

**SOCIOLINGUISTICS ANALYSIS OF TABOO LANGUAGE
IN INTERNET MEME**

Pujiana Masitha (S200140048)
Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta / 57169
kotaksurat.pujianamasitha@gmail.com (085269892118)

ABSTRACT

The study aims to describe the types and the function of taboo language in internet meme. The object of this study is taboo language in internet meme. This research belongs to descriptive qualitative research. In analyzing the types of taboo language the writer used theory from Jay (1999: 225) and analyzing the function of taboo language in internet meme the writer use theory from Wardaugh (2005: 239). The result of the research found that swear word is mostly used in internet meme, and to mock the authority is the mostly use in internet meme.

Keywords: taboo, taboo language, internet meme.

A. Introduction

According to Hyland (2004:1) language is seen as central way in which we construct our live. Language is also used to show our expression, ideas, opinion and feeling. Moreover Brown (1994: 5) stated that a consolidation of the definition of language yields the following composite definition, they are: (1). Language is systematic and generative; (2). Language is a set of arbitrary symbol; (3). The symbols are primarily vocal but may also be visual; (4). The symbol has conventionalized meanings to which they refer; (5) Language is used for communication; (6). Language operates in a speech community or culture; (7) Language is essential human, although possibly not limited for human; (8). Language is acquired by all people in much the same way - language and language learning both have universal characteristic.

The phenomenon of language has brought up many ways in expressing the language itself. There are bad language and good language that usually used by people to express their feeling, idea, and emotions. According to Chaika (1982: 2) people use language to reveal or conceal personal identity, character, and background without realizing that they are actually doing so. Therefore, every person has their own way to choose the language variation which can confirm one's identity. Some people may prefer to use language that has a strong connotation to express certain feeling, for example sad or angry. To achieve this, they sometimes use certain kind of words that are considered as bad or inappropriate to use such as taboo language. People use taboo language to swear because it is the strongest way to express their condition or feeling. Moreover as Jay (1999: 84) stated, that people, as a kind of emotional animal have a desire to express their feelings, relieve their negative stress, and establish their identities and status through their speech. The use of taboo language can help them to achieve these purposes effectively. Taboo words may function means to express or social humor, catharsis, or showing the power.

According to Wardaugh (2006:239), taboo words are disregarded in particular occasion because they have several functions such as to draw attention to oneself, to show contempt, to be provocative and to mock authority. Another reason for using taboo by Hayahawa (1990:48) to express anger, the uttering of forbidden words may provide a relatively harmless verbal substitute for going berserk and smashing furniture; they may

act as a kind of safety valve in our moments of crisis. However, it seems that nowadays the attitude towards the function of taboo words has already changed. The changes happened because the legal sanctions were disappearing and there were tendency that now people are getting more relaxed to accept taboo words. As a result, taboo language is now commonly found when someone expresses the emotive feeling.

Nowadays, we can found taboo language easily. We can hear from conversation on television, real life, books, song, etc. The phenomenon of taboo language also can easily found in internet meme. Internet has made some people overshoots in using language to communicate. For example internet meme become phenomenon because it increases rapidly in cyber world. Meme is well known as a means of communication to express our feelings to others. Internet memes give the chance to many people to be more creative, and people show their memes through social media such as facebook, twitter, instagram, tumblr, pinterest, etc. Brunelo (2012:56) stated that Internet-memes are, for certain, no examples of high-arts, and neither of scientific innovation. They involve, nevertheless, a more 'mundane' and 'ordinary' kind of creativity, one that is often referred to as 'everyday-creativity'.

Meme become something that very familiar in the world, most of people know about meme because of the rapid movement of the internet. Memes provide a powerful new way to combine few things such as, creativity, art, message, and humor in the internet culture. For Leight (1996:51), memes are "actively contagious ideas" memes as information patterns infecting human minds. One of the few cultural anthropologists to actively consider memes as units of culture describes them as "self-replicating [cultural] representations". According to Juzza (2011:3) internet memes is most commonly used to describe certain kinds of information disseminated among the Internet users by themselves. This information may include pictures, films (usually short), and video clips, graphics, texts, quotes, animations, as well as their various combinations (e.g. captioned pictures). Diaz (2011:83) stated that meme has gone beyond the academic definition; this due to the expansion of the computer usage and the exponential growth of the Internet, particularly forums, chats, blogs and social networks; the concept was coined to a new form of internet communication. The researcher interests to analyze taboo language used in internet meme. A lot of captions in internet meme are full of taboo language. Problem may happen through the use of taboo language in internet meme when they are used to insult others.

