

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter the writer will explain the theories related to swear words. First, the writer will relate the study to taboo words, for swear words are related to taboo words. Second, the writer will relate the study to the theories of swear words.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

2.1.1 Sociolinguistics

It cannot be denied that the existence of language cannot be separated from society. This phenomenon is studied in sociolinguistics. It is reinforced by Trudgill (1974: 32) who says that sociolinguistics is a part of linguistics which is concerned with language as social and cultural phenomenon. It investigates the field of language and society and has close connections with the social sciences, especially social psychology, anthropology, human geography and sociology. This is in line with what Downes (1984: 15) says that sociolinguistics is the branch of linguistics which studies the properties of language and languages which require reference to social, including contextual, factors in their explanation. Moreover, Chaika (1982: 02) says that sociolinguistics is the study of the ways people use in social interaction. Then, according to Holmes (1974: 01), there is a relationship between language and society because sociolinguistics examines the way people use language in different social

contexts and the way people signal aspects of their social identity through their language.

Being more specific, Chaika (1982: 02) states that every social institution is maintained by language. People can use to “carry on” love and to “carry out” hate., and through language people can reveal or conceal their personal identity, their character, and their background, often wholly unconscious that people are doing so. Moreover, Whorf via Popenoe (1983: 57) states that the vocabulary of a language can reflect the culture and environment of its speakers. It can be seen from Indonesian people who eat rice as the main food, have so many different words for rice i.e. *padi*, *gabah*, *beras* and *nasi*.

Finnegan (1997: 436) states that language is a major symbol of one’s identity. People can indicate others’ original country through their way of speaking. Language can also be used as an indication of social class as stated by Bordieu (1984) via McEnery (2006: 09).

If a taste for fine wine is supposed to be a token of high social status, then on seeing somebody pouring a drink from such a bottle of wine, other factors aside, one might assume they were of a certain social class. Similarly, if one sees somebody drinking a pint of beer, and this is a marker of low social class, other factors aside, one may also infer their social class.

In this case, Bourdieu relates language with wine and beer as a social class marker. He also argues that type of speech is already associated with certain social class. The wrong use of language is identical

with lower classes because they do not have enough money to get a good education.

If there are forms of language which are identified with a refined form of speech, then those aware of the perception of this form of language, who are able to invest either the time or the money in order to acquire that 'refined' form of language, will be able to identify themselves with a particular group in society. Yet more perniciously, if that type of speech is already associated with a particular social class, then there is a zero cost for that social class in using that form of speech, while the speech associated with lower classes is devalued and the onus is placed on them to adapt the way that they speak. In making that adaptation they tacitly acknowledging the supposedly superior form of speech that they are shifting to when that shift takes place. (Bourdieu, 1984 via McEnery, 2006: 09)

Those bring us to the concept of good and bad language. In fact, according to Dinwoodie (2003: 16), the notion of good and bad language has been commented on by many researches such as Trudgill (1974), Romaine (2000), Menzies (1991), Macauley (1977), Macafee (1994), Andersson and Trudgill (1990), and the Cameron (1995).

2.1.2 Swear Words Classification

According to Jay (1992: 139), there are ten types of swear words based on the word meanings. The swear words including *profanity*, *blasphemy*, *obscenity*, *vulgarity*, *slang*, *epithets*, *insult*, *slurs*, *scatology* and *taboo*.

Profanity is based on religious distinction. It would be words or phrases that abuse or show contempt for God, for example "for the love of

Christ! Get off the phone!”). Blasphemy is directed at religions or religious doctrine, it is usually church related, like “hell!”.

Obscenity is related to sex acts and any image of it which is considered offensive. The word *fuck* is the example of obscenity swear words. Vulgarity does not need to be obscene or taboo, but it reflects the rudeness of street language, such as *bloody*. Slang refers to particular language that is developed among certain communities such as youths, drug users, soldiers, etc, to communicate. Sometimes the slang language also becomes a standard form and is used widely. *John* is the example of slang swear words. *John* in American English means restroom.

