

# Teaching Cultural Taboos and Taboo Language for Intercultural Awareness and Understanding

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## Abstract

The goal of the paper is to show that language can support social and intercultural competence of both students and teachers: one of the ways to do it is teaching cultural taboos and taboo language for intercultural awareness and understanding. The current state of the art in the field points to an increasing interest in the teaching of taboos. The material we analysed consisted in 238 offensive, vulgar and obscene English words that both students and teachers should know to attain social and intercultural competence. The method used is the descriptive one. The degree of novelty is rather high in our cultural area. Results show that there are 134 offensive (slang) words and expressions (referring to the country of origin or to an ethnic group, to sex and sex-related issues (sexual orientation), to race, etc.), 75 vulgar words and expressions (referring to sex and sex-related issues, to body parts, to people, etc.), and 29 obscene words and expressions (referring to body secretions, to sex and sex-related issues, to people, etc.). There seems to be no research limitations given the lexicographic sources that we used. The implications of teaching cultural taboos and taboo language at tertiary level concern both the students and teachers and the organisation they belong to. The paper is original and relevant given the process of globalisation.

**Keywords:** Cultural taboo, Taboo language, Intercultural awareness, Intercultural understanding.

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## 1. Introduction

**Social and intercultural competence** and its related issues can be approached through **language support**: if *social and intercultural competence* implies young people learning to deal with difference in the widest sense of the word, to promote diversity and counter intolerance and discrimination, and to deal with taboos), *language support* implies that organisations should prepare the young people for communicating across cultures, foresee a set of well-defined methods to allow young people to interact despite linguistic barriers, and produce a linguistic support for cross-cultural communication – on difference and diversity, intolerance and discrimination, and

taboos – using both old and new teaching/learning methods [1,2].

**Teaching Cultural Taboos and Taboo Language for Intercultural Awareness and Understanding** should, therefore, include an inventory of **linguistic taboos** (*offensive, vulgar and obscene words*) to be included in English classes or carried out in a separate course for future Erasmus+ mobile students and teachers of other disciplines than English [3-5].

## 2. Material and Method

The material we analysed consisted in 238 offensive, vulgar and obscene English words that both students and teachers should know to attain social and intercultural competence. The method used is the descriptive one.

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### 3. Results and Discussion

All words and definitions in a language dictionary not restricted by status labels should be regarded as appropriate for use in all contexts. However, certain words or word definitions are limited to a particular level or style of usage: they are labelled *non-standard, usage problem, offensive, vulgar, obscene, slang, and informal*. **Offensive, vulgar, and obscene words** are **taboo words**, i.e. *words excluded or forbidden from use, approach, or mention* because of social custom or emotional aversion.

The analysis below shows the distribution of the 238 *offensive, vulgar and obscene words* [1, 6] that students and teachers should know to attain **social and intercultural competence**.

1. Are considered **offensive** the “words and expressions such as racial, ethnic, or gender slurs that are not only derogatory and insulting to the person to whom they are directed but also a discredit to the one using them” [6]. There are **134 offensive (slang) words and expressions** in our corpus. These words and expressions refer to **Country of origin or ethnic group** (31): *babu / baboo* ‘A native of India who has acquired some superficial education in English’, *Boche / boche* ‘Used as a disparaging term for a German’, *bogtrotter* ‘Used as a disparaging term for an Irishman’, *Canuck* ‘Used as a disparaging term for a Canadian, especially a French Canadian’, *Chinaman* ‘Used as a disparaging term for a Chinese man’, *Chink* ‘Used as a disparaging term for a Chinese person’, *dago / Dago* ‘Used as a disparaging term for an Italian, a Spaniard, or a Portuguese’, *Falasha* ‘Used as a disparaging term for an Ethiopian Jew’, *frog* ‘Used as a disparaging term for a French person’, *ginzo* ‘Used as a disparaging term for a person of Italian ancestry’, *gook* ‘Used as a disparaging term for a North Vietnamese soldier or guerrilla in the Vietnam War’, *greaser* ‘Used as a disparaging term for a Latin American, especially a Mexican’, *gringo* ‘Used as a disparaging term for a foreigner in Latin America, especially an American or English person’, *guinea* ‘Used as a disparaging term for an Italian or a person of Italian descent’, *half-breed* ‘A person having parents of different ethnic types’, *Hun* ‘Used as a disparaging term for a German, especially a German soldier in World War I’, *Hymie* ‘Used as a disparaging term for a Jew’, *Indian giver* ‘One who gives something to

