

SWEAR WORDS USED IN “ZOMBIELAND” MOVIE

I Made Anka Andika

madeosbourne@gmail.com

English Department, Faculty of Humanities, Udayana
University

ABSTRACT

This undergraduate thesis is entitled “Swear Word Used in Zombieland Movie”. This study aims to find out the types of swear words used in the “Zombieland” movie and analyze how the swear words used in the zombieland movie. The data were taken from the “Zombieland” movie. They were collected through documentation and library research method with note taking techniques. The method that is used to analyze the data is the descriptive-qualitative one. The theories used for this study are the theory proposed by Hughes' theories about the types of swear word and the principal purposes of verbal obscenity theory by Liedlich combined with swear word motive theory by Andersson and Trudgill. The findings show that there are seven types of swear words found in the “Zombieland” movie namely, swear word related to genital term, excretory term, animal term, personal background term, sexual term, taboo or religion or oath term, and mental illness term. In terms of the use of swear words in the movie, there are six purposes of swear words namely, to create attention, discredit, to provoke, endearment, to create strong personal identification, and provide catharsis. There are also three motives of swear words found in the movie, namely social motive, psychological motive, and linguistic motive.

Keywords: swear word, movie, taboo word

ABSTRAK

Skripsi ini berjudul “Swear Word Used in Zombieland Movie”. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui jenis kata makian yang digunakan dalam film “Zombieland” dan menganalisis bagaimana kata makian yang digunakan dalam film zombieland. Data penelitian ini diambil dari film “Zombieland”. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui dokumentasi dan studi pustaka dengan teknik catat. Metode yang digunakan untuk menganalisis data adalah metode deskriptif-kualitatif. Teori yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah teori yang dikemukakan oleh Hughes' teori tentang jenis-jenis umpatan dan tujuan utama dari teori fungsi kata umpatan oleh Liedlich dikombinasikan dengan teori motif kata umpatan oleh Andersson dan Trudgill. Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan ada tujuh jenis kata makian yang ditemukan dalam film “Zombieland” yaitu, kata umpatan yang berhubungan dengan istilah genital, istilah ekskretoris, istilah binatang, istilah latar belakang pribadi, istilah seksual, istilah tabu atau agama atau sumpah, dan istilah penyakit jiwa. Dalam hal penggunaan kata makian dalam film, ada enam tujuan penggunaan kata makian yaitu, untuk menarik perhatian, mendiskreditkan, memprovokasi, Bahasa pertemanan, untuk menciptakan identifikasi pribadi yang kuat, dan memberikan katarsis. Motif dari kata umpatan dalam film “zombieland” ada tiga yaitu, motif sosial, motif psikologi, dan motif linguistik.

Kata Kunci: Kata umpatan, film, tabu

I. INTRODUCTION

Swear words are considered taboo language to use in public. It is judged as bad words in society. People tend to avoid using it in their conversations. However, swear words are also a part of human language. According to Jay (1992), swearing is the use of taboo language to express the speaker's emotional state and communicate that information to the listener. According to Hughes (1991), people swear by, people swear to do something, people swear at somebody or something, sometimes people swear simply out of exasperation. Swear words are usually used by its speaker to curse, insult or emphasize when they have a strong emotion. Expressing emotions by swearing is normal because swearing is an efficient way to express oneself in a frustrated, struggling or angry state. Moreover, Karjalainen (2002) suggested that swear words may be a factor in reducing stress. Although it is taboo, swear words are still used in daily conversations, especially in a group of friends, to show their intimacy or a strong relationship with their friends (Setiawan and Ms., 2018).

