

# 花言巧語

*hua1 yan2 qiao3 yu3*

Barack Obama paid a visit to Cuba, the first US president to have done so in 88 years. He told the former Cold War enemy it was time for both nations to put the past behind them and face the future “as friends and as neighbors and as family, together.”

“It is time for us to look forward to the future together – a future of hope,” he said in a speech.

Reconciliatory words to heal old wounds, and most people, including Cuban citizens, like them. But not retired Cuban leader Fidel Castro, who accused Obama of sweet talking the Cuban people, called his comments “honey-coated” and said: “We don’t need the empire to give us anything.”

If Castro were Chinese, he might have used the idiom “花言巧語” (*hua1 yan2 qiao3 yu3*) to describe Obama. “花” (*hua1*) is “flower,” “flowery,” “言” (*yan2*) “speech,” “word,” “巧” (*qiao3*) “skillful,” “cunning,” and “語” (*yu3*) “language,” “to speak,” “to say.”

## Idiom by Lon Yan

“花言巧語” (*hua1 yan2 qiao3 yu3*) means “sweet words,” “smooth talking.” It is used to describe “elaborate but insincere words.” Sweet talking is to employ “花言巧語” (*hua1 yan2 qiao3 yu3*) to cheat people, which is what Castro accused Obama of doing.

“花言巧語” (*hua1 yan2 qiao3 yu3*) is a tool of the trade of con men and the standard move of those who are out to steal hearts. It is also a rather common skill politicians employ when dealing with voters, especially during campaigning, and often quite effectively too.

Unfortunately, “花言巧語” (*hua1 yan2 qiao3 yu3*) quite often works due, in part, to willing victims.

**Terms containing the character “花” (*hua1*) include:**

花園 (*hua1 yuan2*) – a garden

花生 (*hua1 sheng1*) – peanut

花錢 (*hua1 qian2*) – to spend money

花花公子 (*hua1 hua1 gong1 zi3*) – a playboy