another and then takes or demands the gift back’, *Jap* ‘Used as a disparaging term for a Japanese’, *Jewess* ‘A Jewish woman or girl’, *Kaffir / Kafir* ‘A Xhosa’, *kike* ‘Used as a disparaging term for a Jew’, *kraut / Kraut* ‘Used as a disparaging term for a German’, *mick* ‘Used as a disparaging term for an Irish person’, *Paddy* ‘Used as a disparaging term for an Irishman’, *Polack* ‘Used as a disparaging term for a person of Polish birth or descent’, *sheeny* ‘Used as a disparaging term for a Jew’, *West Briton* ‘A native Irishman or Irishwoman whose sympathies lie toward England’, *wetback* ‘Used as a disparaging term for a Mexican, especially a laborer who crosses the U.S. border illegally’, *wop* ‘Used as a disparaging term for an Italian’, and *yid* ‘Used as a disparaging term for a Jew’. The ethnic groups referred to are: *Jews* (6): *Falasha, Hymie, Jewess, kike, sheeny, yid*; *Irishmen* (4): *bogtrotter, mick, Paddy, West Briton*; *Italians* (4): *dago / Dago, ginzo, guinea, wop*; *Germans* (3): *Boche / boche, Hun, kraut / Kraut*; *Chinese* (2): *Chinaman* and *Chink*; *Indians* (2): *babu / baboo* and *Indian giver*; *Mexicans* (2): *greaser* and *wetback*; *Americans* (1): *gringo*; *Canadians* (1): *Canuck*; *English* (1): *gringo*; *French* (1): *frog*; *Japanese* (1): *Jap*; *Poles* (1): *Polack*; *Portuguese* (1): *dago / Dago*; *South Africans* (1): *Kaffir / Kafir*; *Spaniards* (1): *dago / Dago*; *Vietnamese* (1): *gook*; and *none* (1): *half-breed*. **Sex and sex-related (sexual orientation)** (20): *AC/DC* (adj.) ‘Engaging in or practicing bisexuality’, *bitch* ‘A lewd woman’, *breeder* ‘Used as a disparaging term for a heterosexual person’, *bull dyke* ‘Used as a disparaging term for a lesbian’, *butch* ‘Used as a disparaging term for a lesbian’, *closet queen* ‘Used as a disparaging term for a gay or homosexual man who chooses not to reveal his sexual orientation’, *dike / dyke* ‘Used as a disparaging term for a lesbian’, *fag* ‘Used as a disparaging term for a gay or homosexual man’, *faggot* ‘Used as a disparaging term for a gay or homosexual man’, *fairy* ‘Used as a disparaging term for a gay or homosexual man’, *fruit* ‘Used as a disparaging term for a gay or homosexual man’, *fruity* (adj.) ‘Gay or homosexual’, *homo* ‘Used as a disparaging term for a gay or homosexual person’, *nance* ‘Used as a disparaging term for an effeminate man, especially a gay or homosexual man’, *nelly / nellie* ‘Used as a disparaging term for an effeminate gay or homosexual man’, *pansy* ‘1. Used as a disparaging term for a man or boy who is considered effeminate. 2. Used as a