Nowadays, the use of swear words in movies is increasing. Susetyaningsih (2014) stated that a movie is one of the best revelations of human's real communication and interaction. The use of swear words by the characters in movies is to express the feeling of anger, pleasure, shock, and to underestimate other characters. The phenomenon that happens in real life nowadays is that a lot of people swear when having a conversation without even realizing that they utter swear words as according to Hughes, swearing often occurs occasionally. Swandewi (2019) studied swear words in *The Dictator* movie. There are phenomena of eight types of swear words found in the study, such as genital term, excretory term, animal term, personal background term, sexual term, taboo or religion or oath term, mental illness term,

and racism term. There are six principal purposes of verbal obscenity found in the study, they are to create attention, to discredit, to provoke violent confrontation, endearment, to create strong interpersonal identification, and provide catharsis. Swandewi's aim is to analyse the type, function, and context of the situation of swear words. Meanwhile, this study adds more explanation on how the word became a swear word supported by motives of swear word theory by Andersson and Trudgill (1990). There are three motives for why swear words are produced. They are psychological motives, social motives, and linguistic motives. The topic is interesting because people judges swear words as bad words but it is still part of human language that has types and purposes swear words and also motives on why swear words are produced that analysed in this study which supported by *Zombieland* movie as the data source which is portraying the natural situation of communication that occurs in society which can relate to the phenomenon.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used in this study was descriptive-qualitative since swear words are part of the sociolinguistic phenomenon. Several descriptive-qualitative procedures such as observing, analyzing, and identifying the data source used to achieve a better understanding of the topic.

The data in this study was collected using a documentation method done by watching the movie and note-taking technique. There are some steps to do note-taking in this study. First, watch the movie with English subtitles and repeat the scene that contains swear words to understand the background story of the swear words that occurred. After that, taking a note of the swear words that appeared in the movie. To support the note-taking step, the official script of the movie also added and mark the

scene that contains swear words in the movie script.

The method that was used in this study is a qualitative method. The technique of analyzing data is divided into two steps. First, analyze the types of swear words by classifying the data according to the eight kinds of swear words proposed by Hughes (1991). Then, analyse the data based on the six principal purposes of verbal obscenity theory by Liedlich (1973) combined with motives of swear word theory according to Andersson and Trudgill (1990).

This study is using the informal method for presenting data analysis. The informal method is presenting data analysis by using words and sentences. The data presented in the form of conversation by the characters that contain swear words. The swear words in the conversation were typed boldly. Secondly, the discussion of the analysis is in the form of paragraphs.

III. DISCUSSION

3.1 Types of Swear Words

There are 79 swear words found in the movie. The words are divided into seven categories based on the real meaning of the words as has been mentioned. The discussion and elaboration of each type are provided as follow:

1. Genital terms

Sexual organ is a part of a human's genital body which is included in sexual reproduction. The example of genital terms swear words is ass or asshole. The following statement is the example of swearing situation.

Data 1 You are like a giant **cock-blocking** robot

According to Merriam-webster, **Cock-blocking** is the action of preventing someone (usually a man) from having sex by intentionally or unintentionally stopping (blocking) someone else's **cock** from

reaching its intended destination. **Cock**, in this case, does not mean a male chicken rather a penis which is a genital organ. As in this context, Tallahassee accidentally disturbs Columbus and Wichita that are going to have sex. They are stopping their actions which made Columbus got mad over it. According to Hughes (1991), swear words that used human's reproduction are categorized as swear words related to genital terms.

2. Excretory Term

Human's excretory system can be used as an instrument to swear. Excretory term is generally related to the solid waste matter of bowels from our body through the anus. The swear words that are related to this term are crap, shit and piss. The following statement is an example of a swearing situation.

Data 2

Columbus: I've heard there's a place untouched by all this **crap**?

Tallahassee: Back east, yeah.

Columbus: Yeah, you heard the same thing?

Tallahassee: Out west we hear, back east. Back east hear it's here out west. And it's all just nonsense.

The word **crap** in this monologue means solid waste, or an occasion when an animal or person produces solid waste. However, in this context, **crap** means the zombie apocalypse problem. The zombie apocalypse makes it very difficult for Columbus to survive in this world. He has a family in Columbus which he does not know are still alive or not, it made him tired of the situation. Columbus feels desperate about this condition; thus, he describes this zombie apocalypse as **crap**.

