



ANALYSIS TYPES AND FUNCTIONS OF TABOO WORDS IN "THE WOLF OF WALL STREET" MOVIE

Dewi Putri Rahmayani¹, Fitrawati²

English Department

Faculty of Languages and Arts

State University of Padang

email: rahmayanid6@gmail.com

Abstract

In linguistics, everyone has his own way of expressing his feelings. One such way is by using taboo language. Taboo language not only happens in everyday life, but also in a movie. This study aims to find the types of taboo language as well as the functions contained in every utterance used by the characters in the western film entitled "*The Wolf of Wall Street*". The data of this research are in the form of sentence or utterance containing taboo language which is spoken by every character in the film. The data were collected from the film "*The Wolf of Wall Street*" taken from the www.layarkaca21.com. Then, choose the utterances containing the taboo language and grouped them into types and functions of taboo words. Type of the research is qualitative and quantitative research. Based on data analysis, it was found that there are 3 types of taboo languages with the highest percentage in the movie "*The Wolf of Wall Street*" namely; Obscenity (64,8%), Epithets (13,1%), and Vulgarity (8,2%). For the function of the use of taboo language was found 3 functions with the highest percentage as well. They are to creation of strong interpersonal (35,6%), provide catharsis (24,5%), and to draw attention to oneself (17,8%).

Keywords: *Taboo Language, The Wolf of Wall Street Movie*

A. INTRODUCTION

In daily life, humans as social creature always communicate to people around them by using a language. Language in communication has important role in order to share the information and idea to the others by using several media. Furthermore, a language has function to show personal identity. The other people will know the character and identity of someone through their languages that they use. Therefore, every person has their own way to choose the

¹ English ELLSP of English Department of FBS Universitas Negeri Padang graduated on September 2018

² Lecturer of English Department of FBS Universitas Negeri Padang

language variation which can confirm one's identity. Some people may prefer to use language that has a strong impact when they are sad or angry. For instance, people sometimes use certain kind of words that are considered as bad language which is actually inappropriate to use.

Holmes (2001:73) states that language variation is linguistics form which used based on social circumstances and also included vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation of dialect, and spelling in different language. So language variation is determined by social itself, their background, status, education, and degree of formality of a situation where the language is used. It means there is no language without variation. All languages in this world are involved in a great deal variation. Because of the variation, the speaker of the language speaks differently. The variation offers the speaker a choice of ways of expression in different ways. Holmes (2001:6), says that a variety is a set of linguistics form used under specific social circumstances such as with a distinctive social distribution. It also includes different accents, different linguistic styles, different dialects, and even different languages which contrast with each others for social reason. It means that all languages speakers have a variation of the language that they have.

People may have a certain ways in using language to expose their feeling in daily life. For example, people using bad language when they want to show anger, disappointed, and frustration. Bad language is a term that people use in their daily life when they use inappropriate language in order to communicate among them, but in linguistics study specifically in sociolinguistics field, the term of bad language as known as taboo language. According to Allan and Burrige (2006: 2-3), taboo refers to a term that denotes a person, object or act which is dangerous and therefore it must be avoided. In addition, taboo language is language variation used by people to show their feeling such as angry, disappointment and dissatisfaction. People usually produce taboo words because it is the most powerful ways to express their dissatisfaction. They sometimes emphasize people's real attention.

Related to the study of taboo words, there are two major topics that can be analyzed; types of taboo words, and the function of taboo words itself. There are many experts who have done the research about taboo words. For example, the research from Jay (1995) and Batistella (2005) who have already proposed about types of taboo words. According to Batistella, there are four types of taboo words. They are; epithets, profanity, vulgarity, and obscenity. In addition Jay also states that there nine types of taboo words. They are; obscenity, profanity, vulgarity, epithets, blasphemy, cursing, slang, insult and slur, and scatology.

