

THE USE OF SWEAR WORDS AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH TABOO WORDS IN FIST FIGHT MOVIE

Komang Dian Puspita Candra, Ni Putu Cahya Megandari
STIBA Saraswati Denpasar
miss_puspita@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

People use language to interact and understand each other. In conversation, people not always use polite word but also taboo word for the example to support the situation like friendliness, familiarity or identity among communities. The uses of taboo words also to express a strong emotion feeling and it familiar as swear words. Swear words are the informal words that are used by people to express their emotion in terrible situation. The existence of swear words can be seen from various sources such as in movies, song lyrics, and television shows. This research concern with the use of swears words and its relationship with taboo words in *Fist Fight movie*. This movie was chosen as data source because there are many swearing words uttered by the characters. This research were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively using theories from Batistela (2015) to find the types of taboo words and theory proposed by Swan (1995) to find the types of swearing words. The result show that all types of strong and weak swear word used by the character depends on the situation. Exclamation of annoyance is dominantly appear in strong swear word and exclamation of surprised is dominant used in weak swear word. All of strong swear word in *Fist fight movie* are considered as taboo word that refer to epithets, profanity, vulgarity and obscenity types. There are only a few of weak swear words that are considered as taboo word in English.

Keywords: swear word, taboo word, sociolinguistics, movie

ABSTRAK

*Bahasa digunakan untuk berinteraksi dalam masyarakat. Dalam melangsungkan percakapan, bahasa yang digunakan tidak selalu sopan terkadang juga menggunakan bahasa tabu untuk mendukung situasi pertemanan, keakraban atau sebagai identitas antara komunitas. Penggunaan bahasa tabu juga dapat digunakan untuk mengekspresikan perasaan yang lebih dikenal dengan "swear words". Swear word merupakan kata-kata dalam bentuk informal yang digunakan untuk mengekspresikan perasaan dalam keadaan yang buruk. Keberadaan swear word dapat dilihat dari beragam sumber seperti film, lirik lagu, acara tv. Penelitian ini focus kepada penggunaan swear word dan hubungannya dengan bahasa tabu dalam film *Fist Fight*. Film ini dipilih sebagai sumber data karena banyaknya swear word yang digunakan oleh karakter. Penelitian ini dianalisis secara kualitatif dan kuantitatif menggunakan teori dari Batistela (2015) tentang bahasa tabu dan teori dari Swan (1995) tentang swear word. Hasil dari penelitian ini yaitu seluruh tipe dari strong swear word and weak swear word ditemukan dalam film. Tipe swear word yang paling banyak muncul adalah exclamation of annoyance, dan tipe yang paling banyak muncul di weak swear word adalah exclamation of surprised. Seluruh tipe strong swear word termasuk dalam bahasa tabu yaitu jenis epithets, profanity, vulgarity dan obscenity, namun tidak semua jenis weak swear word termasuk dalam kategori bahasa tabu.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Language has flexible and dynamic characteristic which will create new possibility in communication. It means that language users always use language in formal and informal situation. In conversation, people not always use polite word but also taboo word for the example to support the situation like friendliness, familiarity or identity among communities. The uses of taboo words also to express a strong emotion feeling and it familiar as swear words. In informal situation, people have tendency to use language that has a strong impact when they are sad or angry like uttering swear words. Swear word has a meaning in taboo words, and have a negative meaning. Swear word as the result of reaction toward unwanted things occurred. Swear words are a part of our language, and swearing is one of the most efficient ways to express extra frustration or anger in difficult situations. Based on Lakof (1975) swear words are divided into two groups, strong swear words and weak swear words. The different of both types depends on how people express their feeling. Strong swears word are the words used to abuse another people by the words and these words have the rudest character. Weak swear words are also the words used to abuse but its character is not as rude as the strong one. Swear word and taboo word has close relationship. The existence of swear words can be seen from various sources such as in movies, song lyrics, and television shows. Swear words are used to support the situation of the story, and express a strong emotion feeling from the character. It is clear that the use of swear words is quite common in speaking. Based on this consideration, movie was chosen as the data source because it is representation of human real life. *Fist Fight* was chosen as the data source because many swear words have been pronounced here like *shit, fuck, bitch, motherfucker, asshole, bastard, etc.* The characters do not care whom they are talking to, swear words are always spoken in each of their talk, without thinking about

the feel of the hearer. They just represent what they feel. Moreover, the characters in “*Fist Fight*” movie mostly come from people with educational background. This research was analyzed how the characters uses swear words to express their emotion in their life in the movie and its relationship with taboo words.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