disparaging term for a gay or homosexual man', **queen** 'Used as a disparaging term for a gay or homosexual man', **queer** (n. and adj.) 'n. Used as a disparaging term for a gay or homosexual person. *adj.* Gay; homosexual', **squaw man** 'Used as a disparaging term for a gay or homosexual man', and **swish** 'Used as a disparaging term for a gay or homosexual man'. The distribution per genders is: *men/women* (3): **AC/DC**, **breeder**, **homo**; *men* (13): **closet queen**, **fag**, **faggot**, **fairly**, **fruit**, **fruity**, **nance**, **nelly** / **nellie**, **pansy**, **queen**, **queer** (n. and adj.), **squaw man**, **swish**; and *women* (4): **bitch**, **bull dyke**, **butch**, **dike** / **dyke**. **Race** (19): **buck** 'Used as a disparaging term for a Native American or Black man', **colored** / **Colored** 'n. 1. A person of a racial group not regarded as white. 2. A person of mixed racial strains. *adj.* a. Of or belonging to a racial group not regarded as white. b. Of mixed racial strains. 3. Distorted or biased, as by irrelevant or incorrect information', **coon** 'Used as a disparaging term for a Black person', **half blood** / **half-blood** 'A half-breed', **half-caste** (n.) 'A person of mixed racial descent' and (adj.) 'Of mixed racial descent', **honky** / **honkie** / **honkey** 'Used as a disparaging term for a white person', **Kaffir** / **Kafir** 'Used especially in southern Africa as a disparaging term for a Black person', **mammy** 'A Black nursemaid, especially one formerly in the southern United States', **Mister Charlie** / **Mr. Charlie** 'A white person or white people considered as a group', **Negress** 'A Black woman or girl', **nigger** 'a. Used as a disparaging term for a Black person. b. Used as a disparaging term for a member of any dark-skinned people', **ofay** 'Used as a disparaging term for a white person', **pickaninny** 'Used as a disparaging term for a young Black child', **red** / **Red** (adj.) 'Of or being a Native American', **redskin** 'Used as a disparaging term for a Native American', **shine** 'Used as a disparaging term for a Black person', **spade** 'Used as a disparaging term for a Black person', **Uncle Tom** 'A Black person who is regarded as being humiliatingly subservient or deferential to white people', **wog** 'Used as a disparaging term for a person of color, especially a foreigner from the Middle East or Asia', **yellow** (adj.) 'Of or being a person of Asian origin'. The groups referred to are *Black people* (10): **buck**, **coon**, **Kaffir** / **Kafir**, **mammy**, **Negress**, **nigger**, **pickaninny**, **shine**, **spade**, **Uncle Tom**; *Native Mixed racial strains* (5): **colored** / **Colored** (n. and adj.), **half blood** /

**half-blood**, **half-breed**, **half-caste**, **yellow**; *Native Americans* (4): **buck**, **red** / **Red**, **redskin**, **squaw**; *White people* (4): **honky** / **honkie** / **honkey**, **Mister Charlie** / **Mr. Charlie**, **ofay**, **squaw man**; *Non-White* (2): **colored** / **Colored** (n. and adj.), **wog**; *Asian* (1): **yellow**; *Non-Native American* (1): **squaw man**. **Continent of origin** (18): **Abo** / **abo** 'Used as a disparaging term for an Australian aborigine', **blackamoor** 'A dark-skinned person, especially a person from northern Africa', **bohunk** 'Used as a disparaging term for a person from east-central Europe, especially a laborer', **coolie** / **cooly** 'An unskilled Asian laborer', **gook** 'Used as a disparaging term for an Asian person', **greaser** 'Used as a disparaging term for a Latin American, especially a Mexican', **gringo** 'Used as a disparaging term for a foreigner in Latin America, especially an American or English person', **Hottentot** '1. A Khoikhoi. 2. Any of the Khoikhoi group of languages', **hunky** 'Used as a disparaging term for a person, especially a laborer, from east-central Europe', **oriental** / **Oriental** 'Used as a disparaging term for an Asian person', **slant** 'Used as a disparaging term for an Asian person', **slope** 'Used as a disparaging term for an Asian person', **spic** / **spick** 'Used as a disparaging term for a Hispanic person', **squaw** 'A Native American woman, especially a wife', **squaw man** 'A white or other non-Native American man having a Native American wife and usually living with her people', **wog** 'Used as a disparaging term for a person of color, especially a foreigner from the Middle East or Asia', **yellow** (adj.) 'Of or being a person of Asian origin', and **yellow peril** / **Yellow Peril** 'Threatened expansion of Asian populations as magnified in the Western imagination'. The continents are represented as follows: *Asia* (8): **coolie** / **cooly**, **gook**, **oriental** / **Oriental**, **slant**, **slope**, **wog** and **yellow**, **yellow peril** / **Yellow Peril**; *America* (3): **gringo**, **squaw**, and **squaw man**; *Europe* (3): **bohunk**, **gringo**, and **hunky**; *Africa* (2): **blackamoor** and **Hottentot**; *Latin America* (2): **greaser** and **spic** / **spick**; and *Australia* (1): **Abo** / **abo**. **Physical / mental disabilities and related terms** (17): **cretin** 'An idiot', **deaf-mute** / **deaf mute** 'A person who can neither hear nor speak', **defective** 'One that is physically or mentally deficient', **dumb** 'Incapable of using speech; mute', **feeble-minded** (adj.) 'Deficient in intelligence', **half-wit** 'A person regarded as foolish or stupid', **loony bin** 'A mental health facility', **mental** (adj.) 'Mentally or