It is important to analyze taboo language because it will help people to understand taboo language that occur in internet meme. Although there have many researches have examined taboo language but most of them focused on taboo language in certain culture. Research which focus on the type and function of taboo language is so limited as Anggita (2015), Fakuade (2010), Gao (2013), Pilloti (2010). Eventhough there are many research about taboo language but most of them focused on taboo language in movie or certain culture. The study about taboo language in internet meme has not been done, so the writer interest to conducting the research about the type and the function of taboo language in internet meme. This research is not the first study which concerns with taboo language and internet meme. There are some study analyzed about taboo language and internet meme. The writer takes the relevant previous researchers to prove the originally of this study. Among those studies are:

Fakuade on 2010 studied linguistic taboo in the igbo society in terms of their classification and socio-cultural factors affecting their usage. The purpose of the study is to classify linguistic taboos in the igbo society into five categories: morality-related linguistic taboo, veneration-related linguistic taboos, decorum-related linguistic taboos,

religion-related linguistic taboo and fear-related linguistic taboo. Two principal method was used in this research are questionnaire and oral interview. The data collected were presented in tabular form, using descriptive statistics. The result of the study showed that while religion and decorum - related linguistic taboo are unmentioned and have no permissible alternatives because they are closely tied to different igbo dieties, morality, veneration and fear-related ones have euphemism.

Pilotti on 2012 studied taboo word expressions. The aim of the research is to examine whether sex differences exist in the number and categories of taboo word expressions used by college students when the intended recipient is defined by sexual affiliation and the medium is either one's primary or secondary language. English-Spanish bilingual participants reported the taboo words that they or their friends use to refer to men and women. Across both sexes, taboo words referring to deviance of a social, psychological or physical nature were most frequent, followed by taboo words involving sexual references. This research found that Spanish references to deviance were more likely to be attributed to men than to women, whereas English taboo words were evenly ascribed to both sexes. Neither differences in age of acquisition nor subjective knowledge accounted for the more numerous Spanish deviations attributed to men.

Gao on 2013 studied about English taboo language. The purpose of the research is to explore various forms of English taboo, along which some comparisons between English and Chinese taboos are made and euphemisms are thus introduced to relieve the harness of taboo words. Through these, the socio-cultural values reflected by them. This research investigate all the major varieties of English taboo, i.e., bodily excretions, death and disease, sex, four-letter words, privacy and discriminatory language, which are respectively defined and provided with concrete examples. The result of the research showed that the euphemistic and round about ways of avoiding using taboo words are offered to deal with the situations.

Mbya on 2002 studied about linguistic taboo in African marriage context. The aims of the research are to analyze the taboo – word and describe the mechanisms used for finding substitutes. The research is a descriptive study of a custom in Oromo culture (Ethiopia) known under the name of lagu or lagacha, which consists in avoiding mentioning the names of the persons who are relations by marriage. The topic deserves much attention as an ethno linguistic phenomenon in the above-mentioned culture and on which nothing has been written so far. The study shows that because of language taboo, husband, wife and the in-laws avoid using their respective names and substitute for them several forms, most of which are coinings. The result of the study showed that language taboo, husband, wife and the in-laws avoid using their respective names and substitute for them several forms, most of which are coining.

The positions of the current study with the previous study are viewed based on the similarity and differences; this research has the similarity with previous researches in investigating taboo language. This present study takes the difference in analyzing taboo language that found in internet meme.

1. Problem Statement

- What are the types of taboo language used in internet meme?
- What are the functions of taboo language in internet meme?

B. Literary Review

The existence of language is the most important thing in social life because language cannot be separated from the society. According to Yule (2010: 254)

sociolinguistics is a part of sociolinguistic study which focuses on language which is dealing with social and cultural phenomenon in one society. It usually explores the field of language, society, and thing which are related to social sciences, especially psychology, anthropology, and sociology. In accordance with the theory of Yule, Holmes (2013: 01) said that people who study linguistics will probably concern on describing people's different ways of speaking in different social contexts. Moreover, Holmes argues that sociolinguists also try to investigate the use of language to convey messages. As language functions to convey messages, there must be social interactions between the members of community. Those social interactions can indicate the relationship of the people who are involved. Thus, sociolinguistics is essential in explaining the interaction between the members of the society.

