

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

People have various ways to express their feeling. Sometimes, they prefer to express their feeling into their words. For example, when they are angry, they use words like “shit” or “fuck” to express their feeling. Those kinds of words can be called as swear words. Swear words are kinds of bad language, because they consists of rude and vulgar language. Although swear words are considered as bad language, they are still used by people in their daily conversation.

Wajnryb (2005) states that swear words can be seen into two meanings, the first is the word that is generally formed “swearing”, and the second is the word has to do with how we refer to “swearing”. It means that swear word not only used in negative way, but also in positive way depend on the speakers. The use of swear words can be considered as a positive language when the bad words turn into common words and recognizable in social form (Wajnryb, 2005).

When people swear, it is believed that they have several motivations depending on the aims of the speakers. It can be caused by number of emotions (e.g. anger, frustration, joy, surprise), their control over swearing from spontaneous form (e.g. habitual), and over which they seem to have little control to the reflective form (e.g. new obscene joke) (Van Lancker, 1987 in Jay, 2009).

Swear words are often used by people in less formal speech, such as when they have a conversation with their peers or people in group which they have

closer relationship with. It seems more acceptable to use swear words in less formal speech than in formal speech. When they use swear words in formal speech, they seem unacceptable and they can be considered as uneducated and impolite people.

According to McEnery (2006) the user of swear words can be distinguished from several groups, such as social class, age, and sex. Based on the social class, people who come from lower class use swear words more than upper class in their conversation (McEnery, 2006). Based on the age, swear words are mostly used by teenagers because they believe that swear words have a particular value (Cheshire, 1982 in McEnery, 2006). Meanwhile, based on the sex, swear words are more often used by males than females (McEnery, 2006).

The phenomenon of swear words become interesting when they are used by different sex speakers. Sex is a biologically given which concern with maleness or femaleness and which is used as the basis of constructing social category, while gender is a term which concerns masculinity and femininity (Renzetti & Curran, 2989). In the past, it is believed that swear words are more identical with males than females, because females are thought as the guardian of society's value. Therefore, they should not use swear words. Lakoff (1975) in Holmes (2008) states that females avoid to use strong swear words. But as the time goes by, swear words are used by both sexes. The frequency for both sexes to use swear words may vary depending on the context and the gender of the hearers. It is also possible that there are some differences of swear words used by males and females.

The comparison of swear words used by males and females may emerge in regular conversation through their words. One of the examples of regular conversation, which is played as natural as conversation is movie. Because it has a script, the writer would like to compare swear words that are often used by different sex speakers through the movie.

To compare swear words used by males and females, to analyze movie that is played by both characters are appropriate. *The Wolf of Wall Street* is an American biographical black comedy movie. This movie was released on December, 25 2013, and it contained so much portrayal about how low the moral of the world really is in that time. Most characters use swear words frequently.

In this analysis, the writer focuses on the main male and the main female characters. Jordan Belfort is the main male character who experiences rise and fall in financial world. His life becomes fluctuated and it influences his utterances towards another character in that movie. On the other hand, his wife, Naomi, is the main female character who always accompanies him and somehow uses swear words towards another character in her life.

The Wolf of Wall Street is chosen as the object because both male and female characters uses swear words on their speech frequently. In contrast to the stereotype, in this movie female characters use swear words as frequent as male characters. Although this movie is full of swear words used by male and female characters, it is still has a good appreciation from movie society. According to the Internet Movie Database 2013, this movie has a good rating at about 8.2/10 from voters. Besides that, this movie is nominated in five categories of Academy

Awards 2014 including best motion picture, best original screenplay, best director, best actor, and best supporting actor. This movie also won the best actor nomination in Golden Globe 2014 (IMDB, 2013). The writer also provides the dialogue which contains some swear words used by main male and female characters in *The Wolf of Wall Street* movie.

Following the explanation above, here is the example of swear word used by Jordan as the main male character in *The Wolf of Wall Street* movie.

Donnie: I think we should keep one in the office because I think they're good luck.
Jordan: Treat it like the **fuckin'** thing it is.