The data of this study was taken from the dialogue spoken by the characters in *Fist Fight* movie. It was chosen as the data source since the dialogues of the movies contain a lot of swears words. In collecting the data, the researcher used observation method with note taking technique. The researcher watched the movie repeatedly to see the whole context. Then the researcher made the transcription from the movie to identify the types of swear words and classify them into taboo words. The collected data were analysed using qualitative and quantitative method by implementing the theory of taboo words as proposed by Batistela (2015) and theory of swear word by Swan (1995). The result of the study is presented both in formal and informal methods.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

According to Swan (1995) there are two types of swear word which are usually used in people’s communication namely strong swear word and weak swear word. In “*Fist Fight*” movie the using of strong swear word is more dominant than weak swear word. All types of strong swear word used by the character those are exclamation of annoyance (32%) (*assholes, fucking, shit, goddamn, suck*), exclamation of surprised (11%) (*fuck, goddamn, shit*), exclamation of unconcern (3%) (*fuck, shit*), Insult (26%) (*Bitch, motherfucker, son of bitches, bastard, Mr.Pussy, Mr. Dick*), Insulting request to go away (3%) (*Goddamn, Fucky, Ass Out*), emphasize an Emotion (15%) (*goddamn, fucking damn, fuck*) Surprise question (9%) (*what the fuck, what the hell, what the fuck is that*) and

violent refusal/rejection (2%) (*Fuck, Fuck Up*). Exclamation of annoyance dominantly appears in this movie. On the other hand, the dominant weak swear word use in this movie is exclamation of surprised (32%) the example words are *Jesus Christ* and *Oh my God*. Followed by emphasize an emotion (25%) and the example words are *kick* and *Insult* (25%) with the example *stupid and idiot*. The last position is exclamation of annoyance (18%) as the example *Jesus* and *Ouch*.

Batistella (2005: 72) suggests four types of taboo words those are epithets, profanity, vulgarity, and obscenity. Epithet is characterized by the existence of several types of slurs, such as *bitch* and *fag*. Other references that are included as epithet are connected to race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, one's appearance, and disabilities such as *nigger*, *midget* and *retard*, *motherfucker*, *tit-man* (Batistella, 2005: 72). Profanity can be categorized as religious cursing because it usually includes the foul-mouthed use of what is considered to be sacred. The words that belong to this type are *Jesus Christ*, *hell*, *damn*, *goddamn*. Vulgarity is used to humiliate or bring down the thing or individual referred to or described. The words that belong to this type are such as *ass*, *tit*, *cock*, *dick*, and *cunt*.

Obscenity is defined as words or expression which involves sex differentiating anatomy or sexual and excretory function that usually uttered in rough manner. The words that belong to this type are *fuck* and *shit*. All of strong swear word in *Fist fight* movie are considered as taboo word in English because most of them refer to Epithets, profanity, vulgarity and obscenity. In the other hand, there are only a few of weak swear words that are considered as taboo word in English. The analysis of swear word and its relationship with taboo words were explained as follow:

3.1 Strong Swear Word

According to Swan (1995), strong swear words have bad or rude meaning to listen and the usage of strong swear word is expressed by people to their powerful emotion. The category of strong swear words are (1) exclamation of annoyance; (2) exclamation of surprised, (3) exclamation of unconcern (4) Insult, (5) Insulting request to go away, (6) emphasize an Emotion (7) Surprise question and (8) violent refusal/rejection. In *fist fight* movie, all of categories were found and classified into the forms of tables regarding the strong swear words based on the situation.

Table 1 The Occurrence of Strong Swear Word in “Fist Fight” Movie

No	Strong Swear Word	Expression	Percentage
1	Exclamation of Annoyance	1. Assholes (2) 2. Fucking (20) 3. Shit (12) 4. Goddamn (2) 5. Suck (1) Total : 37	32%
2	Exclamation of Surprised	1. Fuck (8) 2. Goddamn (1) 3. Shit (4) Total : 13	11%
3	Exclamation of Unconcern	1. Fuck (1) 2. Shit (3) Total : 4	3%
4	Insult	1. Bitch (13)	26%

