateful speech on one creates stereotypes etc.