

An Analysis of Swearwords used by Instagram Users

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ABSTRACT

The current study deals with swearwords used by Instagram users. This research aims to find out the swearwords classifications (its function and theme), pragmatic functions of the swearwords used, and the most dominant function, theme, and pragmatic use of swearing. The writer has found fifty data taken from both Instagram users' captions and comments on celebrities' photos. The writer analyzes swearing types found on Instagram using Ljung's swearing function and theme. After analyzing the swearwords using Ljung's categories the writer would like to discuss the pragmatic of the swearwords used by using Trudgill and Andersson's category. The writer found twelve themes in swearwords function from fifty data. There are curse (4 %), adjectives of dislike (10 %), modal adverbial (2%), name calling (24%), noun supports (10%), affirmation (12%), adjective intensifier (12%), emphasis (6%), interjection (8%), expletive interjection (8%), literal meaning (2%), and anaphoric use of epithets (2%). There are six categories of swearwords theme used; sexual activities (48%), scatological theme (20%), religious theme (16%), ancestors theme (4%), animal theme (20%), and prostitution theme (2%). There are four categories in pragmatic use of swearwords on Instagram; expletive swearing, abusive, humorous, and auxiliary. There are four categories of pragmatic use of swearwords used in Instagram; expletive swearing (6%), abusive swearing (18%), humorous swearing (22%), and auxiliary swearing (68%). The most dominant function of swearwords is name-calling with twelve occurrences and 24% percentage. The most dominant theme used in swearing words data taken is sexual activities with 24 occurrences and 48% percentage. The most dominant pragmatic use of swearing is auxiliary swearing with 34 occurrences and 68% percentage.

Keyword: *swearwords, swearing, Instagram*

A. INTRODUCTION

Swearwords seem so common these days. Moreover, the developments of social networks also influence the use of swearwords. Swearwords like *holy shit! damn it! hell no!* seem so very easy to find in movies, songs, and even daily posts on social networks.

There are some reasons why the writer chooses swearwords used by Instagram users as the object of the current study. The first, Ljung (2011: 3) stated that studies on swearwords were a long neglected area of research until the research was increased by the year 1970's. So, the writer would like to contribute herself in swearwords study found in social network especially Instagram. The second, the writer is interested in analyzing the

pragmatic function of swearing used by Instagram users. And the last is the writer wants to analyze the pattern of swearing used by Instagram users.

Based on the arguments the writer has shown above, the writer wants to limit this study on swearwords used by Instagram users to comment on celebrities posted pictures and how celebrities use swearwords as their Instagram captions. Therefore, the writer has arranged the research questions as follow: 1) What are swearwords theme used, 2) What are the function classification of swearwords used?, 3) how is the percentage of the swearwords used?, and 4) what are the most used swearword(function and theme)? The result of this study can contribute to the field of swearing study. It can also show to readers the different use of swearing in social network. Moreover, this study also contributes to the study of cyber-pragmatic, specifically in impoliteness side.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Hughes (2006) mentioned two kinds of swearing, formal and informal. Formal swearing is a “*ritual of social compliance and obligation*”, such as in marriage, and court. On the other hand, informal swearing constitutes “*a transgression of social codes ranging from the merely impolite criminal.*” Montagu in Ljung (2011: 25) mentioned classification of swearing. He mentioned that swearing can be either abusive, adjurative, assertive, ejaculatory or exclamatory, execratory, expletive, hortatory, interjectional and oburgatory swearing. Pinker (2007) in Ljung (ibid) argued that people argue in at least five different ways: Descriptive swearing (e.g *Let’s fuck!*), Idiomatic swearing (e.g. *It’s fucked up!*), abusive words (e.g *Fuck you motherfucker!*), Emphatic swearing (e.g *It’s fucking amazing*), and cathartic swearing (e.g. *Fuck!*)

Ljung (2011) categorizes swearing based on its function and themes. He divides swearing functions into three, the stand-alone, the slot filters, and replacive swearing. He divides swearing themes into religious theme, animal theme, scatological theme, mother theme, and minor theme. Ljung (2011) categorizes swearing based on its function and themes. He divides swearing functions into three, the stand-alone, the slot filters, and replacive swearing. Stand-alone swearing expressions have a less marked illocutionary character, for example the expletive interjections expressing anger, surprise, pain and other feelings, such as *God!*, *Shit!*, *Jesus Christ!*. Other stand-alone swearing expressions are affirmations, denials, ritual insults and name-calling.