		2. Motherfucker (9) 3. Son of bitches (1) 4. Bastard (1) 5. Pussy (5) 6. Mr Dick's suck (1) Total : 30	
5	Insulting Request to go away	1. Goddamn (1) 2. Fucky (1) 3. Ass out (1) Total : 3	3%
6	Emphasize an Emotion	1. Goddamn (3) 2. Fucking damn (1) 3. Fuck a throphy (1) 4. Fucking shit (2) 5. Fucking ear (1) 6. Fucking head (1) 7. Fucking ass (2) 8. Fucking monster (1) 9. Fucking animal (1) 10. Fuck you (1) 11. Fuck me (1) 12. My fucky (1) 13. Fucking suck (1) Total: 17	15%
7	Surprised Question	1. What the fuck (5) 2. What the hell (2) 3. What the fuck is that (3) Total : 10	9%
8	Violent refusal/rejection	1. Fuck (1) 2. Fuck up (1) Total : 2	2%
Total		116	100

The analyses of table 1 above were explained as follow:

3.1.1 Exclamation of Annoyance

Data 1

Cody : Fuck this! Twenty-two years and then "See you later!" Those **assholes** should have taken my class, so they can manage a fucking budget! I'm taking this.

Crawford: See? We're expendable. (03:43–03:59)

The word “**assholes**” in sentence above refers to exclamation of annoyance. In this conversation Cody addresses his student as those *assholes*. The word **assholes** are used by Cody to express his emotion because his student was annoyed to them. Therefore, the word *assholes* refer to exclamation of annoyance into strong swear word. The word **assholes** are considered to taboo word because the meaning is related with

vulgarity. It is mentioned the organ vital of human as the nickname of a person. As mentioned in Battistela (2005) the vulgarity terms can be defines as the terms which characterize sex-differentiating anatomy or sexual and excretory functions in a crude way. Cody utters the word “**assholes**” to draw Crawford’s attention so that he will pay attention to his word.

3.1.2 Exclamation of Surprised

Data 2

Campbell : Holly you’re not doing meth again, right?

Holly : Yeah, Yeah just a little bit.

Campbell : Holly, You are the guidance counsellor.

Holly : You've never done it?

Campbell : Oh, God, no. No.

Holly : Oh. Man, it's **fucking** great.

Campbell : Is it? (08:47 – 08:50)

The word **fucking** which is expressed by Holly refers to exclamation of surprised. In this case, Holly was surprised with Campbell reaction after knowing she still consume meth. Holly works as a guidance counsellor at school, and she really know that meth is not good for healthy. Holly still consumes it although she knows it was a mistake. On the other side Campbell hasn’t yet taste it in his life. She tries to explain

about the taste of meth to Campbell so he will interest to taste it. Therefore the word **fucking** refers to exclamation of surprised into strong swear word. The word **fucking** is considered taboo in English because the meaning is related with obscenity which is characterized sexual activity. In this conversation, the word **fucking** does not actually mean “to have sexual intercourse” but is used to intensify the word “great”.

3.1.3 Exclamation of Unconcern

Data 3

Campbell : **Shit**. All right.

Mehar : You cussed. I'm gonna write you up!

Campbell : Oh, **shit, shit, shit, shit,shit, shit, shit, shit, shit,shit, shit, shit, shit..**

(29:45 – 29:51)

In this conversation Campbell said “**Oh, shit, shit, shit, shit, shit, shit, shit, shit, shit,shit, shit, shit, shit..**”. This expression refers to exclamation of unconcern. Here Campbell ignores the threat from Mehar who want to report Campbell to the principle because he uses a rude word at school. Campbell uses a rude word to Mehar because Mehar who work as a security at school didn’t want to help him chase away Strickland. Mehar mock

Campbell. It makes Campbell use a rude word “*Shit. All right*” Strickland was fired from school because Campbell snitches about Strickland to the headmaster. As the result, Strickland challenges Campbell to fight after school time. He afraid of this challenges and asks for Mehar help. Therefore the word “shit” refers to exclamation of unconcern into strong swear word. The word *shit* is considered taboo in English because it refers to obscenity.

According to Batistella (2005: 72) obscenity is defined as words or expression which involves sex differentiating anatomy or sexual and excretory function that usually uttered in rough manner. Shit means

human defecation and it will not appropriate used in daily language. Campbell utter the word **shit** to express his disappointment about the reality which is Mehar cannot help him.

3.1.4 Insult

Data 4

Strickland : *Damn* lady, I got this.

Ms Monet : Very well.