Epithets are short but emotive swear words, and they are usually used to express the speaker’s anger or frustration and to help the speaker feel relieved, for example the words *damn it*. It used to show the speaker’s uneasy feeling and to help him feel better. Insults and slurs are similar, they are both verbal attack on people. The speaker gains power from pointing out the target’s (the one who is verbally attacked) characteristics, whether it is the target’s real characteristics or just imaginary characteristic. The difference is that insults use the target’s personal appearance, imperfections or impairments (e.g. *stupid, fatty*), while slurs are ethnical (e.g. *nigger*).

Scatology deals with human’s waste products and processes, such as *piss* and *shit*. Lastly, taboo is any words which are considered “dangerous to be said”. Each culture has different kind of taboo, like in

American death terms are tabooed by the people, while it may be not tabooed by people in other country.

2.1.3 Functions of Swear Words

Andersson and Trudgill (1990: 15) proposed the theory of classifying swear words based on the functions. Andersson and Trudgill divided the functions of swear words into four; *expletive*, *abusive*, *humorous* and *auxiliary*. The categorization of the swear words into these functions really depends on the contexts in which the swear words occur.

Expletive expresses personal emotions. It expresses the speaker's emotions and is not directed to anyone. For example, when someone step on execrable thing and he uttered "*shit!*", the word *shit* belongs to expletive, because he does not direct his swear words to anyone.

Abusive is the swear words which are directed toward others. This kind of swear always needs target to whom the speaker can utter the swear words. For example, the speaker swears to the target "*you asshole*". Expletive and abusive are the major kinds of swear words that are used widely.

In some cases, swear words do not have to be strongly emotive and purposed to release the speaker's emotions. Sometimes the use of swear words can also be in the context of humor. The humorous swear

words usually take forms of abusive swear words, but they serve opposite functions, humorous swear words are playful rather than offensive.

Swear words can also be auxiliary, directed toward people, but it is not intended to offend others. Auxiliary swear words are the way of talking, and it is called by Andersson and Trudgill as “lazy swearing” since it does not have any meaning.

2.1.4 The History of Taboo Words and Swear Words

Before nineteenth century, taboo words are not popular among people because those words are strictly forbidden especially the religion. For example, at that time, references to God in oaths are taboo because the religion emphasize that the lord’s name should not be taken in vain. Moreover, a reference to sexuality and bodily function also becomes taboo since people feel deeply annoyed and insult. In the early of literature, however, sexuality and bodily functions explicit terms are found, but as long as there is no taboo against referring to sexuality and bodily function, they are not swearing words.

However, in the beginning of 19th, the taboo words no longer cause shock in society. The changing of social attitudes and increasing secularization of society bring significant effect about taboo words, for example the religious taboo, sex, and bodily function. In the second half of the 20th century, people are free to express their attitudes toward sexuality,

and *fuck* and *cock* words used in writing and can be heard on television, radio and film.

In the past the word *damn* was a strong taboo word. In the 19th century it was usually not printed, or it was given in the form *d..nor darn* was substituted. Even in the Hollywood of the 1930s there was a taboo against ‘profanities’ that included ‘God, Lord, Jesus, Christ, Hell, Damn and Gawd’; thus the shock when Rhett Butler delivered his parting line in *Gone With the Wind* (1939); ‘Frankly, my dear, I don’t give a damn’

Even though people still regard the taboo words as the most offensive words in the language. The increasing of the public to use those words, mean that the taboo words are losing the power of shock.

Based on a website address www.yahoo.com, A survey in Britain in 1998 found that the most offensive words are “*Cock*”, “*Motherfucker*”, “*Fuck*” and “*Wanker*”. Thus, those words are still considered as causing shock. Even though the word “*wanker*” in British, considered as the most offensive word, in Australia, it has lost of its offensiveness. In this case, in Britain the word “*wanker*” is referring to someone who is stupid or unpleasant, while in Australia, it has literal meaning as masturbator. The words “*wanker*” usually applies to male or female who delude himself or herself, in order to gain pleasure by stroking or rubbing his own penis or vagina.

2.1.5 Taboo Words

The word taboo has become a part of the general vocabulary of English and other western European language, in the meaning of “forbidden by tradition of social usage” (*The Encyclopedia Americana vol 26,1826.p200e-f*).