psychologically disturbed', *midget* 'An extremely little person who is otherwise normally proportioned', *Mongolian / mongolian* (adj.) 'Of or relating to Down syndrome', *mongolism / Mongolism* 'Down syndrome', *Mongoloid / mongoloid* (n. 'A person affected with Down syndrome' and adj. 'Of or relating to Down syndrome'), *mute* 'One who is incapable of speech', *retard* 'Used as a disparaging term for a mentally retarded person', *retarded* (n. 'Persons affected with mental retardation considered as a group' and adj. '1. Affected with mental retardation. 2. Relatively slow in mental, emotional, or physical development'), *runt* 'A short person', and *weak-minded* (adj.) 'Of less than normal intellect'. The disabilities referred to are *physical and mental* (1): *defective; physical* (5): *deaf-mute / deaf mute, dumb, midget, mute, runt*; and *mental and related* (11): *cretin, feeble-minded, half-wit, loony bin, mental, Mongolian / mongolian, mongolism / Mongolism, Mongoloid / mongoloid* (n. and adj.), *retard, retarded* (n. and adj.), *weak-minded*. **Religion** (Christianity, Islam, Judaism) (14): *goy* 'Used as a disparaging term for one who is not a Jew', *Holy Roller* 'Used as a disparaging term for a member of any of various religious denominations in which spiritual fervor is expressed by shouts and violent body movements', *Islamism* 'The religious faith, principles, or cause of Islam', *Mohammedan / Muhammadan / Muhammedan* 'A Muslim', *Mohammedanism / Muhammadanism* 'The religion of Muslims; Islam', *papist* 'A Roman Catholic', *popery* 'The doctrines, practices, and rituals of the Roman Catholic Church', *popish* (adj.) 'Of or relating to the popes or the Roman Catholic Church', *Prod / prod* 'Used as a disparaging term for a Protestant', *Romanism* 'Roman Catholicism', *Romanist* 'One who professes Roman Catholicism', *Romish* (adj.) 'Of or relating to the Roman Catholic Church', *shegetz* 'A non-Jewish boy or young man', and *shiksa / shikse* 'Used as a disparaging term for a non-Jewish girl or woman'. The reference is to *religion* (7): *Holy Roller, Islamism, Romanism, Mohammedanism / Muhammadanism, popish, popery, Romish* and *religious people* (7): *goy, Mohammedan / Muhammadan / Muhammedan, papist, Prod / prod, Romanist, shegetz, shiksa / shikse*; **Gender** (12): *women / girls* (11): *beaver* 'A woman or girl', *bimbo* 'A woman, especially one who is perceived as vacuous or as having an