Strickland : That *bitch* crazy. (30:35 – 30:45)

In the conversation above, Strickland utter some expressions such as *damn* and *bitch crazy*. The word **damn** and **bitch** refers to insult into strong swear words. These utterances refer to the lady called Ms. Monet. The word **damn** represented the nick name that address to the Ms. Monet. Meanwhile **bitch crazy** represented the characteristic of Ms. Monet. The word **bitch** and **damn** are considered as taboo word in epithet types. As it mentioned by

Batistella (2005) epithet is based on the race, ethnicity, gender, or sexuality, and sometimes it refers to the appearance, disabilities, or other characteristics. The swear words that used by Strickland is the replacement of physical aggression towards Ms. Monet. Therefore, these expressions can be identified as epithet because it portrayed the characteristic or personality of Ms. Monet.

3.1.5 Insulting Request to go away

Data 5

Campbell : Do you want your job back?

Strickland : No! I'm done with this place, and I would told you that if you weren't in my **goddamn** business again. (39:52 – 39:58)

In the conversation above the word **goddamn** refers to insulting request to go away. Campbell talked to the principal Tyler about the misconception that make Strickland lost his Job. He tries to fix the problem and make Strickland get back his job. He takes this action without ask permission to Strickland and make Strickland angry with Campbell act. On the other side, Campbell do this because he really afraid with the challenge from Strickland to fight with him after the school time. He hopes after Strickland gets back his job, he will forget about the fight. Listen about Campbell effort to get back his job,

make him angry and say “I would told you that if you weren't in my **goddamn** business again”. Therefore the word **goddamn** refers to insulting request to go away into strong swear word. The word **goddamn** also belongs to taboo word because the meaning is about profanity. Profanity can be categorized as religious cursing because it usually includes the foul-mouthed use of what is considered to be sacred. The aim of the speaker used **goddamn** in this sentence is not to vilify God or anything connected with religion but it used to express emotional response to certain motives.

3.1.6 Emphasize an Emotion

Data 6

Tyler : And I got a **goddamn** mariachi band following me around wherever I go! I offered them \$100 and they still won't leave. (18:24 – 18:27)

The word **goddamn** refers to emphasize an emotion into strong swear word. Here, Tyler expressed his tiredness and anger in the same time. The situation implied in this expression is when Tyler had been followed by mariachi band. He got annoyed because they did not respect him by giving him some privation space. This word can be

categorized also as taboo word in profanity type, because the Tyler as a speaker used the word **goddamn** as he swore to the God. As profanity can be defined as the expression of religious cursing, then the expression of *goddamn* can be classified as the swear to the God.

3.1.7 Surprised Question

Data 7

William : How'd it do that? Oh, I've literally never seen that before. Oh, yeah. You want more?

Campbell : What the *fuck*? What the **hell** are you doing?
(10:57 – 11:08)

Another term which indicates swear word are **fuck** and **hell**. These words are belongs to surprised question. In this situation, Campbell respond William's utterance in shock expression. He uttered *what the fuck? what the hell are you doing* because he surprised and socked towards William. In this situation categorized as

taboo word also. The word **fuck** belongs to taboo word and it has obscenity meaning because it characterized sexual activity. The word **hell** belongs to profanity. *Hell* refers to the religion cursing because this term was spread within religious belief. Sometimes this words can be easily found in society as some hyperbole expression.

3.1.8 Violent refusal/rejection

Data 8

Campbell : I would like you to stop laughing and listen to my...

911 Operator : You're a grown man, now go on and take that **ass-whoopin'**.

Campbell : I'm asking you for help and...Fuck! (43:34 – 43:50)

The word **ass** in the conversation above refers to swear word and the meaning is violent refusal/rejection. The condition here, Campbell feel frustrated with the challenge of Strickland to fight after school time. Nobody can help him at school and finally he decided to call 911. After tell about the problem, all of the officer at 911 just laughing and ask him to face the problem by his self, the crucial thing here is

when they say “take that **ass-whoopin'**” to Campbell and directly cut off the connection before Campbell get any solution from 911. Campbell feels angry with this situation. The word **ass** belongs to vulgarity. Vulgarity is used to humiliate or bring down the thing or individual referred to or described.

3.2 Weak Swear Word

According to Swan (1995), weak swear word is not as harsh as expressions of the strong swear word. The category of weak swears words are less than strong

swear word, those are (1) exclamation of annoyance, (2) exclamation of surprised, (3) emphasize an emotion and (4) Insult. The uses of weak swear word in *Fist Fight* movie can be seen as table 2 below:

Table 2 The Occurrence of Weak Swear Word in “Fist Fight” Movie

No	Weak Swear Word	Expression	Percentage
1	Exclamation of Annoyance	1. Jesus (4) 2. Ouch.. (1) Total : 5	18%
2	Exclamation of Surprised	1. Jesus Christ (2) 2. Oh my god (7) Total : 9	32%
3	Emphasize an emotion	1. Kick (7) Total : 7	25%
4	Insult	1. Stupid (5) 2. Idiot (1) Total : 7	25%
Total		28	100%

3.2.1 Exclamation of Annoyance

Data 9

Campbell : What the fuck is that?, I thought you said you didn't have drugs!