Ljung (2011) mentioned some types of swearing, they are: Religious theme, scatological theme, sex organ theme, sexual activities, mother/family theme, and minor theme.

C. RESEARCH METHOD

The data for this research is sentences which consist of swearwords found in comments and captions on Instagram, specifically, they are taken from popular accounts of Instagram users such as singers, models, actors, actresses and so on. The method of data collection is called documentation. After the data are collected, the writer analyzes the data, categorizes them based on the swearing category, analyzes the pattern used in swearing, and identifies the data into pragmatic analysis of swearing used. After doing such analysis, the writer groups them based on the categorization and then reports them in finding.

D. FINDINGS

The writer has collected 50 data taken from both Instagram users' captions and comments on celebrities' photos. The writer analyzes swearing types found on Instagram using Ljung's swearing function and theme. After that, the pragmatic of the swearwords were analyzed by using Trudgill and Andersson's category. This part will be divided into three, swearing categorization (function and theme), pragmatic use of swearing, and the percentage of swearing, and the most dominant swearwords used by Instagram users.

SWEARING	FUNCTION	THEME
1. <i>Fuck u miley u r a <u>asshole</u></i>	Fuck u=curse asshole= adjectives of dislike	Fuck you: sexual activities Asshole: scatological theme
2. <i><u>Fucking</u> Vegas</i>	Curse	Sexual activities
3. <i><u>Fucking</u> Sexy....<u>Damn</u></i>	Modal Adverbial	Fucking: sexual activities Damn: religious
4. <i><u>Bad</u> bitchezz only</i>	Name-calling	Animal
5. <i>Umm <u>wtf</u> is kortney spreg</i>	Noun-supports	Sexual activities
6. <i>Bro u look gay <u>AF</u> w that blonde hair</i>	Affirmation	Sexual activities
7. <i>U bae <u>asffff</u></i>	Noun supports	Sexual activities
8. <i>This is a <u>bad ass</u> jacket</i>	Noun supports	Scatological
9. <i><u>Fuck</u> this stuff</i>	Noun supports	Sexual activities
10. <i>Hot <u>damn</u></i>	Adjective intensifier	religious
11. <i>Slut</i>	Name-calling	prostitution
12. <i>Yuck! What's that <u>fucking</u> <u>shit</u> u're a bristle</i>	Adjectives of dislike	Fucking= sexual activities Shit= scatological
13. <i>Ur so <u>damn</u> cute</i>	Adjectival intensifier	religious
14. <i>Ur so <u>damn</u> hot</i>	Adjectival intensifier	religious
15. <i>Nice <u>b****</u></i>	Name-calling	animal
16. <i>He <u>fucking</u> do like his <u>damn</u></i>	Emphasis	Fucking = sexual activity Damn=religious
17. <i>Emirates <u>bitches</u></i>	Name-calling	animal
18. <i><u>Bitchinmadonna</u></i>	Name-calling	animal
19. <i><u>Omf</u> she's perfect</i>	Interjection	Sexual activity
20. <i><u>Fuck</u> u</i>	Adjectives of dislike	Sexual activity
21. <i>We can change the world if you weren't in it Justin <u>fuck</u> bever</i>	Noun supports	Sexual activity
22. <i>North looks like when she grows up she's gonna <u>fk</u> <u>bitches</u> up for no reason lol she be mean mugging ppl</i>	Affirmation	Fuck= sexual activity Bitch=animal
23. <i>Hairline looking like a <u>goddamn</u> U turn</i>	Expletive Interjection	religious
24. <i>I am an alien <u>fuck</u> with me</i>	-	-
25. <i><u>Lmao</u> the brunettes are hot <u>af</u> and then there's jack j with allis feet almost touching the ground</i>	Lmao=expletive interjection Hot af=adjective intensifier	LMAO=scatological Fuck= sexual activity
26. <i>Get that <u>shit</u> then</i>	Anaphoric use of epithets	Shit=scatological