3. Swear Words Related to Animal Term

The names of animals can be taboo if they are purposely uttered or referred to the person or thing, they may be considered as swear words. It is also related to the behavior of the animal. The swear words that are related to animal terms are pig, dog, and bitch. This is used by people to express the main characteristics of an individual or group. And often used as an insult or to put down people. The following dialogue is an example of swear words related to animal terms.

Data 3

Tallahassee: I'm not great at farewells, so... that'll do, **pig**.

Columbus: That's the worst goodbye I've ever heard... ...and you stole it from a movie

The word **pig** in the dialogue was uttered by Tallahassee. **Pig** is not a swear word, but it used to refer to Columbus, that's what makes it a swear word. In this context, Tallahassee split up with Columbus, so they are saying goodbye to each other because Tallahassee does not want to save Wichita and Little rock.

4. Swear Words Related to Personal Background Term

These kinds of swear words are spoken by the speaker to a person who is considered to have a low status or profession. It means to insult or put down someone. Consequently, talking about a person who has a low status in his or her profession is totally unacceptable in the public because it gains a great sensitivity and hurts someone's dignity. The swear words that related to this term are bastard, fag, homo and son of a bitch. Bastard and Son of a bitch are swearing words related to personal background in the *Zombieland* movie. One of the examples stated in the conversation below:

Data 4 When the virus struck, for obvious reasons, the first one to go were the fatties. Poor fat **bastard!**

Bastard was originally a word that referred to a child of a nobleman born out of wedlock. It is symbolized alternatively as a child born in a barn or child of the packsaddle. It be interpreted that **bastard** is a displaced child who has no parents because his birth is not wanted anymore. As in this context, the word **bastard** is uttered by Columbus to insult a fat guy that failed to escape from a zombie, that's why it is considered a swear word. As in this context, **bastard** does not mean an illegitimate child, but an unpleasant and despicable person.

5. Swear Words Related to Sexual Term

Sexual activity is an action which involves one person or more in expressing their sexuality and it can be considered as a vulgar word. The swear word which deals with sexual activity is fuck and it proliferates together with its variants. The most appeared swear word related to sexual term is fuck.

Data 5 No! No! Go back... **Fuck!**

Fuck is the most common swear word used to swear in the movie. **Fuck** is the most flexible than the other three swear words since it was used in many variations. According to Dictionary.com the word fuck is extremely vulgar, considered improper and taboo in all of its senses. The word **Fuck** itself is described as having sexual intercourse. Meanwhile, in the context of the dialogue above, it is used by the speaker as emotive language to reflect his feelings when he gets caught by the zombies.

6. Swear Words Related to Taboo or Religion or Oath

The swear words that related to this term are the name of God, unspeakably vile, like cannibalism or incest. Furthermore, swear words related to taboo

or religion may include the name of God, the devil, death and damnation such as damn, hell, goddamn. The writer found fourteen swear words related to taboo or religion or oath there are Oh My God, goddamn, the hell, what the hell, and Jesus Christ.

Data 6

Tallahassee: False advertising.
Columbus: **Jesus Christ**.

The word **Jesus Christ** when it is used with respect as in recognizing Jesus as God is okay, but when it is used as an exclamation to express anger or frustration it becomes a swear word. When words are used to curse, they become curse words in that context. It is considered a swear word in certain contexts in some cultures because it is seen as going against the prohibition in the Bible against taking the Lord's name in vain. As in this context, Columbus seeing Tallahassee rage in the store because there were no twinkies, but the store had an advertisement that they sell twinkies.

7. Swear Words Related to Mental Illness Term

According to Hughes (1991:80), swear words related to mental illness are perhaps the richest source of terms of personal insult and abuse. They are employed as a symbol of those with moderate mental retardation, and it was quickly adopted into the modern scornful sense of a fool, idiot, or stupid. It can be said that the function of such swearing is to degrade someone.

Data 7 I want my Caddy back. **Stupid** little bitches.