Holly : I don't. I have weed.

Campbell : **Jesus!** Fuck! Give...(53:30 – 53:36)

The word **Jesus** in the conversation above refers to swear word and the meaning is exclamation of annoyance. Here, Campbell wants to trap Strickland, by put drugs in his bag and call police to come to the school. Campbell very difficult to find drugs at school, he ask Holly and she said she did not have it, because she usually use it at home before go to school, and she recommend to find at one of his student.

After got drugs namely molly from one of his student, he directly put it on Strickland's bag but suddenly Holly show a weed to Campbell. Campbell felt annoyance with Holly and use word **Jesus** as the exclamation of annoyance. The expression **Jesus**, is considered taboo in English because it refers to Profanity and also considered impolite to say this word directly.

1.2.1 Exclamation of Surprised

Data 10

Campbell : I meant, "Like how do I make a fist?"Not, "Like how do I get punched in the fucking head?" Oh, **Jesus Christ!**

Holly : That makes sense, I wasn't listening to the conversation. (47:38 – 47:44)

The word **Jesus Christ** refer to exclamation of surprised. In this case, Campbell learn how to make a fist just prepare his self to fight with Strickland, but suddenly Holly hit his head. Holly thinks that Campbell want to get a hit from her, because she did

not hear the conversation clearly. As the result Campbell scream **Jesus Christ** while in pain. The expression **Jesus Christ**, is considered taboo in English because it refers to Profanity and also considered impolite to say this word directly. Campbell

utter the word **Jesus Christ** to emphasize that he is in pain.

1.2.2 Emphasize an emotion

Data 11

Strickland : Hey! Hey! You cut out all that grab - assing.

Campbell : You get your ass to detention, Freddie. All right, I'm not joking around. You get there before I kick it there! I will **kick** you into oblivion, Freddie. I will **kick** you into dust! (01:23:38 – 01:23:51)

In conversation above, the word **kick** refer emphasize an emotion. In this conversation Strickland warned Campbell by using *grab assing*. Then, Campbell replied by saying I will **kick** you into oblivion, Freddie. I will **kick** you into dust! This utterance has

denoted emotion as he was angry. The word **kick** refers to emphasize an emotion into weak swear word. The bold word **kick** is not the part of taboo word because this word used in daily life.

1.2.3 Insult

Data 12

Strickland: I can't believe you're not gonna come.

I'm gonna look like such an **idiot**. (01:15:52 – 01:16:01)

The word idiot which is expressed by Strickland refers to insult. In this case, Strickland used this word when he is fighting with Campbell. The word idiot is used by Strickland, because he thinks Campbell will not come after school time to fight with him, the rumors about this fighting have been known at school,

students and teacher are waiting to watch them. He will looks like an idiot if Campbell will not come. Therefore, the word idiot refers to insult into weak swear words. The word **idiot** is not the part of taboo word because this word used in daily life.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the previous analysis, it is concluded that swear words are used in the conversation between characters in *Fist Fight* movie. All types of strong and weak swear word used by the character depends on the situation. The most dominant strong swear word are exclamation of annoyance (32%) followed by Insult (26%), emphasize an Emotion (15%), exclamation of surprised (11%), Surprise question (9%), exclamation of unconcern (3%), Insulting request to go away (3%), and the least is

violent refusal/rejection (2%). On the other hand, the dominant weak swear word use in this movie is exclamation of surprised (32%), emphasize an emotion (25%), Insult (25%) and exclamation of annoyance (18%). All of strong swear word in *Fist fight* movie are considered as taboo word in English because most of them refer to Epithets, profanity, vulgarity and obscenity. In the other hand, there are only a few of weak swear words that are considered as taboo word in English.

BILBLOGRAPHY

- Batistella, E.L. 2005. *Bad Language: Are Some Words Better Than Others?*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hornby, A.S. 1995. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (Fifth Edition)* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lakoff, Robin. 1975. *Language and Woman's Place*. Toronto: Fitzhenry and Whiteside Limited.
- Swan, Michael. 1995. *Practical English Usage*. 2nded. New York: Oxford Up.
- Webster, Marriam. 1828. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (Fifth Edition)* Oxford: Oxford University Press.