According to *Term With Language; An Anthology*, J. Rothwell said that “verbal obscenity is defined as a type of swearing that utilize indecent word and phrase. “Indecent” term fall into essentially into four categories: (1) Copulative term (2) Excretory term (3) term related with human genitals (4) term related to sexual irregularities.

According to *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*, Wardaugh said that taboo is one way in which a society expression its disapproval of certain kinds of behavior believed to be harmful to its members, either for supernatural reason or because such behavior is held to violate a moral code (1986: 230). She means that if we were angry to somebody, we will start to mock with taboo word. If he person does not understand the meaning of the word, he will take it easy, but if he knows, then he will get angry.

Besides taboo words, there are also actions that are considered taboo. Every action that insults and cause discomfort or is done at the wrong place and time is called taboo acts. Just like taboo words, there are no written rules yet it should be avoided by everyone. For example, prohibition of murdering is never in a written form, but if someone

murders someone else, he violates taboo. As the results, the people surround him will give him penalties, even before the people-in-power (at this case, police officers, for example) gives the punishment according to the law (Stenstorm 1995).

2.1.6 Swear Words

Swear related to verbal obscenity or obscene word which are categorized as taboo words. Jay (2000: 13) said that swearing is the linguistic forms to express a range of emotions, including anger, frustration, fear, happiness, etc. Swearing is being excluded from standard variety and official use. Despite the wide usage, swearing is meant not to be used in formal situation. It also has no place in education system (Horan, 2011: 13).

Andersson and Trudgill (1990) define swear words as something that:

- Refers to anything that is taboo and/or stigmatized in culture
- Should not be interpreted literally
- Can be used to express strong emotions and attitudes.

Swear words are considered as bad language, they also function to distinguish between the native speaker with non-native speaker since swear words are idiomatic, which cannot be semantically understood (Andersson and Trudgill, 1990: 15).

There are two types of swearing; social and aggressive. Aggressive swearing seems to appear because of someone's explosion of emotion. Social swearing is used by people since they belong to a community which uses the same kind of swearing (Ljung, 1984: 23). So, someone uses social swearing to maintain his existence inside the community. He believes that both purposes of social and aggressive are equally important.

2.2 Previous Studies

2.2.1 Taboo Words and Swear Words Produced by the People in Krian Market

The writer reviews her analysis by taking the previous study from the one of graduate student's thesis in Faculty of Letter of Petra Christian University, namely IfanYuwanto entitled *Taboo Words and Swear Words Produced by the People in Krian Market*. He states three problems: 1) what is the difference between taboo words and swearing words? 2) analyze the condition when and where the people in Krian market use the swearing words? 3) analyze the motivation of using swearing words?.

In the method of research, Ifan uses mixture of quantitative and qualitative approaches because both approaches are given equal emphasis. A qualitative approach works as a facilitator of quantitative work. Qualitative methodologies refer to research procedures which produce descriptive data, meaning, it tends, to investigate people's own written or

spoken words and observable. While, quantitative methodology refers to produce numerical data. So, that all the data would be reduced to statistical number.

Ifan takes the data from people in Krian market as the source. In this case, he chooses 25 people to fill out the questionnaires. The participants the subjects of the study are people who live in Krian, specifically people in the Krian market. Those people are the buyers and the sellers. They come from different places, such as Krian, Prambon, Mojokerto and so on. He identifies a particular phenomenon that occurs in Krian. In this case, the use of Taboo words, which are used among the people in Krian. He intends to conduct a study to investigate under which condition and motivation that people in Krian market use those words.

2.2.2 An Analysis of the functions of Swear Words Used by Teenage Bonek Community in Surabaya

The second previous study conducted by graduate student's thesis in Faculty of Letter of Airlangga University, namely Ditha Hernanda Putri entitled An Analysis of the functions of Swear Words Used by Teenage Bonek Community in Surabaya. She states three problems: 1) what are the words used by the teenage Bonek community? 2) when are the words used by the teenage Bonek community? 3) what are the functions of swear words used by the teenage Bonek community?.

In the method of research, Ditha uses qualitative approach. In doing her research, she needs very natural settings to observe the objects.

She also needs to do recording and interviews. She records the conversations among the male participants during 5 minutes or until the data saturated. She also does interview to confirm the interpretation the writer makes about the functions and the kinds of the swear words used by the participants.