exaggerated interest in sexuality', *bint* 'A woman or girl', *bitch* '1. A woman considered to be spiteful or overbearing. 2. A lewd woman', *hen* 'A woman, especially a fussy old woman', *mammy* 'A Black nursemaid, especially one formerly in the southern United States', *Negress* 'A Black woman or girl', *petticoat* 'A woman or girl', *pussy* 'Used as a disparaging term for a woman', *skirt* 'Used as a disparaging term for a woman', *squaw* 'A woman or wife' and men (1): *drag queen* 'A man, especially a performer, who dresses as a woman'. **Economic status** (7): *cracker* 'Used as a disparaging term for a poor white person of the rural, especially southeast United States', *nigger* 'Used as a disparaging term for a member of any socially, economically, or politically deprived group of people', *Okie* (*historical derogatory*) 'Used as a disparaging term for a migrant farm worker, especially one from Oklahoma during the 1930's', *poor white* 'Used as a disparaging term for a member of a class of low-income white farmers and laborers, especially in the southern United States', *redneck* 'Used as a disparaging term for a member of the white rural laboring class, especially in the southern United States', *white trash* 'Used as a disparaging term for a poor white person or poor white people', and *whitey / Whitey* 'Used as a disparaging term for a white person or white people'. The reference here is to Black people (2): *nigger, Okie*; White people (5): *cracker, Okie, poor white, redneck, white trash, whitey / Whitey*. **Social status** (7): *Arab* 'A waif', *boy* 'A male servant, such as a valet', *girl* 'A female servant, such as a maid', *mammy* 'A Black nursemaid, especially one formerly in the southern United States', *nigger* 'Used as a disparaging term for a member of any socially, economically, or politically deprived group of people', *redneck* 'One who is regarded as having a provincial, conservative, often bigoted sociopolitical attitude' and *Uncle Tomism* 'Deferential, subservient behavior and attitudes believed characteristic of an Uncle Tom'. **Political status** (3): *nigger* 'Used as a disparaging term for a member of any socially, economically, or politically deprived group of people', *redneck* 'One who is regarded as having a provincial, conservative, often bigoted sociopolitical attitude', *West Briton* 'A native Irishman or Irishwoman whose sympathies lie toward England'. **Profession** (3): *coolie / cooly* 'An unskilled Asian laborer', *mammy* 'A Black

nursemaid, especially one formerly in the southern United States' and **pig** 'Used as a disparaging term for a police officer'. **Age** (2 about women): **hen** 'A woman, especially a fussy old woman' and **old maid** 'Used as a disparaging term for a woman, especially an older woman, who is not married'. **Body parts** (2 about women): **beaver** 'The female genitalia' and **pussy** 'Used as a disparaging term for a woman'. **Marital status** (1 about women): **old maid** 'Used as a disparaging term for a woman, especially an older woman, who is not married'.

As far as the **country of origin or ethnic group** is concerned, the following should be observed: like the feminine forms of other ethnic terms, such as *Negress*, the word *Jewess* has come to be widely regarded as offensive, since it seems to imply that the conjunction of Jewishness and female sex is sufficient to establish a distinct racial or social category. Where reference to gender is relevant, the phrase *Jewish woman* can be used. Like the feminine forms of other ethnic terms, such as *Jewess*, the word *Negress* is now widely regarded as offensive, since it seems to imply that Black women constitute a distinct racial category. Where reference to gender is relevant, the phrase *Black* (or *African-American* or *Afro-American*) *woman* should be used. The term *Asian* is now preferred for persons of South and East Asian ancestry (Indians, Southeast Asians, Chinese, Koreans, Japanese, Indonesians, Filipinos, and others) in place of the term *Oriental*, an older usage that denotes some of these groups. *Oriental* has been objected to on two grounds: because it suggests racial, rather than cultural identity, and because it identifies the place of origin in terms of its location relative to the West (i.e., "from the East"), rather than in absolute terms.

2. Are considered **vulgar** the words and expressions that warn "of social taboos attached to a word" [6]. There are 75 vulgar words and expressions in our corpus. They refer to **Sex and sex-related** (32): **ass** 'Sexual intercourse', **to ball** 'To have sexual intercourse (with)', **to bang** 'To have sexual intercourse with', **to beat off** (Phrasal v.) 'To masturbate', **to blow** 'To perform fellatio on', **blowjob** 'The act or an instance of fellatio', **bugger** (n.) 'A sodomite' and (v.) 'To practice sodomy (with)', **buggery** 'Sodomy', **chicken hawk** 'A man who seeks out young boys as his sexual partners', **clap** 'Gonorrhoea', **come** (n.) 'Semen' and (v.) 'To experience orgasm', **to**