According to the Cambridge dictionary, **stupid** means silly or unwise or showing poor judgement or little intelligence. However, in this context, the word stupid was shouted by Tallahassee to degrade Wichita. It happens because

Wichita stole his car, and he desperately wants it back. This situation led him to destroy a van while shouting "**stupid**" little bitches refers to Wichita and her sister. The word **stupid** in the conversation above means an annoying person which used to express anger towards Wichita.

3.2 The Use of Swear Word in Zombieland Movie

In order to answer the second question, Liedlich (1973) theory combined with Andersson and Trudgill's (1990) theory were applied to analyze the use of swear words. There are six swear words and three motives in the movie. The words are divided into six categories based on the real meaning of the words as it has been mentioned. The discussion and elaboration of each type are provided as follow:

1. Create Attention

The first purpose of using swear words is to create attention. To get people's attention, we can employ bold, passionate language whose connotation elicits an emotional response in the listeners right away. The speakers usually want to get much attention from their friends or people around them. They can use swear words to inform their friends or to the people nearby in order to get attention in expressing their opinion or feelings. Liedlich stated that by using the passionate and the passionate to gain attention. Someone who uses these terms wishes to draw interest, among others, wants to be a focal subject. He has a tendency to speak out verbally when he wants to get the attention of the public.

Data 1

Columbus: What are we doing here?
Tallahassee: Well, take a look. It's a **goddamn** Hostess truck
Columbus: Yeah, I see that, a Hostess truck.
So what?

The word **goddamn** in the literal sense means cursed from a god. In this context, it does not function as a curse, rather gain attention. The scene showed that Columbus asks Tallahassee why they stopped in the middle of the road. Tallahassee then told Columbus to take a look at a hostess truck. He added the word **goddamn** to draw attention from Columbus. Columbus responds by asking "so what?". It means Tallahassee got his attention and a response from Columbus. From the explanation above, **goddamn** is categorized as an emphasis swear word since it adds emphasis in the noun hostess truck. The motive of this swearing phenomenon is a linguistic motive as it is used to emphasize the word hostess truck.

2. Discredit

A revolt against authority, irreverence for sacred things and a profound contempt for the standards of society could be expressed by verbal obscenity. People who use swear words are not satisfied with a particular individual, individual, government, or institution's public image. Therefore, swear words are used by them to express their dislike of many things, such as discrediting individuals, individuals, institutions, and others in the reality that they believe is not appropriate for public opinion.

Data 2 When the virus struck, for obvious reasons... the first ones to go were the fatties. Poor fat **bastard**.

The word **bastard** in this scene is used to discredit. As in this context, Columbus monologues on how the zombie virus works while the scene showed a guy running. The guy was running so slow while being chased by zombies and ended up caught by the zombie. Columbus swears the word **bastard** as a form of insult to the fat guy because he did not follow the rules being in a good shape so he got caught by the zombie. The motive of this swear word

is linguistic because it was used by the speakers to show expression of dislike of a person by describing him using swear words. Instead of saying "poor fat guy" he went to "poor fat **bastard**" as a matter of linguistic style he used to describe people.

3. Provoke Violent Confrontation

Swear words are the most effective rhetorical method available to agitators for inciting violent response. by swearing at a person who has already negative circumstances, it's enough to provoke a person to have violent confrontation.

Data 3 If it makes him happy and keeps him from using that crowbar on me... ..then I say, "Hey, go **ape shit**".

According to Collins dictionary, **apeshit** means to become crazy, enraged, or out of control. In this context, Tallahassee was in negative circumstances after being fooled by Wichita. Columbus provokes him to go crazy over a minivan that they just found. Tallahassee reacts to Columbus' provocation and destroys the minivan. It can be seen that the swear word used by Columbus successfully incited a violent response from Tallahassee. Therefore, it functioned to provoke a violent confrontation. The motive of the swear phenomenon above is linguistic motives because the swear word was used to emphasize the phrase "go ape" although unnecessary, he still adds the word because he wants Tallahassee to go more all-out rage.