Epithets. Epithets are brief but forceful burst of emotional language. They are more powerful in presentation (loudness or duration) and in offensiveness than other type of cursing, for example, joking. Example: "*Shit!*", "*Damn!*". Second type is Profanity. Profanity is based on a religious distinction. To be profane means to be secular or behaving out and to be ignorant to the words in a religious belief which seeks not to denigrate God, religion or holy affairs but would be based more on the ignorance of or indifference to these matters. Some

examples are “*Jesus Christ, I’m tired of this!*”. The next type is vulgarity. Vulgarity means the language of the common person, ‘the person in the street’, or the unsophisticated, un-socialized, under-educated. Example: ‘*Kiss my ass!*’

Another type of taboo words is obscenity. This type is considered as the type that most offensive and rarely, if ever, are used in public places. Obscenities are pointed sexual in nature; this kind of expression is indecent. But obscenity is legal. Example: “*Fuck*”, “*mother fucker*”. The next type is Blasphemy. A blasphemy is an attack on a religious doctrine. While profanity is related to secular or indifferent (to religion), blasphemy aims directly at the church. Blasphemy obtains scorn via the power of the church such that the greater the power of the institution of religion the more one could be punished for the use of blasphemous language. For example: “*Screw the Pope!*”, “*Shit on what it says in the Bible?*”, “*The church can stick their new fund drive!*”.

Cursing, according to Timothy Jay, is the words “to invoke harm on another person through the use of certain words or phrases” (Jay, 1992:2). When cursing is used, the user is probably aiming to have it take effect happen in the future. The example of this cursing word are like “*I hope you broke yours neck*” or “*eat shit and die!*”. The other type of taboo words is slang. Slang refers to a vocabulary that is developed in certain sub-groups (teenagers, musicians, soldiers, drug user or athletes) for case the communication is known as slang. This slang code serves to identify members of group, which may be especially important or illegal translation. Some examples of slang terms are: “*pimp*”, “*dweeb*”, “*cupcakes*”.

In addition, Insult and Slur also include in the types of taboo words according to Jay. Insult and slur are verbal attack on other people. These words are spoken to harm other person by the word alone. Slurs may be facial, ethnic, or social in nature and may indicate or stereotyping or prejudice of the speaker. Insult may denote the physical, mental, or psychological qualities of the target and are commonly heard on the school playground. They both function to hurt the person directly though the particular word or phrases. Some insult and slur use animal imagery, for example: *pig, dog, jackass*. Some are based on social deviations, for example: “*whore, slut, bastard, homo, fag, queer*”. The last type of taboo words is scatology. Scatological terms refer to human waste products or processes. Such terms are among the early words that children hear and use when they are toilet trained. Scatological insult is common among children. For example: *Poo poo, Poop, turd, crap, shit, shit ass, shit for brains, piss, piss off, fart*.

The second focus topic in study taboo words is function of taboo words. Some experts also proposed their theory related to the function of taboo words. There are seven functions of taboo words based on the theory of Liedlich (1973) and Wardaugh (2006). The first function is *to draw attention to oneself*. Sometimes people utter taboo words in order to get the attention from the listener. Mc Edward (in Mc Guire 1973: 5-6) explains that the speakers should gain the interest trough the use of strong, powerful language whose connotation can stimulate an instant reaction from the audience. Therefore, people use taboo

words which are believed to have power in gaining listener's attention because of its strong connotation. The explanation below is the example of taboo words which function to draw attention to oneself.

Sol : *What the fuck are you doing? The fucking car just died.*

Cheddar : *I told you stupid-ass niggas not to be doin' that shit*

In the conversation above, Sol tries to draw his friend attention because he feels that his friend is afraid that he will be caught by the police. So, he yells to his friend by saying “*what the fuck are you doing?*” in order to get the attentions so that his friend can calm down.

The other function of taboo words according to Wardaugh is to show contempt. The use of taboo words in conversation between two people can also mean to show contempt. According to *Oxford Advance Learner's Dictionary* (1995: 249) *contempt* means the impression in which a person or may be something is totally useless and cannot be regarded. Here is the example:

Cheddar : *I told you stupid-ass nigga not to be doin' that shit*

Sol : *That rifle ain't mine. I don't want to go to jail.*

In the conversation above, it is clear that Cheddar's utterance using taboo words *ass nigga*, is functioned to show contempt because he feels angry at Sol. Cheddar thinks that Sol brings a rifle which is actually not his belonging. The taboo word “*nigga*” is another form of the word *nigger* which means to insult black people race.

To be provocative is also include in function of taboo words. When someone utters taboo words, he or she may have an intention to provoke a certain response such as violation or anger from others.