Effect in which the environment is reflected in language is the values of a society. Different societies may value certain things and do them in a certain way. However, almost all of the societies that exist in this world have the same requirements of the categorization of good and bad language. Good language is usually measured when someone speaks properly and politely on the context. Being more specific, good language must contain dense meaning which is shown in beautiful and sweet words. On the other hand, bad language is considered to be nonstandard and wrongly used, which is sometime resulting in annoyance for the other person who hears it. Jay (1996) in Fakuade et al (2013: 121) categorized bad language into several types such as blasphemy, expletive, slang, and taboo which are explained below.

According to Jay (in Fakuade et al., 2013: 121) blasphemy refers to the employment of religious terms to vilify God and religious organization. Expletives refer to words that contain emotive characteristics which are usually in the form of interjections and are not uttered for specific purpose since they are used to release frustration and emotion. Meanwhile, slang refers to those words which are typically created and used by social groups to give them identity and are used to communicate among in-group members such as young people, drug dealers, and baseball player. Then the last is taboo which refers to forbidden phenomena in the specific culture which also includes the language use in everyday life.

Taboo is something that cannot be received for some people or culture. According to Allan and Burrige (2006: 11) Taboo" refers to "a proscription of behavior for a specifiable community at a specifiable time, in specifiable contexts. In general, people refer taboo words as offensive words which cannot be used in daily conversation since they can generate a shocking effect for the individual who hears them. Linguists such as Diez (via Fakuade, 2013: 119) also supported the idea that some people categorized taboo words as the words that have terrible meaning since they contain any substance that are cruel and inappropriate so that they should be avoided. In different societies, it may be hard for an individual to understand taboo words if they do not belong to a particular society which shares the same values. Therefore, Akmajian et al., (2004: 303) assert that taboo words are those words that should not be employed completely or at least prevented in different setting or polite situation. It means that to avoid any misunderstanding, each person who belongs to different cultures with different values should not talk about words that can shock them especially in polite conversations.

There are many types of taboo language that used by many people. Batistela (2005: 72) suggests four types of taboo words, i.e. epithets, profanity, vulgarity, and obscenity. Jay (1999: 25) about the types of taboo language said that there are some categories of taboo language namely swearing, blasphemy, name calling, insulting, verbal aggression, taboo speech, ethnic-racial slurs, slang, scatology, epithet, profanity,

vulgarity, and obscenity. Here are the short definitions and examples of types of taboo language. Taboo words are usually uttered because there is a reason behind them. According to Jay (1999:84) people, as a kind of emotional animal have a desire to express their feelings, relieve their negative stress, and establish their identities and status through their speech. Using taboo language can help them to achieve these purposes effectively, as language is a tool used by everyone. The function of taboo words are listed as follows, such as humor, catharsis, or showing the power. According to Wardaugh (2006:239), taboo words are disregarded in particular occasion because they have several functions such as to draw attention to oneself, to show contempt, to be provocative and to mock authority.

According to changhoon (2014: 2) Internet meme is an idea, style, or action that spreads, often as mimicry, from person to person via the Internet, as with imitating the concept, such as the “Harlem Shake” dancing video and “Chocolate Rain”. Brunello (2012: 9) Internet-memes are, for certain, no examples of high-arts, and neither of scientific innovation. They involve, nevertheless, a more ‘mundane’ and ‘ordinary’ kind of creativity, one that is often referred to as ‘everyday-creativity’. Gauntlett (2011: 10) defines creativity as being composed of three elements: “a culture that contains symbolic rules, a person who brings novelty into the symbolic domain and a field of experts who recognize and validate the innovation”. He explains that novelty and innovation can occur quite routinely in the everyday environment though, including that of “witty or insightful speech”. In the case of internet-memes, the person who brings the novelty is the one who uses a certain idea, image, video and/or catchphrase cleverly, so that others recognize the creativity embedded in it. Validation is done through the meme’s imitation in form of copying and remixing, causing its eventual spread. An idea that is not considered clever, witty of insightful – thus creative in some sense – will not spread. Hence, creativity is essential for a meme to actually become a meme.