**diddle** '1. To have intercourse with (a woman). 1. To practice masturbation upon', **to feel up** 'To touch or fondle (someone) sexually', **to frig** 'To have sexual intercourse (with)', **gangbang / gang-bang** '1. Sexual intercourse, often rape, involving one person or victim and several others who have relations with that person in rapid succession. 2. Sexual intercourse involving several people who select and change partners in an indiscriminate manner', **to go down on** (Idiom) 'To perform oral sex on', **hard-on** 'An erection of the penis', **head** 'Oral sex', **horny** (adj.) '1. Desirous of sexual activity. 2. Sexually aroused', **hot pants** 'Strong sexual desire', **to hump** 'To engage in sexual intercourse (with)', **to jack off** (Phrasal v.) 'To masturbate', **lay** (n.) '1. Sexual intercourse. 2. A partner in sexual intercourse' and (v.) 'To have sexual intercourse with', **to play with (oneself)** (Idiom) 'To masturbate', **to put out** (Phrasal v.) 'To be sexually active. Used of a woman', **screw** (n.) 'The act or an instance of having sexual intercourse' and (v.) 'To have sexual intercourse', **to screw around** (Phrasal v.) '1. To act or fool around aimlessly or in a confused way and accomplish nothing. 2. To be sexually promiscuous', **sixty-nine** 'Oral-genital sex between two people at the same time', **stuff it!** 'Used as an intensive to express extreme anger, frustration, or disgust', **to suck** 'To perform fellatio on', **tail** 'A sexual partner, especially a woman or girl', and **to whack off** (Phrasal v.) 'To masturbate'. The aspects referred to are *sexual intercourse and related terms* (17): **ass, to ball, to bang, to blow, to come** (n. and v.), **to diddle, to feel up, to frig, gangbang / gang-bang, horny, hot pants, to hump, lay** (n. and v.), **to put out, screw** (n. and v.), **to screw around, stuff it; masturbation** (5): **to beat off, to diddle, to jack off, to whack off, to play with (oneself); fellatio** (3): **to blow, blowjob, to suck; oral sex** (3): **head, sixty-nine, to go down on; sex partner** (3): **chicken hawk, lay** and **tail; sodomy** (2): **bugger** (n. and v.), **buggery; erection** (1): **hard-on; sexual diseases** (1): **clap. Body parts** (24): **ass** '1. The buttocks. 2. The anus', **asshole** 'The anus', **balls** '1. The testicles. 2. Courage, especially when reckless. 3. Great presumptuousness', **ballsy** (adj.) 'Very tough and courageous, often recklessly or presumptuously so', **beaver** n. 'The female genitalia', **boob** 'A woman's breast', **booby** 'A woman's breast', **box** 'The vulva and the vagina', **cherry** 'The hymen considered as a symbol of

virginity', *cock* 'The penis', *dick* 'A penis', *dong* 'A penis', *half-assed* (adj.) 'Not well planned or executed', *joint* 'A penis', *to kiss ass* (Idiom) 'To act submissively or obsequiously in order to gain favor', *knocker* 'A woman's breast', *pecker* 'The penis', *peter* 'The penis', *prick* 'A penis', *pussy* 'The vulva', *putz* 'A penis', *tit* 'A woman's breast', *tool* 'A penis', and *wazoo* 'The anus'. The body parts referred to are the *penis* (9): *cock*, *dick*, *dong*, *joint*, *pecker*, *peter*, *prick*, *putz*, *tool*; the *breast* (4): *boob*, *booby*, *knocker*, *tit*; the *buttocks* (3): *ass*, *half-assed*, *to kiss ass*; the *anus* (3): *ass*, *asshole*, *wazoo*; the *testicles* (2): *balls*, *ballsy*; the *female genitalia* (1): *beaver*; the *hymen* (1): *cherry*; the *vulva* (1): *pussy*; the *vulva and vagina* (1): *box*. **People** (19): *asshole* 'A thoroughly contemptible, detestable person', *badass* (n.) 'A mean-tempered or belligerent person' and (adj.) 'Mean; belligerent', *bastard* 'A person, especially one who is held to be mean or disagreeable', *beaver* 'A woman or girl', *bugger* 'A contemptible or disreputable person', *candy-ass / candyass* 'A sissy; a wimp', *fart* (n.) 'A person regarded as annoying or foolish' and (v.) 'To fool around; fritter time away', *half-assed* adj. 'Incompetent', *to kiss ass* 'To act submissively or obsequiously in order to gain favor', *piece* 'A sexually attractive person', *pisser* '1. One that is extremely disagreeable. 2. One that is extraordinary or remarkable', *prick* 'A person regarded as highly unpleasant', *to put out* 'To be sexually active. Used of a woman', *snot* 'A person regarded as annoying, arrogant, or impertinent', *snotty* (adj.) 'Impertinent; arrogant', *son of a bitch* (n.) 'A person regarded as thoroughly mean or disagreeable', *tail* 'A sexual partner, especially a woman or girl', *turd* 'A person regarded as contemptible', *wiseass / wise-ass* 'A smart aleck'. Some of them refer only to *women and girls* (3): *beaver*, *tail*, *to put out*. **Body secretions** (13): *come* (n.) 'Semen', *crap* '1. Excrement. 2. An act of defecating' (v.) 'To defecate', *crapper* 'A toilet', *fart* (n.) 'A usually audible discharge of intestinal gas' and (v.) 'To expel intestinal gas through the anus; break wind', *horseshit* 'Excrement of a horse', *to take a leak* (Idiom) 'To urinate', *piss* (n.) '1. Urine. 2. The act or an instance of urinating' and (v.) '1. To urinate (on or in). 2. To discharge (blood, for example) in the urine', *to piss off* (Phrasal v.) 'To make or become angry', *pissed* (adj.) '1. Extremely irritated or angry. 2. Intoxicated; drunk', *pisser* '1. One that