Following the explanation above, here is the example of swear word used by Naomi as the main female character in *The Wolf of Wall Street* movie

Jordan: I love you, Nay. I love you so much. I've loved you from the first time I saw you
Naomi: **Fuckyou.**

The brief example of dialogue above show that both main characters use swear words when they have a conversation with other characters. It seems like an interesting topic to be analyzed, because they both use swear words, and they might use their own swear words in different function.

The excerpt illustrated above show that the use of the swear word by the main male character happens when he is speaking to his close friend in the same gender in public. He uses swear word to describe something amazing without acting abusive to the listener. On the other hand, the use of the swear word by the main female character happens when she is speaking to her husband, who have close relationship each other in their house. She uses swear word to release her emotions towards her husband.

The studies of swear words have been carried out by several researchers. The researchers that are closely related to this research are Sollid (2009), Williamson (2009), and Martenson (2012). Sollid (2009) in his study entitled –Attitudes to Swear Words: Gender Differences among Native and Non-native Speakers of English” investigated differences and similarities of swear words used by men’s and women’s between native (English) and non-native (Swedish) speaker. She found that both men and women use swear words among their conversation, but the difference is men use swear words in a more offensive way than women do.

Williamson (2009) in his study entitled –How Brits Swear: The Use of Swearwords in Modern British English” investigated the differences of swear words in the English language by age, sex, and social class differences. He found that males prefer to use strong swear words than female, young speakers and adolescents have a higher frequency of the use of swear words, and swear words are commonly used by lower social class in Britain.

Another researcher was Martenson (2012) in his study entitled –Sociolinguistics of Swearing: A Corpus-Based Investigations of Male and Female Use of *Damn*, *Darn*, *Hell*, and *Heck* in Soap Operas Compared to Real Life” investigated male and female usage of four swear words: hell, heck, damn, and darn comparing to real life speech (by using the Longman Corpus of Spoken American English) with scripted language in soap operas (the SOAP corpus). He found that women use milder forms of swearing compared to men. Moreover, hell

is frequently used by men, darn is frequently used by women, and heck is very neutral swear word used by men and women equally.

None of the researches mentioned above have compared swear words used by the main male and the main female characters in an American movie, which is titled *The Wolf of Wall Street*. There are many characters in that movie, but the analysis of this study focuses on the use of swear words that are used by main male and female characters in every single scene. The main male character is Jordan and the main female character is Naomi.

In this present study, the writer conducts a study to examine the comparison of swear words used by main male and female characters in *The Wolf of Wall Street* movie. By using Wajnryb's theory (2005), the writer will compare the types of swear words that are used by main male and female characters in the movie, then compare the functions of swear words after categorize it. The writer will use qualitative approach due to the use of text as the data. It will be taken from the script of *The Wolf of Wall Street* movie particularly in every single scene of main male and female characters use of swear words.

1.2.Statement of the Problem

Based on the explanation of the background of the study above, the writer formulates the research questions below:

1. What types of swear words are used by the main male character compared to the main female character in *The Wolf of Wall Street* movie?

2. What are the functions of swear words used by the main male character compared to the main female character in *The Wolf of Wall Street* movie?

1.3.Objectives of the Study

Following the questions above, the writer wants to compare the types of swear words used by main male and female characters in *The Wolf of Wall Street* movie. Furthermore, the writer wants to compare the functions of swear words which are expressed by main male and female characters in *The Wolf of Wall Street* movie.

1.4.Significance of the Study

This study of the comparison of the swear words used by main characters in *The Wolf of Wall Street* movie will serve two significances, theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this research hopefully can give contribution to the field of the study particularly in sociolinguistics to show that swear words are not only used by males but also females, in a particular condition. Practically, this research hopefully can help the reader's knowledge about swear words in order to use swear words appropriately, since they become a bad language in conversation.

1.5. Definition and Key Terms

Swear Words : The word that is commonly formed –swearing”, and the word has to do with how we refer to –swearing” (Wajnryb, 2005).

- Sosiolinguistics : Study of the relationship between language and society (Holmes, 2008).
- Gender : Term which concerns with masculinity and femininity (Renzetti & Curran, 2989).
- Social Factor : Physical and social setting in which people live or which something happens, such as participants; setting; topic; and function (Holmes, 2008)
- Movie : Showing of motion picture (MWCD, 2005)