C. Research Method

In this research, the writer uses descriptive qualitative research, since it involved the collection of data for the purpose of describing the existing condition. According to Vanderstoep and Johnson (2009:167) this method focuses on cultural, social, personal identity and its goal is more descriptive than predictive. Moreover, Strauss and Corbin (1998: 11) state that qualitative research is achieved not by means of quantification or statistical technique. It can give complex detail about particular phenomena which are difficult to be expressed with quantitative method. Therefore, the findings of qualitative research will not be in the form of statistic data which usually belong to quantitative research. In this research, qualitative method was chosen as the appropriate method because it represented what the researcher had studied. The objects of the research are the taboo words found in internet meme. The data for this research is meme that taken from some internet source, such as twitter facebook, instagram, pinterest, and tumblr because internet meme is easy to be found in such kind of the source.

In collecting the data, the researcher does some steps, the first the researcher collect some meme that taken from the internet and then the researcher make mark on the data. After the data was marked the writer do the analysis by identifying the types of taboo language based on the theory of Jay (1999: 25) and the researcher analyze the function of taboo language by using the theory of Wardaugh (2005: 239). After that the writer Drawing conclusion and suggestion based on the data analysis.

D. Research Finding and Discussion

Based on the data analysis about taboo language in internet meme, the writer can find, as follow: from the analysis process, the total data collected in this research are 100 data and are displayed in table. The table shows the frequency of the occurrence of types and functions of taboo language in internet meme. The results are various and they will be displayed on the table.

Table 1. Sample Data Sheet of Types and Functions of Taboo Language in Internet Meme

NO	SENTENCES	TYPES OF TABOO WORDS											FUNCTION OF TABOO WORDS				EXPLANATION	
		EP	PR	VU	OB	TS	SW	INS	VA	BLS	ERS	SL	SCL	TDA	TSC	TBP		TMA
1.	“You better get the fuck of, before I kick your as off”						I								I			Used to provoke certain response such as violation or anger from listeners. Taboo words are considered successful when the response meets the speaker’s expectation

Table 2. Frequency of the types of taboo language and the functions of taboo language.

No	Types of Taboo language	Function of Taboo Language					Total	Percentage (%)
		To Draw Attention to Oneself	To Show Contempt	To Be Provocative	To Mock Authority			
1.	Profanity	5	-	1	5	11		
2.	Obscenity	3	-	1	-	4		
3.	Taboo Speech	-	-	-	1	1		
4.	Swear Word	9	5	10	5	29		
5.	Insulting	1	3	-	3	7		
6.	Vulgarity	6	3	1	1	11		
7.	Blasphemy	-	-	4	3	7		
8.	Ethnic racial slurs	3	3	-	-	6		
9.	Slang	4	2	1	1	8		
10.	Scatology	2	-	-	-	2		
11.	Verbal aggression	1	1	2	1	5		
12.	Epithet	4	1	1	2	9		
Total						100		
Percentage								

From 100 data number, the writer found that types of taboo language that mostly used in internet meme are swearing word. There are 12 types of taboo words, i.e swearing, blasphemy, name calling, insulting, verbal aggression, taboo speech, ethnic-racial slurs, slang, scatology, epithet, profanity, vulgarity, and obscenity. All of them appear in internet meme. From the table above, it can be noticed that the most dominant type used in internet meme, which appears 29 times. Then, the second highest frequency which has the same percentage is profanity and vulgarity which appear 11 and 12 times. Epithet appear 8 times, taboo speech appear 1 times, insult appear 7 times, blasphemy appear 8 times, verbal aggression appear 5 times, ethnic racial slurs appear 6 times, slang appear 9 times, Finally, the least to occur is scatology which appears 2 times.

E. Conclusion

There are 12 types of taboo language that analyzed by the writer based on Jay perspective. From all the types of taboo language, swearing word is mostly used in internet meme, it proved by 30 times appearance of swearing word in internet meme. It can prove that people are more understand well about swearing because of the influence of internet meme that has been the culture because we can find taboo language easily in social media such as facebook, instagram, twitter, pinterest, tumblr, and phat. The function of taboo language mostly used to Draw Attention to Oneself, and the second is to be provocative, and then to mock the authority and the last is to show contempt.

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