27. <i>How the <u>hell</u> u not tag the <u>bitch</u> @jaremih <u>damn</u> man <u>daaammnnn</u></i>	Hell= Bitch=name-calling Damn=expletive Interjection	Hell, damn=religious Bitch=animal
28. <i>Ur <u>fricken</u> hot</i>	Emphasis	Fricken=fucking=sexual activity
29. <i>Dear god me <u>nigga</u> I loved u</i>	Name-calling	Nigga = ancestors
30. <i>I love you ssooo <u>fucking</u> much. Keep doing your thing</i>	Emphasis	Sexual activity
31. <i>Justin beiber looks so gay in this picture. Like <u>dafuq</u>? Stop trying sir pls</i>	Adjectives of dislike	Sexual activity
32. <i>Oh my god so <u>fucking</u> gorgeous</i>	Adjectival Intensifier	Sexual activity
33. <i>Lucky <u>damn</u> you!</i>	Affirmation	religious
34. <i>Fake as <u>fuck</u></i>	Affirmation	Sexual activity
35. <i>Also, lily next time you go to Laurel Hardware get the steak. It's so <u>fucking</u> good</i>	Adjectival Intensifier	Sexual activity
36. <i>Did she steal declans bear <u>bitch</u></i>	Name-calling	animal
37. <i>They r fake Ugly stupid spoil <u>bitches</u></i>	Adjectives of dislike	animal
38. <i>This <u>bitch</u> is your twin</i>	Name-calling	animal
39. <i>What is it with people talking about the devil witches blah blah bullshit! <u>Bitches</u> shes @madonna</i>	Name-calling	Bitches = animal Bullshit = scatological
40. <i>@madonna those young days will never ever come back.. you're old as <u>fuck</u> now... Bye</i>	Affirmation	Sexual activities
41. <i><u>Wtf</u></i>	Interjection	Sexual activities
42. <i>This is so creepy <u>omfg</u></i>	Expletive Interjection	Sexual activities
43. <i>She not really hot <u>niggas</u></i>	Name-calling	Ancentors
44. <i><u>Lmaoo</u> true true</i>	Interjection	Scatological
45. <i><u>Lmao</u> with those hashtags tho</i>	Interjection	scatological
46. <i>Say that again <u>bitch</u></i>	Name-calling	Sexual activity
47. <i><u>Fucking</u> queen</i>	Affirmation	Sexual activity
48. <i>Whoever tells u ur ugly or dumb n <u>shit</u> their ugly and dumb cuz they don't know what's perfect n that's u.....</i>	Expletive Interjection	Scatological
49. <i><u>Badass</u></i>	Interjection	scatological
50. <i>Ugly as <u>fuck</u></i>	Adjective of dislike	Sexual activities

Based on the pragmatic function of swearing, the writer analyzed the pragmatic function of swearing used using Trudgill categorization of pragmatic function:

- a. Expletive swearing means swearing is used to express emotions without directing it to others. Expletive swearing is usually used when angry, From 50 data, There are three data included into expletive data because there is no intention from the user to say it. There is no clear direction to whom they say it, just like *Wtf* (number 41), *Fuck u* (number 20), and *Whoever tells u ur ugly or dumb n shit their ugly and dumb cuz they don't know what's perfect n that's u.....* (number 48)
- b. Abusive swearing is used to harm the hearer. from 50 data the writer found 9 data used as abusive swearing. Here are the data categorized as abusive swearing which may cause to harm the hearer: *We can change the world if you weren't in it Justin fuck bever*. In writer's opinion, the user use this swearing to directly harm Beliebers. The effect might come up are some protest from Bieber's Fans. That's why it includes abusive swearing. In *madonna those young days will never ever come back.. you're old as fuck now... Bye*. the user tend to mock Madonna because she is not young anymore and affirm that she is not as good as she was young.
- c. Humorous swearing often looks like abusive swearing, 'but has the opposite function.' It is just used as joking. From 50 data the writer found 11 data which are categorized as Humorous swearing. Swearing as joking can be calling herself with swearing like *Bad bitchezz only* (taken from Miley' account), or *Bitchimadonna* (Madonna). This data are taken from celebrities captions in which they have no intention to harm anyone. Moreover Miley wrote a caption like this *Fucking Vegas*, of course this is just a joking. Nobody want their city to be added with swearing that way.
- d. Auxiliary swearing. From 50 data taken there are 34 data included in Auxiliary swearing in which they are used as just auxiliaries, no intentions, as a joke or even to harm people or indirect swearing (expletive). In describing the use of auxiliary swearing can be easier if we use some speech acts categories like the writer has mentioned above, for example:

- Complementing such in *Lmao the brunettes are hot af and then there's jack j with allis feet almost touching the ground, Ur so damn cute*
- Confirming like *How the hell u not tag the bitch @jaremih damn man daaammnnn*
- Suggesting like *Also, lily next time you go to Laurel Hardware get the steak. It's so fucking good*
- Showing Love: *I love you ssooo fucking much. Keep doing your thing*
- Mocking like *Fuck u miley u r a asshole, Dear god me nigga I loved u*
- Expressing dislike like *Fake as fuck*

3.3 Percentage of Swearwords used

This part will be divided into three; the first is discussing swearwords function, followed by theme, and pragmatic use of swearing. After presenting the percentage of each part, the dominant occurrence will be revealed.

Table 3.3.1
Swearwords Function Percentage

FUNCTION	OCCURENCE	PERCENTAGE
Curse	2	4%
Adj of dislikes	5	10%
Modal Adverbial	1	2%
Name Calling	12	24%
Noun Supports	5	10%
Affirmation	6	12%
Adjective intensifier	6	12%
emphasis	3	6%
Interjection	4	8%
Expletive interjection	4	8%
Literal meaning	1	2%
Anaphoric use of epithets	1	2%
Total	50	100%

Table 3.3.2
Swearwords Theme Percentage

THEME	OCCURENCE	PERCENTAGE
Sexual activities	26	52%
Scatological theme	10	20%
religious	8	16%
animal	10	20%
prostitution	1	2%
ancentors	2	4%
Total	50	100%

Table 3.3.3
Pragmatic Function of Swearwords Theme

PRAGMATIC FUNCTION	OCCURENCE	PERCENTAGE
Expletive	3	6%
Abusive	9	18%
Humorous	11	22%
auxiliary	34	68%
Total	50	100%

From the three tables above, we can see the most dominant swearwords used. The first is the function of swearwords. From the table above, the most dominance swearwords function used by Instagram users is as name calling with twelve occurrences and 24% as the percentage. The second is the theme of swearwords. The most dominant theme of swearwords used is sexual activities. A seen on the table, it has 26 occurrences and 52% as the percentage. The last is pragmatic use of swearing. The most dominant pragmatic use of swearing is as auxiliary with 34 occurrences and 68% as the percentage.

E. CONCLUSION

After analyzing sweaing used by Instagram users either to make a caption or comment on one's picture the writer concludes that using same swearwords in different context may mean different interpretation. Swearing can be a used as humor, or even abuse someone. But the most important thing is to say something in the proper way based on the context.

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