is extremely disagreeable. 2. One that is extraordinary or remarkable', *snot* 'Nasal mucus; phlegm', *snotty* (adj.) 'Dirtied with nasal mucus', *turd* 'A piece of excrement'. The body secretions referred to are *urine* (5): *to take a leak*, *piss* (n. and v.), *to piss off*, *pissed*, *pisser*; *excrement* (4): *crap* (n. and v.), *crapper*, *horseshit*, *turd*; *phlegm* (2): *snot*, *snotty*; *gas* (1): *fart* (n. and v.); *semen* (1): *come* (n. and v.). **Animals** (8): *badass* '(n.) 'A mean-tempered or belligerent person' and (adj.) 'Mean; belligerent', *beaver* '1. The female genitalia. 2. A woman or girl', *bull* 'Empty, foolish, or pretentious talk', *chicken hawk* 'A man who seeks out young boys as his sexual partners', *horseshit* 'Meaningless or insincere talk or action; nonsense', *SOB* (abr.) 'son of a bitch', *son of a bitch!* (interj.) 'Used to express annoyance, disgust, disappointment, or amazement', and *wiseass / wise-ass* 'A smart aleck'. **Items** (6): *bull* 'Empty, foolish, or pretentious talk', *crap* (n.) 'Worthless nonsense; rubbish', *horseshit* 'Meaningless or insincere talk or action; nonsense', *mother* 'Something considered extraordinary, as in disagreeableness, size, or intensity', *son of a bitch!* (interj.) 'Used to express annoyance, disgust, disappointment, or amazement', and *to suck* (v.) 'To be disgustingly disagreeable or offensive'. 3. Are considered **obscene** the words and expressions that violate "accepted standards of decency" [6]. There are 29 vulgar words and expressions in our corpus. They refer to **Body secretions (excrement)** (14): *B.S.* (abbr.) 'bullshit', *bullshit* (n.) 'Foolish, insolent talk; nonsense', (v.) '1. To speak foolishly or insolently. 2. To engage in idle conversation. 3. To attempt to mislead or deceive by talking nonsense', and (interj.) 'Used to express extreme displeasure or exasperation', *chicken shit* (n.) 'Contemptibly petty, insignificant nonsense' and (adj.) '1. Contemptibly unimportant; petty. 2. Cowardly; afraid', *shit* (n.) '1. Excrement. 2. The act or an instance of defecating. 3. *shits*. Diarrhea. Used with *the*. 4. a. Something considered disgusting, of poor quality, foolish, or otherwise totally unacceptable. b. A person regarded as mean or contemptible. 5. A narcotic or an intoxicant, such as marijuana or heroin. 6. Things; items. 7. Foolishness; nonsense. 8. Trouble or difficulty', (v.) '1. To defecate (in). 2. To tease or try to deceive' and (interj.) 'Used to express surprise, anger, or extreme displeasure', *to shit on*