4. Endearment

Swear words also helped a person to intimacy between the speaker and the hearer in a particular conversation. This phenomenon happened in the case of casual interaction between best friends in one particular group, teenagers or adults without exception. Certain types of swear words usually had this kind of the purpose of asserting the membership of one

particular group in which a high level of intimacy is involved.

Data 4 All right. Okay. You're thinking about **fucking** Wichita

Some swear words could be fine if it was uttered while speaking to best friends or a particular group. As in this case, Tallahassee and Columbus are best friends. Tallahassee used swear words as a casual interaction between him and Columbus. The swear word he used is **fucking** which means to have sex with. Columbus secretly used perfume to impress Wichita, but Tallahassee noticed that and concluded that Columbus is thinking about having sex with Wichita. The swear word produced in casual conversation between best friends, thus it functioned as an endearment. It is a replacive swearing since the speaker using the swear word **fucking** instead of more polite language such as having sex with. Tallahassee's motive for this swear word is the linguistic motive because it only used to change the non-taboo word into a swearing word as a linguistic style in speaking to another person.

5. The Creation of Strong Interpersonal Identification

According to Liedlich (1973) even though the usage of swear words is socially condemned, it will make the speakers proud because they dare to say or yell those words that others would only express in private. It also means that the speaker wants to state what kind of person he or she is or define the personality of someone else from their point of view.

Data 5

Tallahassee: What was her name?
Columbus: Beverly, Beverly Hills.
Tallahassee: **You dog**.

Dog is not a swear word, but if it is used to refer to a person it can be

considered as a swear word as in the sentence above. Tallahassee refers to Columbus as a dog because he knew that Columbus was secretly lying about his story. Tallahassee didn't even yell or shout the word in anger, rather calmly and giggling. So, it was used only to identify Columbus' personality. This word is categorized as a name-calling function type as it used to describe the addressee which was Columbus. The motive of this swear word is social because it conveys the solidarity between the speaker and the listener.

6. Provide Catharsis

One of the essential functions of swear words, in which verbal obscenity is provided to its user, is to provide catharsis. According to Liedlich (1973), when someone has a problem, usually he or she will use obscene words or swear words as a medicine for his or her inner frustration which is unbearable to exclaim. Swear words are produced to emphasize feelings like anger, excitement, frustration, and sadness. Somehow, swearing, especially when they are angry, makes them feel more relieved.

Data 6 I survive because I play it safe and follow the rules. My rules. **Shit**

The word **shit** in this context is a swear word that does not aim at a person, but it is an expression of frustration. As in the situation, Columbus uttered it spontaneously to express his feeling as he was chased by a couple of zombies and then he dropped the key while trying to open the car to escape. This situation led Columbus to swear in order to express the feeling of frustration he got which According to Liedlich, it was considered a swear word that functioned to provide catharsis. Columbus produced the swear word spontaneously and it was unintentional, thus it was categorized as an expletive interjection. From the explanation above,

the motive of the swear by Columbus was psychological, because the swear word he produced was affected by his psychological condition as in the situation, he was chased by the zombies and accidentally dropped his car key.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of swear word types taken from the "Zombieland" movie and how the swear word is used in the movie, some conclusions are made related to the research problem.

In terms of the types of swear words, seven types were found. The types are genital term, excretory term, animal term, personal background term, sexual term, taboo or religion or oath, and mental illness term. Racism term did not appear any single time in the *Zombieland* movie.

The swear words were used to create attention, to discredit, to provoke violent confrontation, endearment, the creation of strong interpersonal identification, and to provide catharsis". The finding also showed three motives of swearing in the movie namely, "social motive, psychological motive, and linguistic motive".

The swear words are not merely realized in the form of words, but they also occurred in the form of phrases. Moreover, there is a swear word that appeared to have two functions, it was "**shit**, I'm out of shells". The first function is to provide catharsis and the second function is to create attention. The phenomena occurred because of the situation that led the character to swear to express emotion and the following sentence adds another function to it.

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