Jimmy : *I told you not to fuckin' sign me up. What the fuck?*

David : *You wanna fight me now, huh?*

In the conversation above, Jimmy feels angry to David since he signs Jimmy up to a rap battle without his permission. Jimmy feels annoyed with David's act so that he utters the word *fuck* to provoke David's anger. David seems angry and he wants to fight with Jimmy. In this conversation, Jimmy successfully provokes David's anger. The next function is to mock authority. Sometimes people use taboo words when they are not satisfied with public images such as government and institutions. Therefore, some people may prefer to use certain taboo words that are directed to mock authority in order to show their disbelief about governmental stuffs. Here is the example:

Hoot : *Once that first bullet goes past your head, politics and all that shit just goes right out the window.*

Steele : *I just want to do it right today.*

In the conversation above, the taboo word *shit* denotes that Hoot is so sick of politics and stuff related to it. To mock the political situation in his country, he uttered the words *shit* to emphasize his disappointment towards the political situation.

Endearment. The use of the Taboo words in particular conversation also helped a person to intimacy between the speaker and the hearer. This factual phenomenon has largely happened in the case of casual interaction between best friend in one particular group teenager or adult without exception. The creation of strong interpersonal identification is the other function of taboo words.. The

use of taboo words is one particular conversation also helps a person to create a kind of strong interpersonal identification, in which he wants to states what kind of person he is.

The last function of taboo words is provide catharsis One of the essential functions of taboo words, in which verbal obscenity provides to its user, is to provide catharsis. The idea that the users of taboo words use the offending words in order to release their intense frustration and passion. People tend to use taboo words when they have such problems, somehow, these taboo words perform as the therapy for the speakers 'psychology', especially when they are angry, or disappointed with someone or thing. So by acquiring taboo words, they can feel more relieved.

This research aims to analyze taboo words phenomenon in a movie especially on the types of taboo words used and the functions of taboo words uttered by the characters in the movie. Moreover, since movie is the representation of human real life, so, it is acceptable to use a movie as the object of the study. The researcher uses a movie entitled *The Wolf of Wall Street* as the source of this research. This movie has been chosen because a certain reason. The main reason is in *The Wolf of Wall Street* movie, the characters frequently use taboo words in their conversations so that the utterances can be analyzed easily. Moreover, the characters in *The Wolf of Wall Street* movie mostly come from people with higher educational background. Therefore, this topic is interesting where taboo words in the sophisticated era will have different function. In addition, this topic is interesting because most of the characters in this movie have a good educational background. Hence, it can provide a good example of the occurrence of taboo words in well-educated society.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This research was descriptive research. It is describes data and characteristics about the population or phenomenon being studied. This research also belongs to qualitative research supporting by quantitative research. The data of this research were the expression of taboo words that exist in *The Wolf of Wall Street* movie. Furthermore, the data sources are "*The Wolf of Wall Street*" movie that is downloaded from internet in *Layar kaca 21* that can be accessed in www.layarkaca21.com. After access *LayarKaca21*, the first step is watch the movie and take a note to write the utterances that belongs to taboo words. The next step is grouping the data into types and function of taboo words. The last step is analyzing them based on the theory. The data sources analyzed in this research consists of 122 utterances used by the characters which are categorized as taboo words.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Research Finding

The findings of types and functions of taboo words in "*The Wolf of Wall Street*" Movie are shown in the table below:

Table A Types of taboo words found in the movie “*The Wolf of Wall Street*”

NO.	Types of Taboo Words	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Obscenity	79	64.8%
2.	Epithets	16	13.1%
3.	Vulgarity	10	8.2%
4.	Profanity	10	8.2%
5.	Slang	4	3.2%
6.	Cursing	3	2.5%
7.	Blasphemy	0	0%
8.	Insult and Slur	0	0%
9.	Scatology	0	0%
	Total	122	100%

Based on the result of data analysis, the researcher found from nine types of taboo words based on Jay and Batistella's theory, only six types that exist in the movie “*The Wolf of Wall Street*”. They are; Obscenity, Epithets, Vulgarity, Profanity, Slang, and Cursing. From the table above, it can be seen that obscenity as the types of taboo words get the high percentage than others. Obscenity appears 79 times or (64.8%) followed by epithet which is appears 16 times or (13.1%). Furthermore, for the vulgarity and profanity, they stand in the same position because they appear 10 times for each or (8.2%). After that, slang and cursing get the low percentage because they only appear 4 and 3 times for each or (3.2%) and (2.5%) for each.