(Phrasal v.) 'To treat with malice or extreme disrespect', *to get (one's) shit together* (Idiom) 'To get organized; put one's affairs or possessions in order', *to give a shit* (Idiom) 'To care the least bit', *no shit!* (Idiom) '1. Used to express disbelief. 2. Used to express scornful acknowledgment of the obvious', *up shit creek (without a paddle)* (Idiom) 'In dire circumstances with no hope of help', *when the shit hits the fan* (Idiom) 'When the situation goes awry; when trouble starts', *shitfaced* (adj.) 'Intoxicated; drunk', *shithead* (n.) '1. A person regarded as inept or foolish. 2. A person regarded as objectionable or contemptible', *shitless* (adj.) 'Extremely frightened', *shitlist / shit list* 'A list of persons who are strongly disapproved of', *shitlist / shit list* 'A list of persons who are strongly disapproved of', *shitty* '1. Of very poor quality; highly inferior. 2. Contemptible; despicable. 3. Unfortunate; unpleasant. 4. Being in a state of discomfort or unhappiness; miserable. 5. Incompetent; inept. 6. Trivial; insignificant'. Only some are about *people* (11): *bullshit* (adj. 2), *chicken shit*, *shit* (n.4b), (v2) and (interj.), *to shit on*, *to get (one's) shit together*, *to give a shit*, *no shit!*, *shitfaced*, *shithead*, *shitlist / shit list*, and *shitty*. **Sex and sex-related** (11): *sexual intercourse* (6): *cunt* 'Sexual intercourse with a woman', *fuck* (n.) 'An act of sexual intercourse', (v.) '1. To have sexual intercourse with. 2. To engage in sexual intercourse', *fuck over*, *fuck up*, *fucker*,  *fucking*, *fuckup*; *sex partner* (2): *fuck* (n.), 'A partner in sexual intercourse', *fucker* 'One that engages in sexual intercourse'; *fellatio* (1): *cocksucker* 'One who performs an act of fellatio'; *masturbation* (1): *to fuck off*. **People** (7): *cocksucker* 'A mean or despicable person', *cunt* '1. Used as a disparaging term for a woman. 2. Used as a disparaging term for a person one dislikes or finds extremely disagreeable', *fuck* (n.) 'A despised person', *fucker* 'A despised person', *fuckup* '1. One who acts carelessly or foolishly; a bungler. 2. A blunder; a bungle', *motherfucker* 'A person regarded as thoroughly despicable', *twat* 'Used as a disparaging term for a woman'. **Human activities** (4): *fuck* (v.) '1. To victimize. 2. Used in the imperative as a signal of angry dismissal. 3. To act wastefully or foolishly', *fuck off* (Phrasal v.) '1. Used in the imperative as a signal of angry dismissal. 2. To spend time idly', *fuck over* (Phrasal v.) 'To treat unfairly; take advantage of', *fuck up* (Phrasal v.) '1. To bungle. 2. To act

carelessly, foolishly, or incorrectly'. **Body parts** (2): *cunt* 'The female genital organs', *twat* 'The vulva'. **Items** (2):  *fucking* 'Used as an intensive', *motherfucker* 'Something regarded as thoroughly unpleasant, frustrating, or despicable'.

#### 4. Conclusions

Results show that there are 134 offensive (slang) words and expressions (referring to the country of origin or to an ethnic group, to sex and sex-related issues (sexual orientation), to race, etc.), 75 vulgar words and expressions (referring to sex and sex-related issues, to body parts, to people, etc.), and 29 obscene words and expressions (referring to body secretions, to sex and sex-related issues, to people, etc.).

The **expected outcomes of teaching cultural taboos and taboo language** at tertiary level, particularly in a life science-related university, are:

- **In students:** Challenging viewpoints that perpetuate inequality and discrimination; Deeper reflection on European topics; Enhanced intercultural awareness; Greater understanding and responsiveness to social, linguistic, and cultural diversity; Identification of common values in spite of cultural differences; Improved cultural awareness; Integration within their new socio-cultural environments; Respect for cultural diversity and fight against racism or xenophobia;
- **In teachers:** Challenging viewpoints that perpetuate inequality and discrimination; Deeper reflection on European topics; Greater understanding and responsiveness to social, linguistic, and cultural awareness; Identification of common values in spite of cultural differences; Improved cultural awareness; Respect for cultural diversity and fight against racism or xenophobia;
- **In organisations:** An innovative approach to addressing target groups by providing new and improved practices to cater for the needs of disadvantaged groups and to deal with social, **linguistic, and cultural diversity**.

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