Table B The Functions of Taboo Words Found in the movie “*The Wolf of Wall Street*”

NO.	Function of Taboo Words	Frequency	Percentage
1.	To creation of strong interpersonal	42	35.6%
2.	Provide catharsis	29	24.5%
3.	To draw attention to oneself	21	17.8%
4.	Endearment	14	11.9%
5.	To be provocative	9	7.7%
6.	To show contempt	3	2.5%
7.	To mock authority	0	0%
	Total	118	100%

Table B shows the function of taboo words found in “*The Wolf of Wall Street*” movie. In this research, the researcher found from seven functions of taboo words, only six functions which is exist in the movie “*The Wolf of Wall Street*”. They are; to creation of strong interpersonal, provide catharsis, to draw attention to oneself, endearment, to be provocative, and to show contempt. From the table above, there are six functions of taboo words that the researcher found in the movie “*The Wolf of Wall Street*”. First, to creation of strong

interpersonal, this function gets the high percentage because it appears 42 times or (35.6%) followed by provide catharsis which get 29 number of data or (24.5%). After that to draw attention to oneself come after the provide catharsis which is get 21 number of data or (17.8%). In the fourth position, there is an endearment which is get 14 number of data or (11.9%), however, to be provocative only get 9 number of data or (7.7%) and in the low percentage is to show contempt because it only appears 3 times or (2.5%). On the other hand, there is no data include in the mock authority as the function of taboo words.

2. Discussion

Taboo words are the variation of language used by people in their daily life. Usually, people used taboo words to express their feeling specifically bad feeling. For example, when they are getting mad to someone, disappointed, dissatisfaction, etc they will use taboo words for the certain reason. In this research, the analysis of types and function of taboo words elaborated based on four theories, they are Jay and Batistella to analyze types of taboo words and the theory of Wardaugh and Liedlich to analyze the function of taboo words.

From the research finding and 122 samples of data, the researcher found six types of taboo words that are Obscenity, Epithets, Vulgarity, Profanity, Slang, and Cursing. After analyze the data, the researcher found obscenity appears many times than other. It can be conclude that, all of the characters in the movie tend to use obscenity in order to protect the listeners from harmful language. The main reason why the obscenity is the most type of taboo words appears in this movie is because in this movie, some of the characters in the movie come from the high education, so they tend to use obscenity because obscenity is legal to use.

In addition, the characters of this movie also use epithets in order to express emotional feeling such frustration. Epithets stand in the second position in the table 4.1 above. It can be concluded that's normal if the characters in the movie use this type because there are some problem that they face and make them feel frustration and they use epithet to express their feeling. Furthermore, the other types of taboo words the researcher found in this research are vulgarity and profanity. They get the same percentage.

From the number of data of vulgarity and profanity, they are rare to use that types because most of them is high educational person however, vulgarity often used by people under-educated and also the characters of the movie rare to use profanity because this movie does not tell a story about something related to the religious story, so that is the reason why profanity only appears ten times.

The next types of taboo words are slang. In this research, slang only appears 4 times because in this movie, agent FBI are also involve in the several scene in order to investigate the Jordan's company. The last type of taboo that the researcher found in this research is cursing. Cursing used to invoke harm on another person. In the movie "*The Wolf of Wall Street*" cursing get low percentage because the characters in the movie come from educational person,

so they avoid to use cursing however, the researcher still found 3 data include in this category.

The other types of taboo words such as blasphemy, insult and slur, and scatology do not exist in the movie. There are certain reasons why three types above do not exist in the *Wolf of Wall Street* Movie. First, the story of the movie is about the way of life someone and the setting of the movie took the common place like house, apartment, restaurant, and other places. There is no setting took place in the church. In addition, this movie does not tell the story about the religion, so the case blasphemy does not exist in this movie however blasphemy refers to an attack on a religious doctrine. For the types of insult and slur and also scatology also did not found in this research because the characters in the movie come from the high education, so they avoid taboo words that have a strengthen meaning for the hearer.

The second focus in the study of taboo word is the function of taboo itself. In this research, the researcher found from the seven functions of taboo words, only six functions that exist in this research, they are; to creation of strong interpersonal which is stand in the high position than others. This is happen because the characters of this movie want to show what kind of person he is. The next function of taboo words which is stand in the second position is provide catharsis. The characters of this movie tend to use taboo words to make they feel relieved after they face some problem in their daily life. in this movie, there are several conflict between the character, so each of them use taboo words to show and express their feeling but not to make other person hurt but only to make their self relieved and they can think about the solution for their problem. On the other hand, taboo words also have function to draw attention to oneself. In this case, some of the characters use taboo words to get the attention from the listener, for example when they are in the public place or in the crowded situation, sometimes they tend to get the attention by using several utterances that belongs to taboo words.

However, in this research, the researcher also found the endearment as the function of taboo words but the percentage is low. The function of endearment happen when two people have a close relationship each other, so when they are using taboo words in their conversation, it means that, they work on the endearment function but in the movie, from many characters who involved there, only one pair that have close relationship like Jordan and Danny. So, this is the reason why endearment only appears 14 times. In addition, to be provocative is also includes in the function of taboo words but it not use to much, only in the certain situation taboo words has a function to be provocative. In this movie, this functions showed by Jordan and his wife when they argue about something. The last function is to show contempt. This function appears when the speakers will insult the addressee by using certain words, but this function only appear 3 times, it indicate that the characters in the movie sometimes need to insult someone else by using certain words, but they not use that words often. The main reason is the character of this movie comes from the high social class, so they know and understand when taboo words as function as show contempt appropriate to use.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The first objective of this research is to identify and to describe the types of taboo words in *The Wolf of Wall Street* movie. There are nine types of taboo words but in the movie only appear six types consist of obscenity, profanity, vulgarity, epithet, slang, and cursing. The highest frequency of the types of taboo words is obscenity. Obscenity appears 79 times out of 122 total data (64.8%). The lowest frequency is obtained by epithet with 3 data (2.5%). Obscenity becomes the most frequently used taboo words because it is considered as the most effective way to insult someone.

Moreover, obscenity type is frequently used by the characters when they want to show their disrespect toward the addressee. By using obscenity that contains disgust to the sense, is repulsive, indecent, and lack of morality, the speaker can easily debase other people's pride and their goal to hurt other people's feeling will be easily accomplished. The least frequently used taboo word is cursing. Therefore, it can be noticed that epithet is not effective enough to be used as an offensive word to debate other people's pride. Instead of using cursing as offensive language, the characters in *The Wolf of Wall Street* movie use cursing to invoke harm on another person.

The second objective of this research is to describe the functions of taboo words in *The Wolf of Wall Street* movie. There are seven four functions of taboo words but only six functions that appear in the movie: to show contempt, to draw attention to oneself, to be provocative, to mock authority, endearment, the creation of strong interpersonal, and provide catharsis. The creation of strong interpersonal gets the highest percentage with 35.6% and appears 42 times. The lowest function is to show contempt with only 3 occurrence (2.5%). To show contempt appears as the function to occur in *The Wolf of Wall Street* movie because it can represent the speaker's intention of using taboo words that is to show their disrespect toward other people. Moreover, it can be the most effective function to express the disrespect feeling toward other people since it is directed and aimed to hurt someone's pride. .

Based on the conclusions above, some suggestions can be stated as follows. For the students of linguistics, in analyzing taboo words, students of linguistics had better pay more attention to the functions of taboo words which do not always mean that the speaker wants to hurt other people's feeling. They can be functioned to show intimacy or to maintain a good relationship by calling one's name with certain types of taboo words. For English lecturers, a movie which is the representation of human real life can be a good and interesting medium to learn about taboo words. Moreover, using a movie as the medium in learning activity will be much more fun because the students can enjoy the story as well as study the taboo words that are uttered by the characters in the movie.

For the other researchers, this research focuses on identifying and describing the types of taboo words, and also describing the functions of taboo words in *The Wolf of Wall Street* movie. There are other problems such as gender issue and social status issue which are not analyzed in this research. Similar researches that will be conducted in the future are better to discuss those problems. The other researchers can observe the relationship between the use of taboo words

and gender issue. They can also observe the relationship between the use of taboo words and social status in the society.

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